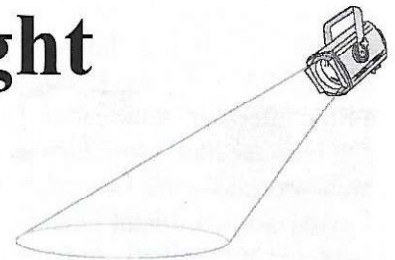


# Houndsman Spotlight

By, Jim Lane



*An "in-depth" Beagler Interview is an open ended, discovery oriented method to obtain detailed information about a Beagler, his hounds and beagling in general. Our goal is to explore "in-depth" a respondent's point of view, experiences, feelings, perspectives and get relevant answers to questions that people really want to know within the sport of Beagling ...*

Enjoy the 12 Take Spotlight Interview of: **Rick Snow**

Name: **Rick Snow**

Home Town: **Greenville, Michigan**

Email: **rsnow2498@charter.net**

Website: **<http://snowmanbeagles.com>**

Phone: **616-225-2498**

Kennel Name: **Snowman's Beagles**

Bloodlines: **Frank Reese's Gay bloodline, Jerry Lossin's Muskie Lake bloodline ...**



1) When did you get introduced to the sport of Beagling and what were the circumstances surrounding that?

**"First, I would like to say thank you for the chance to spotlight Snowman's Beagles... My introduction to the sport of Beagling started when I was 5 years old with my brother Rock, who was a year older than me. We tagged along with our father, Larry, and his friends and neighbors, Lynn Wickerham and Jerry Northam. My dad had a basset hound, Lynn had a redbone, and Jerry had a grade hound. Jerry's dog was a beagle and I took a shine to it as it worked the cover. From then on I was hooked and it sent me in the direction of hunting with a beagle.**

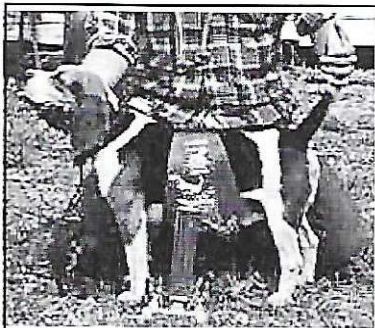
**I got my first beagle at the age of 12. A neighbor down the road from our summer cottage had to find a home for his dog named Tinkerbelle. He was starting college in the fall and he couldn't take her with him. Tinkerbelle was AKC registered. She and I would walk about half a mile from home and be rabbit hunting behind the high school. The cover was stumps that were bulldozed up into piles, briars, pine trees, and small woods. We would spend hours in there hunting rabbits.**

Years went by and the guy who gave me his dog had finished his college education. One day, he stopped by the house to see Tinkerbell and ask about her. It seems that he missed his dog so much that he had her name tattooed on his arm. Well, after hearing that I gave Tinkerbell back to him.”

2) Once you decided to pursue Beagling, who “personally” influenced you within the sport of Beagling the most?

“{Actually, there were three} I was in my late teens and working as a full-time meat cutter at a local supermarket when I got the bug to pursue beagles. So, on my days off I would go beagling with anyone willing to let me tag along. A guy named Joe Basney had an AKC female beagle named Bonnie that ran almost check-free regardless of the weather conditions. I really liked that dog. Almost daily, I also ran rabbits with Joe West, who had a pack of beagles. Joe was called the “King of Beaver Island” because the old guy had a cabin on the island. He would spend five weeks every year running snowshoe hares there and invited me up to hunt for a week with him. I would fly over to Beaver Island and meet up with all the old retired hare hunters who had the time to run with Mr. West. I also ran rabbits a lot with Jewel Welch, a retired GM worker, who was born and raised in Tennessee. Jewel really knew hounds and kept his dogs in great shape.”

3) What were the “foundation” dogs of your kennel and exactly why did you choose them.



