



## BREED COLUMNS

### SPORTING GROUP

We need to do better, especially on planes!—S.C.

I want to thank Sonia for taking the time from her professional “writing life” to write the above column. I first met Sonia when she was exhibiting Fisher, her Novice A dog, in obedience when I was judging at our national specialty show held in Washington in September 2019.

—Betsy Horn Humer,  
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American Chesapeake Club

### Curly-Coated Retrievers

Kari Swarztrauber has shared this very important subject with us. I cannot stress enough just how important it is to be very well aware of this challenging problem that she thoughtfully has shared with us all.

#### BLOAT: A CAUTIONARY TALE

I had just gotten home from a hike in the national forest with my pack of five Curly-Coated Retrievers



Curly-Coated  
Retriever

(Curlies). The sun had been brilliant, and I had brought Madge, my 5-year-old, 100-pound Curly who had given birth to 15 healthy puppies three months prior. She was finally in prime condition. She ran the whole two-hour hike nonstop. I remember thinking to myself, “She is going to live forever.”

Shortly after the hike, I fed my Curlies dinner. About an hour after eating, Madge came over to me seeking comfort. She stretched her neck way out in front of her as if to clear her throat and also made small attempts to vomit. Her stomach was slightly tucked up. She continued to retch, bringing up

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saliva. She paced and was restless.

I called my vet and drove the rural roads to her office. It was about 8 P.M. It was the time of COVID, and despite that there were only two people at the vet office, I was not allowed into the building. I waited.

An hour or so later, the vet came out and said she was sure Madge was not bloating, because she had given her a treat and Madge had eaten it. She explained that dogs who will eat can't be bloating. She said she was going to bring Madge back out to me and I could take her home.

I was surprised. "Are you sure?" I asked. "Madge would probably eat on her deathbed."

The vet returned inside to get Madge, and I continued to wait in my car.

Another hour or more passed. Finally, the vet reappeared. She explained that she had decided to take an X-ray, and it was confirmed: Madge was in full gastric dilatation-volvulus or bloat.

Now it was almost 11 P.M. I got angry. "I need to see my dog!" When I entered the vet office, Madge was a different dog. She came over to me, but she didn't look at me. She was panting and tense. Her chest bulged at the sides and her belly was tight.

My vet explained that they were not doing surgery after hours anymore, "A new nationwide veterinary policy." I had to drive two hours to an emergency vet if I wanted to have Madge surgically decompressed.

I remember looking at Madge as my eyes filled with tears, huge waves of anger and sadness. "We will never make it," I cried, "Madge is going to die in my car on the way there. Isn't there anything you can do?"

I lost Madge that night. After the waves of sadness, I got angry, and then I got busy. Social media allows us to communicate with people who share our interests from all over the world. Using the Jotform technology platform, and with the

technical help of Maureen Thompson and the support of the Curly Coated Retriever Club of America (CCRCA), I put together a questionnaire about bloat in Curlies. About 70 people reported on over 120 Curly Coated Retrievers from around the world. I analyzed the data. The results showed that seven percent of Curlies bloat in their lifetime. Bloat is more common in Curlies whose first-degree relatives bloated; it is more common in males, and more common in Curlies over 3 years old.

I wrote up an article about these findings, and it was published in the CCRCA's Jan/Feb 2023 *Curly Commentator* (Swarztrauber, K., Estimated Lifetime Prevalence of Bloat in Curly-coated Retrievers Using International Survey Data of Owners).

In my mind, I can still see Madge running across the hill. She stops and turns to look at me, her panting tongue pink and wet against her black, tight curls. Her eyes dance with joy. She

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turns back and then, like a flash, disappears over the hill.—K.S.

Thank you, Kari, for sharing this with all of us.

—Ann Shinkle,

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Curly-Coated Retriever  
Club of America

### Golden Retrievers

#### IT ALL STARTS WITH A SNIFF

A new tool in the law enforcement fight against crime has four legs, a tail, and most importantly, a nose. Known as electronic storage device (ESD) detection K-9s, these specialty-trained sniffers are part of the Federal Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. Trained to find hard drives, thumb drives, cell phones and other electronic storage devices that might contain evidence of child pornography, the ESD K-9 can search hidden, even nasty, places an investigator might avoid or could easily miss.

Layla, a 4-year-old Golden Retriever whose



Golden  
Retriever

beauty belies her crime fighting skills, works with private investigator, Spence Cowand, in Westfield, Indiana. Spence says her temperament is excellent for this type of search work.

“At home, she’s a normal pet, and can be silly and playful,” Spence says, “but when I ask her, *do you want to go to work*, it’s like she visibly flipped a switch. She becomes very calm and mellow, and ready for her work collar and vest. When I tell

her to Seek, she’ll start sniffing, and when she alerts that she found something, she sits. I’ll tell her to ‘show me,’ and she will use her nose to pinpoint the exact spot with the scent.”

Suspects often hide their child pornography by taping their ESDs under furniture or under cabinet drawers, Spence said. In one notable instance, Layla alerted on the obvious, a pencil cup on a desk. “It’s so important to be thorough,” Spence

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