

THE LAB REPORT

AUGUST 2002

THE HURON RIVER LABRADOR
RETRIEVER CLUB, INC.

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August Issue
LITTER ADS: Pauline Mortier
NOTICES: Beverly Schnell
COMING EVENTS: None submitted
for August issue
MEMBERSHIP: Cindy Skiba
SUNSHINE: Helen Bronson

HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

By Bev Schnell

The August General Membership meeting of the Huron River Labrador Retriever Club will be held on Saturday, August 10, 2002 at the home of George & Beverly Schnell, 400 Riley Center Road, Memphis, MI 48041-4112 at 1 p.m. You may bring a dog if you wish to. Hopefully there will be some water left in the pond!

A very big THANK YOU to Norm and Sheila Norgren for the use of their grounds for another great fun match.

SEE YOU NEXT MONTH!

DUES

Membership Dues for Family are \$40, for Single are \$30, for Newsletter Only \$25. Breeders Directory Dues on the HRLRC Club Website are \$25. All fees were due MAY 15, 2002. Remit to the Treasurer.

HRLRC MEETING DATES

August 10---General
Membership & Board Meetings
at the Schnells
September 6---General
Membership
September 17---Board Meeting
October 4---General
Membership
October 15---Board Meeting
November 1---General
Membership
November 19---Board Meeting
December 7---Christmas Party

MEMBERSHIP DUES

PAID

Ruth Acterhoff-Aust
Jeanine Asch
Stella Blair & Dolores Richards
Karen Brines
Helen Bronson
Kim Bryson
Terry Bryson
Nancy Chargo
Annie & Ron Cogo
Cathy Culpert
Mary T. Evans
Angela Ewald
Kristi Fruchey
William Gardner
Carrie Gati
Mary & Steve MacLean
Mike & Judy Merians
Laura Michaels
Maurice & Pauline Mortier
Sheila Norgren
Freida Paison
Mike & Deborah Rathsburg
Laura & Al Reich
Heath Roy
Michael Sapienz
George & Beverly Schnell
Tom & Gail Shearer
Cindy Skiba
Pamela Smith, DVM
Ed & Marsha Standler

PAID MEMBERSHIP DUES

(cont'd)

Jan Stolarevsky
Nancy Todd
Judy Trevino
Michelle VeuCasovic
Lorry Wagner
Cheryl Wellnitz
Madge Ziessow

WEBSITE PAID FOR 2002

Ruth Actershoff-Aust
Helen Bronson
Kim Bryson
Terry Bryson
Nancy Chargo
Annie & Ron Cogo
Cathy Culpert
Carrie Gati
Kristi Fruchey
Mary MacLean
Mike & Judy Merians
Pauline & Maurice Mortier
Sheila Norgren
Heath Roy
George & Beverly Schnell
Tom & Gail Shearer
Cindy Skiba

REMINDER:
Deadline date for
submissions to the
newsletter is the 15th of the
month.

HRLRC GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING JULY 13, 2002

Members in attendance were:
Angela Ewald, Cindy Skiba, Dolores
Richards, Stella Blair, Frieda Paison,
Matt Pius, Mike & Deb Rathsburg,
Mary & Steve MacLean, Lorie Schoen,
Tom & Gail Shearer, Mike & Cathy
Culpert, Annie & Ron Cogo, Karen
Brines, Pam Smith, Diane Masserant,
Helen Bronson, Michelle VeuCasovic,
Nancy Chargo and Jeanine Asch.

Guests in attendance were Patti Wayne,
Pam Nichols, Mark Foster, Nancy
Manning, Gerald Pyles, Carol Lynn
Johnson and Jeff & Patti York.

Meeting was called to order at 4 pm
by vice-president Nancy Chargo.

Treasurer's report was accepted as
read.

Minutes from the June meeting
were approved as read.

Beverly received a thank you card
from Cheryl Wellnitz thanking us for
the flowers that were sent to her.

A letter from Terry Bryson was
read stating her appreciation of her
lifetime membership and stained glass
piece. She also expressed her
displeasure regarding those who
complained about their lifetime
membership gifts.

Old Business: Fall specialty—Both
judges have confirmed their
assignments but we are still waiting to
hear back from AKC.

When making raffle donations,
please be sure to include your name
along with your donation so you can
receive credit. REMINDER—cash and
checks are gladly accepted as raffle
donations—Cathy will gladly spend the
money on raffle items!

Bob Curtis will be the chief ring
steward and will handle getting any
other necessary stewards.

Michelle has finished compiling the
premiums. Cheryl's daughter and
friends worked on getting the
premiums sent out—Thank you! There
are printed copies available currently.
An electronic copy will be on the web.

Annie tried to get in touch with her
contacts with the bomb and arson dogs
but has not received a call back. If she
hears back from either of them before
the August meeting, she will notify club
members via email regarding when
they will do a presentation.

New Business: The possibility of
holding a back-to-back specialty in
2003 was brought up and discussed.
When Annie talked to Monroe Kennel
Club, they were unwilling to give up
their Labrador entry at their show.
Therefore, we would have to hold our
specialty on Thursday and Friday
unless the location or date was changed.