Glynn's Gay Demon

“I studied bloodlines long and hard because I had seen early on that all beagles were not created equal. I went and watched a bunch of dogs run rabbits and tried to make an informed opinion about which could run on snow. I learned what bloodlines had a different amount of nose power to get the rabbit circled to the gun all winter long. I chose Frank Reese’s Gay bloodline and stopped at Glenn’s Gay Demon. Jerry Lossin’s Muskie Lake bloodline was another. Jerry’s Muskie Lake John was a male beagle that could circle a rabbit on ice or old snow at temperatures down to -20 degrees Fahrenheit, while making it look easy.

The thing I most looked for was a dog that could run a track in extreme conditions and be able to pass this trait on through a family bloodline. An example of this is Gay Slide, the Grand Dam of Gay Baker and Muskie Lake John, who is the father of Muskie Lake Eli. Catron John was the sire of Muskie Lake John. Catron John was old Smith’s breeding top and bottom (Smith’s Mingo Mike X Smith’s Miss Coco) to introduce yet another family of genes.

What I looked for in each and every hound brought into the mix is a big nose and line control. I hate a check that is longer than four seconds. I have travelled to wherever it leads me in order to add the necessary genes to the bloodline of my snow hounds.

Here is how I choose my breeding. I start with genotype, which is line breeding. You breed family back to family, keeping it simple. Then focus on phenotype, in hopes of capturing and passing along certain abilities and traits of a particular hound. Now, if you breed specific outstanding hounds I expect the cream rise to the top producing offspring with the same running style of the dogs used in the breeding Hoping to create a “Phenom”, a dog that can run way past the ability of a normal hound.



Jerry Lossin "Muskie Lake Beagles" Being Interviewed by; "Snowman" Rick Snow

What is a “Phenom”? That is a hound that can run way past the ability of a normal dog. There are good hounds, great hounds, and exceptional hounds being the top 2%. A “phenom”, in my opinion, is the top 2% of the exceptional ones. This is a hound that can lift scent and run on very bad days when of the other hounds can’t smell or run a track. A true “Phenom” can run like it’s a normal day. I have witnessed them. Most people have never seen a true “Phenom” run and never will in their lifetime. That’s how rare they are. When anyone claims to own one or knows where there is a hound with such rare abilities, I spend the time and money to check them out. A “Phenom” will breed

“Phenoms”. The rare abilities and traits may skip a generation or two, but you will get better than average results, while hoping for way above average hounds. As you add the breeding of that hound into your family of hounds you will get both the genotype and phenotype found in such line breeding as East Creek Bad Boy Jake and his son Windy Hill Hammer II; Muskie Lake John and his son Muskie Lake Eli; Knight’s Nitro and his grand pups Welch’s Mark Anthony and Welch’s Cleopatra; Gay Slide and her grandson Gay Baker; or, Snow run Boone and his grandson Snowman’s Demon. These hounds were true “Phenoms” that could scent and run rabbits on days when most hounds could not—and do it nearly check-free. What I have seen in all “Phenoms” it’s not about foot speed, but nose speed. Nose speed is the ability to correct to where the line of scent is before an overrun or a check happens. The dogs look like their floating the line and are as smooth as can be. Remember, I’m only a hunter and I do not run any field trials. Thus, this is the type of hound that I have built my kennel from.”



**Snowman's Jack The Ripper**

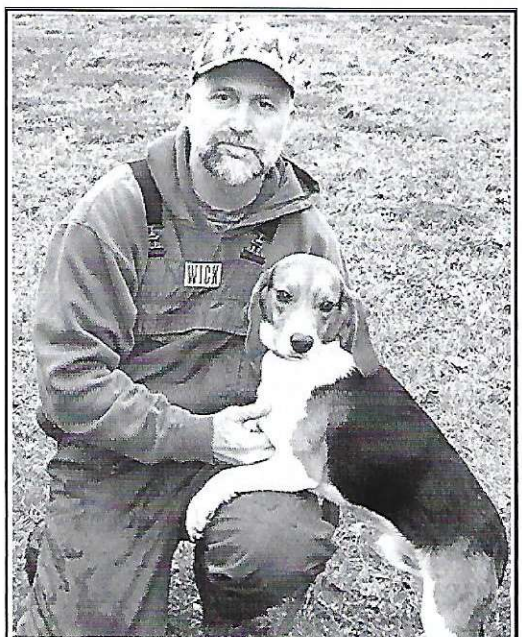
4) What is the average size of your hounds, speed and general hunting style?

