



# Gold Ribbon Rescue

*Rescuing and Rehabilitating Golden Retrievers in Central Texas*

June 2015



## Upcoming Events

**Spring Splashfest**  
at the Quarries  
has been cancelled  
See more details below!

**amazon.com**

Shop on Amazon [with this special link](#) and donate to GRR at the same time.

## Join GRR:

Your Membership  
Expired or Expires on  
\$expires\$

## From Margo, GRR President



Hello everyone! I've got a lot to tell you!

I know some of you may have heard about this wonderful and amazing story. [Adopt a Golden Atlanta](#), in partnership with [Adopt a Golden Knoxville](#) and [Adopt a Golden Birmingham](#) were able to bring thirty-six Golden Retrievers from Istanbul to Atlanta! See the [Adopt a Golden Atlanta](#) website for more information, as well as, their FB page to watch these lucky dogs come to life again. Just heartwarming!

Elsewhere, come and join us at the Quarries for the Spring Splashfest June 6th.

The details are just below my column and you can use the link there to make your reservation.

By the way, we're on Twitter and Instagram now, too! It's a great and easy way to keep up with what is happening at GRR. If you don't have a Twitter account, clicking on this [link](#) will have instructions. If you don't have an Instagram account, clicking on this [link](#) will have instructions, too. Get started today and keep up with our news! Direct links to the media itself are in the left column.

Lastly, summer is just beginning, but it's time to start thinking about the 2016 GRR calendar. Bidding for the monthly photos will begin mid-June. Watch for an upcoming email with details and the kick-off date.

Click this [link](#) to join or renew your membership

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### How Can You Help a Golden?

Make a [tax deductible donation](#) to GRR

Become a [monthly donor](#) and we'll automatically charge your credit card.

[Volunteer](#) – lots of rewarding opportunities  
[Learn More](#)

[Foster](#) – help a golden start its new life  
[Learn More](#)

To learn how you can help make-a-difference, email Shelia Thomas at [Sheila@grr-tx.com](mailto:Sheila@grr-tx.com)

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Many of us, especially me, are drawn to senior Golden! Until recently, the eldest dog to be surrendered to GRR was Ginger at age seventeen. You can imagine the GRR team's amazement when a pair of EIGHTEEN-year-old litter mates were surrendered due to their life-long owner's out of state move. Bailey (15-048) and Honey's (15-049) health and mobility are surprisingly good, and they can both still climb stairs. Their foster parents, Tom and Anita will adopt the charming twosome.

Speaking of summer again, in this issue you will find out how to keep your Golden cool, Dear Goldie is talking about what it's like to be in a new home, and Leslie Parker describes her experience with titer testing.

Enjoy!

*-Margo*

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## Spring Splashfest at the Quarries – CANCELLED!



Due to the recent heavy rains and the risk of bacteria and parasites in bodies of water, the Swimfest will be canceled until further notice. Stay tuned for more details.

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## Dog of the Month: Bogart (14-114)

*- JC and Cathy Smith*



Type of Surrender: San Antonio Animal Care Facility

Status: Available

Age: 9 – 10 years

**Personality:** Bogart loves (and I mean LOVES) tennis balls! His favorite game is fetch. Wherever we are, he always has a tennis ball or two to bring to us. Just in case I forget that he loves to fetch his ball, he will leave it right in front of me. Filling the dishwasher? He puts the tennis ball on the open tray. Sitting on the sofa? He puts the ball next to me. His favorite toys endlessly entertain him. When he leaves a toy outside and forgets to bring it in with him, all I have to say is “go get your toy” and Bogart ventures outside to bring it in. What a smarty pants! If you are looking for a pal to take in the car with you, you've found your best buddy!

**Ideal home:** Bogart loves the attention of kids and loves to be loved. He gets along with older dogs but prefers not to be around dogs that are overly active. Cats are interesting to him in passing, but he has not been formerly introduced to a resident cat. He enjoys his naps and is more suited to a slower lifestyle than being someone's jogging partner. He doesn't jump up on people and has the manners of a distinguished gentleman!

**Comments:** Doesn't he look cheerful despite the “lampshade”? This elderly fellow has now quite nicely recovered from TPLO surgery (tibial plateau leveling osteotomy), had his teeth fixed and now manages his creaky joints with anti-inflammatory medications.

If you are interested in Bogart, please fill out our application here. If you have already applied, have had your phone interview and your home visit, please contact [Paula Ellis](#) OR to learn about the adoption process and complete an application, [click here](#).

## ***Volunteer Spotlight: Pam Phillips***



### **How long have you been volunteering with GRR?**

I first started volunteering with GRR almost 16 years ago.

