

# The Labrador Retriever

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## Introduction

Thank you for your inquiry. Please note the enclosed pedigrees and pictures. The information attached to the pedigrees will be explained further in this packet, as well as the logistics of the pedigree. Dornschatten Kennels were originally established in 1979 under the name of Gold Nugget Labradors (GNL). My original breeding stock was purchased from

Shamrock Acres Kennels in Wisconsin, an exceptional line of Labs from which some of the foundation breeding stock for Guide Dogs for the Blind were obtained. I have continued in this line of excellence, consistently producing the all-around Labrador who is everything from a calm fireplace ornament, baby-sitter and Show Cham-

pion, to an active duck dog in the rough waters of Cold Bay. I continually receive rave reviews from puppy buyers on the excellent temperaments of their Dornschatten Labradors as well as their high trainability for obedience and field work, and their superior conformation. Dornschatten Labradors continue in the



paw prints of their English descendents who had to perform in both the show ring and the field to earn their championships.

My kennel is open on an appointment only basis for tours and puppy-viewing. I produce yellow puppies on a year round basis. The cost of the puppies is \$700 which includes a replacement guarantee on hips and eyes.. A \$200 deposit (Checks made payable to Pamela Thorne-Hodgson) is required on a first deposit, first choice basis. The deposit hold your position until the puppies are ready to be chosen and taken home at approximately seven

weeks. These deposits are generally non-refundable, but buyers are allowed to change to a choice from a later litter if the timing suits them better, or if there are not enough choices to accommodate them.

At seven weeks of age , all puppies have had their dew-claws removed, first shot, and two worming. All new owners are furnished with feeding instructions, a sample food packet, and a health record with instructions for future vaccinations. For those of you that are inquiring long-distance, although I prefer for puppy buyers to choose their own puppy, I am well-versed at picking out puppies and shipping

them via airline to the most remote locations. I can provide you with many references of extremely satisfied, "phone order" puppy buyers. Please don't hesitate to make an appointment to see the kennel. The dogs and I equally enjoy visitors. A kennel tour is also a good time to ask any questions you might still have, even after reading the rest of this packet which is designed to provide you with a basic working knowledge of the Labrador Retriever. I am proud of my excellent reputation and strive to please. I look forward to hearing from you again and to the opportunity of placing one of my puppies in your good home.



# The Standard

When in search for the perfect dog, the searcher needs some type of standard with which to evaluate each puppy and parent he views. The American Kennel Club has set up a standard (evaluation checklist) for each breed of dog for which it holds a registry. The Breed Standard for the Labrador retriever reads as follows:

**GENERAL APPEARANCE** — the Labrador Retriever is a strongly built, medium-sized, short coupled, dog possessing a sound, athletic, well-balanced conformation that enables it to function as a retrieving gun dog; the substance and soundness to hunt waterfowl or upland game for long hours under difficult conditions; the character and quality to win in the show ring, and the temperament to be a family companion.

should be equal to one half of the height at the withers. The brisket should extend to the elbows, but not perceptively deeper. The bone must be of sufficient length to permit a straight, free and efficient stride; but the dog should never appear low and long or tall and leggy in outline. **SUBSTANCE** — Substance and bone proportionate to the overall dog. Light “weedy” individuals are definitely incorrect; equally objectionable are “cloddy” lumbering specimens. Labrador Retrievers shall be shown in working condition; well-muscled and without excess fat.

**HEAD — SKULL** — The skull should be wide; well developed but without exaggeration. The skull and foreface should be on parallel planes and of approximately equal length. There should be a moderate stop — brow slightly pronounced so that the skull is not absolutely in a straight line with the nose. The brow ridges aid in defining the stop.

Physical features and mental characteristics should denote a dog bred to perform as an efficient retriever of game with a stable temperament suitable for a variety of pursuits beyond the hunting environment.

