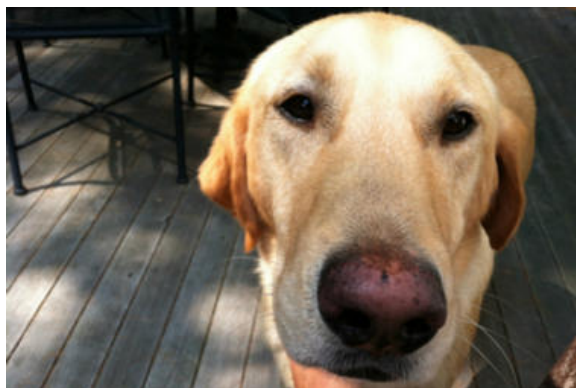


## With rescued dog Albie, family learns to hold on to the leash

After a couple of weeks with the Zheutlin family, Albie, a Yellow Lab-Golden Retriever mix, teaches them that they need to hold onto his leash – and how to deal with other dog owners at the dog pond.

By Peter Zheutlin, Correspondent / July 19, 2012



Albie, a Yellow Lab-Golden Retriever mix, has been living with the Zheutlin family for a couple of weeks. He has charmed them with his unconditional love and "infinitely sweet disposition."

Courtesy of Peter Zheutlin

Earlier this week Albie, our new Yellow Lab-Golden Retriever mix rescue dog, met Sheldon and Molson. I know, sounds like a Jewish comic and a Canadian brewer, but Sheldon and Molson are dogs Albie met at a local pond popular with dogs and their owners. We'll come back to Sheldon and Molson in a moment.

Albie has already grown very attached to us, so much so that whenever I leave the house he sits by the door waiting for me to come home. (I know this because my wife told me, not because we have a doggie-cam.) You think I get that kind of affection from anyone else in the family? No wonder people love dogs.

Despite the bond that's rapidly bound Albie to us and vice versa, our limited experience letting Albie off the leash has taught us two things: 1) he doesn't know his name, and 2) he's much faster than us. So, on our trips to the doggie pond, we've kept him on the leash because adjacent to the pond are acres and acres of woodlands. If Albie takes off, I'm going to have to run through the forest chasing him like Daniel Day-Lewis in "The Last of the Mohicans."

Back to Sheldon and Molson: Sheldon is a 5-month-old mixed breed puppy and Molson is an older retriever. Molson was content to observe from a distance as Albie and Sheldon had an energetic game of tag. Albie was at a distinct disadvantage because every time Sheldon would nip his ear Albie would take off after him only to find he could travel exactly six feet. And don't think Sheldon didn't know Albie was tethered to a 180-pound man. He took full advantage of it.

Now, being a dog owner is going to take some getting used to. First, there's camaraderie among dog owners that I'm not fully on board with yet. They are such friendly people, but I'd rather talk about politics than dogs for hours on end. Dog people seem to assume you're as obsessed with dogs as they are. I'm just obsessed with Albie. (I mean, really; look at that picture. Is that a face?) Second, when Albie stops to relieve himself, I feel like I'm back in sixth grade trying to shoplift a Playboy from the newsstand at the Port Authority bus terminal in New York. I feel like everyone's looking at me and thinking what I used to think when I saw people walking their dogs: "You're really gonna pick that stuff up in a plastic bag and carry it home?"

Albie's been with us almost two weeks now and as in any relationship you learn more about one another as time goes along. What I love about Albie – besides his ears, his nose, the shape of his head, his expressive eyes, his unfailingly gentle nature and his manners (trust me, you could leave a filet mignon on a plate he could easily reach and he won't even make a move in that direction) – is his infinitely sweet disposition.

On the medical record form completed by a volunteer from [Labs4Rescue](#) in Louisiana where Albie was found as a stray, there's a note at the bottom: "Sweet/soft boy," it says. "Loves all."

I think I could learn a lot from this dog.