### **What made you want to volunteer with GRR?**

I met a young girl who was a neighbor of mine. Her best friend was a year-old Golden named Danny. We three became good friends and I was amazed how smart Danny was! Her family moved away and I really missed them, but I also realized how much I truly missed Danny! I didn't think I wanted to own dogs again even though

they had been in my life since I was 4 years old. I have always had a dog in my life until I lost our last Basset Hound three years before. I didn't think I wanted to "own" a dog after that, but I missed Danny so much, I decided to see if I could foster with a Golden Retriever rescue group, if there was such a thing in Austin. Coincidentally I stumbled across an event that GRR was having downtown and let them know I was interested in fostering. Margo Biba came with a Golden and interviewed me. I guess I passed. When our second foster, Sam, came into our lives, we failed, hands down.

### **What volunteer position do you hold?**

Currently I am the co-chair with Paula Ellis for a number of special events for GRR. We head up the volunteer appreciation luncheon, the GRR Gala, and the annual holiday party. My husband, Dean, and I both do home visits and are also Foster coordinators.

We fostered for fourteen years and were drawn to the young, rowdy boys who came into GRR. It was, and still is, the best feeling to see a dog who needed to be socialized, groomed, trained, & most of all, loved come to us. The transformations were amazing! They went from young crazy, under-loved dogs to dogs that could easily be accepted wherever they went. They blossomed! All they ever needed was someone to show them how to behave in this world and how to accept the love that was offered.

### **About how many hours do you typically spend volunteering in this position?**

Gearing up for an event is time consuming, but with the help of so many other GRR volunteers it makes it worthwhile.

**What is your favorite part above all?**

Personally I LOVE doing home visits! My two older Golden Retrievers, Jingles, who's 8, and Rodeo who is almost 4, love them too! You know how Golden Retrievers are; an open door is an invite to come in and socialize. They are great ambassadors for GRR!!

**Describe a cute/funny/interesting story while volunteering in this position.**

Our second foster, Sam, was chosen for us because, (I was told later) he needed a quiet home to heal from ACL surgery and also that we were "older", that our house was a good fit. Ha! And all I really wanted were those crazy young rowdy boys! Lesson learned, be careful what you ask for!

**Give one piece of advice for volunteers interested in serving in this position.**

Don't be afraid to try multiple volunteer positions. Some might be a better fit than others but all are greatly needed and appreciated.

**What is one or two words that describes your experience while volunteering for GRR?**

Gratifying is a word that comes to mind when I think of all the dogs we've fostered. The amazing dedication of so many wonderful people who come together because of the love of Golden Retrievers. Jump in! The water's fine!!

To learn more about volunteering with GRR, send an email to [Sheila@grr-tx.com](mailto:Sheila@grr-tx.com).

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***GRR Monthly Status Report: April 15 - May 15***



**Adopted:** 14-143 Kiska, 15-027 Macy, 15-029 Spunky, 15--019 Duke, 15-012 Cassidy, 15-035 Sissy, 14-134 Boston, 14-141 Missy, 15-021 Montana, 15-030 Hero, 14-130 Baxter, 15-030 Pookie, 15-017 Trouper

**Came in to GRR Care:** 15-038 Tigger, 15-039 Hannah, 15-040 Pookie, 15-041 Trixie, 15-042 Thorne, 15-043 Reggie, 15-044 Ritz, 15-045 Graham, 15-046 Porter, 15-047 Momma Bear, 15-048 Bailey, 15-049 Honey, 15-050 Whitney, 15-051 Willow, 15-052 Nolan, 15-053 Brayden

**Currently in Foster Care:** 49 (24 Available Now/Soon, 16 Foster-Pending-Adoption, 2 Matched 7 Permanent Fosters)

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## **Dear Goldie:**



**Hero (Sherry Keller)**

**Introduction and disclaimer:** Dear Reader, The 'Dear Goldie' column offers advice on issues behavioral and medical, and are written from the **dog's first-person perspective**. I have researched a great number of articles on the internet -and from you- before I formed the issue for this month. I am not an expert, but I do my research. If you have any sample issues for the column, please drop me an [email](#). I promise to make the question and answer fun but informational. Enjoy! - **Dawn Marie Rae**

### **Dear Goldie,**

I came from a shelter and it was just awful. I don't even want to get into that with you. I am definitely on edge and anxious as you can imagine. But now, I've moved in with my new family, a couple of Goldens named Huey and Dewey (I'm glad I'm not Louie!). There are two kids who are always playing around and are kind of noisy, and of course there's my human parents. The problem is they want me to be part of the family action right away and all I want to do is hide in a closet. The kids want to play with me and the dogs are a little scary. It's totally nerve-wracking. I'm just not ready for all of this stuff just yet. How can I get them to go a little slower with me?