The most distinguishing characteristics of the Labrador Retriever are its short, dense, weather resistant coat; an “otter” tail; a clean-cut head with broad back skull and moderate stop; powerful jaws; and its “kind,” friendly eyes, expression, character, intelligence and good temperament. Above all, a Labrador Retriever must be well balanced, enabling it to move in the show ring and to work in the field with little or no effort. The typical Labrador possesses style and quality without over refinement, and substance without

The head should be clean-cut and free from fleshy cheeks; the bony structure of the skull chiseled beneath the eye with no prominence in the cheek. The skull may show some median line; the occipital bone is not conspicuous in mature dogs. Lips should not be squared off or pendulous, but fall away in a curve toward the throat. A wedge-shaped head, or a head long and narrow in muzzle and back skull is incorrect as are massive, cheeky heads. The jaws are powerful and free from snippiness; the muzzles neither long and narrow nor short and stubby.

**NOSE** — the nose should be wide and the nostrils well-developed. The nose should be black on black or yellow dogs, and brown on chocolates. Nose color fading to a lighter shade is not a fault. A thoroughly

lumber or cloddiness. The Labrador is bred primarily as a working gun dog; structure and soundness are of great importance. **SIZE, PROPORTION, AND SUBSTANCE — SIZE** — The height at the withers for a dog is 22 1/2 to 24 1/2 inches; for a bitch is 21 1/2 to 23 1/2 inches. Any variance greater than 1/2 inch above or below these heights is a disqualification. Approximate weight of dogs and bitches in working condition: dogs 65 to 80 pounds; bitches 55 to 70 pounds. The minimum height ranges set forth in the paragraph above shall not apply to dog or bitches under twelve months of age. **PROPORTION** — Short-coupled; length from the point of the shoulder to the point of the rump is equal to or slightly longer than the distance from the withers to the ground. Distance from the elbow to the ground

pink nose or one lacking in any pigment is a disqualification.

**TEETH** — The teeth should be strong and regular with a scissors bite; the lower teeth just behind, but touching the inner side of the upper incisors. A level bite is acceptable, but not desirable. Undershot, overshot, or misaligned teeth are serious faults.

Full dentition is preferred. Missing molars or pre-molars are serious faults.

**EARS** — the ears should hang moderately close to the head, set slightly above eye level. Ears should not be large and heavy, but in proportion with the skull and reach to the inside of the eye when pulled forward. **EYES** — Kind, friendly eyes imparting good temperament, intelligence and alertness are a hallmark of the breed. They should be of medium size, set well apart and neither protruding

*The Labrador Retriever  
is a strongly built,  
medium-sized, short-  
coupled, dog.....*

Eye color should be brown in black or yellow Labradors, and brown or hazel in chocolates. Black, or yellow eyes give a harsh expression and are undesirable. Small eyes, set close together or round prominent eyes are not typical of the breed. Eye rims are black in black and yellow Labradors and brown in chocolates. Eye rims without pigmentation is a disqualification.

**NECK, TOPLINE, AND BODY** — the neck should be of proper length to allow the dog to retrieve game easily. It should be muscular and free from throatiness. The neck should rise strongly from the shoulders with a moderate arch. A short, thick neck or an “ewe” neck is incorrect. **TOPLINE** — The back is strong and the topline is level from the withers to the croup when standing or moving. However, the loin should show evidence of flexibility for athletic endeavor. **BODY** — the Labrador should be short-

coupled with good spring of ribs tapering to a moderately wide chest. The Labrador should not be narrow chested; giving the appearance of hollowness between the front legs. Nor should it have a wide-spreading bulldog-like front. Correct chest conformation will result in tapering between the front legs that allows unrestricted forelimb movement. Chest breadth that is either too wide or too narrow for efficient movement and stamina is incorrect. Slab-sided individuals are not typical of the breed; equally objectionable are rotund or barrel-chested specimens. The underline is almost straight, with little or no tuck-up in mature animals. Loins should be short, wide and strong; extending to well-developed powerful hindquarters. When viewed from the side, the Labrador Retriever shows a well-developed, but not exaggerated forechest. **TAIL** — The tail is a distinguishing feature of the breed. It should be very thick at the base,

gradually tapering toward the tip, of medium length, and extending no longer than to the hock. The tail should be free from feathering and clothed thickly all around with the Labrador’s short, dense coat, this having that peculiar rounded appearance that has been described as the “otter” tail. The tail should follow the topline in response or when in motion. It may be carried gaily, but should not curl over the back. Extremely short tails or long thin tails are serious faults. The tail completes the balance of the Labrador by giving it a flowing line from the top of the head to the tip of the tail. Docking or otherwise altering the length or natural carriage of the tail is a disqualification.