Since many people would have to take
an additional day off work if we hosted
a show on a Thursday, it is unlikely we
would be able to get enough volunteers
to assist with hosting the show. Mary
motioned to send an email asking for
volunteers who would be willing to do
the necessary work for the 2nd specialty.
Annie rephrased the motion to poll
meeting attendees of who would be
willing to volunteer. As there were no
volunteers, the motion did not pass and
was tabled. Another suggestion was to
contact a kennel club such as Oakland
or Livingston County to see if they
would let us support their entry and
hold sweepstakes classes.

Cindy Skiba reported she had
received four applications for
membership from the following: Carol
Lynn Johnson, Patty Wayne, Jeff &
Patty York, and Nancy Manning &
Paul Foster. Their applications were
read and a vote of members present
was taken. All were voted into the club.
Welcome to all the new members!

The topic of tables being purchased
by the club was discussed. Per the
minutes from the August 2001 meeting,
it was motioned to have Laura
purchase some tables. After the tables
were purchased, there was confusion
regarding where there was prior
authorization for buying them. Mike
has the tables currently. It was decided
to keep some of those tables as well as
buy some round tables. We will get
four 8 foot tables and two 4 foot tables.
These will help make our shows and
events run smoother and possibly
encourage more people to volunteer
since things like this make their job
easier.

Michelle motioned to purchase an
additional canopy. Motion passed.

Cathy thanked everyone who helped
with the match. We made \$239 from
the raffle.

Meeting adjourned at 4:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanine Asch, Secretary

HRLRC BOARD MEETING JULY 13, 2002

Board members present were: Nancy Chargo, Angela Ewald, Cindy Skiba, Cathy Culpert, Mary MacLean and Jeanine Asch.

The meeting was called to order at 5:15 pm by vice-president Nancy Chargo.

New Business: A discussion was held regarding the breeder directory on the website and whether inactive members should pay more than \$25 to have a listing. It needs to be determined how to best structure the system.

Genessee County Kennel Club has had similar problems in that a core group of members are the ones doing most of the work. Their solution was to provide a trip for the active members every few years.

AKC does not recognize labeling a member as active or inactive. We could institute a probationary period of a year or longer for new members. The specifics of this would have to be addressed.

As many current members do not attend meetings regularly, it is sometimes difficult to have a quorum to make business decisions. Additionally, since there are many husbands and wives who are members but often only one (or neither) of them attends the meetings, this compounds the problem.

There have been many changes discussed recently that pertain to how the club operates. As it appears there have been quite a few issues proposed, it might be worthwhile to look into changing our constitution to reflect the changes that have been discussed. Often, it was decided it was too much hassle to change the constitution and by-laws. But, if there really are that many aspects of those documents that should be modified, it would probably be in the best interest of the club to do so.

Annie will contact an AKC representative to see if that person would be willing to come to one of our meetings and provide some advice.

Meeting adjourned 5:45 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,
Jeanine Asch, Secretary



THANK YOU

From Cheryl Wellnitz:

Cheryl Wellnitz wrote a thank you card: "Bev, please let everyone know that I received the basket of flowers and really appreciate them. They are beautiful and all can be planted outside. See you soon. Cheryl"

From Terry Bryson:

"First of all, I am known as Terry, not Teresa. I do understand most of you do not know me. I am a lifetime and charter member. I know I have not been active in the club for some time. But you all should note, that you have my support and any help I can give you. I am in a position now that my family needs me. This controversy with the lifetime gifts makes me sick. All of you, that have complained, should be ashamed of yourselves. I was very honored with my stained glass and very surprised. Cheryl did a wonderful job. Life is too short everyone . . . be grateful for what we have. Sincerely, Terry Bryson"

WHELPIN' WAGGIN'

Disclaimer Clause: This list is for litters of our members that are in good standing with our Club and the American Kennel Club and has been made available for your assistance in finding a new puppy. BUT: The Huron River Labrador Retriever Club, Inc. makes no warranties, expressed or implied as to the condition of any dogs being offered for sale, standards or practices of any breeder, the quality of their animals or the accuracy of any of the information contained within the HRLRC, Inc. Newsletter Listing, or within the HRLRC, Inc. website or any links from the website. HRLRC, Inc. does not endorse, recommend, or guarantee any kennel, breeder or dog listed.

Reminder: Send \$5 litter ad fee per month/per ad to Pauline Mortier, 4611 Brophy, Howell, MI 48843. Please indicate in memo section of check the month that you are paying for. These litter ad fees go towards our Rescue Account. Please call (517) 548-5429 or email pmortier@ismi.net to renew or update your ad. Deadline is the 15th of the month. NEW POLICY: No litter ad will be published without receipt of the fee. Also beginning JULY 1, 2001 for ACTIVE MEMBERS fee remains the same---\$5 per month/per ad. For NON-ACTIVE MEMBERS fee will be \$100 per month/per ad. Read the minutes in the March 2001 newsletter for detailed explanation of ACTIVE MEMBERS & NON-ACTIVE MEMBERS.

