

Mike and I have been married for 33 yrs and we have two grown sons. We live in the country on 3 acres. The front 1 ½ acres is fenced and electronic gated. Our home and kennel sit inside this perimeter. The back 1 ½ acres has a tributary of the Skeleton Creek running through it and we have allowed this back area to be natural with some maintenance of the trees and the walking paths, we've made.

I have always been a lover of all animals. I grew up w/ dogs, cats and working quarter horses.

When Mike and I married, we purchased a golden retriever. I then purchased a Rhodesian Ridgeback because many times the boys and I were alone while Mike worked. Unfortunately, he was severely dysplastic and had to be put down by the time he was 3yrs old. Back then, they didn't have surgical fixes for CHD like we have today. Waylon, our golden, was getting up in years and it was time to think about another family companion. We decided while the golden was wonderful, the grooming they needed was not! We didn't even consider another RR because they really aren't a dog to have around a lot of different people. We knew they are extremely protective but we didn't realize their immense capacity for family protection. He would have a hard time understanding that kids squealing in happiness or the boys and friends wrestling, were not real threats.

I have my husband to thank for my getting totally immersed in the Labrador Retriever. Little did he know I would embark on such a love and passion for this wonderful breed! You see, I didn't want a Labrador - he did. We were a very active young family; very outdoorsy, played a lot of team as well as individual sports, owned a boat and were always at the lake. I grew up playing basketball and softball, both fast pitch and slow. The year I gave up softball was the year my team won women's State Championship...and I was 40 yrs old. The classmates of our boys were always choosing Mike and me to be their class parents. I also coached basketball (for 7 yrs). Thus, we were having lots of children and teenagers over at the house all the time. Mike's constant pro-Labrador arguments won out. A Labrador was simply perfect for the type of people we were and our lifestyle. I cannot imagine my life without these wonderful dogs today. They are truly unsurpassed as the ultimate family companion.

Our first Labrador was purchased in 1988. She was called Sadie and was Sunnybrook Acres-bred. She went everywhere with us and was a superior companion for our boys. I got involved with the local kennel club's obedience classes and decided I wanted to do therapy dog work with her. She went on to earn her CGC and TDI.

I went to my first dog show here in Enid not too long after obtaining Sadie and I was wowed by all the beautiful dogs. Growing up athletic, I knew I wanted to try this dog sport.

My first show prospect was a yellow male we called Joe. He was sired by Ch. Waterbound Flying Scotsman. Joe and I had a lot of fun going to matches. AKC Sanctioned Matches were plentiful back then and a great training ground for a newbie. The first lab people I met at this time were Gene Paul and Betty Reed of LabArk and they were very nice to me and encouraging. Unfortunately, when Joe was 8 months old, Sadie sprung him from a free standing pen we had outside (we hadn't put up fencing yet out here on our 3 acres) and we lost him. We were all devastated. Three months later, I was offered a darling little black male puppy by the Reed's. I named him Shadow, LabArk Sher-Mi Black Shadow. His sire was Ch. Davoeg Silky Beau and his dam, Ch. Cedarwoods LabArk Fanfare.

I started studying the breed, learning about the standard and deciphering what it was telling me, learning about structure, movement and literally just being a sponge. I read everything I could get my hands on. I was nowhere near ready for a bitch and breeding as I had so much to learn. I wanted to be sure when I did start breeding that I could pick the right pup(s) to keep. However, a lady I had met in the park one day had a pretty yellow bitch with her. She shared with me that her girl had a litter of yellows and would I be interested in seeing them. In this litter was a very outgoing, pretty, and balanced darker yellow girl that caught my novice eye immediately. She had beautiful eyes (to this day, for me, you must have correct shape and color; the eyes of a Labrador are the window to his soul). I mentioned to the owner that while I was still in my homework stage of learning about Labradors, she should consider holding this puppy back and sell her last if she didn't want to keep her.

Well, Callie, as this bitch puppy came to be called, ended up coming to live here at 1yr old. I started showing her and we picked up points easily enough. I remember at a show one time, we had won WB and went onto win BOB over a top ranked dog at the time shown by a well known pro. A few ladies exhibiting that day at the show came over to me and introduced themselves and wanted to know about, Callie. They were Kim Livingston of Briarglen and Ann Vaughn of BlueMoon. I have always remembered this as they made me feel welcome. I remember Kim saying to me that Callie looked like a female Finchingfield Navigator. I was happy to tell her that he was behind her.

