



# Love IS BLIND



IF YOU FOLLOW NORTH AMERICAN STANDARDBRED RACING AT ALL, YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD OF **ITS A LOVE THING** - THE SUPREMELY TALENTED THREE-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER OF BETTORS DELIGHT. WHAT YOU PROBABLY DON'T KNOW HOWEVER, IS THE INCREDIBLE STORY BEHIND HER, AND THE FATE THAT HELPED BRING HER AND HER LOVING CONNECTIONS TOGETHER. IT'S A STORY THAT WILL GIVE YOU GOOSEBUMPS, AND AT TROT WE 'LOVE' STORIES LIKE THAT.

STORY BY KEITH MCCALMONT

The scent of freshly-baked jalapeno cornbread wafts through the specially designed open-concept home of Sasha Moczulski, that sits on the 700-acre Spring Station Bloodstock Farm in Midway, Kentucky, as she looks to distract her partner, farm and racing manager Josh Green, and their menagerie of special-needs dogs, long enough to complete this interview.

“We have our deaf Great Dane [Oliver], our blind Great Dane [Albert] and then we have our English Foxhound [Farrier] that we adopted from the hunt club I was a part of in Delaware. He had a double herniated disc in his neck that we had operated on. He’s 13 now and you wouldn’t know it,” says Sasha, as she slips out the door, undetected, to wander the farm property in peace.

The couple also care for Marcus, a trotter that has tried his hand at racing under saddle, and another retired Standardbred named Majority Rules that now goes by the name of ‘Pony’.

Of course, the much-loved pets should be secondary to the business of running Eric Good’s bustling Spring Station Farm, but somehow Sasha and Josh manage to have all of the animals there feeling like first priority.

“We have a little over 100 mares, and we’ll have 33 yearlings selling at Lexington this fall, so the operation here is progressively getting larger,” Sasha said. “We’ll cap off in 2026 with the most we’ll have selling - that’s when all the pedigrees we’ve worked on will come through.”

Josh and Sasha oversee a busy farm that includes a resident vet in Dr. Megan Moschgat and the assistance of Eric Good’s son Jack Good, who was attending the University of Kentucky before stepping back from his studies and making the farm a full-time priority.

Paramount to the farm’s recent success is the sophomore pacing filly Its A Love Thing, a \$65,000 Lexington Selected Sale purchase that has now banked more than \$1.1 million through a 21-13-4-1 record for trainer David Menary, including scores at Woodbine Mo-

hawk Park in the Shes A Great Lady at age two, and this year in the Fan Hanover.

With a sophomore stat line of 9-7-2-0 and \$633,874 in seasonal earnings, to go with her speed badge of 1:48.2, Its A Love Thing is currently ranked at #6 in the USTA/Hambo Society’s Top-10 Poll, and, after speaking with Sasha, one quickly realizes that the one-eyed filly was pre-destined to land in the care of Sasha and Josh.

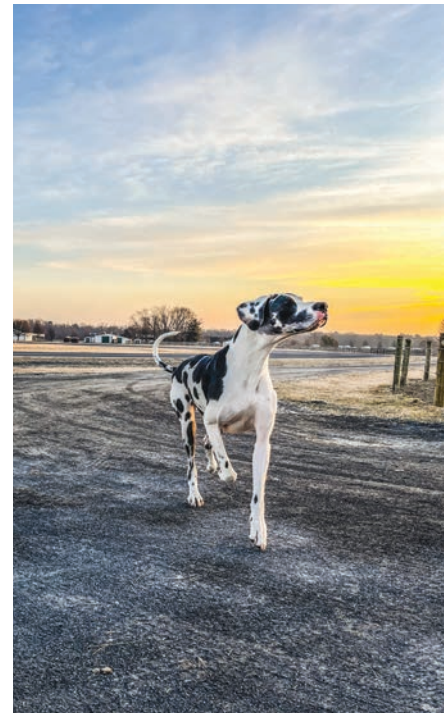
“We did not buy her because she was blind - it’s just sometimes fate finds you,” said Sasha, who grew up in awe of the talents of her late, older sister Tanya, a graduate of the Florida School for the Deaf and The Blind, who passed away at just 33-years-old.