**Lor-al's Direct Deposit WC CGC
LOR-AL'S DIRECT FROM TANTARA
Wolvercote Galaxy Girl from Kimvalley**

X

**Ch Tullamores Just One Look
NORTHMARKS EXCITEMENT
Inselheim Pineview Saffron**

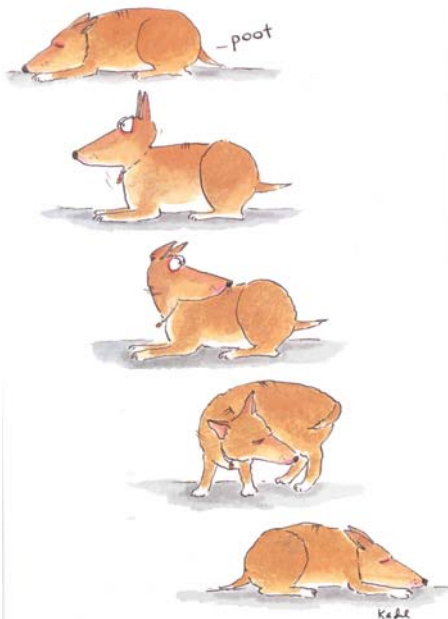
Whelped: May 24 2 yellow males
Karen Brines Midland, MI
(989) 832-9528 email: Kbrines@tm.net

**Pachangas Magnum Force
MW'S DAMN I'M CHOCOLATE M.H.
Pandas Kodiak Bear Creekwood S.H.**

X

**Ch Dickendall Arnold
INSELHEIM GEEZ LOUISE
Ch Inselheim Just Jokin'**

Whelped: May 24 1 black male,
1 black female, 2 chocolate females
Terry Bryson Swartz Creek, MI
(810) 635-4820
email: Windmilab@aol.com



WINS'N'GRINS

LUBBERLINE ENDEAVOR SPINNAKER, Jeanine Asch & Pauline Mortier, Ann Arbor KC Sanctioned B Match---Best Puppy of Breed and Group 3 in Sporting Group!!!

HRLRC MATCH JULY 13TH
EAST HILL WINDFALL KODIAK, Sheila Norgren, Best of Opposite Sex in Sweepstakes

EAST HILL RADAR---Sheila Norgren, 6-9 month puppy dog in regular classes

EAST HILL ZIP---Sheila Norgren, 6-9 month puppy bitch in regular classes

EAST HILL THISTLE---Sheila Norgren, 6-9 month puppy bitch in sweeps

VISIONS LUBBERLINE GRACEFUL---Pauline & Maurice Mortier & Kevin Henry, 1st 6-9 months puppy bitch in regular classes and 3rd in sweeps

CASTLEBRAE LUBBERLINE TELLTALE---Pauline & Maurice Mortier, 2nd 4-6 months puppy bitch in regular and 3rd in sweeps

Note: no other results were received from our HRLRC Match.

WINDFALL PIPE MAJOR---Annie & Ron Cogo---an Oregon KC show---**WINNERS DOG 4 POINT MAJOR!!!**

ANN ARBOR KC SAT. & SUN., JULY 6TH & 7TH

INFINITY'S SCREAMING EAGLE---Michelle VeuCasovic & Brittany Hazlett---1st Am Bred Dog Sat. & Sun.

LUBBERLINE MARTINGALE---Pauline & Maurice Mortier---**WINNERS DOG, BEST OF WINNERS, & BEST OF BREED!!!**
 Sunday

VISIONS LUBBERLINE GRACEFUL---Pauline & Maurice Mortier & Kevin Henry---1ST 6-9 month puppy bitch & **WINNERS BITCH & BEST OF OPPOSITE SEX!!!**

FRANKLIN'S DISCOVERY---Mrs. B.W. Ziessow---**RESERVE WINNERS DOG Sat. & 3rd Open Yellow Dog Sun.**

INFINITY'S MATINEE---Michelle VeuCasovic---**RESERVE WINNERS BITCH Sun.**

INFINITY'S MUSTANG SALLY---Michelle VeuCasovic---1st 6-9 month puppy bitch Sat.

MAR-JO'S ON THE BANK---Mike & Judy Merians---2nd BBE bitch Sat. & 1st BBE bitch Sun.

LUBBERLINE MATEY---Pauline & Maurice Mortier---2nd Open Yellow bitch Sun.

WINDFALL'S BE-BOPPIN' BOBBI SOCKS CD NAJ---Michelle VeuCasovic---2nd Open Yellow bitch Sat.

INSELHEIM CALAMITY JANE---Mike & Judy Merians---**WINNERS BITCH & BEST OF OPPOSITE SEX Sat.!!! & 1st Open Yellow bitch Sun.**

LUBBERLINE MARTINGALE---Laporte County KC---Pauline & Maurice Mortier---**WINNERS DOG & BEST OF WINNERS!!!**

BONAVENTURE LUBBERLINE VISCOUNT---Laporte County KC---Pauline & Maurice Mortier---3rd Open Dog

CH BONAVENTURE CLIPPER---Laporte County KC---Tom & Gail Shearer---**BEST OF BREED!!!**

Lor-Al's Loretta---Laporte County KC---Laura Reich---3rd Open Bitch

JULY 2003 HRLRC MATCH

Cathy Culpert has agreed to be Chair again and Norm and Sheila Norgren have agreed to host the Match again. The date will be about the same, whatever that Saturday is. So now people shouldn't be able to say they were busy. Weddings excluded.