Callie became Sher-Mi's foundation bitch. She was OFA excellent, OFA elbows normal(few were doing them back then and I have Mary Feazell to thank for educating me about the importance of checking elbows as well as doing ACVO exams on whole litters) and eyes examined until she was 9 yrs old. Her registered name was, **Ch. Lesages' Own Golden Tornado CGC**. She was a Ch. Bold Aaron granddaughter and a Ch. Shookstown Solo Smasher gr-granddaughter on her dam's side and came down from Ch. Finchingfield Navigator on her sire's side.

For my first litter, I bred Callie to Shadow. She whelped 9 puppies in a space of 3 hours. After she came back into coat from the litter, I finished up her championship title. From this litter I kept a yellow female and a yellow male and these two became Sher-Mi's first homebred champions. They were Isom, **Ch. Sher-Mi Stop 'Em Cold CGC**, and Haley, **Ch. Sher-Mi Heart In Motion CGC**. These two did well at the specialties they attended winning their large classes. Haley won Best In Specialty Match at SMLRC (they were still working on obtaining AKC sanctioning at that time). For Callie's second litter, I bred her to Ch. Sumo's Bo Regard Arrogance. I kept back a pretty black girl but unfortunately, her bite went off. Callie's third litter consisted of two puppies and was sired by Blackthorn Imminent Thunder. I had a nicely structured puppy girl that I placed into a Junior's home on a co-ownership basis. They did well in Junior Showmanship. I bred this bitch one time, to Topform Master Sergeant WC TDI. I co-owned my pick with Jo-Anne Jace of Imagine Labradors in Calif. This puppy started off going Best Puppy at HDLRC. Nessa, **Ch. Sher-Mi Imagine A Perfect Ten WC**, finished with a 5 pt major. Jo-Anne is having a lot of fun with her girl today as a veteran. Last year at HDLRC, Nessa won Best Veteran in Sweeps, 1st Veteran Bitch in regular classes and then onto Best Veteran.

After my first litter, we decided to erect a kennel building (16x40) that was indoor/outdoor with heat and A/C for the comfort of the dogs. It is right outside our backdoor down the sidewalk to the east. While I have a kennel, our dogs are not kennel dogs. All seniors are in the home 24/7 and our keeper pup(s) are raised in our home. Everyone else rotates into our home on a regular basis. The kennel was designed for my comfort too,

with a recliner, TV, fridge, music. I have an area where I can bathe the dogs too when I think they need it, which is not often.

Haley was bred to Ch. Tabatha's Drifter At Dickendall JH, and from this breeding came our beloved, Joel, **Ch. Sher-Mi Drift'n Heart JH WC CGC**. We have dearly loved all of our dogs but, Joel stole everyone's heart right off the bat. I can honestly say if this pup hadn't worked out, he was here to stay regardless. He was a male who loved puppies. He would get into the whelping box and let the babies crawl all over him. With older pups, he would entice them into games of gentle tug of war. He was a quick study dog and was so much fun to work with. He just made everything so easy. He earned his JH title with very little training (I had no training group. I grabbed a book and we were off!), no force fetch in place and no e-collar conditioning. He was a true natural in the field. One thing he would do when coming out of the water on water retrieves, was set his bird down (not drop it) on the ground, shake off and pick his bird right back up and come on into me. This was a given time and time again. I had no worries because it was a constant. Joel earned his JH in 4 out of 5 tests. And the one he didn't pass on was the water series. It was a concept that he hadn't done before but boy he hunted trying hard to find it anyway. He would stop and look at me but I was afraid to try to handle him because we had just started that and I knew if he didn't do it, we'd be out for sure.

I'll share a funny story with you, one which after all these years still makes us laugh. When I decided we were going to enter our first JH test, a friend in TX, Darlene Harper, Goldust Labradors, invited us to stay with her that weekend. Off to her pond we went to do some water work. Joel swam out to get his bird, swam back, gets out, laid his bird on the ground to shake like always and WALKED OFF! I tell him to fetch it up and he IGNORED ME! I was flabbergasted and told him to do it again. He wasn't having any of it. I look at Darlene and told her, "He's never done this before." She asked me if he'd been force fetched. "No", I tell her, "He doesn't need it" She opened her eyes wide and is floored. She couldn't believe I'd come all that way and entered a dog with little or no formal training in a hunt test. This gal has run many hunt tests all the way through MH and she's no green horn. Insecurity set in and she had me seriously thinking about not running him. I was secretly worried about it all night and decided I'd make my decision once we get there. I can't tell you how elated I was when I decided to run him and he passed his first JH leg! By the way, him not picking his bird up never happened again and he never refused a 'fetch it up' again. He was great at rounding up inside toys taken outside into our large yards.

