

## SPORTING GROUP

He further said that the beauty of the Shorthair rests on sound fundamentals through trials to produce the suitability for the tasks for which the breed was being developed. The best of the trial *Siegers* (field champions) are identical to the most beautiful dogs in the ring.

Much consideration was given to the Shorthair coat. They didn't want the body hidden under long or thick coats. It was a source of great pride to see the muscles functioning and vein work evident as the dog worked the field, indicating what was considered a look of nobility.

Bred to retrieve on both land and water, sometimes in cold, icy conditions, and to work through heavy brush and muddy fields yet live in the home as part of the family, the Shorthair's coat was critically important. Much thought was put into the type of coat that met these conditions and would still be short enough to show the dog's lean athleticism at work.

It was observed that in nature the coat and hair of the otter, beaver, and polar bear resisted ice and snow and shed dried mud easily. It was important that the Shorthair's coat would not catch, snag, pick up burrs, nor become entangled in heavy brush, as was often the case in the breeds with longer coats or more porous hair. Softer hair or curled fur

created other problem of matting or the need for periodic cutting.

The breed's founders wanted an efficient coat that protected the dog in the field yet made him an easy keeper in the home.

It is because of the breed's founding with these purposes in mind, along with some trial and error, that the Shorthair coat today is what it is: short, thick, tough, and hard to the hand, while thinner and soft to the touch on the head and ears. The slight oily property found in a fine hair undercoat helps with insulation, gives waterproof qualities, and allows the coat to dry quicker and withstand cold, wet, and icy conditions.

*It is not* a double coat, nor is it a wire coat. The hair shaft in the Shorthair coat is relatively consistent in length—with the exception of under the tail, where it is slightly longer; and on the head and ears, where it is shorter and a bit softer.

If one gently pulls some of the Shorthair's body hair (dark or white) and rolls it between the thumb and forefinger, the texture should be readily apparent: round and smooth, yet with resistance; not soft. It is this attribute that gives the coat its identifying feel under hand.

—Patte Titus,  
[chexsic@mac.com](mailto:chexsic@mac.com)

[German Shorthaired Pointer Club of America](#)

## Curly-Coated Retrievers

Again, Jenny Dickinson is our columnist this month, and she has written a thoughtful column about tracking. I like her new approach, especially as today tracking test sites and land to practice on with our dogs, may not be very easy to find. I was very fortunate many years ago to have a tracking judge teach me the high points about tracking. Jenny, however, shares some very good ideas that can be used when practicing on small areas of land as well as the larger areas that some of us are more familiar with. Jenny's thoughts follow.

### IT'S THE NOSE: TRACKING WITH CURLIES

I continue to marvel at the scenting ability of Curlies. I recently ordered several cans of cat food from Chewy and left them in the garage. My young Curly promptly discovered them, got several cans out of the shrink-wrapped cases, and opened them with his teeth. These are no longer accessible (I think!), but his determination to get at food he was able to detect through plastic and cardboard impressed me.

This reminded me of a game I teach puppies in preparation for the scent discrimination exercise they will later learn in Utility, and for other scenting activities such as tracking. Curlies are



Curly-Coated Retriever: cigarette card, early 20th century

COURTESY: NY PUBLIC LIBRARY

## SPORTING GROUP

so brilliant at using their noses that they take to it immediately. I first learned this game from trainer Esther Zimmerman. Whether you want to track, do obedience, or do nose work, you might want to try it. It is also a good game if you are stuck at home during a pandemic!

I call the game “Find Mine,” which is my Utility command. You will need a number of identical metal boxes—an easy source is the boxes that hold holiday gift cards. (The reason I choose metal boxes is that your dog may decide to retrieve a box, so plastic would not hold up.) You will also need tongs. Put one box aside, and mark it with a dot of nail polish or a marker. This will be the one to hold *your* scent. Make sure to handle all the others with tongs.

Put a piece of meat in the marked box. Put that box between your hands and heat it up so you have hot scent on that box. Put pup behind a barrier so that he cannot watch you place the boxes on the floor. Tell him, in an excited voice, not to peek! Build expectation. Using the tongs, set three boxes eight or so inches apart, and have the one with your scent among them.

Now, ceremoniously release pup to the pile, saying, “Find mine!” He will naturally investigate the boxes. When he hesitates or makes *any* indication of interest at the marked box, say “Hooray!” and rush to open the box, and let him get the treat. You are *not* expecting certainty on his part. At this point, you just want him to

see that this is a fun game with a worthy payoff.

Stick with just a few boxes until pup shows you that he understands the goal. As with all our teaching, we want our dogs to feel pride and confidence in their actions. If he shoots directly to the correct box, he is a Curly! Now add more boxes with your tongs until you have a ridiculous number. Your Curly will embrace the challenge with alacrity and enthusiasm!—J.D.