- Nerve-wracked in New Braunfels

### **Dear Nerve-wracked,**

I understand completely! I'm going to get you fixed right up away. They need to put themselves in your shoes. They don't become close to everyone right away and they wouldn't get in someone's face too close right off the bat either. Their personal space is three feet, yours is around six. A big difference, right? So, ask them to please let you have your quiet time and some personal space to get used to their routines. Have them get you a little place behind a baby gate or a crate so you can feel safe and secure. After a little time, you'll grow to love them like they have always been your family. Look at the bright side; you're in a forever home!

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## **Where Are They Now? Maya (14-117)**

- Amy and Stephen Sebesta



### **Why I Believe in Maya**

Just before Maya came into our lives, I was sent away for a week on a business trip to learn about Emotional Intelligence (EQ). The idea of EQ as opposed to IQ separates good leaders from great. I thought this was all very interesting, at times boring, and uncomfortable as my own emotions were being exposed. What I didn't realize was how impactful the lesson would be in understanding Maya.

Maya was found running stray, physically unhealthy, scared, and malnourished. We couldn't get her out of our drive way for a brief walk without her freezing up, she lacked name recognition, didn't actively listen or engage with us outside the house, acted like my cat was a threat to golden national security, and vowed to beat any other four-legged creature to the punch by aggressively barking and lunging at fences, windows, and on leash. Is this really a golden retriever?

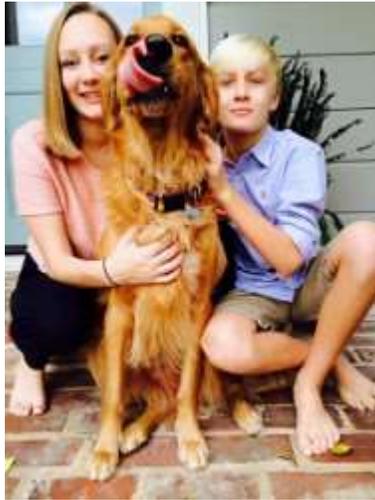
After much encouragement from GRR's Sheila Thomas, I realized Maya's behavior was being driven by her past beliefs. Beliefs are powerful representations of our views, opinions, environment, and life experiences. They guide our feelings that are expressed as behaviors (good and bad), not only in people, but also dogs. Quickly, I thought back to EQ class and the source of Maya's behavior became clear. Maya's primary belief of an almost constant future threat from being stray caused anxiety, driving unGolden-like behaviors.

Ok, so how did we change Maya's beliefs? The first priority was her health. Maya's two months of heartworm bed rest afforded us an opportunity to build a consistent routine, encourage the use of a cozy safe crate, and work on her name recognition and basics with a clicker and lots of treats. After the heartworm treatment was complete, we spent each Saturday for four weeks 1:1 with a dog behaviorist working half time on skills and half time desensitizing. Maya's confidence skyrocketed. So much so, we donated our last unused 1:1 to GRR. While we are still on supervised leash-free visits with the cat, and fence running is sometimes too fun to resist; all of Maya's anxiety-ridden behaviors have completely disappeared letting all her Golden-joy shine through every day.

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## **More 'Where Are They Now?' Brogen/Mo 14-129**

*- Jenny Ulm*



### **Why I Believe in Maya**

It has been six months now since Brogen came to live with us. First of all, we changed his name to Mo. Believe it or not we have a cousin Brogen so we just could not call him that. He took to his new name very well. He is doing great. When he first arrived he jumped on people so excited to see them. We have trained him not to jump. He also pulled on the leash and now he is totally leash trained and loves, loves, loves his walks. He does not have an interest in swimming in our pool, only going to the first step to sit in the water to cool off.

Here are the reasons we love him so much:

He loves to play fetch with my son. The tennis ball is his best friend. He really needed a big yard so that he can play fetch and run.

He is a great snuggler. Loves to jump up in bed and just cuddle.

He loves other dogs. He has play dates with the Golden next door and he loves it. He is a great guard dog. He has a pretty mean bark when he does not know who is at the door.

He does not bolt out the front door. We have trained him to wait at the door and not go in the front without his leash.

He loves the car. He goes to school with me to run carpool and sits in the back with all the boys.

He loves our cats. They are all best buds.

He seems to be very happy at our home.

