

This has been a tough week for the puppies. As the puppies transition from newborn helpless to outgoing puppies, adjustments are happening. First of all, everyone is learning to take a nap in their crate. It is not easy for a puppy to learn crate. Puppies instinctively understand that there is safety in numbers. A single puppy is a target for predators. Even though domestic puppies do not have to worry about that, the instinct to stay together is very strong. Crate training at this age is essential. It teaches the puppy that it is okay to be by his or her self, thus helping to eliminate separation anxiety. Puppy is fed in his or her crate allowing me to see that each puppy is eating the proper amount of food. Having a puppy spend time in the crate also teaches the puppy to tell me when he or she needs to go.

The positives outweigh the negatives when teaching crate; however the actual teaching of crate can be very tedious. The puppies are not happy being separated, and are quite vocal about it. It is like trying to teach several sets of twins how to take a nap in their own bed. One goes to sleep, one has a melt down. Once you calm that one down, another one decides it is time for his or her own meltdown. Plus it is a challenge to decipher the "I need to potty" wail from the "I don't want to take a nap" wail. The puppies are doing well, and learning two important commands "Quiet Puppy" and "Nap Time". I am able to successfully have the puppies nap for 2 hours in the morning. I get them up for their lunch. Once the puppies are more comfortable with Nap time. I will transition them to sleeping individually through the night. Again, another fun time for all!

The next difficult adjustment was saying goodbye to Mom. May Day went back to her home on Saturday. The girls are large, and have a good set of sharp teeth. They are eating solid dry kibble with no issues. Although Mom still nursed everyone, you could tell they were biting her. You could hear May grumble as she corrected them. Phantom (AKA Harley) has his teeth, but I would have liked to have had him nurse on Mom a bit longer. Unfortunately May treated Harley like his sisters, and weaned him on the same schedule. Harley is eating kibble soaked in goat's milk which seems to satisfy him.

This week our field trip took us to a farm and ranch store called Atwoods. Harley was very excited to join his sisters on the trip. Everyone was in a laundry basket, which I had in a shopping cart. I just wheeled them around as I was shopping. Once people understood that I wasn't selling puppies, I had lots of volunteers to hold puppies. Although I didn't take pictures, I was able to have a family of 5 kids hold puppies. Their mom was a bit unsure at the beginning. I promised them that I wasn't selling puppies. I just needed to socialize the puppies with as many people, especially children, as possible. I had 4 kids ages from about 5 to 13 hold the puppies. I did not feel it was appropriate to ask to take pictures of the children. I was also able to have several cashiers and other customers hold everyone. I was very proud of how calm and relaxed all the puppies were.

Zsa Zsa loves her field trips. She is enthralled with all the people holding her and looking at her. At home, she can be a bit of a bully. She loves to run right at Harley, knock him over and take off. It is not unusual to hear a puppy snarl and yell. I look up to see Zsa Zsa standing on top of one of her sisters. She wants to be the queen.

Ava is blossoming. She continues to be the snuggle bunny. When I sit outside, she is the one sitting at my feet. She loves to be held and cuddled. Everyone who picked her up was amazed how calm and relaxed she was in their arms.

Lana is so much like Ava, I often have to look at her collar to see which puppy I am petting. She isn't quite as much of a snuggly puppy as Ava, but she is close. She is still a bit more independent. She enjoys rough housing with her sisters. She likes to hide behind the flower pots and do sneak attacks as her sisters and brother run by. Since she is behind the pots, squeezed in a corner, they can't reach her.

Audrey is a firecracker. She is a free range puppy who does not like to be told what to do or where to go. Unfortunately she is also the smallest sister which makes her a target. It is not unusual to hear an angry yell or squeal. It is probably Audrey on her back with Zsa Zsa or Lana on top of her. When everyone is in their crates, the one loud wail is usually Audrey. She is very stubborn, incredibly smart and will be so much fun as an adult!

Harley, formally known as Phantom, is maturing so quickly. He found his voice. If he is in an area and he can't find his sisters, he barks until someone finds him. While we are out in the potty area, he will go a bit further away to defecate. Occasionally I walk back to the patio to sit down, if he feels he is alone, he immediately calls out. He is doing so well with his crate training. He will take his nap willingly, but if he has to go potty, he will tell me. I will take him out to potty and he goes back to sleep.

I am very pleased at the potty progression with the puppies. We are still having pee in their area, but they will wait to defecate in the proper area. The puppies are now consistently sleeping through the night. I will give them a few more days before I work on night time individual crate time.