**FOREQUARTERS** — Forequarters should be muscular, well-coordinated and balanced with the hindquarters. **SHOULDERS** — The shoulders are well laid back, long and sloping, forming an angle

with the upper arm of approximately 90 degrees that permits the dog to move his forelegs in an easy manner with strong forward reach. Ideally, the length of the shoulder blade should equal the length of the upper arm. Straight shoulder blades, short upper arms or heavily muscled or loaded shoulders, all restricting free movement, are incorrect. **FRONT LEGS** — When viewed from the front, the legs should be straight with good strong bone. Too much bone is as undesirable as too little bone, and short-legged, heavy boned individuals are not typical of the breed. Viewed from the side, the elbows should be directly under the withers and the front legs should be perpendicular to the ground and well under the body. The elbows should be close to the ribs without looseness. Tied-in elbows or being “out at the elbows” interfere with free movement and are serious faults. Pasterns should be strong and short and should slope slightly from the perpendicu-

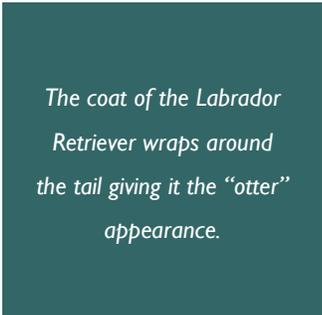
lar line of the leg. Feet are strong and compact, with well-arched toes and well-developed pads. Dew claws may be removed. Splayed feet, hare feet, knuckling over, or feet turning in or out are serious faults.

**HINQUARTERS** — The Labrador’s hindquarters are broad, muscular and well-developed from the hip to the hock with well-turned stifles and strong short hocks. Viewed from the rear, the hind legs are straight and parallel. Viewed from the side, the angulation of the rear legs is in balance with the front. The hind legs are strongly-boned, muscled with moderate angulation at the stifle, and powerful, clearly defined thighs. The stifle is strong and there is no slippage of the patellae while in motion or when standing. The hock joints are strong, well let

down and do not slip or hyper-extend while in motion or when standing. Angulation of both stifle and hock joint is such as to achieve the optimal balance of drive and

traction. When standing the rear toes are only slightly behind the point of the rump. Over angulation produces a sloping topline not typical of the breed. Feet are strong and compact, with well-arched toes and well-developed pads. Cow-hocks, spread hocks, sickle hocks and over-

angulation are serious structural defects and are to be faulted. **COAT** — The coat is a distinctive feature of the Labrador Retriever. It should be short, straight and very dense, giving a fairly hard feeling to the hand. The Labrador should have a soft, weather-resistant undercoat that provides protection from water, cold and all types of ground cover. A slight wave down the back is per-



Woolly coats, soft silky coats, and sparse slick coats are not typical of the breed, and should be severely penalized.

**COLOR** — The Labrador Retriever coat colors are black, yellow and chocolate. Any other colors or a combination of colors is a disqualification. A small white spot on the chest is permissible, but not desirable. White hairs from aging or scaring are not to be misinterpreted as brindling. **BLACKS** — Blacks are all black. A black with brindle marking or a black with tan markings is a disqualification. **YELLOW** — Yellows may range in color from a fox-red to light cream, with variations in shading on the ears, back, and underparts of the dog. **CHOCOLATES** — Chocolates can vary in shade from light to dark chocolate. Chocolate with brindling or tan markings is a disqualification.