“I run the 15 inch beagle. My males average 14 3/4” while the females average 14”. They run upper medium in speed. Not super fast as to overrun. I love a good race. I don’t like to get bored waiting to see a rabbit either. When the game is on, I want steady pressure so that the cottontail can’t pull a bunch of tricks. I want him running for his life. I also want my dogs to stay up when following a snowshoe hare when I head north to hunt them.”

5) What is your process/method and reasoning behind choosing “keeper” pups?

“When evaluating the litter of puppies I always look for the dominate pair of males and dominate pair of females. Then evaluate each one before I choose the pup to keep. I always go with the one that shines above the rest in ability. The ones I hold back I run throughout the winter to evaluate

their ability for running on snow. I make sure to run them on the toughest of days, also. I look for a dog to run high scent when it can and put its nose down and run spore scent if it has to, which is the case when running rabbits on ice or frozen dirt. Here in Michigan, you come across a lot of different scenting conditions when running both cottontails and snowshoe hares. For cottontails, I have had the privilege to be able to run a couple thousand acres of Christmas tree farms. You have to have a hound with a strong nose to run rabbits in that type of habitat because of the lack of vegetation between the rows of pine trees.“



**Snowman's Arctic Drifter**

6) Explain your training techniques and the methods you use to start, train and develop your hounds.

“I start my puppies very, very young. Most of all my pups are running to catch a rabbit when they are 14 weeks old. Yes, that’s right, 14 weeks. Every year, I raise a good size garden. it is surrounded by a fence, not to keep animals out, but to keep rabbits in. You see, along about the end of July, I quit weeding the garden, since most of the vegetables have been harvested. Once the garden veggies are done being picked, I will trap four wild rabbits out of my yard and put them in the garden along with some fresh brush to provide some cover and safety for the rabbits. This also creates a challenging environment when I start working the young 8 week old pups. Once they start sight-chasing and opening up on the rabbits, I put them in the garden after dark to make them use their noses.

After getting the puppy’s “rabbity” in the small confines of my garden, I start walking them around a 4 acre enclosure that is adjacent to the kennels, which has both cottontails and snowshoe hares in it. Most nights I will walk the puppies around until well after dark. This quickly teaches them to use their noses. it also builds confidence in each of the pups. After

this, the puppies are worked one-on-one with an older dog out in the wild on cottontails. From then on, it's a mixture of solo and pack running."

7) What are the top 5 characteristics and traits that you expect and demand from your hounds?

1. **Nose** — Big strong nose because I want my hounds to be able to run on the toughest of days
2. **Brains** — To run it right
3. **Hunt** — I expect all of my hounds to have all day hunt and want to work hard to grub out a rabbit
4. **Line Control** — I breed for a hound to have the tools to float the line of scent with control
5. **Confirmation** — You need a good body to be able to run smooth all day numerous days in a row

8) What would you say your hound's greatest "strengths" are and if you could wave a magic wand and add to, take away or change any one particular thing within your hounds, what would it be.

"I would say that the snow nose is their greatest asset and having the brains to run it right. Our hounds also have a ton of heart to run all day for days at a time.

If I could change anything, it would be a little more size on my females and bigger voice. All of my hounds have chop and squall mouths. That is what you get when you breed that type of dog; one with a head-down running style. Most bawl mouth dogs raise their heads up. Then they have to find the scent again after barking."



9) What was the absolute best male and female that you have ever "personally" seen run?

"The best male that I've ever personally seen run has to be the hardest question of this interview to answer. I have travelled to watch some great males run and have bred to some very impressive males. I've seen some of the great ones, who all ran well. Some were so impressive that I paid good money to breed to them: dogs such as NLPC IFC Cedar Beck Oliver, FC Windy Hill Hammer II, Muskie Lake John, FC Muskie Lake Eli. They were all deluxe snow hounds. It's impossible to select the "best male" among them.

