



# UNLEASHED

Volume 31 Issue 6 A publication of the Central Ohio Labrador Retriever Club July/August 2020

## 2020 Meeting/Event Dates

There will be no August COLRC Meeting as several members are making that annual trek to the Canfield County dog show! An outdoor September Meeting may occur, or a "Zoom" or "virtual" gathering may happen. Stay tuned, the health + safety of our members is top priority; so, the decision will be made closer to 9/1/20.  
~ Lori

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

1. MEETING DATES; SPECIALTY INFORMATION
- 2 - 3 MORE FROM LORI
- 4 - 6 THE DANGERS OF PLAYING WITH LASER LIGHTS
7. SPECIALTY INFORMATION
8. GENERAL CLUB INFORMATION

CHECK OUT CENTRAL OHIO LABRADOR RETRIEVER CLUB  
ON FACEBOOK

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/GROUPS/575516432535825/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/575516432535825/)

## Specialty Information

**I've reached out to DOKC to see where they stand on Covid-19 planning for this year's show. A few small updates from DOKC:**

- 1. Superintendent is being switched from MBF to Executive Dog Show Secretary (Nina's group)**
- 2. DOKC is currently working on the premium list with Nina (they have our 2020 trophy list)**
- 3. The only Covid-19 related decision they've made is buildings with rings in them will not have grooming to help comply with social distancing**

**Everything else is TBD and DOKC is relying on Nina regarding state guidelines and helping to comply.**

**~Cora Fleming**

## More from Lori

Due to one odd circumstance or another, we have not officially met since the new year. 2020 has been challenging at best and here's a re-cap on what some of our members have been up to these past 4 months. Thanks to all who cheerfully offered up these personal stories!

On a sad note, just last weekend Sally was "hit hard" with the loss of her beloved dog, "Easy", due to cancer. While she was somber answering questions, she admitted to her favorite time of day being "early evening with a glass of wine in her hand." She admitted her new hobby, gardening, is NOT going well, but she's never planted before. She says her tomatoes are "disgusting"! Yes, Sally has cut Ron's hair during the pandemic, but she always cuts his hair. Books on her nightstand: "Everybody's Fool" + "Barkskins". She beats the heat staying in the A.C. All her dogs love her air-conditioned basement over her air-conditioned barn! Her 'social media' time has increased as "she wonders what everyone is doing!" She's stopped baking "due to its repercussions". Loves watching "Yellowstone" Sunday nites and says thru it all, "don't worry about problems you don't have yet."

Linda has been refinishing furniture in the cool A.C. of her basement. Current project is an antique sewing machine cabinet. Her biggest challenge has been being transferred between 3 different jobs and wearing a mask all day long. Says, "it isn't that difficult." She's always mowing but has hired a handyman to do the weed whacking! Happy days!

Angela stays sane during COVID listening to music. She's currently reading "White Fragility" + "Dare To Lead". Favorite part of her day is getting done with work and letting dogs out to swim. She also likes a Hard Seltzer to relax. She doesn't cut Si's hair; he cuts his own. Fights the heat taking advantage of their own pool. Her father recently had a kidney transplant and remains hospitalized. Our thoughts and prayers are with you

What Jan misses most about the isolation "is having friends over and going out to eat." Says her gardens have never looked better and her grass is always cut. No new hobbies unless its cleaning out every closet + drawer and rearranging furniture. Her favorite time of day is "Happy Hour" on her front porch with her dogs watching the birds. Keeps her sense of humor paying attention to the general public and reading FB posts about dealing with "the covids". Yes, she cuts Eric's hair with her dog clippers and a #3 blade. "It's a struggle to keep him on the grooming table", she adds!

Jennifer has a new camper that went to MVLRC on its maiden voyage and will head out to Canfield next week. No new hobbies, but always "happy" to tend to her flowers but sure wishes it would rain! She also has cooked alot but quit the baking - "I just eat it." Her recent book purchases include "White Fragility", "Memory Man" by Balducci and has found a kind of corny series narrated by a dog called, "The Chet + Bernie Mysteries". She says she doesn't know if she's learned much about herself these days, but has learned much about others who have been on FB too much.

Brian + Christian say they have NOT had many challenges during the crisis. Both are "homebodies" to begin with. No new hobbies, but certainly cook at home more. Most memorable meal was Christian's "crockpot jambalaya" creation that was delicious! A.C. helps to beat the heat and their salvation: college homework and Christian still being able to fly!

John's normally a Balducci fan, but he is plodding thru "The Room Where It Happened" while Lori loved "All Adults Here", finished "White Fragility" and is currently

enjoying “The Vanishing Half”. She also “puzzles” which is a constant puzzle to John! They try to get in a 3-mile walk in every day so they can enjoy a cocktail together @ 6 p.m. followed by a bowl of “Moosetrack” frozen yogurt after dinner. Lori was cutting John’s hair, but once back to his regular stylist was told, “not to quit her day job”!

