

An Interview with

Marshall Stoner

Lost Creek Danes



WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

I grew up in a little town in central Illinois on the Illinois River called Henry. We had a sign at both ends of the town that said, “Henry Illinois, Best Town in Illinois by a Dam Site”. We had an antiquated former dam on our river front. Those signs for a long time were pretty much what our little town of 1900 people was known for.

HOW DID YOU GET STARTED IN DANES? WERE THEY YOUR ORIGINAL BREED?

As far as Danes being my and my wife’s original breed for exhibiting and breeding, yes Danes were our first and only. However, growing up I can’t remember a time of not having a dog and many other pets in my life. Pigeons, cats, an owl, banty chickens, rabbits and a raccoon were just a few examples that my brother and sister plagued our single mother while she supported us on a waitress income. As I look back, I appreciate so much how she managed a very difficult situation.

WHAT IS YOUR KENNEL NAME AND HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THE NAME?

We live in a rural subdivision southeast of Pekin, Illinois. Our property of approximately 2 acres has a small stream called Lost Creek running through it. We toyed with the name Stonybrook, but decided in favor of the one we chose. No regrets.



Multiple BISS Ch Rojon's Don-Sue Luke v Lost Creek. Sire of 21 AKC champions and the sire of the #1 Great Dane two years running in the late '80's in Australia. He was the number 1 stud dog in the US in 1985.

HOW MANY DOGS DO YOU HAVE?

We currently have 3 adult Danes living with us. However, I am co-owner of others that live with my wonderful partners.

WHAT WAS THE NAME OF YOUR FIRST CHAMPION? AND HOW MANY YEARS WERE YOU IN THE BREED BEFORE YOU HAD YOUR FIRST CHAMPION?

Our first champion was a beautiful male brindle by the name of BISS Ch Rojon’s Don-Sue Luke v Lost Creek. We purchased him from Ray Cataldi in 1984 and finished him in May of 1985. As far as how long were we in the breed before Luke, June and I have always had Great Danes. But it was

only after I retired from coaching basketball in 1982 that we began to seriously become involved in exhibiting and breeding.

WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES YOUR DOGS DISTINCT FROM OTHER LINES?

I don't believe our dogs are distinct. I do believe we have been able to take advantage of some positive qualities that were present in some of the early animals we acquired, and stamped those attributes into most of the pups we produce.



Multiple BISS Ch Rojon's Don-Sue Luke v Lost Creek

DO YOU AND WHAT KIND OF HEALTH TESTING DO YOU DO?



Ch Rojon's Lost Creek Revelation. Sire of 20 AKC champions and the winner of the GDCA Stud Dog Class in 2000. He is, also, the sire of our Hall of Fame bitch, Ch Lost Creek's Candle In The Wind "Diana"

I believe in health testing when there is evidence of a need. Gina Jaebon, successful and long time breeder of harlequin Danes, gave the best answer I have ever read in an interview she did recently. To paraphrase her answer, she says if there are health problems there must be symptoms. She believes health tests are only good for about 4 to 6 months. She says to have one set of health tests and profess a dog to be "free of disease is a fallacy and hypocrisy". Now I know that opinion goes against what a lot of Great Dane people believe, and that is fine. If people want to do a lot of health testing that's their prerogative. Some people get so wrapped up in testing that they end up with an ugly dog with a CHIC number. I believe that a more common sense approach is to religiously monitor your breedings, and base your health test decisions on that knowledge. I've been doing it that way for 30 years.

WHO WERE YOUR MENTORS?

Even though I've been around for a while, I still consider myself somewhat of a beginner. Every dog, every season, every event inevitably teaches me something new. As far as mentors, I've had a lot of good ones. We acquired our first show dog from Dr. Ralph and Mimi Graff. We spent many years showing and traveling with John and Myra Stusek. But, I would have to say that the many hours I've been fortunate enough to be able to listen to Ray Cataldi expound on the world of Great Danes, has been my most beneficial area of learning. In a different manner, I have learned a lot by listening to and observing John and Jessie Gerszewski and Jeff and Patrice Lawrence and Linda Cain. I've really been blessed in this area.



Ch Lost Creek's Candle In the Wind HOF pictured at 10 years of age. She is in the GDCA Hall of Fame by reason of being the dam of 12 AKC champions. She, also, competed in the Top 20 in 2000. She is the dam of our signature dog multiple BISS Ch Lost Creek's Joseph Dane Lane.



Multiple BISS Ch Lost Creek's Joseph Dane Lane, Top 20 2005, winner of over 20 specialties and our "Heart" dog.

AT WHAT AGE DO YOU EVALUATE A LITTER?

