

It is now the home stretch. I find it fascinating that most breeders have their puppies placed by this time. I look at my pups and I realize how much more they have to learn before going home. In fact, they are still nursing on Choo. The nursing is only for comfort. Everyone is eating solid food with very little issues. Choo still wants to have puppy nurse time, until someone bites. Monday is the last nurse day. On Tuesday when everyone turns 9 weeks, Choo will go to the vet's office to be boarded for a few days. It will completely dry her up, and allow the puppies time to adjust to puppy food only without the "trauma" of seeing mom every day.

Now that the pups are older, I am working on individual puppy cooperation. Notice I did not say obedience. They still have puppy mush brain, and with the distraction of 7 other siblings and



"cousins", the task would be overwhelming both to the puppy and to me! There are commands that the puppies are learning to perform individually. My favorite, and one of the most difficult is "Quiet Puppy". Just because your "neighbor" is being a noisy, does not give you permission to yowl as well. This is especially convenient for the 3 a.m. bathroom trips. Every night, some one has to potty. It is never the same puppy. Everyone is becoming quite good at staying quiet and still while the one puppy goes potty and comes back to bed. Puppies are understanding that when the sun is not up, they will not be either.

Another individual command I am teaching is "walk with me". I am taking each puppy out individually on the leash for a short walk. I am extremely pleased on how well each pup is doing. Each one happily walks with me, without pulling or stopping. If there is a pause, I immediately stop, kneel down and call the puppy. I am always using a happy encouraging voice. The last thing a puppy needs is someone pulling on his or her neck, cementing in each one's brain that leashes are bad. Next week I will have Brian walk puppies as well, to change the exercise.

This week was microchipping week. Everyone now is microchipped. It is imperative that the microchip be registered to you. This is done through the puppy's AKC paperwork which will come with them. Not only will this register the dog with AKC, but for \$15.00 the microchip will be connected to his or her own AKC registration number for the lifetime of the dog. It is a one time fee. Please utilize this potentially life saving offer.

Once the microchips were in place, the next stop was a very high end clothing boutique called CK and Co. A dear friend and Coton owner is a buyer for Lafayette designer clothing. The shop is amazing and way too expensive for me, but the Cotons fit in perfectly. Everyone had to hold a puppy. All the pups were very good, and give lots of happy wags and kisses. It looked like a professional photo shoot, white dogs, expensive black dresses on marble floors with faux animal skins and chandeliers. It made for quite an outing. In fact, it was a good thing all the puppies had



homes, there were some offers.

Maggie is looking more and more like her mother every day. The only difference is that she has fawn ears. She is dainty and but very bold. On the one hand she cringes every time I make her potty on the wet grass in the morning, yet she has no issues climbing in the baby pool and wading around. She just doesn't want to be out done by her brothers.

Duke is over coming his abhorrence of being wet. He still is not as appreciative of swimming in the baby pool as some of his siblings, but he finds it to be a necessity if he is going to get a drink of water. He will get in drink his water, and then quickly jump out. I guess he really is made of sugar.

Jack is quickly gathering a fan base. No matter where I take the puppies, everyone is drawn to Jack. At first it's because of his color. He is so different from his siblings and cousins, but then his personality comes out. Jack does not have a bad day. He is always wagging his tail, but his all time love is to be held and carried around. He is my only barker. He only barks when he wants something. It is not a constant yappy obnoxious noise. He barks when he needs to potty, or when he is hungry. He is very expressive.

Opie is hysterical. He really tries to understand what I am saying, and he really becomes frustrated when I don't understand him. He looks right into my eyes, and tilts his head. It's as if he is trying to read my mind. His best expressions come when he is in a crate and he doesn't want to be. He waits until my back is turned, and then he wails. I turn around and he is sitting a solemn and quiet as a tomb as if nothing had had happened. It frustrates and makes me laugh at the same time. He knows better, which is why he is quiet while I am in the room, he just can't help himself.

Dancer is a great middle of the road dog. I see attributes of each puppy all in Dancer. He is goofy like Opie preferring to wait until I am out of sight to have a melt down. He is happy like Jack. He was given lots of compliments yesterday about how pretty he was, and he is bit of a priss like Duke and Maggie. He will get into the water, but usually by accident. He will try to get a drink without falling into the pool. It usually ends with wet feet and face.

Finally our new activity was getting a bath. One would think that I personally dunked each puppy until they were moments from passing out. The sad faces and wailing that transpired while I was washing and rinsing everyone was absolutely hysterical. The water was only 3 inches deep, just enough to cover their feet. Everyone smelled and looked good for about an hour. In the evening, it was warm so everyone ran outside to get a drink from the pool. The end result was happy muddy wet puppies.