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## **Another Success Story: Michael/Buddy 14-118**

*-Niti Mahendra*



From shy and jumpy to confident and cuddly, Buddy has made quite a journey. His first act of success came long before he happened into my life, and that was finding his way to GRR. Foster Mom, Kathy Burton, gave Buddy the best start to his life that this owner could have ever asked for. She took the little pup in and along with her husband and other Golden Retrievers they cleaned him up, crate trained him, and got him ready to find his forever home. I am lucky that I happened to be his forever home. Buddy has always been sweet, but he started out being very jumpy. The slightest out of the ordinary sound, and it would make Buddy bark and growl. With some reassurance and kind words Buddy has learned

that the out of the ordinary is more fun and exciting than scary. He now walks around the neighborhood almost smiling!

He has been a very good addition to my home. He fit right in and one of his favorite past times is helping me cook. He waits patiently for scraps to fall and he is always willing to taste test things, even if I don't need him to! This reminds me of a time he helped himself to a can of refried beans! I had opened the can, and in the time it took me to turn around and grab something else out of the fridge, Buddy had propped his front paws on the counter and started eating the beans right out of the can! I didn't know whether to be upset or to laugh...let's just say it was the first of many laughs Buddy has brought to me. In addition to beans, Buddy is also fond of going for walks and playing with other dogs at the dog park. He runs up to every dog and every person and thinks that they all want to be his buddy! I guess he is just staying true to his name and tries to make friends with everyone. So far Buddy hasn't met a dog bed that he likes! Once in Buddy's crate, those dog beds stood no chance. He rips into them and eventually he is surrounded by a sea of shredded foam, almost like he is in a winter wonderland! All and all he is the best dog I could have ever asked for, I can't wait to see how Buddy keeps growing and changing and maybe one day he will find a dog bed he can make his buddy!

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## ***Keeping your Golden cool this summer***

By [Cesar Millan](#)

1. **Exercise your dog early in the morning or late at night.**

Since these are the cooler parts of the day, this will make the walk more comfortable for both you and your dog. I'm a believer in vigorous exercise for healthy dogs, but this is the time of year to back off on exercise intensity.

2. **Use doggie boots.**

You can find these at your local pet supply store. If you can't walk your dog during the early and later hours of the day, this is a good way of protecting him. Heat rises from the ground, especially on surfaces like cement and asphalt, and dogs absorb

and release heat through their feet. Just like boots prevent the dog from absorbing the cold in the winter, they also isolate heat.

3. **Watch for signs of dehydration.**

Dogs can't sweat. They cool off by panting, so an overheated dog will drool excessively. It will become lethargic, its eyes will be bloodshot, and it may appear a little pale. If you lift its skin, it will take longer than usual for the skin to fall back into place.

4. **Keep your dog hydrated!**

Different dogs have different needs when battling the heat. Keep in mind that darker coats absorb more heat than lighter coats. Also, overweight dogs are at higher risk for dehydration. Carry a bottle of water when going on a walk with your dog. Better yet have your dog carry it for you in a backpack or a vest! The water in the bottles will keep the dog cooler and also give the dog a sense of purpose.

5. **Find innovative ways to cool your dog.**

Don't have air conditioning? No problem! Find a spot in the shade and set up a kiddie pool. Lay down a wet towel for your dog to lie on. Or simply set up a fan in front of a pan of ice. At the Dog Psychology Center, we have sprinklers that spray the dogs with a gentle mist of water.

6. **Dogs cool from the bottom up.**

Make sure to spray the paws and stomach, not just the top of the dog, when spraying it with water. A wet towel does more good on the bottom of your dog than when laid on the top of its coat.

7. **Let your dog dig!**

Your dog may resort to finding his own way to avoid the heat. Dog in nature dig their dens not out of frustration but to find food, hide, give birth--or keep cool! If it's possible, locate a shady area where it's okay for your dog to dig.

8. **Let your dog check the weather.**

Dogs don't have the Weather Channel, so they don't know why they are being denied a long walk for the day. Allow your dog to step outside and feel for itself that it is too hot, too wet, or too cold to go on a long walk.



Rusty 14-030 (Eileen Joyce)

Instinctually, the dog will understand that it has to shorten its walk, or simply come back inside where it's safe.

9. **Never leave your dog in a parked car.**

The car retains more heat than an open area, even if it is in the shade. Plus, a dog may get overexcited in the car due to passersby or panic from claustrophobia, making dehydration more likely. On longer trips, make sure you have water for the dog and keep the AC running.

10. **Use hot weather as an excuse to swim more often!**

The best activity you can do in summertime or hot weather is swimming. Instead of walking the dog, take the dog on a swim! If you hold on and allow your dog to take you around the pool, it becomes a powerful bonding experience for the two of you, similar to the walk.

