

In addition to their detection duties, Bella and Ginger specialize in public relations, serving as lovable liaisons between the police and the community. Doing what Goldens do best, the two charm schoolchildren and scout troops during demonstrations of their sniffing skills. After first greeting their audience with Golden smiles and wagging tails, each takes only seconds to identify boxes containing gunpowder. Sergeant Cook encourages the children to rearrange or hide the boxes, but the dogs follow their noses and quickly find the stash.

Once the team goes home after a day's work, Bella and Ginger become typical Goldens. "Bella is the kind of dog who goes to work and when we go home is just a dog," Cook says. "Ginger is from a line of Goldens bred as working dogs and genetically built for this kind of work. She is always in work mode and just wants to work."

Despite the differences in their heritage, both Bella and Ginger are worthy representatives of what's best in the Golden Retriever.

—Nona Kilgore Bauer, [nona@nonabauer.com](mailto:nona@nonabauer.com)

Golden Retriever Club of America website: [grca.org](http://grca.org)

## Labrador Retrievers

Petra Ford is our guest columnist this issue. Petra and her remarkable partner, Tyler, were twice National Obedience Champion. In 2012 they also won the Crufts World Cup Individual Championship. Petra is cofounder of Aqua Dog Rehabilitation and recently released a video on puppy conditioning and body awareness.

### Got Attention?

*Attention: the concentrated direction of the mind, especially to a problem or task.*

The majority of obedience dogs can perform the individual exercises without much difficulty. The challenge lies in their ability to perform them while ignoring strong temptations such as smell, sight, and sound. Dogs are wired to rely on their senses for self-preserva-

tion and to navigate the world. For them it is counterintuitive to ignore these distractions and must be trained. What I see quite often, however, is the handler's inconsistent attention to the dog and the task at hand. In dog training, attention is a two-way street. We cannot expect our dogs to ignore every distraction and focus completely on us if we are not doing the same.

Attention is more than "not looking away." The handler must be mentally focused on their dog and on the task at hand before expecting the same from their dog.

Dogs tend to be like me: literal, black and white. So as trainers and handlers we must be clear. The dog is either working, or not. The dog should not have to guess. From the moment I start training my dogs until we are finished, I never take my attention off them. And I expect them to keep their attention on me. Things often happen that can interrupt a training session. Doors open and close, people talk to you, you forget what your training plan was, you start thinking about work, and so on. When these things happen, release your dog and either put him in a crate or in a relaxed down, and then regroup.

Often I see people look away from their dog while training. When they look back at the dog, the dog is also looking away. Then the handler corrects the dog for looking away. Doesn't sound fair, does it? To be honest, most people don't even realize they are doing it. So pay attention to yourself!

Recently at a trial I observed handlers with their dogs outside the ring. In one instance, the handler let her dog visit a friend during her warm-up. She then stopped and watched the ring. Soon it was her turn, and she rushed to the ring entrance, urging the dog to come along. As they entered the ring, I knew they were in trouble. She had never reconnected with the dog, and the dog was not clear whether he was working or not. Between exercises the dog went to visit the steward. Some would say, "naughty dog!" But the dog had just been allowed to visit with a

person outside the ring—how does the dog know the difference? The owner commented that the dog was not paying attention. I would argue that the handler was not paying attention.

The exciting news is that you can change your behavior and have a positive impact on your ring performance. Start paying close attention when you train. Work on maintaining attention for short sessions at home, then progress to more distracting environments like class or a training group. Don't worry if you make a mistake. The important part is recognizing it! Over time you are creating a habit, and it will become easier.

Remember, be fair to your dog. Don't ask for complete attention if you can't do the same.

Happy training! —P.F.

Thank you, Petra! Your observations and advice are valuable well beyond the obedience ring.

—Lee Foote

The Labrador Retriever Club website: [thelabradorclub.com](http://thelabradorclub.com)

## Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retrievers

Addison's Disease and Juvenile Addison's Disease in Tollers

Addison's disease (AD) has been recognized in Tollers since 1997. More recently, juvenile Addison's disease (JADD) has been documented as a genetic form of Addison's disease found in Tollers.

Addison's disease is caused by destruction of the adrenal glands, resulting in decreased production of vital hormones necessary for the regulation of sodium and potassium levels in the blood. Clinical signs of Addison's disease are often nonspecific and may include vomiting, diarrhea, decreased appetite, weight loss, and slow heart rate.

Based on data specific to Tollers, the average age of onset is 4.4 years, while JADD occurs in much younger dogs. The average onset for JADD is 5 months, although puppies between 8



**sporting** weeks and 12 months have been identified. In addition, JADD dogs have been diagnosed with a variety of other autoimmune diseases and non-autoimmune diseases including seizures, meningitis, polyarthritis, pneumonia, AIHA (hemolytic anemia), AITP (thrombocytopenia), hepatitis/liver failure, and eye disorders, including corneal edema, bilateral neutrophilic keratitis, and lymphocytic conjunctivitis.

