



## TO LOVE, HONOR AND OBEY

Blazing the trail and lighting the way, Teddy, aka Storm Kloud's Rrain Dance, was the first-ever Alaskan malamute to earn a Utility Dog Excellent title, the highest honor the AKC has awarded to date in our breed for obedience competition. Owner, trainer and competitor Kim Sullivan explains why you should never underestimate the working ability of a malamute - or the perseverance of his owner!

### Oh Let Me Be Your Teddy Bear

In January of 1991, I anxiously paced the airline cargo area, awaiting the arrival of my new Alaskan malamute pup. For the past several months, breeder Nancy Russell had reported often on the progress of a young male she had selected for me; an outgoing,



*It's Show Time! Teddy and Kim on their way to the ring.*

natural leader in his small pack of litter mates. That cold rainy night, I took him out of his crate and wrapped him in my coat for the drive home. As he relaxed and fell asleep, our lifetime bond began.

Teddy was always willing to learn and work. I often said he would rather work than eat. True, he was not your usual malamute. Descended from working dogs in several different disciplines, he certainly inherited those abilities.

A very happy and lively youngster, he started off strong in obedience competition, finishing his Companion Dog (CD) title at just 14 months of age! He placed in Novice B for all three legs and won the AMCA's Black Hawk Award for obedience in 1992. Teddy went on to complete his Companion Dog



### About the Author

*Kim Sullivan's first malamute was her birthday present in 1989. Intrigued by her dog's physical toughness and emotional sensitivity, she found she enjoyed training and competing in obedience - a hobby that has lasted her over 20 years. In that time, she and her dogs achieved many AKC, CKC, and UKC Obedience, AKC Rally, and AKC and NADAC Agility titles. Kim also shows in conformation and has finished several AKC Champions. She treasures the memories, experiences and friendships her hobby has brought her through the years.*

*Presently living in Helena, Montana, Kim works as an operating room R.N. She enjoys hiking, camping and skijoring with her seven mals and actively competes with four of them.*

*A member of the Helena Montana Kennel Club, Kim also enjoys teaching 4-H kids how to train their dogs in obedience.*

# HISTORY IN THE MAKING

Excellent (CDX) title in 1994, placing first in Open A at an all-breed trial for his third leg.

We took some time off in 1995, as I moved a couple of times that year. It was worth it because my new job allowed me to buy a house with a huge yard, perfect for training dogs. Another perk was normal working hours with no on-call or weekend work (rare for Registered Nurses), leaving me free to travel and show.

Training began for our Utility Dog (UD) title in 1996, and we started competing in September of 1997. On a rainy afternoon in October, in Enid, Oklahoma, we earned our first UD leg. We tied with two other dogs for second place, and the three of us competed again in an off-lead heeling exercise to break the tie! Teddy and I won this unusual three way run-off, to earn our second place finish in Utility A.

We earned our second UD leg in November in Springfield, Missouri, and our third and final leg in December at home in Dallas, Texas.

## Kim and Ted's Excellent Adventure

At that time, the Utility Dog Excellent (UDX) was a fairly new AKC obedience title, originating in 1994. Also, in January of 1998, the jump heights required for dogs competing in AKC obedience had been lowered to shoulder height. Thus, Teddy's required jumping height had changed from 32 inches to 26 inches. After hip x-rays and a full physical examination showed Teddy to be in excellent health, we decided to make the UDX our goal. Our first competition took place in January of 1998.

Competing with an Alaskan malamute in Open and Utility B was an interesting experience. The most common comment I heard was, "Lady, are you SURE you are in the right ring?" One judge even declared that she had judged obedience for 30 years, and had never had a malamute in her ring!

We slowly earned respect among our competitors, by consistently qualifying for our first few legs. Our first double



### In Pursuit of Excellence

*Born on November 18, 1990, in Nancy Russell's "Rr" litter, Teddy's sire was A/C BIS BISS Ch Storm Kloud's Keep The Win, WLD, WTD, WWPDX, ROM, and his dam Ch Silver Shadow's Snow Phoenix, WTD.*

*Competing in obedience from 1992 - 2000, Teddy earned qualifying scores in 11 states in the U.S. and one province in Canada. He received three AMCA Awards of Merit in obedience, as well as the AMCA's Black Hawk Award in 1992.*

*Teddy truly loved life, and our family loved him. Above all else, he was a wonderful family pet, very gentle with puppies and children. My constant companion for 11 years, Teddy really was a "once in a lifetime dog."*



# HISTORY IN THE MAKING

qualification was in January, our second in February, our third in March. In May, in Oklahoma City, we had earned five UDX legs...halfway there!

Then we hit mid-June, and the rising summer temperatures in the south. Remember the summer of 1998? It broke records for heat and drought in Texas. Some of our venues had no air-conditioning, making a few show weekends rather miserable. Just getting from the hotel to the van to the show site was a challenge. Ice boots for the dogs were the best solution, as the pavement was unbelievably hot.

We did escape to Canada for a couple of weeks, in search of Canadian CD titles for Teddy and his kennel mate Winnie. I have a photo of them in Canada, and I know they are smiling!

Teddy had a habit of "wooning" loudly after his turn to sit on the directed jumping exercise. Some judges did nothing, some took points off, and some laughed so hard they had to catch their breath to give me the signal to send Teddy over the jumps! The latter was the case for our judge in July where we earned UDX leg number eight. Our sweet little old lady judge told me, "I haven't been moaned at like that in years!" With an unusual breed, you never lack entertainment.

The very hot weekends persisted all summer, affecting our performance, which was discouraging after a while. One of the hottest shows was on Labor Day weekend in Monroe, Louisiana - the heat indices were 110-120 degrees Fahrenheit! No Double-Q's there!



