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What's Happening in the ~~(Whelping)~~ Box Weaning Pen

As I predicted, time has been passing *very* quickly here. Much has changed since the last issue; the whelping box came down and the weaning pen went up. Pups are up and running around although still nap alot, their eyes are wide open and their vision improves everyday, they hear very well and have sharp little teeth.

Mama Luca's work is wrapping up and ours has become more intensive. She is slowly being relieved of her feeding duties. The gruel that was introduced nearly 2 weeks ago has been replaced with soaked and softened kibble that is offered 4 times a day. Most meals are eaten in the kitchen or on the deck and the pups have a blast with the extra room to run around and play.

I no longer weigh pups on a daily basis as I can see that they are all eating well and obviously gaining.

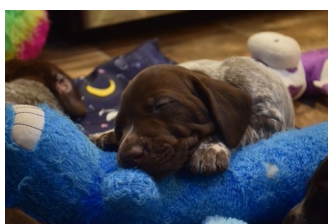
Luca no longer cleans up after them. Pee pads have been replaced with litter boxes in the weaning pen and it is amazing how well pups are doing using them. See the article in this issue about our housetraining philosophy.

The brutal heat we have had the past several days has made it difficult to get them outside much but I am hoping to get their outdoor play area set up this weekend. Methodically expanding their world and carefully exposing them to as much possible continues to be



our focus.

Speaking of exposing them, we are looking forward to visits from some of you next week. We truly appreciate the time taken to make the trip here and absolutely understand that not all can make it since many of you live quite far away. If you haven't scheduled a visit yet and would like to, please do not hesitate to reach out.



Visits

I like to schedule visits when pups are 5/6 weeks old. I welcome the chance for us to actually meet and it helps me to socialize pups. I do ask that visits not exceed 1 to 1 1/2 hours as I have many families to schedule in a short period of time.

Since pups are unvaccinated and still very fragile, we must take every possible precaution when we have visitors. It is unfortunately too easy for someone to unknowingly carry in a deadly virus such as Parvo, which would have a devastating effect on these pups.

Therefore:

- please do not visit any other dogs the day of your visit
- please wear clothing that you have not worn around other dogs
- please expect to remove your shoes when entering the house (feel free to bring slippers or wear old socks!)
- please expect to wash and sanitize your hands before going in the puppy room
- please do not "pick" a favorite, but do let me know if there are any you are not at all drawn to

Socialization



Socializing a new pup might not be exactly what you think. Folks often think socializing a pup means getting it around other dogs, but really it is more about environment and people.

We strive to raise our litters with socialization and enrichment in a way that gives them the best chance of developing to their fullest potential. The premise is that the experiences a puppy has in the first few months has a profound effect on how he/she will handle stressful situations throughout life. We spend countless hours socializing, exposing pups to various surfaces, areas and obstacles to overcome, introducing clicker training, crating etc. It is up to you to continue this work.



Once pup settles into your home, begin to take them out to visit safe places and meet new people. If you do introduce them to other dogs, please be sure they are friendly and **HEALTHY** dogs. Make sure these experiences are positive and fun for your pup. Avoid common areas, **NEVER** go to a dog park or walk pup down a city street. Please remember that viruses such as Parvo are easily transmitted, all pup has to do is step where there may be microscopic infected fecal particles and then lick their paws. (Never let pup lick or chew on shoes for this very reason.)

Parasites

Internal and external parasites can have debilitating effects on dogs, especially young pups. Even though a mother dog will test clear of intestinal parasites, she can still pass larvae to her pups either in-vitro or through her milk.

External parasites are generally fleas and ticks and are for the most part seasonal. A severe flea burden is not only extremely uncomfortable for a dog but can actually cause anemia as they literally suck blood from the host. Ticks, of course, are known for the horrible diseases they can transmit—Lyme Disease, Ehrlichiosis, Anaplasmosis are a few.

Internal parasites include heartworm, intestinal worms, and single cell organisms.

Heartworm larvae is transmitted dog to dog by mosquitos and develop into actual worms that lodge and eventually clog the heart. Untreated, it is deadly, but treatment is not easy either, it causes the worms to die and be carried to the lungs where they are slowly reabsorbed by the body. The dog must remain quiet and relaxed for several weeks while this happens. Thankfully, there is a preventative for heartworm, please be sure to discuss this with your veterinarian.

Common intestinal parasites include roundworms, whipworms, hookworms, tapeworms and single cell organisms such as giardia and coccidia. These parasites are commonly contracted from the mother dog and/or the environment - soil, plants or other objects, or by ingesting an infected host such as a rodent, bird or insect. Intestinal parasites cause a range of symptoms from vomiting, diarrhea, anorexia, anemia, and malnourishment. Most of these worms will show in a fecal sample tested by the veterinary lab.

It is not uncommon for puppies to be born with certain intestinal parasites such as roundworms. We always have samples tested over the 8 weeks that pups are with us to make sure there is not an active infestation. Many dogs develop intestinal parasites at some point in their life. Some are picked up in the environment, and some remain dormant in the intestines, but can become active and shed at times of stress. Should you have any concern about an intestinal parasite in your dog, simply have a fecal sample tested by your veterinarian's office.

It is a good idea to have a sample checked occasionally throughout your dog's life.

Housetraining and Crate Training

We began the house-training process back when pups were only a couple weeks old. You probably have heard the theory that dogs prefer to keep their environment clean and if given the option, will not relieve themselves where they eat and sleep. We encourage this behavior early on by providing a comfortable sleeping area and a separate spot in the whelping box to relieve themselves.

As pups age, we provide a bigger and bigger area. The whelping box gave way to the “weaning pen” -an exercise pen with pads and blankets for sleeping and playing, and litter boxes for “pottying”. We are certain that fostering the ability to maintain a clean environment and giving them a distinct place to “go” helps with the house-training efforts when pups move on to their homes.