“When Tanya was born, the doctors told my mom she was completely blind, but my mom thought she could see a little bit,” Sasha said. “She was essentially born legally blind - imagine putting a book at the end of your nose and the scope of vision would be the size of the end of a pencil? That’s what she could see. Anything beyond that was total darkness.

“She was super smart,” continued Sasha proudly. “She went to a boarding school in Florida, and there she learned how to ski while tethered to another person. She graduated Valedictorian and went on to get her

Masters [Degree].”

Tanya flourished despite her significant struggles and inspired all those around her, and perhaps also sparked the compassionate side of her younger sister, Sasha, who looks at the world through the positive lens of what can be accomplished rather than what skills might be lost.



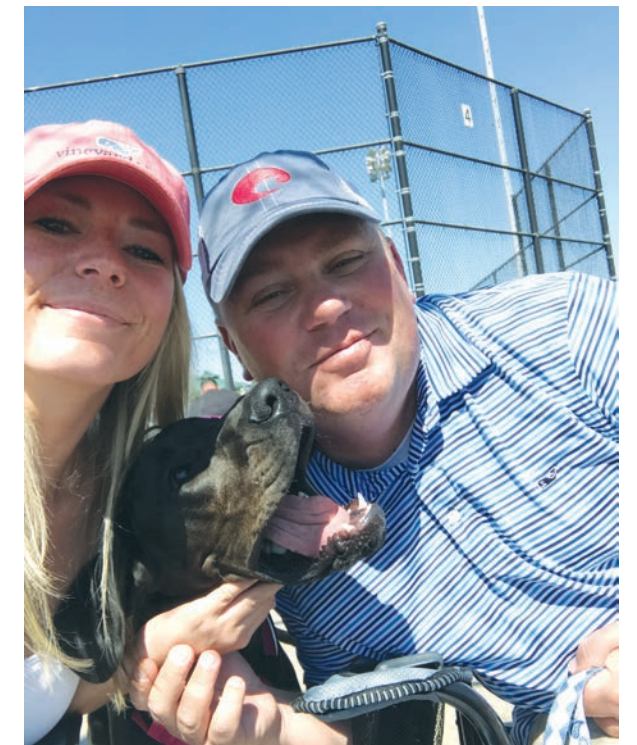
**ALBERT - JOSH & SASHA’S BLIND GREAT DANE**



**SASHA (R) WITH TANYA AND THEIR MOM (L)**



**ABBI AT THE TRAINING CENTRE**



**SASHA, JOSH & ABBI**



**ABBI AND HER FOOTBALL**

“If someone is disabled - horse or animal - know that they’re capable of so much. They just need kindness and love to get there,” Sasha said.

\*\*\*\*

Strength, will and determination can take one a long way in life, but the support of a partner is just as important, whether it’s overseeing a busy breeding farm, training down horses, or navigating the grief of a personal tragedy such as losing a sister.

“It was in college that Tanya started falling down and passing out on her way to class,” Sasha said. “They started doing tests, and that’s when they found a tumour. I’m the youngest of five. I was the baby sister always yelling for my mom - but Tanya and I were very close. My sister loved her family, and she was such a sassy thing.”

Sasha and her mom took care of Tanya throughout the cancer struggles and grew closer in the process.

After Tanya passed, Sasha struggled to deal with the loss of her older sister, until Josh recognized an opportunity to bring

some light into her life.

“The first year we dated we were sitting behind an 18-wheeler one day, and it had Great Dane mud flaps on the back. I said, ‘I’ve always wanted a Great Dane’, and Josh said, ‘I have too,’” recalled Sasha.

One afternoon, not too long after, Josh sent Sasha a picture from an adoption website, of a puppy they would later adopt and name Abbi.

“Abbi was completely blind. She had one eye removed, and the other eye was filled with scar tissue,” recalled Sasha. “I was in our bedroom folding laundry when I saw the picture, and I came out of the room crying - and I mean ugly crying - and I asked him if we could adopt her.”

Less than one month later, Abbi arrived to shine light into both their lives.