Teddy, U-CDX Storm Kloud's Rain Dance, UDX, Canadian CDX, WPD, CGC, owned by Kimberly Sullivan and Lindsay Conover, earned his UDX on September 26, 1998. Teddy was the very first Alaskan malamute to achieve this title from the American Kennel Club. Above, big smiles after earning the 5th UDX leg! Below, practicing the "Go Out" command at home.



## To Boldly Go Where No Malamute Has Gone Before...

### We Review the AKC Requirements for the Utility Dog Excellent Title

The AKC website at [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org) states: "**Utility Dog Excellent (UDX)** - Dogs with UD titles must earn qualifying scores in both Open B and Utility B at 10 trials in order to add the UDX title after their registered names." So, what does that mean, exactly? What do the dog and handler actually DO? They need to compete at ten shows where they qualify by earning at least 170 out of 200 points in both the Open and Utility classes - also known as a Double-Q, for Double-Qualification. Ten Double-Qs make a UDX.

The Open class is the second level of obedience competition and includes exercises that teach the dog to do a variety of tasks and to follow commands either by voice or signal. In the Open class, dogs and handlers will:

- Heel Free and Figure Eight - performed off leash.
- Drop on Recall - the handler calls the dog from across the ring, the dog drops to a down position, then returns to the handler on command.
- Retrieve on Flat - the handler throws a dumbbell; the dog retrieves it on command.
- Retrieve Over High Jump - the handler throws a dumbbell over the high jump; the dog goes out over the jump, picks up the dumbbell and promptly returns with it over the jump on command.
- Broad Jump - the dog clears a wide jump on a single command or signal.
- Long Sit (3 minutes) - performed with the handler out of the dog's sight.
- Long Down (5 minutes) - dog must remain in a down position with the handler out of the dog's sight.

The Utility class is the third and highest level of obedience competition. In the Utility class, dogs and handlers will do:

- Signal Exercise - shows the dog's ability to understand and correctly respond to the handler's signal to stand, stay, down, sit, heel and come. No voice commands are given; only hand signals are allowed.
- Scent Discrimination - the dog finds the handler's scent among a pile of leather and metal articles.
- Directed Retrieve - the dog follows a directional signal to retrieve a glove and promptly return it to the handler.
- Moving Stand and Examination - the dog must heel, stand and stay as the handler moves away. The dog must stay and accept an examination by the judge and return to the handler on command.
- Directed Jumping - the dog must go away from the handler, turn and sit. Then, the dog must clear each jump the handler indicates and promptly return to the handler.

# HISTORY IN THE MAKING

Our next stop was Lubbock, Texas, to compete at the Heart Of The Plains Kennel Club shows at the end of September. Thankfully, the panhandle of Texas gets cooler much sooner than the rest of the state.

With the nicer weather and a pleasant show site, things were looking up. We got our ninth leg that Friday and our tenth and final leg on Saturday to earn our UDX. I cannot tell you how nervous I was on the out of sight long down, the last exercise in Open B that day. After the judge said "Exercise Finished," I did get many hugs and congratulations from my fellow competitors. Many of them were ranked much higher in the national standings than Teddy and me, but accomplishing a unique achievement in a breed was something they all could relate to, appreciate and celebrate! It was a great day that I will always remember. Even our judge, Kent Delaney, had an ear to ear smile in the photograph!

That year at the 1998 AMCA Mid-East Regional obedience trial, the day before the AMCA National in Pennsylvania, Teddy and I earned an eleventh UDX leg and also the High-Combined score for that competition. In 1999, he finished his Canadian CDX and then retired from regular competition. His last show was in 2000, where he took first place in Veteran's Obedience at the AMCA Nationals in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, at 10 years of age.

Though retired, Teddy continued to travel with us, as he never wanted to be left at home. He was a sweet, loving and sensitive dog, and performed more consistently in obedience competitions than any dog I have ever owned. When people marvel at our historic accomplishment for the breed, I tell them "Never underestimate the working ability of an Alaskan malamute - or the perseverance of his owner!"



## Live Long and Prosper

*Teddy and his kennel mate Winnie (U-CD, CH Tikiluk's Winter Holiday, CDX, Can. CD, CGC) were one month apart in age and became lifelong friends. Wonderful pets and companions, they were exceptional ambassadors for our breed.*



## How to Hook a Marlin

### Kim Sullivan achieves another malamute milestone

On March 25, 2007, Marlin, aka Rain Dance A Touch Of Gray, RAE4, CDX, GN, NJP, OAP, NFP, CGC, NADAC-NAC, became the first Alaskan malamute to earn the title of Rally Advanced-Excellent (RAE), achieving perfect scores of 100 in both classes that day.

A RAE title is earned by first completing the three levels in Rally: Novice, Advanced, and Excellent; and then succeeding in RAE competition. The dog and handler must qualify in both the Advanced B and Excellent B classes, on the same day, at ten separate trials. If you keep competing, each additional ten Double-Q's take you to the next level - RAE2, RAE3, etc.

Marlin is an agile and attentive dog, so he really did enjoy the competition. Yes, he has occasionally had a Malamute Moment! Stuffed toys are his weakness. One time during the honor exercise, he was to sit and stay. While staring longingly at a stuffed bear a judge had used for the off-set figure eight, he literally slid from the sit to a down...still staring at the toy! He had heeled around it without a glance, but dogs will be dogs!

Marlin has always been a great dog, and I am very proud to be his breeder/owner/handler. You can't be around Marlin without smiling!



*Making History - Marlin is the first RAE in mals.*