Crate training is often tied to house training as it has the same premise-pup is confined to a crate for sleeping and when he or she cannot be watched. The crate needs to be small enough that pup will not have enough space to urinate or defecate on one side and lay down on the other thus (hopefully) learning to both hold it and alert you when he or she needs to go.

The difficult part with crating is that it can initially be very stressful for both puppy and people, there almost always is crying and screaming by the pup, sometimes so much that it leads to crying by the people! Eventually, most pups happily accept the crate as his or her own space, but initially it seems like torture if we do not work very hard at making it a positive place, or if we rush the process. Some pups become so distraught being locked in a crate that all thoughts of cleanliness go out the window, they defecate, urinate and jump through it making a gross mess. You have heard of separation anxiety, but confinement anxiety is just as real. So, what to do? I suggest letting pup sleep overnight, take naps and eat in the crate-so he or she associates it with the good and necessary things in life. If you consistently put pup in crate when getting close to falling asleep and feed pup in it without closing the door, you will notice pup seeking the crate when he or she is tired, going in all on his/her own.

Now, of course, this leads to the dilemma of what to do when you must leave pup unattended in the very beginning. The reality of life is that most of us cannot have eyes on him or her 24/7, and they should absolutely be confined in some manner when you cannot give your full attention. Ideally, you will be spending as much time as possible with pup for the first several days home and can take the time to acclimate to the crate in a positive manner, but for longer periods of time, and/or until you get your pup comfortable being locked in a crate, you might want to consider using an ex-pen type set up, similar to the setup we had here for the litter –a crate (for a sleeping area) attached to the pen, with a litter box (low sided container with shredded newspaper or other litter material), food, water and some toys. This gives the pup the ability to keep his/her environment clean without having unrealistic expectations of pup not having any accidents. Pup will probably still protest, but hopefully will be a bit cleaner. You may be inclined to do this type of setup in a kitchen or bathroom without the ex-pen but be aware that pup just may chew on cabinets or furniture, also areas such as kitchens tend to be too big.

While we have digressed a bit from house training and will revisit separation anxiety later, the gist is all about encouraging pup to use an appropriate place to relieve him or herself, alerting you to when he or she has “to go” and developing the capability to “hold it”.

The housetraining basics

- ◆ Get pup outside (**by carrying**) immediately upon waking up, after play time and within 15-30 minutes of eating and drinking.
- ◆ Generally, it is believed that pup can hold it an hour for every month old it is (2 months old=2 hours), so expect to take pup out *at least* every 2 hours to start. You may even find yourself outside every 30 minutes!
- ◆ Pay close attention to pup for cues that he or she has to go. From being accustomed to using a litterbox, he or she will start to search for the appropriate place to go in your home. As soon as you see this behavior which is usually sniffing the ground, running and frantically looking, scoop pup up and carry outside. The downside of using the litterbox process is pup will seek a target and it may be a rug, bed or towel on the floor.
- ◆ Take pup to the same place outside every time and praise lavishly when he or she goes.
- ◆ I like to tie a command to pup going (“hurry up, go potty”).
- ◆ Do not assume pup is finished after peeing or pooping once, sometimes they go a couple times to empty out.
- ◆ There will be accidents, they will NOT be the pup’s fault so do not punish or get mad at anyone but yourself for not seeing the signs or not getting pup out enough.

Feeding

We have raised this litter on the same food our adult GSPs are on—Inukshuk. Pups get the 26/16 blend—that is 26% protein, 16% fat and is chicken based.

Inukshuk is manufactured by a small Canadian company and mostly sold in bulk. We order it by the pallet. It is also available by the bag on Chewy

It was originally developed for sled dogs, but folks like us with high energy sporting dogs have discovered it and find our dogs do very well on it.

What food you choose to feed your pup is up to you and you may want to discuss it with your veterinarian. We highly recommend a premium brand as opposed to a “grocery store” brand. The cost may seem higher but is worth it in the long run as you end up feeding less and the quality of nutrition your pup will get is much better. **Please be cautious about feeding a grain free food, there is research connecting grain free to cardiac problems in dogs.**

If you live near us and would like to continue using Inukshuk, we would be happy to add to our bulk order for you.

We send enough food home with each pup to get them settled and/or to transition to a new food.



Water

Clean, fresh water is vital for pup's well being. It usually is not necessary for pup to have water overnight if he or she sleeps all night.

However, many people are tempted to limit pup's access to water during the day in an effort to help with house training. Please do not do this—it can have a detrimental effect on pup's health.

Resources

There are many resources I can suggest for helping you along in your journey with your new pup. Local training facilities are a great place to start, I recommend finding one that offers a Puppy Kindergarten class and sign up asap. I am happy to help you find a facility in your area, I also suggest you ask your veterinarian for their recommendations as well.

Local training facilities and kennel clubs will also offer classes in the many fun activities that GSPs excel at such as Nosework, Agility, Rally, Tracking etc. Check these out and set goals for the future!

My favorite online training programs include Method K9 (methodk9.com) and Home School the Dog by Susan Garrett (dogsthat.com). Susan Garrett also does “Crate Games”. The Fenzi Dog Sports Academy is awesome, too (fenzidogsportsacademy.com)

For anyone with an interest in eventually hunting with your dog, I suggest NAVHDA - North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association. This is an international organization with local chapters that often hold training clinics and tests, a wonderful way to interact with others who have the same interest and have experience. Membership in the organization gives you a monthly magazine that often has helpful training articles.

The German Shorthaired Pointer Club of America is the AKC Parent Club for GSPs. All new puppy buyers that have not been a member in the past will get a complementary 1 year membership.

