

The Holidays are over and now the real work begins. Puppies are now 5 1/2 weeks old and are beginning their "serious" training. We had our first sleep in the crate at night experience, last night. It was very successful. Everyone slept from 9:00 p.m. until just after 7:00 a.m. with no accidents. At this time they are all in the same crate. I am teaching them to "hold it" for longer periods of time. In individual crates at this time lessens the amount of time they can hold it due to higher level of anxiety. We will start individual day crate training this week. Each puppy will have treats and a toy to help teach coping mechanisms.

I also introduced an Adventure Box. An Adventure Box is cube made of pvc pipe with lots of dangling objects, all puppy friendly. The object is to teach puppy about different sounds, textures and motions. My box has bells, metal washers, plastic spoons, plastic cups, Styrofoam noodles and wooden wheels. During the 4-6 week period, puppies are naturally unafraid making it a perfect time to introduce clangs, bangs, whooshes and other "scary items" It also teaches puppies not to be head shy since things are swinging above them. The items touching their bodies teaches them to be relaxed when moving about in tight spaces. The Guide Dog for the Blind Foundation uses these techniques with their puppies. They have to learn to wear a harness, and maneuver in tight crazy spaces without having an issue. Both my adult dogs and cats also enjoyed exploring the box. I put treats in the middle of the box and made everyone figure out how to get them. It was quite a learning experience.

Pali- This week she was my outgoing alpha puppy. She was the first into the box, and is always the first one to pop into the living room. She is a busy girl. She wants to be in the middle of everyone and everything. Even when it is nap time, it takes time for her to settle. She thinks she might miss something if she goes to sleep. When it is time to get up, she is the first one to greet me. She is a riot!

Coco-Coco is on the verge of blossoming. She wants so much to be in the middle, but she still a bit reserved. She adores her siblings and mimics both of her sisters. She takes her cues from her sisters. I have started working with her individually to help build her confidence. You can definitely see the difference when she is with her sisters and when she is by herself. I will continue working with her to build her confidence.

Dolly- Dolly is right behind Pali in confidence and energy. She is a bundle of energy. If I'm not chasing Pali, I'm chasing after Dolly. She has even found away around my x-pen onto my porch to see the "big dogs". Her favorite is May Day my 20 month old, who thinks she's 6 months old. May is huge, weighing about 14lbs, but Dolly loves to run right up to her and grab a tail or an ear. In fact, Dolly is the resident bully. She has learned that siblings make wonderful squeaky noises when being pulled by the tail. She delights in tormenting everyone.

Star-Star is my baby. He is the littlest pup with the most coat. He is going to be a woolly bear as he grows older. Star tries to be fearless, but it is difficult when your much bigger sister sits on you all of the time. He loves to be outside. Star had a bit of soft stool because he runs outside and grabs leaves. He loves leaves and runs around with them in his mouth. Rain, snow, or good weather does not seem to matter with Star. He loves outside.

Neige- Neige is my lover. He is a big boy who thinks he is just a little guy. It is fun to watch how he goes outside and looks around, unsure if he really likes it or not. Then, as a decision is being made, a sister comes and tackles him. He gets so annoyed at his sister. If I hear any whining, it is usually Neige. "She's biting my tail", "She's biting my ear" "I don't want to be in here." His sister take great joy in annoying him. He is just a gentle giant. He is a bit shy, which I am working on, but he is my biggest cuddle bug.

Finally this last week brought unexpected snow. Puppies have to learn how to potty in wet and dry. I'm including pictures of them enjoying their first snowfall.