

SPORTING GROUP

Not all sporting dogs have docked tails, most likely because the forefathers determined what worked best for their breed was dependent upon the function for which it was being developed. A quick glance at several breed standards finds “to or not below the hock”; “naturally tailless or docked to four inches”; and “docked to a specific length, six inches at maturity and docked or undocked but should be in balance with rest of the dog.”

The 1796 English dog tax law is often quoted about docking. “This was intended to be a luxury tax for any dog(s) not used in sport if the individual lived in a dwelling assessed a tax. Individuals who lived in dwellings not assessed a tax could own one dog as a companion without being taxed.

So why do we dock? To avoid injury, infection, and potential amputation for the health and welfare of our dogs.

—Patte Titus,

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Curly-Coated Retrievers

Jenny Dickinson is again sharing some more obedience ideas concerning training Curlies who are more mature, and her article follows.

TRAINING THE MATURE CURLY

I have been training my current Curly-Coated Retriever, Billy, since he was a little puppy, but life has gotten in the way of obedience work. After recent surgery, I just returned to obedience training. I am 70 years old, and my dog is now 5 years old. I am scared to run out of time, but what I have discovered is that he is more cooperative and settled in his work than he was before. He is giving me more sustained effort. *That is what a Curly will do if you let him grow up!*

The most compelling example of this was my dear Bart, who passed away some years ago. Bart was the orneriest puppy I have ever had to live with. He was contentious and uncooperative and picked fights with my other Curly male. After one particularly serious fight that landed us all in the veterinary hospital, I seriously considered re-homing Bart to a single-dog home. However, I loved him too much and decided I had to make our situation work.

After rigorous separations and lots of desensitization, harmony was restored. As time passed, the boys grew very comfortable with each other, and we were all able to sleep in the same bed together; one boy on either side of me. However, the best was yet to be!

My work involves helping families with reactive dogs. Bart became my “sidekick,”



Curly-Coated Retriever

working with me by reacting calmly to dogs who tended to bark and lunge. Bart became an essential partner, and along with my Lhasa Apso, he helped many cranky dogs learn to walk politely with their owners.

Bart went with me to pet expos, Meet the Breeds events, benefit strolls, and many other events where unpleasant behavior would have been unthinkable. Bart had become completely reliable. I marveled at his loyalty and

cooperation. Obviously, I learned some valuable lessons from him.

In the past, I have had breeds that took several years to mature, but Curlies are exceptional in this regard. Typically, Curly people will tell you that you do not have the complete package until a Curly is 5 years old. I am seeing this with Billy, and I certainly learned this with Bart.

I, myself, did plenty of stupid things as a

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young person, and I like to think I have grown up. Maybe that is why it does not bother me that my breed needs time, too! —J.D.

Thank you, Jenny, for sharing Billy and Bart's stories. It does demonstrate to me that with some Curlies, older is certainly better. I have had only two Curlies who, over the past many years, responded well to early obedience training. Now, if I can only have my 7-year-old Curly earn her CD title, I would be thrilled!

—Ann Shinkle,

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Curly-Coated Retriever Club of America

Golden Retrievers

COVID-19 AND GOLDEN RETRIEVERS

During the current global pandemic, people are concerned not only about their own health, but also about the health of their dogs and other pets. Thankfully, there is no reason to worry.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, as reported by the American Kennel Club, there is no evidence that pets can spread the virus. It is known however, that a few dogs, worldwide, have tested positive. But those dogs had been exposed to people known to be infected, and the dogs experienced zero to mild symptoms. Thus,



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the CDC recommends that you care for your pet as you would a family member and take the same precautions to keep them safe. It's important to note that coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, and *canine* coronavirus infects only animals and does not infect people.

As the world waits for a vaccine to protect against the virus, conversation has turned to immunity and antibodies. So, what does that mean for your Golden? How do you know he has the necessary antibodies to protect him against those canine diseases that put him at serious risk? A titer test, performed by your veterinarian, can measure the presence and number of antibodies in his blood to determine if your dog is immune to a given disease.

Vaccinations given at an early age offer protection for an estimated period of time. Most veterinarians recommend revaccination (booster shots) for the “core,” or life-threatening diseases—canine distemper virus (CDV), parvovirus (CPV), and canine adenovirus (CAV)—every year or every three years.

Dr. Ronald Schulz, professor of immunology and founding chair of the Department of Pathobiological Sciences at the Wisconsin-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine, and author of the vaccination

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