RAFFLE FOR FALL 2002 SPECIALTY

Please contact Sheila Norgren to donate either an item or money to purchase an item for the Fall 2002 Specialty Raffle. There were a few items received, including money, that have not been identified as to where they came from. If those people who donated items and didn't have their names written on the items would email Sheila Norgren at normcc@aol.com then she will be able to add their names to the list and perhaps more importantly will not have to call them or bother them. Thanks.

HEALTH RESEARCH FOR DOGS

As a responsible breeder of Labrador retrievers, you know that good health and longevity are important factors to consider when producing quality puppies. You also know how important nutrition is for good health. But it can be very difficult to maintain a dog at a healthy weight. Because obesity is the number one nutritional disease of dogs, scientists at the University of California at Davis are very interested in understanding weight gain in dogs. Since Labrador retrievers are one breed known for their tendency to be overweight, Dr. Andrea Fascetti and Dr. Jon Ramsey (veterinarians on the faculty at the University of California - Davis School of Veterinary Medicine) have chosen Labrador retrievers to participate in their study on energy metabolism in dogs. The goal of this research is to help define the nutritional requirements of an individual dog based on the way he utilizes energy. Wouldn't it be great to know if a particular dog was susceptible to excessive weight gain? Ultimately, information like this could help in the management or prevention of joint disease, heart disease, diabetes and other illnesses that compromise the quality of life of overweight dogs.

We are looking for 16 male, neutered, black Labrador retrievers (approximately 18 to 36 months old) to participate in the study. The dog does not need to be overweight. The study will last for approximately 3-4 months, during which the dogs will be housed at the UC Davis Animal Research Kennel. Each individual dog in the study will have a complete health work-up conducted by the veterinarians at the University of California at Davis. The dogs will be fed various diets and undergo a variety of health tests related to energy metabolism.

During the time the dogs are housed at the University of California at Davis, they will be given lots of personal attention. They will have exercise and play sessions several times daily with a caretaker. They will also be given obedience training. At the conclusion of the study, the dogs can be returned to the original owner or placed in new, approved, pet homes. The University of California will cover all costs involved.

As a fellow dog breeder, I am excited about the potential of this study. That is why Drs. Ramsey and Fascetti have asked me to help them find dogs with whom to work. If you know of a healthy, young, male Labrador retriever who could take part in this landmark research, please contact me at the numbers listed below. Feel free to pass this letter along to anyone else who may want to participate. Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. We cannot make advances in health research without you!

Sincerely,
Amy L. Suggars, Ph. D.
Watermark Retrievers
358 Greenwold Ct.
Columbus, OH 43235
614-781-0283 (office)
614-781-0284 (fax)
614-975-5388 (mobile)
amysuggars@mindspring.com



“Well, your nose feels cold.”

ADDENDA TO RESEARCH

Recently I sent you a message regarding a research study being conducted at the University of California at Davis. In the initial message I asked for neutered males. Since then, based on feedback from other breeders like you, we have changed the criteria to *intact* males.

I would like to emphasize a few other points. First of all, the participant dog does not need to be overweight. The researchers will be studying your dog's metabolism when he is fed on a high fat diet and then when he is fed on a maintenance diet.

Finally, the candidate dog does not need to live in California. The University of California will cover all costs associated with this study, including transportation.

Please contact me if you have any questions or would like additional information. This research could be quite important for the future health of our dogs!

Sincerely,
Amy L. Suggars, Ph.D.
Watermark Retrievers
358 Greenwold Ct.
Columbus, OH 43235
614-781-0283 (office)
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614-975-5388 (mobile)
amysuggars@mindspring.com

"DEVELOPING HIGH ACHIEVERS" Originally published as "Early Neurological Stimulation"

Surprising as it may seem, it isn't capacity that explains the differences that exist between individuals because most seem to have far more capacity than they will ever use. The differences that exist between individuals seem to be related to something else. The ones who achieve and out perform others seem to have within themselves the ability to use hidden resources. In other words, it's what they are able to do with what they have that makes the difference.

In many animal-breeding programs the entire process of selection and management is founded on the belief that performance is inherited. Attempts to analyze the genetics of performance in a systematic way have involved some distinguished names such as Charles Darwin and Francis Galton. But it has only been in recent decades that good estimates of heritability of performance have been based on adequate data. Cunningham (1991) in his study of horses found that only by using Timeform data, and measuring groups of half brothers and half sisters could good estimates of performance be determined. His data shows that performance for speed is about 35% heritable. In other words only about 35% of all the variation that is observed in track performance is controlled by heritable factors, the remaining 65% are attributable to other influences, such as training, management and nutrition. Cunningham's work while limited to horses provides a good basis for understanding how much breeders can attribute to the genetics and the pedigrees.