In May 2012, scientists from the Bannasch Laboratory at the University of California, Davis developed a DNA test available through the OFA to identify carriers of JADD found in Tollers. The carrier rate of JADD just prior to the test being offered was 20 percent. Over 450 Tollers have been tested for JADD to date, giving breeders another tool to make educated and appropriate decisions in their breeding programs.

Some owners have been surprised to receive a test result of “probable affected” for one of their Tollers when the dog exhibited no notable symptoms at a younger age and is in current good health. The reason for this is due to JADD not being completely penetrant, meaning that not all puppies with two copies of the mutation will go on to develop the disease. Based on current research, approximately 75 percent of puppies with two copies of the mutation and haplotype are affected with Addison’s disease.

Toller fanciers have also occasionally expressed frustration or even disbelief that JADD results are not also indicative of Addison’s disease. Although clinically the same disease, the diseases are different based on causative mutation. Danika Bannasch, DVM, Ph.D., says it helps to think of it like PRA. There are 20 different forms of PRA, caused by different mutations. Progressive rod-cone degeneration PRA (prcd-PRA) is the one most commonly found in Tollers, and the one we can test for. Although an ophthalmologist cannot tell the difference by looking in a dog’s eyes, a geneticist can define them as different based on the causative mutation.

Research on both AD and JAAD is

active and ongoing. Bannasch Laboratory continues to work on understanding how the JADD mutation causes autoimmune disease in Tollers, as well as identify genetic causes for adult-onset AD in the breed. Samples are still being collected on *all* Addison’s cases, JADD cases, and non-penetrant JADD cases. Please contact Emily Brown ([eabrown@ucdavis.edu](mailto:eabrown@ucdavis.edu)) to submit samples.

—Heather Green, [zephyr341@sbc-global.net](mailto:zephyr341@sbc-global.net)

Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever Club (USA) website: [nsdtrc-usa.org](http://nsdtrc-usa.org)

## English Setters

### Boy or Girl?

When someone approaches me about acquiring their first English Setter, they often ask, “Should I get a boy or a girl?”

My answer is always “yes.”

Either one can work beautifully in almost any home. The following generalizations are what my experience tells me is often true—but of course there are exceptions.

Many folks have the perception that bitches are docile, easy to manage, and quiet, whereas males do a lot of marking and are macho and hard to handle. Those traits might be true of some breeds, but in English Setters, not so much.

Carefully bred English Setter males should not be aggressive toward other males. They don’t send out vibes that make intact males they encounter want to fight them. If threatened, they will defend themselves (and you), but they hardly ever initiate aggression. If you already have a male dog, chances are you can add an English Setter male to your household if you take common-sense precautions.

Males can be trained not to mark in the house, and once trained, they hardly ever make a mistake.

English Setter girls mature physically and mentally earlier than males. They are alert to their environment (“What can I get into next?”) and use their charms to melt you in order to get

something they want.

Girls often learn new skills more quickly than boys, and they are not intimidated by much. Like boys, they will defend themselves and you when necessary.

Both English Setter puppy boys and girls are playful, affectionate, and can be quite naughty. Household contents and human body parts must be safeguarded from the marauding teeth until the puppy approaches a year of age, when those bad habits begin to fade away. Once again, common sense should be liberally applied.

Both genders are usually very gentle with children. They tolerate ear-pulling and pestering with patience. If a child starts to hurt an English Setter, the dog will often just get up and move away. Of course adult supervision is *always* required when dogs and children get together. And children need to be taught to interact considerately and gently with the family puppy or dog.

Both boys and girls love playing and need exercise. The saying “a tired puppy is a good puppy” applies equally to both genders.

If size is a factor for you, the girls are smaller than the boys. When fully grown, boys are about 25 inches tall at the withers and weigh about 65 pounds, whereas girls are about 23 inches tall at the withers and weigh about 50 pounds. Both tend to think of themselves as lapdogs.

Many personality differences fade away as boys and girls mature. Most English Setter adults are affectionate, laid back, and gentlemen and ladies by nature, as long as they get the exercise they need for optimum health and have an outlet for their energy.

Don’t shy away from a boy if you are looking for a sweet, docile, loving companion who has bursts of energetic playfulness. If you want a pert, sharp-witted, quick, lively creature who pursues her own agenda, then a girl might be just the ticket for you.

I like to sum up the differences this way: English Setter puppy boys seem to say, “Mom, Dad, I love you so much!”