I was SH training Joel at the time of a bad car accident. A woman in her brand new Lincoln town car ran a red light going about 45mph and broadsided me in my full size conversion van(thank God, I believe in seat belts) and totaled both vehicles and broke my back. This has been a tremendous set back for me and changed so much in my life overall and in dogs. I'm on my feet today and I'm thankful for it. I can show myself sometimes and I so enjoy it. I really miss being in the ring with my own dogs.

Joel finished his championship at 14 months of age. I had taken Joel to SMLRC for his first shows at 7 months. He took 2nd in his sweeps class and 1st in his regular class. I was called by some Texas friends that were working on building majors at a show there and would I consider bringing my young boy to help with the numbers. I did, figuring it would be good practice for him and he took the major at 8 months of age! When he was just a few weeks past his first birthday, he won RWD at DFWLRC. The very next day at an all breed show he won his second major.

Haley was bred again, this time to Ch. Tormentil Labradale Primetime. From this litter I kept a male and a female. Unfortunately, this litter became my first experience with elbow dysplasia. The little boy was severe and crippled by 5 months of age. I polled some breeders for information/advice and learned many just put them down. I simply could not do that. It was expensive, but this little boy deserved a chance at as much a pain free life as I could give him. Surgery was done one elbow at a time and a great home was found for him. He has lived his life at leisure being a certified therapy dog. It was truly his calling according to his owner. He is up in years now and has some arthritis but it's managed and life goes on for this special boy. The female I kept also had a bad elbow but wasn't severe like her brother's was...it was grade 1 so no surgery was warranted. She too is going strong today and still hunts with her owner.

I leased two bitches for Joel. One was Flyway's Ripple Effect, WC and the other, Ch. Flyway's Gift Of Gab. Of the first, Deuce, **Ch. Sher-Mi The Heart's Contender JH**, was born. This boy captured the heart of a young woman at 2 wks of age. She didn't know it but I knew I'd be keeping him and letting her finish his Championship and then I would give him to her for her birthday one day. He's the apple of her eye and she loves him dearly. These two bonded from the time he was a wee one. From the second leased bitch, the bitch puppy I kept, didn't work out and was placed in a pet home (she was too soft for me) and another lovely bitch puppy went to be a foundation for a new kennel. A boy in the litter, Sher-Mi Winmore Jagged Heart JH, is owned by my field trainer and is in training for his SH.

Isom (**Ch. Sher-Mi Stop 'Em Cold CGC**) was bred to a bitch I had purchased called, Ryah, Avalon's Sher-Mi Uryah Heap CGC. I put several points including one major on her but I never finished her. I gave up as she didn't really like to show so it was a challenge and decided it wasn't worth it if she wasn't having fun. From this mating came my, Ripley, **Ch. Sher-Mi Believe It Or Not CGC**. On the day I finished her championship, she took Best of Breed from the classes over 6 specials! When she was 10 ½ yrs old, I took her to LRC National 2006. She won Best of Opposite Sex Veteran Sweeps. Three months later, I took her to a large all breed show in Texas where she won Best in Show Veteran! Today, Ripley is 13 yrs old and going strong.

I bred Ripley three times. Her first litter was to Mex.Ch. Milton Of Little By Little, and from this mating came my Roma, **Ch. Sher-Mi Believes In Angels WC**. Roma's first major was a 5 point one, earned the day after DFWLRC. Ripley's second litter was by Ch. Sounders Easy Does it and from this mating came Dallas, **Ch. Sher-Mi Stagecoach To Barbaree CDX**, owned by my good friend, Linda Oldham, of Barbaree Labradors. Dallas was bred to a lovely male of Linda's, Ch. Barbaree River D At 'Appyland, and from this mating came my Dani, **Barbaree Sher-Mi River Dance, SH**. For Ripley's final litter, I bred her to Joel and co-owned a lovely yellow female and she was bred to, Ch. Janlon's Light My Fire and from this mating came my Dusty, **Ch. Sher-Mi Dusty McStorms P.I**. Dusty is currently in whelp to Noah.

Roma was bred to Joel for my Randi, **Ch. Sher-Mi Random Hearts WC**. For Roma's second litter 2 yrs later, she decided she wanted puppies by Joel again! She bred herself this time. Roma is a problem solving girl and can open anything she wants to if it's not secured. I had just used her as a tease for a collection and failed to secure her gate. I went out to the kennel about 5 minutes later to get her (we were off to the shows that weekend) and there she and Joel were, both grinning at me. From this second mating to Joel came a yellow female who earned her JH quickly and was getting ready to start running SH, when she turned 2 yrs old and upon OFA time, she had one hip that didn't pass. Another in this litter went on to be the foundation of a new kennel in KS, and

as of this date, she's in whelp w/ her first litter to Noah. Roma's third litter was by Ch. Shadowglen Augustus CDX JH. From this mating a nice male went to a friend that does hunt tests and he earned his JH quickly and will be running SH this fall.