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## ***Beyond Fetch: Games To Play With Your Dog***

-Lorraine Martinez - [LOMA Behavior and Training](#)



A game is a great way to exercise your dog's body and mind, and spend a little quality time together. What's in your repertoire? Here's a selection of games you can play indoors or outside:

**Homegrown agility.** If your house is big enough, create a makeshift obstacle course for your dog from rolled-up towels, cardboard boxes, blankets hung between chairs, etc. Or, if the weather is good and you have a yard, build your course outside.

**Hide-and-seek.** Grab a handful of yummy treats or your dog's favorite toy. Ask your dog to sit and stay, then you go hide in another room. Call your dog and when he finds you, reward him with a treat or a play session with his toy. Repeat until you have had enough—your dog likely won't get bored anytime soon.

**The name game.** Get two of your dog's favorite toys and remove all other toys and possible distractions. Say the name of one of the toys (keep names simple, like "moose" or "bird") and throw it for your dog to fetch. Repeat a few times, then do the same with the second toy. After a while, test to see if your dog has made the name connection. Put the two toys down and ask him to fetch one of them. If he

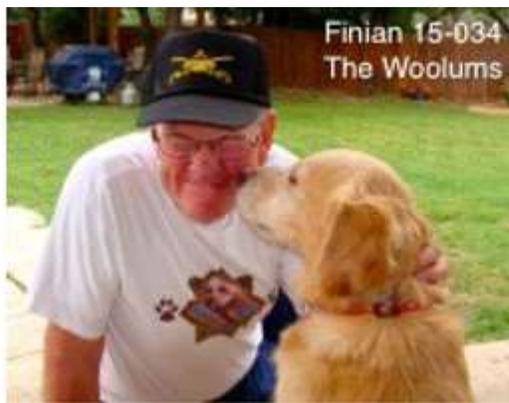
gets it right, praise and treat him. If not, go back to the name-the-toy-and-fetch-it game a bit longer.

**Round Robin.** Have the whole family (or a group of friends) grab treats and sit in a circle around 10 feet from each other. Each person then calls your dog, one after the other, and rewards him when he comes. If he catches on fast, try speeding up the game; having people call his name the moment the previous person has delivered a treat. When he has mastered this level, try spreading out further or taking the game outdoors.

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## ***The Golden Coat: Keeping them soft and silky***

*- Susan Wilson*



### **How to Groom your Golden by a Not-so Professional**

In my younger years (like way younger...like when I was a pre-teen and teen), I showed a Golden Retriever in conformation. In the Junior Handler class, not only was I required to know how to show off my dog's best side, I also had to know a good bit about the breed standard, the dog's physical structure (Do you know where the withers are? Or what the occiput is?), and how to appropriately groom the dog to showcase breed standard.

Now, with two pet Golden Retrievers, I see grooming time as a real bonding time. I enjoy it, and, more than that, Harry (06-149) and Sandy really enjoy pamper time. We try to get them to a professional groomer every 6 weeks or so, but in between those visits, well that's "our time".

Everyone will have his/her own style of grooming, and every dog will have its own way of loving, hating or just tolerating it. Among the benefits of grooming your

Golden are: bonding (obviously), health, mental relaxation both for you and your pup, cleanliness (of your dog and your home) and early identification if your dog contracts any health issues (joint pain, hot spots, mats, irritated spots, etc.). I'll explain my approach to our spa time with Harry and Sandy.

Let's start with tools. You could spend hundreds of dollars on a grooming kit, and tools run the gamut from various sizes and shapes of brushes and scissors to toothpaste, toothbrushes and even nail polish! Harry and Sandy get a solid grooming about every 2-3 weeks, using my basic go-to tools.

I use a **slicker brush** with fine metal teeth, but not too short or they won't go all the way through a thick golden undercoat to the skin. My brush is about 5x4 inches with a sturdy handle. I start each grooming session with a nice, good brushing. This is just to let the dog know we are in pamper mode, and to get the loosest of the flyaway fur. We also perform this brushing step every 1-3 days, just to keep the dust bunnies caused by Golden fluff at bay in our house.

Next, I will rake the dog. The **rake** has really wide teeth, which are not very sharp, and goes all the way down to the skin. It does a great job of removing loose undercoat without pulling out any excess that isn't ready to shed. You won't believe how much fluff you get with a rake! Sometimes it reaches the size of a half a golden. And the dogs seem to love the feel of the rake.

The next step is to check the dog for mats. I look behind the ears, on the chest, under the elbows, in the pantaloons and tail, and on the belly of the dog. In some cases, I can use my **variable wide/narrow-tooth** comb to gently comb out mats without having to cut them. When I find a mat that can't be combed out, I will use **scissors** to gently cut it out, as close to the skin as possible without breaking the skin. I try to leave about a ¼ inch margin. I use scissors appropriate to the area and size of mat – sometimes this means very small **cosmetic scissors**.

