

Meet . . .

Owner-Handler

Judith Karen Arsenault

CHROMA Great Danes

- 1) **Number of years showing dogs.** 14 years.
- 2) **Your kennel name & how you got it.** CHROMA. We purchased our first show dog from JP Yousha of 'Chromadane'. After co-owning a few dogs together, we decided to become breeding partners and keep the same kennel name.
- 3) **Where you live.** Niantic, Connecticut.
- 4) **Where do you travel to show?** All over the East Coast. New England and Pennsylvania, and we have traveled to Virginia and North Carolina for shows. Nationals have us traveling further.
- 5) **How many shows do you attend in a year?** If we have a new puppy out, approximately 2 show weekends a month.
- 6) **Have you ever hired and/or used professional handlers and for what purpose?** Not for my own dogs but we have hired handlers for co-owned dogs.
- 7) **What made you decide to owner-handle your Great Danes?** I showed horses growing up so was competitive in nature and it felt familiar.
- 8) **What are the greatest advantages of owner-handling your dogs?** Building and maintaining a close bond / working relationship with your dog.
- 9) **What are the biggest challenges of owner-handling your dogs?** Showing often enough to be totally comfortable in the ring. Showing the dogs as well as the professionals so to appear professional to the judges.
- 10) **What do owner-handlers need to consider if they want to be competitive in the ring?** Success in the show ring doesn't happen overnight. Give yourself time to watch and learn from the professional handlers. You need to make time to train your dog and keep them in tip-top shape.
- 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.** I feel I may have made mistakes presenting my dog and may not have given the dog the best advantage over the dogs handled by professionals, causing my dog to be overlooked.
- 12) **Do you feel there is any stigma against owner-handlers in Great Danes and if yes please explain.** No. There are, however, many professional handlers in the Dane ring and it makes it more challenging for owner handlers.
- 13) **What tips would you give a new owner-handler to help them step up their game?** Attend seminars and talk to people who have years in your breed so to learn about conformation. Study and learn from professional handlers you admire. Train your dog and always have your dog well groomed and ready for the ring. Try to handle dogs other than your own because each dog is different and teaches you something new.
- 14) **What is the most valuable advice you ever received about handling your own dogs from a professional handler?** You can be serious about your handling without being stressed and uptight. Have fun with the dog and you and the dog will relax and show better.
- 15) **What is the most helpful technique you ever learned just by watching professional handlers?** How to walk the front of your dog into position and how to present their head correctly.



- 16) **What are some common mistakes you see owner-handlers committing in the ring?** Not knowing what the judge's ring procedure is. Fidgeting when stacking. Not 'presenting' the dog to the judge.
- 17) **What have been some of your show ring successes as an owner-handler?** I have shown many of our own dogs to their Championships & Grand Championships. I have done the same with dogs owned by friends. Taking Group wins is especially rewarding. Winning Specialty majors feels like a success and owning and showing the Best Junior in Futurity at our National Specialty.
- 18) **What are some of the most rewarding things about owner-handling for you?** The pride you feel when one of the dogs you bred (or co-bred), train and show does well in the ring. Helping other owner handlers succeed is rewarding as well.
- 19) **Most professional handlers began as owner-handlers. What keeps you from taking that same route?** I have shown dogs for others but only when I am not showing a dog of my own. I feel it wouldn't be fair as I wouldn't be able to put in the time and effort I believe it takes to do a good job. I enjoy breeding and showing my own dogs too much right now.
- 20) **Who is your favorite judge and why?** I don't have a favorite but I do admire many breeder judges who are consistent in what they award.
- 21) **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?** Oh boy...the first that came to mind, although she is much younger is Rachael McAdams.