**MOVEMENT** — Movement of the Labrador Retriever should be free and effortless. When watching a dog move toward oneself, there should be no sign of elbows out. Rather, the elbows should be held neatly to the body with the legs not too close together. Moving straight forward without pacing or weaving, the leg should form straight lines with all parts moving in the same plane. Upon viewing the dog from

the rear, one should have the impression that the hind legs move as nearly as possible in a parallel line with the front legs. The hocks should do their full share of the work, flexing well, giving the appearance of power and strength. When viewed from the side, the shoulders should move freely and effortlessly, and the foreleg should reach forward close to the ground with extension. A short, choppy movement or high knee action indicates a straight shoulder, paddling indicates long, weak pasterns; and a short, stilted rear gate indicates a straight rear assembly; all are serious faults. Movement faults interfering with performance including weaving, side-winding, crossing over, high knee action; paddling, and short, choppy movement, should be severely penalized.

**TEMPERAMENT** — True Labrador Retriever temperament is as much a hallmark of the breed as the “otter” tail. The ideal disposition is one of a kindly, outgoing, tractable nature; eager to please and non-aggressive towards man or animal. The Labrador has much that appeals to people, his gentle ways, intelligence and adaptability make him an ideal dog. Aggressiveness towards humans or other animals, or any evidence of shyness in an adult should be severely penalized.

## DISQUALIFICATIONS —

Any deviation from the height prescribed in the Standard.

A thoroughly pink nose or one lacking in any pigment.

Eye rims without pigment.

Docking or otherwise altering the length or natural carriage of the tail.

Any other color or a combination of colors other than black, yellow or chocolate as described in the Standard.

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Hopefully after reading this lengthy description, you now have a better idea of what constitutes a good Lab versus a bad Lab. The standard covers virtually every aspect of the Labrador Retriever including athletic ability from correct conformation, the proper temperament for easy trainability, and correct appearance. One important aspect that is not covered in the standard is genetic problems such as hip-dysplasia and eye disease which I will cover further on in this publication.

## FINDING A KNOWLEDGEABLE BREEDER

Purchasing a Labrador puppy can be like trying to buy an automobile. The subject is so complex, that even after considerable research on your part, you may still have many unanswered questions. Now that you have an idea from the Breed Standard of what to look for in a Labrador Retriever, I will define what to look for in a knowledgeable breeder who can correctly answer your remaining questions.

Generically speaking, a breeder is only someone who owns either one or both of the parents of a litter.

Many people naturally assume that since a breeder is breeding two AKC registered dogs, they will get a good puppy. Unfortunately, the American Kennel Club has no quality control program. The Breed Standard that they publish is a guideline for breeders, but sadly enough many people who breed Labradors don't even know it exists. Simply because a dog is AKC registered does not mean that it is in anyway representative of the Labrador in either looks, temperament or working ability. It is the

breeder who is responsible for assessing the quality of his dogs, and for correctly matching them with mates who will compensate for any weaknesses they may have. Many breeders lack the necessary knowledge to correctly breed their Labradors and then there are others who just don't care and are only interested in financial gain. The kind of breeder that you are looking for is one who first and foremost strives to produce quality Labradors that are a joy to live with, regardless of the financial gain or loss. This type

of breeder is a devoted fan of the breed, who will stick by the Labrador through rises and falls of popularity. They are also very concerned that you and your future puppy be well-matched, so that the puppy they sell you will have a permanent, quality home. Here are some criteria you can use to evaluate the quality of a Labrador Breeder. Some of these can be assessed over the phone, while others will require a visit to the kennel:

1. Checkout the breeder's reputation with several different sources, to include: Veterinarians, Kennel Clubs, other breeders, and previous puppy buyers.
2. Is the breeder actively involved in any aspects of the sport of dogs beside the breeding part?
3. Does the breeder refer people to other breeders, even when they have puppies?
4. Does the breeder guarantee their puppies against hip dysplasia and eye problems? Is it a written guarantee and does it allow you to keep the puppy with the problem (providing it is spayed or neutered)

## THE PEDIGREE

Inevitably, during your search for the perfect puppy, the term "pedigree" will enter the conversation. The pedigree is simply the ancestors of the puppy. To determine the quality of a puppy's pedigree, it is not necessary to go back more than four generations. This will cover the puppy's parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and great-great-grandparents, which includes thirty ancestors. The further back an ancestor is in the puppy's pedigree, the less effect that ancestor has on the puppy's genetic make-up. In a quality pedigree, the titled dogs should start with one or both of the parents, or at least with the grandparents. In a weak pedigree, the titled ancestors

and provides you with a replacement puppy of the same quality at no charge?