As far as the best female, that would be Welch's Cleopatra. She could run dead on the track at warp speed every day and make it look easy. Also I owned a half-sister to Muskie Lake Eli who could run and lift scent when all others couldn't, and run almost check-free. Man, I miss her."

10) Who is/was the most knowledgeable trainer/handler and the most knowledgeable breeder that you have ever known?

"For this question, there are two men that I respect so much. First is Bob King. He has trained, handled and competed in Field Trials for years. Bob always brings his "A" game. I enjoy talking with Bob because he has a wealth of knowledge and he knows how to bring the best out in a dog.

As for a breeder, my hat goes off to Jerry Lossin of Muskie Lake Beagles. Jerry has a great eye for the

total package when choosing a mating and he's disciplined to keep only the best gun dogs with the traits he desires. Jerry and his dad started Muskie Lake Beagles back in 1950. A few of his dogs can be found in the foundation of Branko's Beagles bloodline."

11) If you had to start over today with a total different bloodline, what bloodline would you choose and why?

"I have been watching a new blood line to the beagle world from Doug Beyor's kennel. His dog NEK Tipper Mack has put Doug and his friends in the spotlight. They are breeding a line control dog with plenty of foot speed to keep the williest rabbit running straight for its life. I expect great things from this kennel: both gun dogs and field trial hounds."

12) What is your advice to the individual that is just beginning their journey in the sport of beagling?

"Take your time to choose the type of hound that fits your needs. Stay true to your convictions. If you want to be a breeder, then you have to have the mindset and discipline to give up your time and money to work for your goals. Your rewards won't come as money. Ask any old-timer and they would all tell you the same thing, "It's not about the money, awards, or ribbons. It's just a great life being blessed to run dogs and meet so many wonderful people." I, for one, would not ever change that. It takes a lot of time feeding, caring for, and running beagles to do them justice. Only care for what you can. Don't get caught up in the "flavor of the month" when breeding and think that you have to have it."

More from Rick Snow concerning Snowman's Beagles...



Snowshoe Hare Hunt 2013  
Rick Snow, Brandon Dalrymple,  
Tryce Warner and Brian Tiffany

My name is Rick Snow and I live in Michigan where the weather changes so much because of the Great Lakes. My kennel name is Snowman's Beagles and I breed beagles to run on snow because I gun hunt all winter. Since you can't choose the weather conditions for your days off work, I need a hound that can run in a lot of different climates and habitat conditions. I run both cottontails and snowshoe hares. I want my hounds to run close and clean on track with upper medium speed because I don't want to get bored hunting. So, I like the hounds to stay up on their rabbit or hare. Therefore, most of the times they are running body scent. To help with this, I will not breed to a dog that lifts its head to bark. I want them to keep their faces down while running and tonguing the line. I'm not trying to reinvent the wheel, but I want the best line of snow hounds for hunting...period. I don't want to be a puppy mill and only breed two or three females a

year to keep my line going for myself and a few friends. Generally, there is at least a two-year waiting list for buyers. When I find a true snow hound male to breed to I load up my kennel breeding to a couple of different females to evaluate the crosses made, and see the producing power of both. There is such a small window in time to breed to an outstanding male that I take advantage and breed while I can. If it's what I want, then I will breed multiple times. If the outcome does not have the abilities I want, then I keep the AKC registration papers and give the hounds to good homes. What I look for are the Alpha male and female pups that can really drive a rabbit or hare at a very young age. You can see a lot in a very short time using a running pen first, I then take the young hound out into the wild before it even knows the difference between the pen or wild. Early on, it doesn't know it's in a pen. The pen is a training aid. For example, when last year's pups were 7 to 8 months old we ran them with a few older hounds. Myself and a small group of hunters shot almost 80 rabbits in front of them last season. The young hounds contributed to the races, staying out there and ran very well. I use Garmin GPS tracking collars and SportDog HoundHunter 3225 E-collars. I use these together on up to six dogs at a time while hunting rabbits on one of the big Christmas tree farms. In smaller spots, I will only run one or two hounds. I enjoy running dogs all year long.