Once the mats are out, it's bath time, if we are doing a bath. There is such a thing as bathing too often. Most Golden, in absence of severe allergies, have skin that produces natural oils that keep the skin and coat hydrated. We don't want to counter that with strong soaps too often. Our dogs get their baths about once a month, unless there is an allergy flare-up, or they decide to romp in a mud puddle. But, keep in mind that our dogs swim on an almost-daily basis, so that may mean they don't need baths as often as they otherwise may.

After the bath, and once the dog is 90-100% dry, we go back to the floor for more precise grooming. We'll rinse the ears with **ear cleaner**, if necessary, and sop out with **cotton balls**. Next is another good brushing and raking, and then it's on to the pretty part.

I do the following steps in no particular order, and as long as the dog is comfortable. Behind and under the ears, I'll use the slicker brush again. If you have

a set of **thinning shears** (these are the scissors with a normal blade on one side and a comb on the other blade), you may trim behind the ears in a downward motion. This will thin out the fur behind the ears and prevent mats, also making the neck look nice and long. If the ears are looking a little "ratty", I'll trim along the outside edge with scissors, again in a "downward" motion, trimming in the direction of hair growth so the end result doesn't look choppy.

Each paw gets a really good once and twice over. I check again between the paws for tiny mats that tend to grow there. Those get cut out with the small cosmetic scissors. I also use either pair of scissors to trim the hair around the pads, just enough that it doesn't roll under the pads and they step on it. And, to avoid "Grinch Feet", I use my fingers to "brush" the fur between the toes upward, and then I use scissors to cut, again in the direction of hair growth. Once this is done, the paws will have a nice teddy bear look and feel. (Many golden owners and groomers will just use **human electric hair trimmers** for this, and that looks great too.)

As a carryover from my dog show days, I like for the back of the hocks to look very clean. So I will comb this fur out with the comb, making it stand on end, up and out behind the dog, then trim with scissors, following the direction of hair growth. Once brushed back into place, the hocks may need a little touch up to eliminate a choppy look.

I spend a lot of time on pantaloons and tails (my dogs' least favorite part), because I tend to always find mats starting to form there, no matter how recently I have groomed them. I will brush and comb these areas until the brush runs cleanly through them without pulling.

I'll roll the dog over onto its side or back and brush through chest and belly fur. Again, I try to work these areas until a comb runs cleanly through.

The last step is to get the dog into standing position. Then, if I feel like it, I'll trim the feathering behind the front paws, pantaloons and tail, just to show a nice "line". I don't like for them to appear to be groomed, just to look clean, so I don't take a lot of feathering off here.

The whole time I am grooming, I am also taking time to massage every inch of the dog. Through the massage, which the dogs love, by the way, I can identify if there are any tender spots, hot spots, moles, warts, lipomas, or other irregularities, and I can check the growth of any that I already knew existed.

I lied. The last step is the best step. It's the part where the doggie gets tons of praise and love and usually a cookie or two! Bottom line is this: if you take the time to groom your Golden once every week or two, it will enhance your bond, keep your home cleaner (less shedding hair), and keep your dog healthy. Don't consider it a chore; consider it one of the joys of your Golden owning you!

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## ***My Experience With Titer Testing***

*- Leslie Parker*



It was early on a glorious morning in April 2005. I was excited. I was headed to my very first canine weekend camp with my dog Cobe! He had just turned a year old and had his annual vaccines late the afternoon before. I knew he would be with other dogs whose owners I didn't know. I knew we would be hiking and in some fairly rough terrain. I wanted to make sure I covered all my bases. I had him vaccinated for everything, even the new rattlesnake vaccine, just to be safe you understand

When I went to put my arm around Cobe, I noticed a lump, a big lump, a nearly softball sized lump where they had injected the vaccines. I immediately called my vet who assured me that he would be fine by the next day.

Throughout the weekend, my exuberant one year old Golden who loved pretty much any activity involving me and a tennis ball refused to participate in anything, choosing instead to lie down and observe from the side lines. It seemed he wanted to join in the fun but just couldn't muster the energy. He also seemed excessively warm, panting and drooling. I was worried!

The next morning, the camp director came over to our picnic table to visit, and as he approached us, Cobe, for the first time ever, jumped up and started barking ferociously at him. It was a clear warning not to come any closer. Cobe had never shown any sign of aggression towards any living creature. Ever. I was stunned! Cobe went from resting quietly, to out of control aggression for no apparent reason in the blink of an eye. On Monday, we went back to the vet, who again told me everything would be fine. It was, after a week of swelling at the site and Cobe exhibiting extreme lethargy. I would later view this as an isolated incident.