Researchers have studied this phenomena and have looked for new ways to stimulate individuals in order to improve their natural abilities. Some of the methods discovered have produced life long lasting effects. Today, many of the differences between individuals can now be explained by the use of early stimulation methods.

Introduction

Man for centuries has tried various methods to improve performance. Some of the methods have stood the test of time, others have not. Those who first conducted research on this topic believed that the period of early age was a

most important time for stimulation because of its rapid growth and development. Today, we know that early life is a time when the physical immaturity of an organism is susceptible and responsive to a restricted but important class of stimuli. Because of its importance many studies have focused their efforts on the first few months of life.

Newborn pups are uniquely different than adults in several respects. When born their eyes are closed and their digestive system has a limited capacity requiring periodic stimulation by their dam who routinely licks them in order to promote digestion. At this age they are only able to smell, suck, and crawl. Body temperature is maintained by snuggling close to their mother or by crawling into piles with other littermates. During these first few weeks of immobility researchers noted that these immature and under-developed canines are sensitive to a restricted class of stimuli which includes thermal, and tactile stimulation, motion and locomotion.

Other mammals such as mice and rats are also born with limitations and they also have been found to demonstrate a similar sensitivity to the effects of early stimulation. Studies show that removing them from their nest for three minutes each day during the first five to ten days of life causes body temperatures to fall below normal. This mild form of stress is sufficient to stimulate hormonal, adrenal and pituitary systems. When tested later as adults, these same animals were better able to withstand stress than littermates who were not exposed to the same early stress exercises. As adults, they responded to stress in "a graded" fashion, while their non-stressed littermates responded in an "all or nothing way."

Data involving laboratory mice and rats also shows that stress in small amounts can produce adults who respond maximally. On the other hand, the results gathered from non-stressed littermate show that they become easily exhausted and would near death if exposed to intense prolonged stress. When tied down so they were unable to move for twenty-four hours, rats developed severe stomach ulcers, but litter mates exposed to early stress handling were found to be more resistant to stress tests and did not show evidence of ulcers. A secondary affect was also noticed.

Sexual maturity was attained sooner in the littermates given early stress exercises. When tested for differences in health and disease, the stressed animals were found to be more resistant to certain forms of cancer and infectious diseases and could withstand terminal starvation and exposure to cold for longer periods than their non-stressed littermates. Other studies involving early stimulation exercises have been successfully performed on both cats and dogs. In these studies, the Electrical Encephalogram (EEG) was found to be ideal for measuring the electrical activity in the brain because of its extreme sensitivity to changes in excitement, emotional stress, muscle tension, changes in oxygen and breathing. EEG measures show that pups and kittens when given early stimulation exercises mature at faster rates and perform better in certain problem solving tests than non-stimulated mates. In the higher level animals the effect of early stimulation exercises have also been studied. The use of surrogate mothers and familiar objects were tested by both of the Kelloggs' and Dr. Yearkes using young chimpanzees. Their pioneer research shows that the more primates were deprived of stimulation and interaction during early development, the less able they were to cope, adjust and later adapt to situations as adults.

While experiments have not yet produced specific information about the optimal amounts of stress needed to make young animals psychologically or physiologically superior, researches agree that stress has value. What also is known is that a certain amount of stress for one may be too intense for another, and that too much stress can retard development. The results show that early stimulation exercises can have positive results but must be used with caution. In other words, too much stress can cause pathological adversities rather than physical or psychological superiority.

Methods of Stimulation

The U.S. Military in their canine program developed a method that still serves as a guide to what works. In an effort to improve the performance of dogs used for military purposes, a program called "Bio Sensor" was developed. Later, it became known to the public as the "Super Dog" Program. Based on years of research, the military learned that early neurological stimulation exercises could have important and lasting effects. Their studies confirmed that there are specific time periods early in life when neurological stimulation has optimum results. The first period involves a window of time that begins at the third day of life and lasts until the sixteenth day. It is believed that because this interval of time is a period of rapid neurological growth and development, and therefore is of great importance to the individual.

The "Bio Sensor" program was also concerned with early neurological stimulation in order to give the dog a superior advantage. Its development utilized six exercises which were designed to stimulate the neurological system. Each workout involved handling puppies once each day. The workouts required handling them one at a time while performing a series of five exercises. Listed in order of preference the handler starts with one pup and stimulates it

using each of the five exercises. The handler completes the series from beginning to end before starting with the next pup. The handling of each pup once per day involves the following exercises:

1. Tactical stimulation (between toes)
2. Head held erect
3. Head pointed down
4. Supine position
5. Thermal stimulation.

1. Tactile stimulation

Holding the pup in one hand, the handler gently stimulates (tickles) the pup between the toes on any one foot using a Q-tip. It is not necessary to see that the pup is feeling the tickle. Time of stimulation 3 - 5 seconds.

(Figure 1)



2. Head held erect

Using both hands, the pup is held perpendicular to the ground, (straight up), so that its head is directly above its tail. This is an upwards position. Time of stimulation 3 - 5 seconds (Figure 2).