5. Is the kennel basically clean (spring can be a messy time!) and are the dogs happy, healthy and eager to see visitors?
6. Does the breeder ask you about your lifestyle and your setup for a puppy?
7. Is the mother of the puppies representative of the Labrador according to the Breed Standard and is she happy to share her puppies with you? (She may be hesitant if her puppies are newly born.)
8. Is the father of the puppies representative of the Labrador according to the Breed Standard? (If he is not at the kennel ask to see photos and his hip and eye clearances).
9. As you tour the kennel, does the breeder honestly represent his dogs to you concerning their good and not-so-good qualities?
10. Can the breeder tell you why he bred the sire and the dam of the litter together? (Hint: The answer should have something to do with

matching certain attributes of the parents, not that his children wanted to experience the birth of a litter, or that his buddy owned the sire and that they needed extra money, or that he heard that if the mother had one litter that she would calm down!)

11. What tangible results can the breeder show you to prove that they know what they are doing? How many of the dogs in this kennel were bred by this breeder? How many Champions, Hunting Companions, Obedience titled dogs have they bred? (Anyone can buy two AKC registered Labradors and start breeding them together without knowing the first thing about quality breeding! The true test of a sound breeding program is being knowledgeable enough to purchase good breeding stock, title them, and than correctly breed them to produce your own problem free, good-looking, and good working line of Labs.



will be found starting in the great-grandparent section and further back. While a six to eight generation pedigree is interesting to study, do not be impressed if the titled ancestors are not found starting with the grandparents. Some so-called breeders will even hand you several different pedigrees belonging to the parents and grandparents of the puppies. This

gives the appearance of titled ancestors closer up in the pedigree. In reality, once you sort through all of the pedigrees, you will find a typical, backyard breeding pedigree with untitled ancestors in the first two to three generations. Hopefully, you have been referring to the pedigrees I have sent you while reading this section so that all of this information makes sense to you. If you have any questions on how to read a pedigree, please feel free to give me a call at (907) 696-6096.



"Hey, I'm not crazy ... sure, I let him drive once in a while, but he's never, never off this leash for even a second."

## GENETIC PROBLEMS

All breeds of dogs have some form of genetic problems which are common to that breed. The biggest problems with Labradors are hip-dysplasia and eye-disease.

**HIP-DYSPLASIA (HD)** occurs when the ball and socket joint, which forms the hip in the dog, alters its formation. It is a polygenetic trait; HD inheritance is effected by so many genes that it is impossible to eliminate at this time. Currently, the best way to avoid this problem is to only breed dogs whose hips are clear of HD. But, even then the problem will still surface occasionally, which is why you should always buy your puppy from a breeder who guarantees their puppies against

HD because this problem will surface even in the best bred litters. Usually, the affected Labrador will not have any noticeable change in their movement nor experience any pain. HD is usually not detected until the Labrador is x-rayed in preparation for breeding. A puppy can be x-rayed starting at about six months of age to see how it's hip formation is progressing. The Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) will not certify a dog's hips until they are two years of age.

**EYE PROBLEMS** can also occur in the Labrador. There are three main types of eye disease which will appear. These are Retinal

Dysplasia, Progressive Retinal Dysplasia, and cataracts. The first two involve gradual retinal changes in the dog's eye which affect his eyesight. Retinal Dysplasia (RD) can be detected in a puppy and distorts the eyesight. Progressive Retinal Dysplasia (PRA) occurs in older dogs and can lead to blindness. Cataracts usually appear in older dogs, but Juvenile Cataracts will appear in dogs around 18 months of age. Both types will distort the dog's vision.

These eye diseases follow a more predictable inheritability pattern than HD and screening from a canine eye doctor will certify the

eyes of potential breeding stock against being affected with any problems. But, these diseases can still be carried in the genetic make-up of the dog with cleared eyes who is used for breeding and if two dogs of this type are bred, eye problems may occur in some of the puppies. Currently, genetic testing is being developed which will be able to detect eye problem genes in dogs whose eyes are examined to be clear. When perfected, eye problems in dogs being produced by Knowledgeable Breeders will all but disappear. Meanwhile, we do the best that we can and rely on feedback from families who have purchased our puppies.

