

The puppies are doing so much that it will be difficult to put it into just one update. Everyone, including Phantom, is growing and maturing quickly. This week we started field trips, we learned to use the water bottle, and we are beginning to sleep through the night. Those are just the highlights.

The week began with lots of anxiety. Although the weaning process began about a week and a half ago, I was dealing with lots of tummy issues. During the night, instead of 2 am and 6 am wake up calls, I was getting up every 45 minutes to an hour. The good news was the puppies were telling me they had to potty, but the amount of loose stools and times they were getting up was quite difficult on me. I decided to change their food from a puppy food with chicken as a main protein, to an adult food where pork was the main protein. It is working. On Friday night, the puppies slept from 11:00 to 5:30 am. I did see 2 wet spots on the pad in the crate, but no one had to defecate. Although, I don't know who, someone has a chicken allergy. In order to maintain good health, I am no longer giving any of my puppies things that may contain chicken.

Because of the tummy issues, I have not done any crate training. It is stressful enough to learn to crate without having an upset stomach as an extra irritant. I am planning on starting that process this week as I see improvement with their potty issues.

On Tuesday, I took the four girls on their first field trip. Phantom was still too little to go. The girls were put into a crate in the back of my van. The purpose of field trips is to teach the puppies to relax in the car, thus avoiding car sickness problems, and to teach puppies about the "outside world". Dr. Ian Dunbar a well known author and canine behaviorist states that a puppy should meet at least 100 different people by the time he or she is 12 weeks old, to ensure proper socialization. It is a tall order, but I do want my puppies to meet as many different people as possible. So on Tuesday, the puppies had their first adventure. Due to a slight problem with my payment to the dentist, that was my first stop. Dr. Austin and his staff were fantastic. Everyone was able to hold a puppy and pass them around. Everyone commented on how calm and relaxed all of the puppies seem to be. There was no whining, or shyness, and most importantly, everyone stayed dry until they came back home to go potty the right place!

On Wednesday, we headed back out to a pet food boutique to pick up some food. Once again the staff was amazed with how quiet and calm everyone was. These puppies enjoy the attention. Ava was a bit nervous. You could tell by how she would grip everyone's hand with her front paws, but she soon relaxed.

While the sisters were going on field trips, poor Phantom was learning the hard lesson of being the younger brother. My husband stated that each time his sisters left, he would wander around the pen wailing and looking for them. He would look in all the crates and around the toys until exhausted, he would go to sleep. Oh the joyous reunion when everyone came home! Next week, Phantom will be old enough to go out with his sisters on the trips.

These puppies are quite intelligent. I have a water bottle in their area. It is actually for their Mom when she goes in and feeds them. They watched May use it, and they smelled where she licked it. They now are happily drinking water out of a bottle. I use bottles because it is easier to keep everyone's face clean. Puppies also like to drink by osmosis, two paws and a nose in the water

dish. Having a water bottle keeps the dish from spilling. With May's puppies keeping clean is not really an issue. May does not like wet grass or being dirty. It is not unusual to have to shoo her off of the porch in the morning and make her go into the wet grass. Although the puppies are fine pottyng in the wet grass, when it comes time to eat, they are very dainty. They eat without making much of a mess. Their food is a mixture of ground kibble and goat's milk. It makes a paste. They are very careful and seldom even have it on their face. Phantom is different. He loves to eat. He will climb in the middle of the plate and eat. The sisters have to eat around him. After every meal, he has kibble paste on all four legs and on his tummy. Eating has become his favorite time during the day. He is definitely not going to be a picky eater!

Zsa Zsa is fulfilling her namesake. Field trips are right up her alley. The more people that recognize her magnificence, the better. She looks right at you and has a half smile on her face. You know there is something going on in that little brain of hers. She is doing very well in her potty behavior. She is beginning to understand the command "go potty". In fact, if she is in her area, and you say it's time to "go potty", she will squat right there. I have to wait until she is outside in the potty area before I say the command.

Audrey is a hoot. I believe she is part Jack rabbit. She does not walk anywhere, she runs or hops. It's as if she is afraid something is going to happen without her. She is brimming with self-confidence. She loves to go up to the fenced area where the adult cotons hang out and play with them. She runs back and forth and dances all around. On Saturday, I allowed one of my young male cotons out with me and the puppies. Audrey was the first to go right up to him. He looked at her and bounced, she backed up for only a second, and then bounced right back. Soon she was chasing him around the porch. She has no fear.

Lana and Ava are both coming out of their shell. Lana is my love bug. She is by me or on my feet no matter where I am when we are outside. She loves to hang out with me. I pick her up and rub her belly. When I put her down, she flops down for another belly rub. She is so personable. She loves to be held. She is going to be a lap dog.

Ava is so pretty. I love her structure and her temperament. She isn't as outgoing as her sisters, but she isn't shy. As I stated earlier, she was a bit pensive with new people picking her up, but she never shied away. As soon as she was held close, she settled right down. She is more of an explorer than her sister Lana. Lana loves to hang out with me, whereas Ava likes to wander and see the world around her. It is not unusual for her to have a leaf, or rose petal or stick in her mouth, a treasure from her roaming adventures. She too loves belly rubs. She will surrender anything in her mouth as long as a belly rub is the trade off.