3. Head pointed down

Holding the pup firmly with both hands the head is reversed and is pointed downward so that it is pointing towards the ground. Time of stimulation 3 - 5 seconds (Figure 3).



4. Supine position

Hold the pup so that its back is resting in the palm of both hands with its muzzle facing the ceiling. The pup while on its back is allowed to sleep struggle. Time of stimulation 3-5 seconds. (Figure 4)



6. Thermal stimulation

Use a damp towel that has been cooled in a refrigerator for at least five minutes. Place the pup on the towel, feet down. Do not restrain it from moving. Time of stimulation 3-5 seconds. (Figure 5)



These five exercises will produce neurological stimulations, none of which naturally occur during this early period of life. Experience shows that sometimes pups will resist these exercises, others will appear unconcerned. In either case a caution is offered to those who plan to use them. Do not repeat them more than once per day and do not extend the time beyond that recommended for each exercise. Over stimulation of the neurological system can have adverse and detrimental results. These exercises impact the neurological system by kicking it into action earlier than would be normally expected. The result being an increased capacity that later will help to make the difference in its performance. Those who play with their pups and routinely handle them should continue to do so because the neurological exercises are not substitutions for routine handling, play socialization or bonding.

Benefits of Stimulation

Five benefits have been observed in canines that were exposed to the Bio Sensor stimulation exercises. The benefits noted were:

1. Improved cardio vascular performance (heart rate)
2. Stronger heart beats
3. Stronger adrenal glands
4. More tolerance to stress and
5. Greater resistance to disease.

In tests of learning, stimulated pups were found to be more active and were more exploratory than their non-stimulated littermates over which they were dominant in competitive situations. Secondary effects were also noted regarding test performance. In simple problem solving tests using detours in a maze, the non-stimulated pups became extremely aroused, wined a great deal, and made many errors. Their stimulated littermates were less disturbed or upset by test conditions and when comparisons were made, the stimulated littermates were more calm in the test environment, made fewer errors and gave only an occasional distress when stressed.

Socialization

As each animal grows and develops three kinds of stimulation have been identified that impact and influence how it will develop and be shaped as an individual. The first stage is called early neurological stimulation, and the second stage is called socialization. The first two (early neurological stimulation and socialization) have in common a window of limited time. When Lorenz, (1935) first wrote about the importance of the stimulation process he wrote about imprinting during early life and its influence on the later development of the individual. He states that it was different from conditioning in that it occurred early in life and took place very rapidly producing results which seemed to be permanent. One of the first and perhaps the most noted research efforts involving the larger animals was achieved by Kellogg & Kellogg (1933). As a student of Dr. Kellogg's I

found him and his wife to have an uncanny interest in children and young animals and the changes and the differences that occurred during early development. Their history making study involved raising their own new born child with a new born primate. Both infants were raised together as if they were twins. This study like others that would follow attempted to demonstrate that among the mammals there are great differences in their speed of physical and mental development. Some are born relatively mature and quickly capable of motion and locomotion, while others are very immature, immobile and slow to develop. For example, the Rhesus monkey shows rapid and precocious development at birth, while the chimpanzee and the other "great apes" take much longer. Last and slowest is the human infant.

One of the earliest efforts to investigate and look for the existence of socialization in canines was undertaken by Scott-Fuller (1965). In their early studies they were able to demonstrate that the basic technique for testing the existence of socialization was to show how readily adult animals would foster young animals, or accept one from another species. They observed that with the higher level animals it is easiest done by hand rearing. When the foster animal transfers its social relationships to the new species, researchers conclude that socialization has taken place. Most researchers agree that among all species, a lack of adequate socialization generally results in unacceptable behavior and often times produces undesirable aggression, excessiveness, fearfulness, sexual inadequacy, and indifference toward partners.

Socialization studies confirm that the critical periods for humans (infant) to be stimulated are generally between three weeks and twelve months of age. For canines the period is shorter, between the fourth and sixteenth week of age. During these critical time periods two things can go wrong. First, insufficient social contact can interfere with proper emotional development which can adversely affect the development of the human bond. The lack of adequate social stimulation, such as handling, mothering and contact with others, adversely affects social and psychological development.

Second, over mothering can prevent sufficient exposure to other individuals, and situations that have an important influence on growth and development. The literature shows that humans and animals respond in similar ways when denied minimal amounts of stimulation. In humans, the absence of love and cuddling increases the risk of an aloof, distant, asocial or sociopathic individual. Over mothering can also have its detrimental effects. It occurs when a parent insulates the child from outside contacts, or keeps the apron strings tight, thus limiting opportunities to explore and interact. In the end, over mothering generally produces a dependent, socially maladjusted and sometimes emotionally disturbed individual.

The absence of outside social interactions for both children and pups usually results in a lack of adequate learning and social adjustment. Protected youngsters who grow up in an insulated environment often times become sickly, despondent, lacking in flexibility and unable to make simple social adjustments. Generally, they are unable to function productively or to interact successfully then they become adults.

