

Papers Capers

Paper Cities Kennel Club April 2011

<http://www.papercitieskc.org/>

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Papers Capers is a monthly newsletter of Paper Cities Kennel Club, Inc., Wausau, WI. Opinions expressed in articles do not necessarily imply approval or endorsement of Paper Cities Kennel Club, Inc. The editor reserves the right to discretionary editing.

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Paper Cities Kennel Club

Meeting Notices

The Paper Cities Kennel Club will meet Wednesday, April 20th at 7:00 p.m. at Willow Springs Gardens off of Hwy. K in Wausau.

The Board of Directors meeting will be held Wednesday, May 4th at 7:00 p.m. at PENDING in Wausau.

In case of questionable weather or road conditions, contact any officer or board member after 5:30 p.m. on the day of the meeting to verify whether the meeting will be held.

Announcements

Braggs

Upcoming Events

DATE	EVENT	WHERE	WHO(contact)
April 06	PCKC Board Meeting	Annies Restaurant	Wausau, WI
April. 8-10	Saginaw Valley Kennel Club	Birch Run, MI	MB-F
April. 9-10	Kennel Club of Yorkville Illinois	DeKalb, IL	Roy Jones Dog Shows
April. 16-17	Steele City Kennel Club, Inc.	Crown Point, IN	Roy Jones Dog Shows
April 20	PCKC Meeting	Willow Springs	Wausau, WI
April. 23-24	Fond Du Lac County KC	Fond Du Lac, WI	Roy Jones Dog Shows
April. 23-24	Waterloo Kennel Club	Waterloo, IA	Onofrio Dog Shows
April. 21	Terre Haute Kennel Club, Inc.	Terre Haute, IN	Roy Jones Dog Shows
April. 22	Bloomington Indiana KC, Inc.	Terre Haute, IN	Roy Jones Dog Shows
April. 23	Terre Haute Kennel Club, Inc.	Terre Haute, IN	Roy Jones Dog Shows
April. 24	Bloomington Indiana KC, Inc.	Terre Haute, IN	Roy Jones Dog Shows
April 28	Champaign Illinois KC	Decater, IL	Onofrio Dog Shows
April 29	Sandmac Kennel Club	Decater, IL	Onofrio Dog Shows
April 30	Champaign Illinois KC	Decater, IL	Onofrio Dog Shows
May 01	Mattoon Kennel Club, Inc.	Decater, IL	Onofrio Dog Shows
May 04	PCKC Board Meeting	Pending	Wausau, WI
May 7th	Canine Amb. at Bike Rodeo	Weston Police Dept.	Weston, WI
May 6	Badger Kennel Club	Jefferson, WI	Roy Jones Dog Shows
May 7	Janesville-Beloit Kennel Club	Jefferson, WI	Roy Jones Dog Shows
May 8	Badger Kennel Club	Jefferson, WI	Roy Jones Dog Shows
May 14-15	Indianhead Kennel Club	Eau Claire, WI	Roy Jones Dog Shows
May. 14-15	Scott County Kennel Club, Inc.	Rock Island, IL	Onofrio Dog Shows
May. 14-15	Midland Michigan Kennel Club	Midland, MI	MBF-Inc.
May 18	PCKC Meeting	Willow Springs G.	Wausau, WI
May 21	Oshkosh Kennel Club, Inc	Fond du Lac, WI	Roy Jones Dog Shows
May 22	Winnegamie Dog Club, Inc.	Fond du Lac, WI	Roy Jones Dog Shows
May 21-22	Kokomo Kennel Club	Greentown, IN	Roy Jones Dog Shows
May 21-22	Genesee County KC, Inc.	Flint, MI	MBF-Inc.
May. 27	IL Valley KC of Peoria, Inc.	Bloominton. IL	Onofrio Dog Shows
May. 28	Cornbelt Kennel Club	Bloominton. IL	Onofrio Dog Shows
May. 29	IL Valley KC of Peoria, Inc.	Bloominton. IL	Onofrio Dog Shows
May. 30	Cornbelt Kennel Club	Bloominton. IL	Onofrio Dog Shows