“Abbi lived every day fearlessly. She had such a zest for life. If we woke up before the alarm, we’d be afraid to breathe too loudly as she would wake up ready to party,” Sasha laughed. “She’d play catch with a football - she’d hear it flying through the air and when



AT THE 2022 LEXINGTON SELECTED SALE



LOVEY AND CARETAKER SHAWNA HENDERSON

it hit the ground, she'd hear that too. She was just so amazing - there was nothing any other dog could do that she couldn't do," Sasha beams. "The epitome of how you want to live your life. She took advantage of every single moment."

Josh and Sasha were running a busy training operation in Delaware when their owner, Eric Good, asked if they would be willing to pivot and run a broodmare farm for him. Josh was a successful trainer with 3,269 wins and \$39.9 million in purses to his name, but the couple recognized an opportunity to create something special in Kentucky.

"Josh and I are both work-obsessed, and if it wasn't for COVID, and realizing how nice it is to stay home at night, we maybe never would have taken the opportunity to move down here," Sasha said.

And with the move came a place with more room for special friends, to help them deal with the sudden loss of Abbi, to cancer, after just a brief period of time in their lives.

"When we lost Abbi, we didn't know if we could do it again, but we realized we had to pay it forward. We learned so much from her and she wouldn't want us to be sad," Sasha

said. "Our house now is completely set up for dogs with disabilities. We have an open floor plan with a master bedroom on the first floor. The yard outside has to be very open, so they don't run into things. The way we look at the world is just a little more aware, but it's our passion."

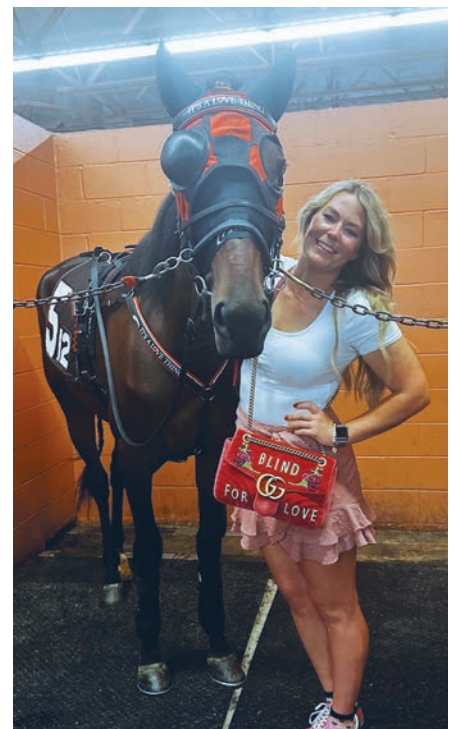
And as the farm grew, and more and more broodmares dotted their Kentucky landscape, along came 'Lovey' too.

\*\*\*\*

Its A Love Thing, by Bettors Delight and out of the winning Captaintreachorous mare Love For Sail, was Hip #496 at the 2022 Lexington Selected Yearling Sale.

"I didn't realize that she had one eye at first. Josh, Eric and I were walking through the sale with a list of horses to see," recalls Sasha. "I saw Lovey from a bit of a distance [in the Kentuckiana consignment] and there were people looking at her. I said to Josh, 'That's a gorgeous horse, can we go look at her?'"

Josh and Sasha thought that at the very least that the filly could be a potential broodmare prospect, but as they watched and waited from a distance, they saw two or three people ask for her to be pulled from her stall,



only to turn away very quickly rather than inspect her for long.

"We brought her out and that's when I realized she just had one eye... I said to Josh, 'She's perfect, we have to have her'. She looked more like a woman than a yearling.



She was so built and just gorgeous. I like Bet-tors Delights, and we had another broodmare by him, and this pedigree was strong enough that she'd make a good broodmare if she didn't work out as a racehorse."

Sasha spent the rest of the day pestering Eric and Josh that they needed to have the filly they estimated to be worth up to \$200,000. Sasha had a feeling that the filly's so-called 'disability' would provide them with a lower price than anticipated.

"She goes into the ring and Josh is bidding on her, and finally he gets her for \$65,000... I was ecstatic. I told Eric we got her at bargain basement pricing," Sasha said.

So determined was Sasha in her pursuit of Its A Love Thing, that co-owners Tommy and Lisa Biederman told her if she was that excited, she should buy in. And so they [Josh and Sasha] did, joining a group of friends that includes Good, the Biedermans and Rich Lombardo Racing.