**EPILEPSY** will sometimes occur in

the Labrador. The exact mode of inheritance is not known at this time. Labradors can also seizure from causes other than epilepsy, such as



invisible fence shock, mushrooms, garden fertilizers and poisons, head trauma from run ins with automobiles, etc. So, be sure to puppy proof your home and keep your little guy safely enclosed.

AND the number one **HEALTH PROBLEM** in the Labrador Retriever is...you guessed it.....**OBESITY**. This breed really likes to eat. I do not encourage families to spay or neuter their Labradors in general as this tends to make things even worse. But, if you must spay or neuter, please wait until your puppy is over one year old.



## COST

I have purposely placed this subject toward the back of this booklet, because cost should be relative to quality, and by now you know what kind of quality you must have in order to

minimize the risks of purchasing a Labrador puppy with problems. A breeding quality puppy which has a good pedigree, closely resembles the Labrador Breed Standard, has an

outgoing and responsive temperament, an aptitude for retrieving and comes with a good guarantee will cost between \$600- \$1000. If that sounds too high for your

budget, occasionally, you can find a "pet-quality" puppy from a knowledgeable breeder that will cost you about half as much. The "pet-quality" puppy is labeled as such because it differs substantially from the Breed Standard in some way, such as a conformation flaw, or size,

or color. This type of puppy will not be sold with a guarantee, but will have the same genetic quality as the rest of the litter. Keep in mind it is always better to get a pet quality puppy from a good litter, than "pick of the litter" from a poor quality litter. Also, you might look into providing a home for a retired dog

from a good kennel. These dogs are generally older, placed at no charge, and don't need to be housebroken.



## PREPARATION

Hopefully by now you have found a knowledgeable breeder that you can trust and put a deposit down on a puppy. Now is the time to prepare for the new arrival. Step one is to purchase the necessary equipment. Listed below is a list of necessary supplies and equipment that you will need for your new puppy as well as suggested sources.

One size #400 or #500 Airline kennel. Purchase the size you will need for you puppy at adulthood. The kennel is a great place for him to sleep at night, as well as a nice spot to store him while you are house-training him and have times when you can't watch him. The best source is Walmart with a cost of around \$75.

One Chain-link kennel run or

fenced yard. The best source for portable chain-link kennel runs is Acme Fence Co. A fenced yard or kennel is the best protection for your puppy to keep him in and keep other dogs, and children who tease dogs, out!

One indoor puppy enclosure if it is winter for when your puppy comes home and you are gone during the day. This can be set-up in the garage, kitchen, or utility room. You can use baby-gates or exercise pens. Baby gates can be found at many different stores with baby sections, or at



Alaska Mill, Feed and Garden down on Post Road in Anchorage. Exercise pens are best ordered through Best Care @ 1-800-367-4444.

Various supplies such as Puppy Food (the same kind the breeder will be feeding), metal dog bowls (puppies will chew!), a medium weight leash and buckle collar set, sturdy chew toys, a pooper-scooper, carpet cleaner (I recommend Nature's Miracle), a dog brush, nail clippers, and retrieving dummies. Fred Meyers is a great source for Nutra Nuggets Puppy Food and has lots of great toys and supplies. You can also order from Best Care. Also, Alaska Mill, Feed & Garden has a great selection of retrieving dummies, leashes and collars.

## CHOOSING YOUR PUPPY

At last the day arrives when you can choose your puppy and take him home. Your knowledgeable breeder will not let the puppies go to their new homes before six to eight weeks of age because he knows that it is very important psychologically for the puppies to remain with their dam and litter-mates until that age. The dam has stopped caring for the puppies when they were about four weeks old so the breeder has had the sole responsibility of feeding them and keeping them clean. He has obviously gotten well acquainted with the pup-

pies after spending so much time with them and has a good idea of which puppies would meet your requirements as far as quality and temperament. Now all you have to do is choose one! Many wives-tales about picking puppies dissolve in your mind as all candidates are responsive, good-looking little eager-beavers who busy themselves kiss-



ing your face and untying your shoes.. Now what? Either just reach in and grab one (gently), or ask the breeder for help. With a well-bred litter, you really can't lose. After you've paid the balance due, the breeder will furnish you with a registration document which you will need to finish filling out and mail to the