Owners who have busy life styles with long and tiring work and social schedules often times cause pets to be neglected. Left to themselves with only an occasional trip out of the house or off of the property they seldom see other canines or strangers and generally suffer from poor stimulation and socialization. For many, the side effects of loneliness and boredom set-in. The resulting behavior manifests itself in the form of chewing, digging, and hard to control behavior (Battaglia).

It seems clear that small amounts of stress followed by early socialization can produce beneficial results. The danger seems to be in not knowing where the thresholds are for over and under stimulation. Many improperly socialized youngsters develop into older individuals unprepared for adult life, unable to cope with its challenges, and interactions. Attempts to re-socialize them when adults have only produced small gains. These failures confirm the notion that the window of time open for early neurological and social stimulation only comes once. After it passes, little or nothing can be done to overcome the negative effects of too much or too little stimulation.

The third and final stage in the process of growth and development is called enrichment. Unlike the first two stages it has no time limit and by comparison covers a very long period of time. Enrichment is a term which has come to mean the positive sum of experiences, which have a cumulative effect upon the individual. Enrichment experiences typically involve exposure to a wide variety of interesting, novel, and exciting experiences with regular opportunities to freely investigate, manipulate, and interact with them. When measured in later life, the results show that those reared in an enriched environment tend to be more inquisitive and are more able to perform difficult tasks. The educational TV program called Sesame Street is perhaps the best known example of a children's enrichment program. The results show that when tested, children who regularly watched this program performed better than playmates who did not. Follow up studies show that those who regularly watched Sesame tend to seek a college education and when enrolled, performed better than playmates who were not regular watchers of the Sesame Street Program.

There are numerous children studies that show the benefits of enrichment techniques and programs. Most focus on improving self-esteem and self-talk. Follow up studies show that the enriched Sesame Street students when later tested were brighter and scored above average and most often were found to be the products of environments that contributed to their superior test scores. On the other hand, those whose test scores were generally below average, (labeled as dull) and the products of underprivileged or non-enriched environments often times had little or only small amounts of stimulation during early childhood and only minimal amounts of enrichment during their developmental and formative years. Many were characterized as children who grew up with little interaction with others, poor parenting, few toys, no books and a steady diet

of TV soap operas.

A similar analogy can be found among canines. All the time they are growing they are learning because their nervous systems are developing and storing information that may be of inestimable use at a later date. Studies by Scott and Fuller confirm that non-enriched pups when given free choice preferred to stay in their kennels. Other litter mates who were given only small amounts of outside stimulation between five and eight weeks of age were found to be very inquisitive and very active. When kennel doors were left open, the enriched pups would come bounding out while littermates who were not exposed to enrichment would remain behind. The non-stimulated pups would typically be fearful of unfamiliar objects and generally preferred to withdraw rather than investigate. Even well bred pups of superior pedigrees would not explore or leave their kennels and many were found difficult to train as adults. These pups in many respects were similar to the deprived children. They acted as if they had become institutionalized, preferring the routine and safe environment of their kennel to the stimulating world outside their immediate place of residence.

Regular trips to the park, shopping centers and obedience and agility classes serve as good examples of enrichment activities. Chasing and retrieving a ball on the surface seems to be enriching because it provides exercise and includes rewards. While repeated attempts to retrieve a ball provide much physical activity, it should not be confused with enrichment exercises. Such playful activities should be used for exercise and play or as a reward after returning from a trip or training session. Road work and chasing balls are not substitutes for trips to the shopping mall, outings or obedience classes most of which provide many opportunities for interaction and investigation.

Finally it seems clear that stress early in life can produce beneficial results. The danger seems to be in not knowing where the thresholds are for over and under stimulation. However, the absence or the lack of adequate amounts of stimulation generally will produce negative and undesirable results. Based on the above it is fair to say that the performance of most individuals can be improved including the techniques described above. Each contributes in a cumulative way and supports the next stage of development.

Conclusion

Breeders can now take advantage of the information available to improve and enhance performance. Generally, genetics account of about 35% of the performance but the remaining 65% (management, training, nutrition) can make the difference. In the management category it has been shown that breeders should be guided by the rule that it is generally considered prudent to guard against under and over stimulation. Short of ignoring pups during their first two months of life, a conservative approach would be to expose them to children, people, toys and other animals on a regular basis. Handling and touching all parts of their anatomy is also necessary to learn as early as the third day of life. Pups that are handled early and on a regular basis, generally do not become hand shy as adults.

Because of the risks involved in under stimulation a conservative approach to using the benefits of the three stages has been suggested based primarily on the works of Arskeusky, Kellogg, Yearkes and the "Bio Sensor" program (later known as the "Super Dog Program").