Fast forward to year two. I had taken Cobe in for his 2nd annual vaccines and then to go for a swim as a reward. We got to the lake and my champion swimmer wouldn't get in the water. What??? That had never happened before. If there were a 1/4 inch puddle he would jump in! This is my water crazy dog! Then, as before, I noticed swelling at the injection site. I took him right back to the vet, who again assured me he would be fine in 24 hours. I took him home; only to have him become extremely lethargic, begin to exhibit mobility issues, vomiting and diarrhea.

This escalated into a 3-year battle with severe pancreatitis. I can't even begin to describe the pain and heartbreak and fear we all suffered during that time not really knowing if he was going to make it through.

It was after the 2nd reaction that I sought out a new veterinarian, as a scared, angry pet parent. I went to the new vet asking for help but at the same time refusing to vaccinate again. That was when he shared with me his views on limited vaccination and suggested titer testing. Cobe was also a hypothyroid Golden. This is an autoimmune disease. It made sense to me that a dog with an autoimmune disease would naturally not respond well to anything that was directly attacking his immune system like a vaccination.

I began to study and study about how I could naturally support his immune system. I studied anything and everything I could find that had a chance at helping my dog. I studied natural care, acupuncture, chiropractic care, herbal medicine, essential oils, homeopathic care and even the somewhat "woo-woo" world of crystals.

Although always an obsessively responsible pet parent, for the first time in my life, I became my dog's true voice. I stopped taking everything the vet said as unquestionable and started questioning everything and researching on my own. I learned enough to question my vet when it was appropriate and to stand firm if needed as a pet parent. I interviewed veterinarians and I put together a team, who practiced both Eastern and Western veterinarian medicine.

I can't tell you with absolute certainty that Cobe's health and behavior problems were directly related to the vaccines. What I can tell you is that there is enough hard science and enough questions still unanswered that my approach to vaccination is with extreme caution.

I follow the state law on rabies vaccines. Initial vaccines are given in separate trips to the vet, not in a pack, and I titer test annually. I can't tell you this is the right method for you. All I can do is encourage you to do your research and find your own path through educating yourself. You will find as many people and vets against titer testing as there are that support it. It will likely come down to your own research, your own feelings of risk/reward for your dog and a healthy dose of faith.

Cobe went on to live an aggression free, fabulous life of nine very full years that flew by way too fast. Cobe was a dog that lived life out loud. Even though he is over the bridge, he continues to make his voice heard and make me a better pet parent. I hope maybe through this article, that his story, his voice, touches your life, too.

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## ***Reading your Golden's Body Language***



By using their facial features and holding their body in different postures, Golden Retrievers have an elaborate second language without using sound that shows exactly how they think and feel. When you can read and understand Golden Retriever body language, it gifts you the ability to tend to their needs and change your behavior to suit their mood. This will make you a far more attentive and caring owner, and make the relationship between you stronger as you can communicate so much more effectively. Your dog will be able to see and feel that you understand them and they will love you all the more for it.

### **The Eyes**

Your Golden can hold their eyes wide open, half closed, be staring straight at you or looking away and each is different when it comes to how they're feeling.

- A dog's eyes are usually relaxed and oval-shaped when feeling calm, happy and relaxed.
- A dog's eyes are usually wide and rounded when feeling on high alert, when threatened or afraid.
- If your dog is staring straight at you this is almost always a threat. Dogs rarely make eye contact and when they do it usually means they're feeling confrontational.
- If your dog looks away, or at you and then away very quickly, it means they don't want to seem aggressive. It's a submissive gesture showing they aren't threatening and could mean they're slightly nervous or afraid.
- The infamous 'whale eye'. When a dog's eyes are round and wide open, staring at you from the corner of their eyes so you can see a lot of white, it can mean they're about to get aggressive or are at least seriously considering it. You'll see this if you tease a possessive dog about taking away a toy or a bone. It's wise to move away and not escalate things here.

### **The Ears**

As a golden retriever has quite large and floppy ears, they aren't as expressive as the ears of some breeds, but they do still show emotion.

- When the ears are held flat and back on the head, it shows negative feelings of fear or nervousness. The more forward and 'high' (hard for a Golden) the ears, the more confident they are.

- Due to the nature of a Golden's ears they can't move them so much ('prick' them) as many breeds, but they certainly still do use them the same way.