American Kennel Club so that the puppy will be registered to you with his own registration number and his new official name that you have selected. Most breeders require that you do use their kennel name

in the registered name of the puppy. If you have any questions on this procedure once you get home, give the breeder a call and have her help you. You should also receive information on future vaccinations (your puppy should

already have one), wormings, health care, and feeding instructions. Again, if you have any questions once you get home, give the breeder a call and he will be happy to help you and also get a progress report on the puppy.

## BASIC CARE AND TRAINING

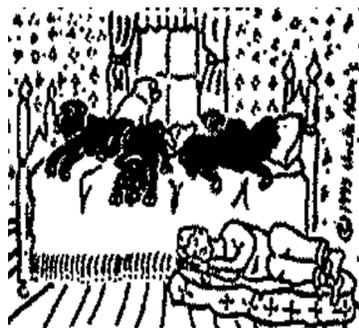
It is important to take your new puppy directly home and give him several days of relative quiet to adjust to his new lifestyle. Resist the temptation of visiting friends and relatives' houses to show him off. Caring for your puppy should be a fairly simple matter as you now have all of the necessary equipment. Follow the feeding instructions sent home by the breeder and keep fresh drinking water available at all times during the day. Brush your puppy every few days to loosen any dead hair and decrease shedding. Trim your puppy's toenails every week by nipping off just the tips, and bathe him when he is no longer socially acceptable!

Your puppy's first night should be spent in his crate, which is hopefully beside your bed. If he howls a little, reassure him by dangling your fingers inside his crate and talking to him. Resist the temptation of letting him sleep with you. If he does, he will see himself as equal to you and this will make training him more difficult. Labradors are a mellow breed, but they still need to know who's in charge. If you are wishy-washy about your role as alpha, your puppy will be happy to take over.

Training your puppy is much easier if you understand that dogs learn through consistent repetition, praise, and correction. For exam-

ple, when house training, consistently put him outside and praise him when he relieves himself in this correct location. When your puppy has an accident in the house, tell him "no" in a stern voice, put him outside and then praise him. Your puppy will soon learn to relieve himself outdoors since he gets praise for doing so, and avoids going indoors because your reaction is unfavorable.

These training principles work for any type of training (including spouses, kids, and employees)! If your puppy is doing something you don't want him to do, it is because he is rewarded and not punished for that act. For example, if your puppy barks when he is outdoors and you promptly let him in, he will learn to bark when he wants in. If you want to change this behavior, the next time your puppy is outdoors and barks because he wants in, open the door and squirt him in the face with a lemon juice and water mixture. Your puppy now learns that outdoor barking earns an unpleasant response and will stop barking to be let in after several repetitions of being squirted. Don't forget the repetition! Dogs are creatures of habit and old habits die slowly. Socialize your puppy early on to



different sights, sounds and people so that he will develop a well-rounded personality. Always insist that he greet strangers even if he doesn't want to. The MOST IMPORTANT thing to teach your puppy is to COME WHEN HE IS CALLED. Teach him now at this

young age while you can still outrun him, should he choose to ignore you. If he doesn't come when you squat down, clap your hands and say "puppy come," go and get him immediately, make him come to you and give him a treat. Never punish your puppy or do unpleasant things to him after he comes to you. Go and get your puppy if you are going to scold him, give him a pill or a bath! ALWAYS insist that he come to you at this young age and you will avoid many problems later on, such as watching in horror as your puppy gets run over by a car.

Consult the classified ads of your local paper for information on training classes. Some classes are designed for puppies as young as four months old, so don't delay! There are also many books and videos available on the subject of dog training. Check with your local library as well as bookstores and Best Care at 1-800-367-4444.

## SUMMARY

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. I hope that you have now gained enough infor-

mation that you can feel confident enough to purchase a Labrador Retriever puppy of quality which will

be a joy to own and a lifetime companion. What more could a Lab lover and breeder hope for?