Thank you, so much, Jenny, for sharing a very informative column.

—Ann Shinkle,  
[annshinkle@aol.com](mailto:annshinkle@aol.com)  
[Curly-Coated Retriever Club of America](#)

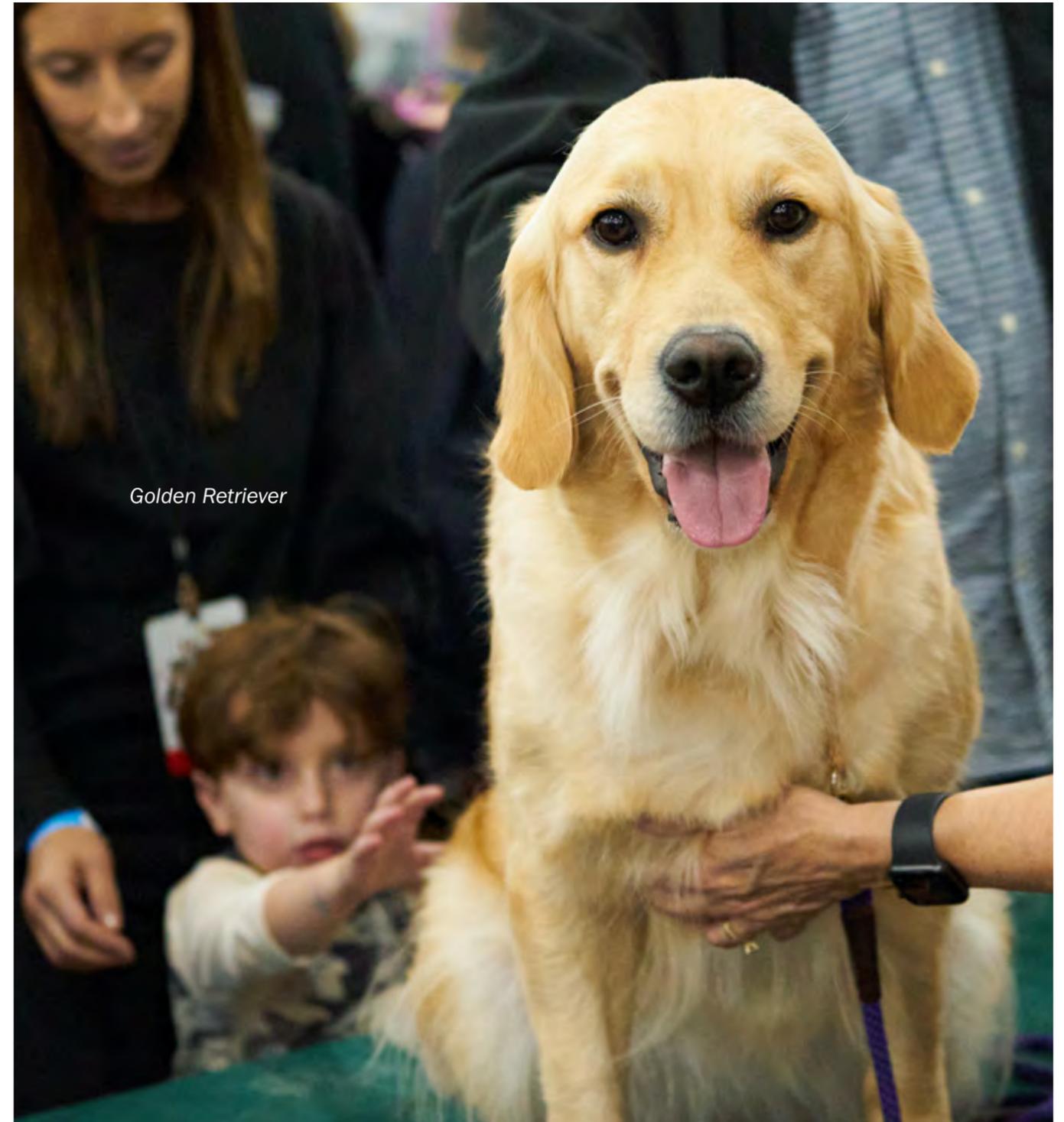
---

## Golden Retrievers

### GOLDENS FOR VICTIM JUSTICE

She’s a Justice Facility dog. Puma, a 4½-year-old Golden Retriever in British Columbia, is the counterpart to the U.S. Courthouse Facility dogs you read about in my July column. Puma and her handler, Kim Gramlich, work with the Delta Police Victim Services assisting victims of all types of crimes, including domestic violence and sexual assault.

Puma came to Delta two years ago through the Pacific Assistance Dog Society (PADS), which is an assistance dog school in Canada, accredited through Assistance Dogs International (ADI). ADI is a coalition of



Golden Retriever

DAVID WOO ©AKC