

Meet . . .

Owner-Handler

Renea LaNell Crowell

- 1) **Number of years showing dogs.** 11 years.
- 2) **Your kennel name and how you got it.** I don't have a kennel name.
- 3) **Where you live.** Ponca City, Oklahoma.
- 4) **Where do you travel to show?** Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, Missouri.
- 5) **How many shows do you attend in a year?** It depends on whether I feel my dogs are ready. I try to stay logical with the expenses and base it on what my dogs are ready for.
- 6) **Have you ever hired and/or used professional handlers and for what purpose?** Yes, on a few occasions. I have been very lucky to have had Steve Arnold put my first girl's majors on her to finish after I singled her out and Linda Cain handled my latest boy at the National in Topeka. I felt my dogs needed more experienced hands on them each time and they did beautiful with them.
- 7) **What made you decide to owner-handle your Great Danes?** It's more fun to show than to wait on the side and watch someone else with your dog
- 8) **What are the greatest advantages of owner-handling your dogs?** No one knows your dog better than you do. Training, socializing, playing, no one has spent more time with your dog than you have and it shows in the ring.
- 9) **What are the biggest challenges of owner-handling your dogs?** Nerves! I was and still can be a bundle of nerves.
- 10) **What do owner-handlers need to consider if they want to be competitive in the ring?** Training and socializing are so important. If your dog is well behaved and has fun, you will be calmer and have more fun. Try to learn from others in and outside the ring.
- 11) **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.** Yes, it happens and will happen again. It makes the times we aren't over-looked and do win even better.
- 12) **Do you feel there is any stigma against owner-handlers in Great Danes and if yes please explain.** Somewhat. We do not normally finish dogs as fast as a pro handler can. In the Breed ring there are very few owner-handlers and even fewer that are in the rankings.
- 13) **What tips would you give a new owner-handler to help them step up their game?** Train, train, train! And then train some more! Watch other handlers and other breeds as well. Ask questions and learn from each mistake or success.
- 14) **What is the most valuable advice you ever received about handling your own dogs from a professional handler?** Try to relax and make the most of your 2 minutes in the ring.



15) What are some common mistakes you see owner-handlers committing in the ring? Fidgeting and too much stacking. I'm guilty of it too but am working on it. Let your dog relax when you can in the ring and have fun

16) What have been some of your show ring successes as an owner-handler? I won an All-Breed Best in Show with my first girl when she was a veteran. It was not a Veteran Best in Show, it was a regular all-breed AKC show, and my bitch won Best in Show. I was the handler straight through. We also won a Best Veteran in Show and a few Group placements. Most recently I finished my first Champion all owner-handled with 5 majors.

17) What are some of the most rewarding things about owner-handling for you? The wins mean a lot more and you know you and your dog did it together.

18) Most professional handlers began as owner-handlers. What keeps you from taking that same route? A husband, a toddler, another baby on the way and a full time job to pay for this expensive hobby!

19) Who is your favorite judge and why? Any judge that has fun doing their job and enjoy the dogs. Gary Newton and Bill Shelton are two that make all exhibitors and dogs relaxed and in my opinion give everyone the same attention.

20) 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? I'm not sure. They'd have to be funny because I try not to take things too serious.