

Meet . . .

Owner-Handler

Karen Burkhart

Sunquest Great Danes

- 1) **Tell us your whole name.** Karen Burkhart.
- 2) **Number of years showing dogs.** 39 years.
- 3) **Your kennel name and how you got it.** Originally it started as Musicbox but I have since joined up with a friend and have started Sunquest.
- 4) **Where you live.** Phoenix, Arizona.
- 5) **Where do you travel to show?** Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah.
- 6) **How many shows do you attend in a year?** Depending on what we are showing 15 to 30 approximately.
- 7) **Have you ever hired and/or used professional handlers and for what purpose?** Yes, once. It was suggested that I use a handler on a male that I had if I wanted him to win. I hated being outside the ring and the dog didn't win.
- 8) **What made you decide to owner-handle your Great Danes?** I enjoy doing it.
- 9) **What are the greatest advantages of owner-handling your dogs?** A lot less cost and knowing you did it yourself.
- 10) **What are the biggest challenges of owner-handling your dogs?** Understanding that professional handlers show a lot more dogs than most owner handlers, hence they do win more, are more familiar to a lot of judges and recognition can go a long way.
- 11) **What do owner-handlers need to consider if they want to be competitive in the ring?** They need to know their own dog's faults (yes, they all have them) and learn to minimize them. Also decide if the dog they have should really be shown.
- 12) **Do you feel your dog has ever been over-looked in the ring by the judge because you are an owner-handler and if yes please describe.** Maybe when I first started and didn't have a clue what I was doing. Most judges anymore give owner-handlers as good a look as anyone else in the ring.
- 13) **Do you feel there is any stigma against owner-handlers in Great Danes and if yes please explain.** No.
- 14) **What tips would you give a new owner-handler to help them step up their game?** Pay attention to what you are doing. Have your dog in the best condition it can be in; proper weight, show groomed, and trained.
- 15) **What is the most valuable advice you ever received about handling your own dogs from a professional handler?** You have to sell your dog to the judge. Present your dog, don't just stand there.
- 16) **What is the most helpful technique you ever learned just by watching professional handlers?** See answer to #15.
- 17) **What are some common mistakes you see owner-handlers committing in the ring?** They don't pay attention and they do not listen.
- 18) **What have been some of your show ring successes as an owner-handler?** Ch. Musicbox Flash to Spring. She was the First owner-breeder-handled uncropped bitch in Arizona. Ch. Congistador Next Tune At Musicbox was the First Australian/New Zealand import to achieve an AKC Championship. Ch. Doves Danemar PC Michaelangelo was #11 Top Twenty 2008. Ch. Baysides Just Wicked DMD and puppies out of her first litter.



Ch.Sunquest More of a Good Thing, Ch.Sunquests Amtrak Zerphyr All Adored, Sunquest Bayside Your Still the One, Major pointed and Sunquest Slam Dunk, pointed.

- 19) **What are some of the most rewarding things about owner-handling for you?** The fact that I have done it myself with the help of the team to get them all there.
- 20) **Most professional handlers began as owner-handlers. What keeps you from taking that same route?** I work full-time and if you are taking money from a client I feel that those dogs should have priority and when you are showing your own dogs that can be difficult.
- 21) **Who is your favorite judge and why?** I have a number of judges that I like to show to. Main reason being the ones that do not have a problem telling you what you did wrong or what kept you from being pointed at.
- 22) **Bonus Question! (Please answer!) If the mockumentary movie "Best in Show" made a sequel with you as one of the characters, what famous actor/actress would play YOU?** Bett Middler.
Yes, I do have a sense of humor, it just doesn't show when I am at the end of the lead.