Christine says her favorite part of the day is early morning when she can work the dogs and do some gardening before it gets too hot. Wishes she could go visit her new granddaughter in Pennsylvania. It was difficult not having agility & obedience classes although the they have finally begun again. Made many masks for the hospitals the first few months and am now back to some of her own projects.

Cora says the favorite part of her day during COVID is taking breaks from work with her dogs out on her patio. Prior to the “shutdown” she was learning how to sew, because she thought it would be a good thing to know. But, with no classes offered during the pandemic, she just bought herself a sewing machine and continues to figure it out on her own. She says don’t expect any fancy garments anytime soon. But, she has made some cool flamingo print crate pads. She also cuts her husband’s hair during COVID and the two of them beat the heat by going to Norris, TN, for some socially distanced time on the lake. If they’re not at the lake on weekends, she does a private pool rental for the dogs so they can swim. “I just dip my toes in the water from the ramp,” she says

Sue says the most difficult thing during the outbreak is not seeing her parents. FaceTime has helped, but no hugs, kisses or just holding hands. She learned that she loves being home and doesn’t believe she could exist without her sweet dog, “Ellie”. “Looking forward to when we all can share some laughter and a good beverage!”

**Baseball is back !**



## The Dangers of Playing with Laser Lights

Howie\* was an adorable little teddy bear of a dog. He wiggled as I sunk my hand into his plush, soft, curly fur. A delightful Cavachon, Howie adored people and loved to meet new friends. He sat beside me on the sofa, leaning into my touch. The room was dark other than a single lamp, the curtains not just drawn but clipped shut. Howie's foster caregivers told me about his obsessions as we sat in the dim room, being careful not to move and throw shadows on the floor. I took notes, pausing occasionally to pet the little dog.

Howie was surrendered to the rescue when his self-injurious behavior became too much for his owners to handle. He was housetrained, friendly to people, and a delight with children. When he arrived at his foster caregiver's home, he sported an oozing, open wound on his muzzle and nose. Howie was obsessed with lights, and would do anything to try to catch one... including harming himself.

Howie's obsession started out, as most do, innocently enough. As a young dog with lots of energy, Howie's owners found that he enjoyed chasing a laser light. They used the light to exercise him at least twice a day and he chased after it delightedly, racing throughout their living room. They sent him up and down stairs after the elusive light, onto the sofa and under the table, around and around until he was tired out. It seemed like the perfect exercise solution on cold Minnesota days when none of them wanted to go outside.

Howie soon began to play the light game even when his owners weren't using the laser. He stalked shadows and light patterns on the floor, staring intently as he crept forward until he was close enough to pounce. He loved the reflections off his owner's watch crystals and from the prism in the window. Outside, he was entranced by the movement of the shadows from sunlight shining through the leaves of a tree or birds flying overhead. He no longer sniffed on walks, but instead searched constantly for the next light.

During laser play sessions, Howie's intensity began to concern his owners. He bit at the carpet where the laser had been and slammed into walls. They threw away the laser and attempted to dissuade him from these dangerous behaviors by putting him in his crate whenever he did them. He persisted, chasing lights and shadows in their home. Soon, Howie was spending the majority of his time in his crate, with a blanket thrown over the top to block out any light.

When he was loose, Howie damaged his owner's home. He tore chunks out of the carpet and bit at the walls. He broke a front tooth attacking the wall and chipped several others. Soon, he had an open wound on his muzzle that wouldn't heal from slamming himself into the floor, walls, and furniture in his attempt to catch the lights and shadows that taunted him. Howie's owners had a new baby, and they were concerned that his behavior put their child at risk. They surrendered him to rescue.

While extreme, Howie's story isn't unusual. Light and shadow chasing are some of the most common obsessions found in dogs. All breeds can develop these issues, but those who were bred for strong gazes, such as herding breeds and Pointers, seem to be especially at risk.

Light obsession most frequently develops after owners use a laser pointer to exercise their dog. Unlike toys or treats, lights cannot be caught. This is incredibly frustrating for many dogs, who never "win" the game. Even after you put the light away, many dogs



continue to search for the elusive light. Shadow and light chasing behavior can develop soon afterwards.

For this reason, **I highly recommend *against* using a laser light to exercise any dog.** It's impossible to know which dogs will develop issues until they happen, and it's just not worth the risk. If you do decide to persist in using a laser for exercise, consider having the laser eventually lead your dog to a small pile of treats as you end the game so that he "wins" something. However, complete avoidance of the game is preferable.

If your dog begins to show light or shadow chasing behavior, know that the sooner you intervene, the better the prognosis becomes. Howie's case was extreme in large part because it had been going on for so long: nearly five years by the time he was surrendered to rescue. Early intervention greatly increases the likelihood that you can help your dog.

If your dog begins chasing lights and shadows, the first thing to do is to **increase his physical and mental exercise**. Oftentimes this intervention alone can be enough in the early stages. My dog Trout showed this behavior as a young dog, and will occasionally still stare at the wall near lamps if she hasn't received enough exercise. Whenever your dog begins to obsess, redirect him to an appropriate activity. Trout is usually redirected by physically getting in between her and the wall, then calmly moving her away from the area. Avoid making a big deal over the behavior – both reinforcement in the form of treats or excessive attention, or punishment in the form of any aversive can make this behavior worse. In fact, **stress can be a huge factor in many obsessive behaviors**, so any intervention that includes aversive consequences for obsessing (such as using an electronic collar or swatting your dog) can greatly increase the chances that your dog will obsess.