### **The Mouth**

A dog can show emotions through their mouth by either holding it open, closed, curling their lips to bare their teeth or by licking their lips or another dog or person. Here's what each of these most usually mean:

- When a dog's mouth is closed, or slightly open and panting in hot weather, then they're usually happy and relaxed.
- When a dog licks their lips or the face of another dog or person it's a submissive gesture.

### **The Tail**

**An important point to note is that a wagging tail doesn't always mean a dog is happy!** They also wag their tail when feeling confidently aggressive. Here's how your Golden uses their tail to express their emotions:

- A tail held naturally, level or lower than the body means calm and relaxed.
- A tail held very low between the legs or tucked under the body shows a nervous or fearful dog.
- A tail in a natural position, level or lower than the body and wagging either slowly or crazily shows a dog that is happy and excited. However...
- A tail held high in the air and wagging side to side slowly and purposefully shows a dog feeling dominant, threatening or aggressive.

### **Overall Body Posture**

Dogs also use their bodies to communicate their intentions. In general, dogs either try to look normal, smaller or larger. If your dog's feeling happy and contented, he'll look normal—relaxed muscles and weight evenly balanced on all four feet. Similarly, when he's playful, he'll look normal. He may be bouncing around or running wildly with exaggerated movements, but his facial expression and his muscles will be relaxed and nothing about his body will look unnatural.

This is quite different from the overall appearance of a scared dog. When your dog is scared, he'll be hunched as though trying to look small. He might lower his body or even cower on the ground. His head will be held low as well. If something or someone frightens him, he'll recoil away from it. For instance, if your dog is scared on an examination table, he'll pull away from the veterinarian and lean into you. If your dog is uncertain but curious about something, he might approach it tentatively, with his weight centered over his rear legs so that he can retreat quickly if he needs to.

A submissive dog looks very similar to a frightened dog because he makes himself look small to convey that he's not a threat. If your dog is submissive, he'll lower his

body or even cower on the ground. His head might be raised, though, if he's greeting a person or another animal.

An assertive (dominant), alert or aroused dog tries to make himself look large. His muscles will be tense. He'll stand erect, sometimes even on his tiptoes, with his neck and head raised above his shoulders. His weight will either be centered over all four feet or he'll be leaning slightly forward on his front legs.

An angry, aggressive dog also makes himself appear larger than life to be as intimidating as possible. If your dog is aggressive, he'll look very similar to an assertive, alert or aroused dog, but his posture will be accompanied by aggressive threats. Typically, his weight will be centered over his front legs so that he can lunge or charge forward rapidly.

Knowing your dog's posturing and other dogs as well can make your actions and behaviors much more proactive.

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## **Common Pet Poisons**

By the [ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center](#)

The [ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center](#) (APCC) in Urbana, IL handled more than 167,000 calls involving pets exposed to possibly poisonous substances in 2014. Nearly 16% of those calls were from pet parents whose pets got into medicines intended for human use, putting this category at the top of the toxin list for the seventh year in a row.

Here are the 10 most common pet toxins of 2014 ranked in order of call volume:

- Human prescription medications are most often exposed to pets, as mentioned above. The prescriptions that caused the most concern correlated with the most popular medications prescribed to humans.
- Over-the-counter medications, including herbal and other natural supplements, attracted greater concern this year than in previous years resulting in approximately 25,000 calls. This category is exceptionally large, encompassing more than 6,900 different products.



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- Insecticides dropped to the third slot this year, comprising 9.1% of calls to the APCC (15,000 cases). These products can be very dangerous, especially if the label directions are not followed.
  - Household items were the cause for concern in more than 13,500 cases, especially paints and cleaning products.
  - Human foods are appealing to pets, especially dogs. Dogs can get into serious trouble by ingesting onions, garlic, grapes, raisins and xylitol, a sugar substitute that can be life-threatening for animals. Approximately 13,200 cases involved human foods in 2014.
  - Veterinary medications made up 7% of total cases in 2014. Pet parents should be aware that chewable medications are very tasty and pets might ingest an entire bottle if it is not kept out of their reach.
  - Chocolate ingestion is very common. At the APCC, chocolate calls make up 6% of the total call volume—more than 30 calls a day! The darker the chocolate, the more potential it has to do harm.
  - Plants represent approximately 5% of the calls to the APCC and moved up a spot since 2014. Most of these calls involve cats and houseplants.
  - Rodenticides are made to kill mice and rats, but they can also kill pets if ingested. APCC handled more than 7,500 calls about rodenticides last year.
  - Lawn and garden products round out the top ten, accounting for about 2.7% of all calls. Many of these exposures occurred because people did not store lawn and garden products out of the reach of pets.
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