****Interesting Web Sites****

Info Dog Site: <http://www.infodog.com/default.htm>

American Kennel Club: <http://www.akc.org/index.cfm>

Merck Veterinary Manual: <http://www.merckvetmanual.com/mvm/index.jsp>

Natural Holistic Health Care: <http://www.naturalholistic.com/nhpc/index.html>

EARS - Emergency Animal Rescue Service: <http://www.uan.org/ears/>

Therapy Dogs of Central Wisconsin: <http://www.wi-tdi-dogs.org/>

Amber Alert site for missing dogs: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/K9AmberAlert/>

Lost Dogs in Wisconsin: <http://lostdogswisconsin.webs.com//>

or facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Lost-Dogs-of-Wisconsin/395490441240>

Family Sanctuary at Peaceful Pines: <http://www.pppmemorials.com/FamilySanctuary/index.html>

Article on Bloat: <http://www.briard.com/about/liebesbloat.html>

Site about responsible breeders: http://www.akc.org/breeders/resp_breeding/resources.cfm

Lakeshore Pembroke Welsh Corgi Rescue: <http://www.lakeshorecorgirescue.org/>

Dog Federation of Wisconsin: <http://www.dfw.net/>

Dr. Patricia McConnell has a blog for training dogs: <http://www.theotherendoftheleash.com/>

Canine Vision: <http://www.uwsp.edu/PSYCH/dog/LA/DrP4.htm>

Canine Health Foundation: <http://www.caninehealthfoundation.org/>

Ask vet about medicines for pets from FDA: <http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm205666.htm>

Information on Dogs: <http://www.doggedhealth.com/>

Breeder's Handbook: Weaning More Puppies: http://www.akc.org/enewsletter/akc_breeder/2010/spring/handbook.cfm

Hormone Replacement Products affect Pets: <http://news.vin.com/vinnews.aspx?articleId=15950>
 LYME VACCINE & LYME DISEASE: <http://www.thedogplace.org/Vaccines/Lyme-Disease1-10062-Jordan.asp>
 DNR Wolf Alerts: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/mammals/wolf/dogdepred.htm>
 Foods: <http://www.dogfoodadvisor.com/dog-food-reviews/brand/>
 Michigan State University-College of Law-Animal Legal & Historical Center: <http://www.animallaw.info/>

Dr. Schultz online vaccination seminar –free: <http://www.showdogvideopros.com/PCAF2010SchultzA.html>

good one for the newsletter - timely !
 Vickie

Form W-K9 Department of the Treasury—Internal Revenue Service **2007** IRS Use Only—Do not write grocery lists or doodle emotions in this space.

Label
 Use this form if there are any pets in your household.

L A B E L H E R E	Your first name and initial	Last name
	Pet's first name and initial	Pet's pet name
	Home address	
	City, town or post office, state, and ZIP code	

Pet Election Campaign ▶ Check here if you want \$1 to go to a fund to elect a dog or cat president. ▶

Income Your Pet's Contribution to Your Household	1 How cute is your pet, on a scale of 1 to 10? ▶ <input type="checkbox"/> Multiply by 100 and enter here	1	
	2 Number of times a day you pet, play with, or talk to your pet	2	
	3 Number of times a child has claimed your pet ate his/her homework	3	
	4 Number of times your pet has protected you or your home (from a real or imagined threat)	4	
	5 Number of times your pet has eaten food someone didn't want	5	
	6 Snookums Tax: Total number of nicknames for your pet	6	
	7 Add up the numbers in lines 1–6 and multiply by \$10,000. This is your total Pet Tax ▶	7	
Adjustments Expenses You Can Deduct	8 Food: Estimated yearly cost of meals, snacks, and scraps eaten by your pet	8	
	9 Grooming: Number of hours you spend grooming or thinking about grooming your pet, or cleaning its cage or tank. Multiply by \$10	9	
	10 Number of squeaky toys, scratching posts, and hamster wheels in your home. Multiply by \$5.	10	
	11 Hours a week spent exercising the animal. Multiply by \$10 (or \$20 for walks when the temperature is 32°F or below)	11	
	12 Total amount spent on obedience training, veterinarians, therapists, and gifts for angry neighbors	12	
	13 Add up the numbers in lines 8–12. These are your total Pet Expenses ▶	13	
Damages Incurred by Pet	14 How many times did your pet throw up or have an "accident" in your house?	14	
	15 How many pieces of furniture or clothing has your pet destroyed?	15	
	16 Piranha Credit: Number of other household pets destroyed by this pet	16	
17 Add up the numbers in lines 14–16 and multiply by \$100. This is your total Damages Credit ▶	17		
Calculate Your Pet Tax	18 Add up the numbers in lines 13 and 17	18	
	19 If line 18 is more than line 7, subtract line 7 from line 18. This is the amount of your refund ▶ Choose form of payment: <input type="checkbox"/> cash <input type="checkbox"/> equivalent in pet food <input type="checkbox"/> a new pet	19	
	20 If line 18 is less than line 7, subtract line 18 from line 7. This is the amount you owe ▶	20	