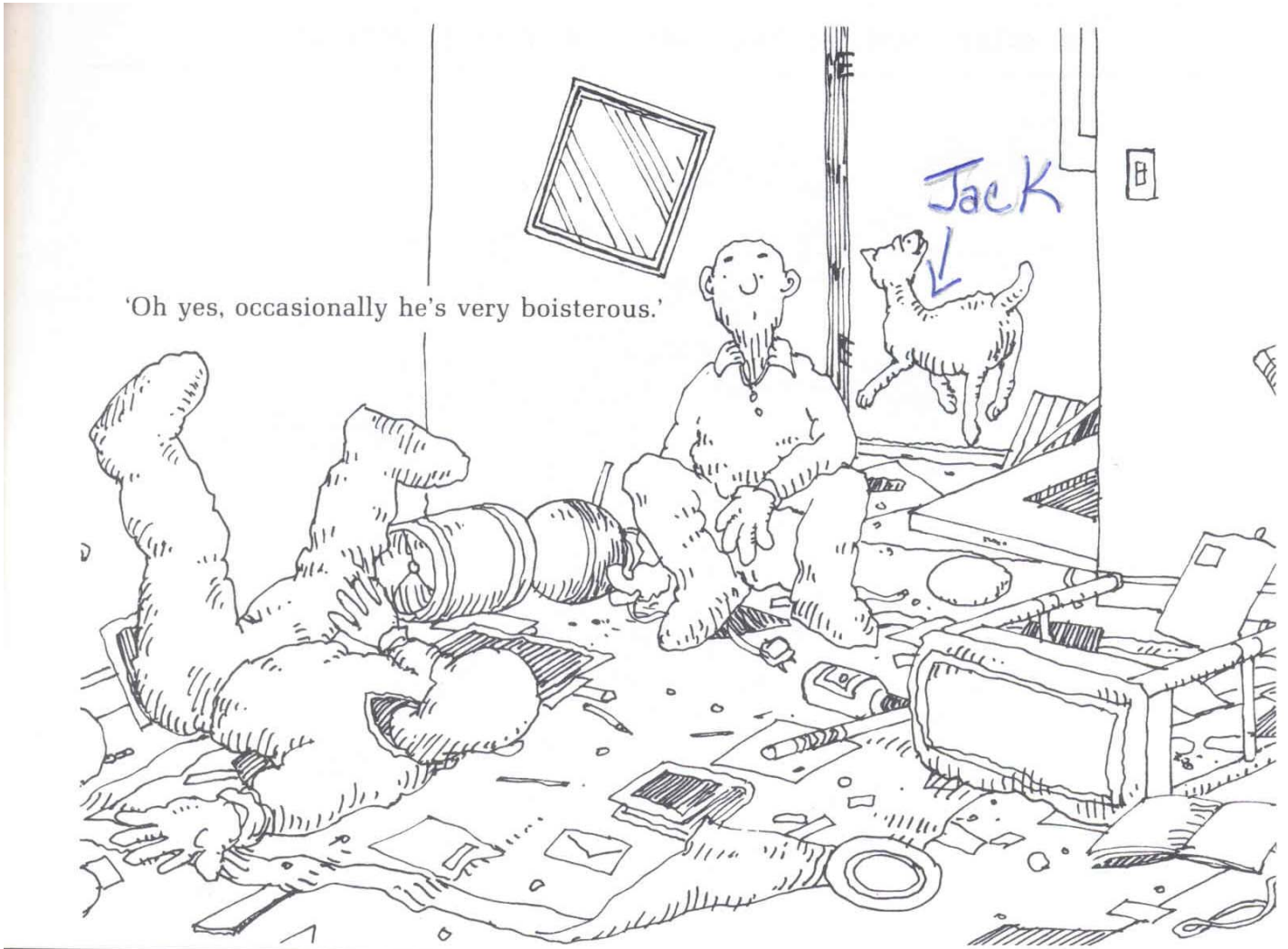
Both experience and research have dominated the beneficial effects that can be achieved via early neurological stimulation, socialization and enrichment experiences. Each has been used to improve performance and to explain the differences that occur between individuals, their trainability, health and potential. The cumulative effects of the three stages have been well documented. They best serve the interests of owners who seek high levels of performance when properly used. Each has a cumulative effect and contributes to the development and the potential for individual performance.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carmen L Battaglia holds a Ph.D. and Masters Degree from Florida State University. As an AKC judge, researcher and writer, he has been a leader in promotion of breeding better dogs and has written many articles and several books. Dr. Battaglia is also a popular TV and radio talk show speaker. His seminars on breeding dogs, selecting sires and choosing puppies have been well received by the breed clubs all over the country. Those interested in learning more about his articles and seminars should visit the website <http://www.breedingbetterdogs.com>



RON PEMBERTON

For those of you who have shown your Labradors in the Conformation ring, I am sure you recognize the name of Ron Pemberton, an AKC judge, whom many of us considered a good judge of Labradors, albeit he was of lately in his “black mode”. Ron died on his 68th birthday this past July 22nd, suffering a heart attack and complications following surgery at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ann Arbor. Ron was a man of many talents: husband, father, grandfather, retired junior high science teacher, master gardener, orchid enthusiast, safari seeker in Africa, breeder of 50 champion Newfoundlands, coordinator of the Detroit Kennel Club combined specialties, and just plain good friend. A note of condolence may be sent to his family at: 5125 Vines Road, Howell, MI 48843-9659.