Randi's first litter was by Ch. Lockbriar Journey O'BriargIn JH. We had 3 babies and I kept two of them, Noah, **Ch. Sher-Mi Front Runner JH**, and Natalie, **Ch. Sher-Mi Music Of The Heart**. Noah had 9pts in two weekends of showing when he was just 6 months old. He earned a 4pt major at 9months of age. He finished his championship with another major at 14 months of age on the day. I showed him at SMLRC when he was 16 months and he earned a JAM. He quickly earned his JH. Noah is currently back in the show ring for this year and he's ranked #7 right now. Competition is quite stiff as there are some very nice dogs/bitches competing right now. He'll go back in the field next year for his SH. I have very high hopes for this boy to earn an MH one day. He is a quick study like his grandpa, Joel, and he's a natural line taker and an excellent marker so this goal is a reachable one, I think.

Natalie finished her championship at 16 months of age. She had 5pts at 6 months of age. At a big all breed show she took Sporting Group 1 –Puppy. Her first specialty was DFWLRC and she went Best Puppy In Specialty from the 9-12month class. At Potomac, in both 9-12 sweeps and regular classes she earned a cut pin. The following year, I showed her at DFWLRC and she took a JAM and then another JAM at MVLRC. Natalie currently has her first litter and I like what I see.

For Randi's second litter, I bred her again to Ch. Lockbriar Journey O'BriargIn JH, and had an average sized litter this time. I didn't keep anything personally from this litter but did co-own one with my good friend, Dana Rose, Tribute Labradors. Remy started out a beautiful puppy and she's still very pretty with a lot of quality to her but as she started to mature, she wasn't using her rear well on her own. So the decision was made to not show her and Dana and I are excitingly awaiting an upcoming litter with her. Another nice puppy girl went to Julie McVay-Reeves, of Shadowmyst Labradors, and their girl has earned her started retriever title thus far. They plan on much more with her. Then at Hilton Head, yet another pretty girl lives with her owner and she has a major and some points thus far and has earned all the rally titles and has a few legs towards her CD title at the time of this writing.

I feel very fortunate and blessed through the years to have had the successes I have had with relatively few problems. My goal in breeding has always been to strive to breed athletic Labradors that were mentally and physically sound and to keep good work ethic in my dogs with outgoing biddable temperaments. Winning is fun and wonderful but it's not the end all for me. That sound, even tempered family pet is. The greatest satisfaction is through phone calls/emails/pictures sent from families who own my dogs letting me know how wonderful they are, how much they are loved and how full their lives are because they have them. Sher-Mi dogs through the years have earned Championships, hunt test titles, obedience and agility titles. I have numerous therapy dogs in homes including service dogs and SAR dogs too. One service dog who stands out so richly was Aspen. In 2006, she was chosen AKC's Service Dog of the Year, AKC ACE AWARD. If you've not read her stories, please go to my website, www.sher-mi.com/ and do so. It will warm you to the ends of your toes. The bond she had with her owner and how much Aspen enriched and gave her life back to her even though she was disabled. Warning though, it's a tissue alert at times.

I have met and become friends with many through the years. This wonderful sport of Dogs gives you that. I don't get to attend as many specialties as I would like for they are so much fun and I immensely enjoy them. Win or lose, the camaraderie is what it's all about....seeing old friends and meeting new ones. If you place or win, that's just icing on the cake! Labrador people are a lot like their dogs....intelligent, kind and FUN!

I didn't have a mentor when I started but once I got going and started to meet people and talking with them, there have been more than a few that have been there for me when I've had a problem or questions about whatever. I could count on them for honest answers. I thank Kendall Herr, Kim Livingston, Jan Grannemann, and Dana Rose. I especially thank Linda Oldham. Even though I didn't have a mentor when I started and muddled through many years on my own, once I became friends with Linda, she has truly become the mentor I never had.

We will be retiring very soon and I'm looking at judging. I have done some judging and I really enjoy it. I've judged the Sussex National Sweeps, Weimaraner and Papillon Specialty sweeps and many AKC Sanctioned Matches through the years. I am currently working on obtaining my Labrador judging approval. It has always been one of my goals and I look forward to it. I will always have Labradors but breeding will slow down and I'll be co-owning more. Thank you, LQ, for asking me to share my successes and setbacks through the years. Breeding is truly one step forward and two steps back. To new breeders, know where you are coming from, where you are and where you want to go.

Sherry L. Anderson
Sher-Mi Labradors