I really do not have a set age to evaluate them. Every litter is different and circumstances vary. Sometimes the pick is still wet. One of my very best was headed to a companion home until he started coming on at 5 months. Up until then he was 5th pick in a 6 male litter. That experience convinced me to be as patient as possible.

DO YOU EVER GO INTO THE RING? DO YOU HAVE

ANY SPECIAL TRAINING TECHNIQUES TO SHARE?

Only when I have to. You would think that a person who was a 4 year starter for his college basketball team and who won his college conference's high jump championship twice, would be athletic enough to handle a dog. I'm terrible! What I'm good at is being able to evaluate good handling technique. I'm a connoisseur of handlers. Some day I'm going to write an article on the art of handling. I love watching a good handler present my dogs up to their maximum potential.



BISS Ch Lost Creek's Joseph Dane Lane

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO BEGINNERS?

Wow, where to start on that one. We spent two years going to shows, observing, and picking brains before we ever acquired our first show dog.

Even then we made many mistakes with our first one. But she led us to Ray Cataldi and things got better in a hurry after that. So number one, connect with a mentor. Keep it as simple as possible. Concentrate on one dog to start with. I see many beginners, and experienced people, try to involve too many dogs at once. They spread themselves too thin. Goodness knows, it's hard enough to finish one dog, let alone a whole stable full. Use common sense. Learn how to put your candidate in the best possible situation to win. Do your homework on judges. Know which ones like your dog's type. Use your handler intelligently. Some do better under certain judges. They all have priority systems. At a small show if you are not near the top of their list, chances they'll win with dogs higher on their list and won't be able to go back in Winners on your dog, even if you win your class. At larger more competitive shows the percentages favor the best dog, so if you have a really good one, it's more likely they'll be able to stay on your dog in Winners. This may be a little complicated for beginners. Suffice it to say; just try to make intelligent common sense decisions.



Ch Gracyn's Esther v Lost Creek, dam of the 2009 Best In Futurity, Reserve Puppy Dog, 7 AKC champions to date with 4 others all with majors or pointed out.



BISS CH Gracyn's Valiant Warrior v Lost Creek, the 2009 Best In Futurity and Top 20 2011 canddate.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS TO DATE?

My greatest success has not occurred yet. I believe the epitome of Great Dane breeding is to be the breeder of the Best Of Breed at the GDCA National. All other wins pale in comparison, in my opinion. Best In Shows and Top 20's, Westminster and Eukenuba are all great achievements, but I'll take just one BOB at the National. That means your dog has been judged the best of the best, most always by someone who really knows our breed. If that never happens I guess I'll have to settle for being the



BISS CH Gracyn's Valiant Warrior v Lost Creek is owned by Jerry Kerr and is the mascot for two of Jerry's charities, including Segs4Vets voted one of the top charities in the nation.

breeder of several Top 20 candidates, many specialty wins, a dog in the GDCA Hall Of Fame, two winners of the Stud Dog Class at the National, the Top Stud dog in 1985 and lots of champions. We bred the 2009 Best In Futurity and own the sire of the 2011 Best In Futurity. We bred a pup who finished by winning 5 point majors on 3 consecutive days at the Ohio specialties and another that finished at his first 6 shows at the January Florida circuit in 2011. I judged the 2005 Futurity. We hope there will be additional

accomplishments.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST CHALLENGE TO DATE?

Waking up every morning. I'm 77 years old!

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME A JUDGE? WHAT BREEDS WOULD YOU LIKE TO JUDGE?

I'm enjoying the breeding and exhibiting part too much to spend time becoming an AKC judge. I do enjoy judging sweepstakes and fun matches.

WHAT ARE YOUR OTHER HOBBYS?

I am an avid bird watcher. We spend a lot of our time in our RV traveling to as many beautiful places in this great nation as we can get to. So travel and nature watching top the list. In



Ch Gracyn's Lost Creek Listen To The Whisper, littermate of Barney, sire of the 2011 Best In Futurity, sire of 7 champions to date with 9 others pointed and nearing their championships.



Ch Gracyn's He Will Reign v Lost Creek, who finished by winning 5 point majors on three consecutive days at the Ohio Specialties in 2009. He was Reserve Junior Dog at the 2009 Futurity.

addition, my bride of 56 years and I have a wonderful and active family. The Good Lord blessed us with four kids, 7 grand kids and 1 great-grand kid so far.

LAST QUESTION—ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?

Yes. I've been blessed to have been involved in several co-ownerships. Two of those have played an inordinate part of our success. The first is with Steve and Sue Mahany. They have been instrumental in two of our specialing and breeding efforts. The other person is Karen McCance. She has done all the hard work lately within our partnership, including some of our breeding decisions. We are deeply indebted to all three of those folks.