"There's never been a more appropriately named horse to come into my life," Sasha said. "Josh has three daughters and they've always teased me since they were young about how I always say, 'I love love'.

"I'd say that to them when they were pouty and tell them, 'Doesn't it feel better to think about something that you love?'" added Sasha. "I have this old Tiffany's necklace that says 'Love' in cursive. I was wearing it that night at the sale, but I do wear it every day of my life. I love love, and I know it's cheesy but there's never been a horse more meant for me than her."

\*\*\*\*

Sasha and Josh would have loved Its A Love Thing regardless of how she turned out on the track, but given that they're running a business and have a stake in the filly themselves, it boggles the mind to think that such a racehorse landed on their doorstep.

After the sale, Its A Love Thing was sent to the barn of Canadian trainer David Menary.

"We broke her shortly after the Lexington sale and from there until Harrisburg she never hit the pace," Menary says with a laugh. "I had a couple of really good guys helping me break yearlings that year in Blair McCarthy and Randy Waples, and Randy just kept saying to take my time. Some of it was the pacing and some was because of her eye, but about a week after I got home from Harrisburg, I kinda scared her out there one day and she

went a mile in 2:30-2:40 on the pace... she's paced ever since.

"Real early on in her career - in January or February of her two-year-old year - I actually thought this might be the best filly I've ever had," Menary added.

Dave took a hands-on approach with the feisty filly, who proved that as much as Sasha might love love, 'Lovey' can also hurt.

"The first time Blair McCarthy took her to the track [Mohawk]; she sent him to the ambulance. She kicked him in the head at the first day of qualifiers," Menary said. "She's been a handful, but when you've got one this good, you're willing to put up with it."

Its A Love Thing qualified twice at age two with James MacDonald in the bike, and no one else has ever sat behind her in a charted mile. She took three straight stakes events to start her career, and then finished 3rd in an OSS Gold leg in front of runner-up finishes in the Eternal Camnation and another OSS Gold.

"James has done a great job educating her," Menary said. "There were a couple races early when she was second or third that she could have won by six lengths, if not for some steering issues. That wasn't the way she acted at home or warming up, just a little bit of greenness from a baby with one eye.

"We made some equipment changes right before the Eternal Camnation and she was just gangbusters for the rest of the year," he added.



**BLAIR MCCARTHY STILL SMILING AFTER GETTING KICKED BY LOVEY**

Its A Love Thing would annex the Champlain (1:50.2) and Shes A Great Lady in September, the latter with a stubborn first-over trip to overcome pacesetting Eternal Camnation-victress Caviart Belle, and put away Odds On Platinum and budding foe My Girl EJ.

At Hoosier Park for the Breeders Crown, things did not go the filly's way, as Its A Love Thing landed fifth in her elimination and a late-moving fourth in the final - won by My Girl EJ.

"She was underrated in the Breeders Crown last year," Menary said. "She was fourth, but probably had the most go of anybody in the stretch and was probably good enough to be second... but it was a rebound effort. She was hitting the racebike in the elimination and hadn't been on the front before... that fourth she got was a lot better than it looked on paper."

With freshman earnings of \$560,656 and a runner-up finish in the O'Brien Awards voting, Its A Love Thing went home to Spring Station over the winter and Menary hoped and prayed the filly would come back as good if not better.

"Josh and Sasha did a great job with her," Menary said. "She was a big filly last year, and when she came back in on January 18th, I never had to let her harness out one bit. Her crupper and her breast collar were in the exact same holes as last year - she'd just grown



SASHA & LOVEY

into herself."

Menary said he planned on qualifying the filly just once ahead of her first stake back - the SBOA Championship.

"She had a schooler in the mud one day and I had waited all winter for the first qual-

ifier. When James moved her over [into a clear path in the stretch], I pretty well teared right up," Menary said. "She came 25 and a piece that day. I'd been waiting all winter for it... It's nice when a plan comes together.