If your dog's obsession has been going on for a long period of time or is so severe that you're unable to easily interrupt it, it's worthwhile to discuss medication options with your veterinarian.

Howie's foster family did just that, starting him on fluoxetine (the generic for Prozac) at the advice of the rescue's veterinarian. They also began a steady behavioral modification regimen of appropriate exercise, training, and management. Howie wore a Calming Cap when he went on walks to block his ability to search for lights, and was rewarded handsomely for learning several new tricks. His foster family was gradually able to open the curtains, first on cloudy days, then at night, and finally on sunny days. They worked hard with him for months and months, helping him to cope with his former obsession.

Sadly, Howie's story does not end well. After months of hard and loving work by his foster family, the injury on his muzzle had healed over. He was taken into the vet clinic for dental surgery to repair his damaged front teeth, and stopped breathing during the operation. The veterinarian was unable to revive him.

While Howie's story was sad, there is a silver lining. He had several months of peace with his foster family, finally free of the light-chasing obsession that had so overpowered his life for so many years. He discovered the joys of using his nose and began to love the sport of nose work. He snuggled and got brushed, and got a chance to wriggle around in the grass and sleep in a bed. He was loved.

If you currently use a laser light to exercise your dog, I urge you to reconsider. While Howie's story was extreme, it's not uncommon. I work with obsessive dogs much like Howie regularly. Most of these cases could have been avoided with some minor changes to the dog's routine. There are better ways to exercise and stimulate your dog. Save your laser light for powerpoint presentations, and you could save your dog from a lifetime of obsession. It's a fair trade, and Howie would approve.

\*Howie's name and identifying details were changed at the request of his foster family.

Posted in Basic Dog Care, Client's Dogs, Exercise, Preventing Behavior Problems, Rescue, Supplies, Trainer Development

Reprinted with permission: <https://paws4udogs.wordpress.com/2014/12/>  
Sara Reusche CBCC-KA CPDT-KSA CVT  
Paws Abilities Dog Training, LLC  
<https://pawsabilitiesmn.com>  
<https://paws4udogs.wordpress.com>

APDT Premium Professional Member #72543



# Central Ohio Labrador Retriever Club

## Back-to-Back Specialty Shows

October 24 & 25, 2020\*

Delaware County Fairgrounds

Delaware, Ohio

Saturday, October 24

JUDGES: Diane McClurg, Maidstone

Sweepstakes: Norman Grenier

Sunday, October 25

JUDGES: Cheryl Curtis, Erinhill

Sweepstakes: Jenna Kemp

Closing Date: October 07, 2020

The Labrador show will be in its own building with plenty of room for seating and crates. There will be lots of parking for cars and RV hook-ups are available. Join us for some great silent auction items and hospitality!

\*Pending AKC Approval\*

Superintendent MB-F, Inc.

[www.infodog.com](http://www.infodog.com)

PH: 336-379-9352

Show Chair – Cora Fleming

PH: 937-564-1385

## General COLRC Information



The **UNLEASHED!** is a publication by and for the members of the **Central Ohio Labrador Retriever Club** and others interested in the betterment of the sport and advancement of cooperative communication within the Labrador community and the dog fancy.

The articles and information contained in this publication have been deemed by the editor to be of interest to our readers but do not necessarily reflect the beliefs or the opinions of the editor or COLRC members. Reader input is actively solicited.

Please address or email all articles, announcements, comments and suggestions to [newsletter@colrc.com](mailto:newsletter@colrc.com). Unleashed is published ten to twelve times per year. Closing for each issue is the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the month prior to publication.

Dues are \$25 annually for a single membership and \$40 for a joint membership. Business cards will be placed on the COLRC website for the year at a cost of \$50 for members and non-members.

Club members who wish to utilize the Litter Listing Column of the newsletter and website will be required to pay \$50 per litter listing unless they have worked at two of our three club events during the course of the year.

**Meetings** General meetings shall take place the first Wednesday of every month unless otherwise noted.

### OFFICERS

President.....	Sally Bell	(Term expires Dec 2021)
Vice President.....	Lori Bentine	(Term expires Dec 2021)
Treasurer.....	Linda Bednarski	(Term expires Dec 2021)
Secretary.....	Brian Tipton	(Term expires Dec 2021)

### COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Membership.....	Linda Bednarski
Newsletter.....	Christine Nickerson
Puppy Match.....	Linda Bednarski
Show Chair.....	Cora Fleming
Eye Clinic.....	Jennifer Stotts

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cindy Gerhan	(Term expires Dec 2020)
Christine Kofron	(Term expires Dec 2020)
Jennifer Stotts	(Term expires Dec 2020)
Jan Eichenser	(Term expires Dec 2020)
Sue Frazier	(Term expires Dec 2020)