"I was just trying to keep her quiet and



## Ontario-Sired Yearlings Sell at:



(79 Total Yearlings) LEXINGTON 9/30-10/4

(49 Total Yearlings) LONDON 10/15 & 10/16

(52 Total Yearlings) HARRISBURG 11/4-11/6

(23 Total Yearlings) HARRISBURG MIXED 11/7 & 11/8

**Visit [www.winbakfarm.com](http://www.winbakfarm.com) for 2024 Yearling Lineup!**

**Joe & JoAnn Thomson**, Winbak Farm Owners / **Jack Burke**, General Manager  
**James Ladwig**, Yearling Manager / MD: 410.885.3059 / [james.ladwig@winbakfarm.com](mailto:james.ladwig@winbakfarm.com)  
**Pat Woods**, Canada Manager / CAN: 905.838.2145 / [canada@winbakfarm.com](mailto:canada@winbakfarm.com)



DAVID MENARY & JAMES MACDONALD

put a good foundation in her," he added. "We did all the hard work through the cold winter - the rest was up to her."

Its A Love Thing aced the test in the SBOA Final, winning sub-1:50 for the first time (1:49.4), and three starts later put in a performance for the ages in the \$425,000 Fan Hanover final, pacing first-over a long way and putting away favoured Geocentric, while staving off the late charge of Caviart Belle and My Girl EJ to win in a stakes, track and

Canadian record-equalling time of 1:48.2.

"The Sunday morning after the Fan Hanover, James MacDonald phoned me up and said, 'Do you realize what kind of mile that was? Do you realize how bionic that was?'" Menary said. "Around the last turn, he was standing straight up in the stirrups. She really earned that."

Menary says Its A Love Thing is at her best when staring down a target.

"1000 percent. She just wants to kill.

FAN HANOVER FINAL - 148.2

She just wants to hunt. She's a big mare and it takes a little bit to get her rolling - when she does get rolling she wants to go straight through the wire. She could go a mile and a quarter. She has a killer instinct and a great set of lungs."

\*\*\*\*

Its A Love Thing has continued to win since her Fan Hanover coup, taking down the Jerry Silverman Memorial over My Girl EJ at the Meadowlands, the OSS Gold Mid-Season Final at Mohawk, a KYSS event at the Red Mile and another OSS Gold at Mohawk.

"She's really special in the barn and on the track. She's got the resume [on the track] now but she's pretty special in the barn, too," Menary says. "She's got her quirks and a great personality, and she has the talent. She's everything you want in a racehorse."

"I said early on that I wanted her to be known for her talent not for her one eye. She's been on the road to the Meadowlands and Lexington and a lot of people didn't know she was missing one eye. They just know that she's Its A Love Thing."

Menary has her on a mission to take down sires stake finals in Ontario and Kentucky, and is working towards a year-end goal of winning the Breeders Crown.

It seems she's come a long way since



JOSH, LOVEY AND SASHA IN KENTUCKY



(L-R) ALBERT, SASHA, JOSH, FARRIER & OLIVER

being overlooked as Hip #496.

"Her missing one eye certainly affected her yearling price, but it hasn't hurt her racing career," Menary said. "She can be tough to deal with, but her and I have always gotten along because I'm a bit of a hummer, a talker and a singer. She always knows where I'm at. I'll sing mostly country - I'm a big Eric Church fan."

And when he's standing in the winner's circle with "Lovey" - that's a 'Hell of a View'.

\*\*\*\*

And as for Sasha and Josh - when not able to attend her races in-person, they continue to follow the exploits of Its A Love Thing from the farm in the only way they know how - surrounded by family, canines included.

"I made homemade pizza the first time we watched her win, and now every time she races, we have to have the dough ready to make the pizza and drink the same drinks," Sasha smiles. "It's pandemonium when she wins, with Josh and I all excited and the three dogs - a blind Dane, a deaf Dane and our Foxhound, who will party at any moment - going crazy in the living room. It's a sight to behold."

The love and laughter that fill Sasha and Josh's home is readily apparent, and much of it is traced back to that first blind pup that taught them how to be happy again.

"Having Abbi, and her being blind and seeing what she could do was key for us," Sasha reminisces. "She mapped out our horse and learned to walk up and down steps. The trust we gained, and love we gained showed us what could be done. Even after she passed, we knew that we had to take the love Abbi gave us and pay it forward."

But now they have a new life with full hearts, and the knowledge and will to give their utmost to all of the furry friends in their life.

"It takes time and patience, and they have to be more important to you than yourself," Sasha says. "It's a lot of time management and having a patient heart."

And just like Lovey does, you have to keep your eye on the prize. **I**