For details on how to pay, see publication K9-433228873VZ9998TP.

Sign Here	Your signature	Date
	Your pet's signature (or paw print, nose print, or piece of dander, feather, or scale)	Date

WARNING: The penalty for falsifying information is cleaning up poop at the local pound for 300 hours a week.

Ask AKC

with Lisa Peterson

Spring is upon us! With all the snow and rain this winter we can expect a milestone mud season! While we may be dealing with dirty paws, the winter precipitation does bode well for our gardens. I get a lot of questions about dogs digging in the garden, so I'm sharing one of my favorite columns just in time for spring. But back to mud season and dirty paws!

Dear Lisa: Now that Spring is right around the corner, I'm spending more time outdoors with my young puppy. However, all she wants to do is dig in the yard. She digs in different places and is destroying the lawn and garden. What can I do to stop her from this annoying habit? — **Spring Solutions**

Dear Spring: Dogs will dig! It's in their nature. It's a tool they use to accomplish many tasks. But why they dig is as wide and varied as your yard's terrain after the puppy has had her way in the turf. Reasons for digging fall into two categories: a natural instinct to achieve a goal or a symptom of a behavioral problem.

Instinct vs. Bad Behavior

Many purebred dogs were selectively bred for their digging abilities. The terrier breeds in particular and some hounds are noted for "going to ground" to locate their quarry. While Dachshunds may dig for badgers and Parson Russell Terriers for fox, other breeds use digging to help locate weasels, otters, rodents and other small vermin that live in the ground.

Dogs may dig when they find small mammals like moles or voles in your yard. With dogs' acute hearing they hear them scurrying along in their underground burrows and their keen sense of smell helps them locate the exact spot to dig. Hunting prey is one major reason for digging. Especially if you have a heavy-coated breed your dog may dig to create a cool spot in the earth to lie down in. This natural cooling method is employed in shady areas during summer's heat. Sometimes dogs just like to have fun and digging gives them a thrill.

Other times dogs may dig out of boredom, obsessive-compulsive behavior or the need to escape. Puppies especially have tons of energy and need to release it somewhere. If a puppy isn't mentally challenged or physically exercised enough she could be digging to relieve that pent up energy. Dogs that dig at a fence line may want to escape from the yard either to play with other dogs to relieve boredom or to try to locate their owners due to separation anxiety.

Solutions

Once you've identified what type of digger you have dealing with solutions can be more focused. If prey drives your dog to dig then removal of the object of their desire is first and foremost. For fun diggers, keep bare spots of dirt to a minimum as the soft earth is an easy target. Cover barren patches with natural obstacles like stones, tiles, gravel or wood or use temporary measures like chicken wire laid flat over the spot to prevent digging. This may stop digging in that one area but may lead your dog to dig elsewhere.

The best solution is not to try and stop your dog from digging but give him his own place to dig by building a digging pit or sandbox. However, the only way to truly prevent digging is to provide a small kennel run with a concrete floor.

One further option is to allow dogs to dig in their own yards. Many people divide their yards into dig-free zones for cultivation of manicured gardens and lush lawns and give the dogs a fenced-in area all their own. My dogs have their own 30 x 50-foot area that is theirs for the digging. Having holes to work on and dirt to excavate is one of their pleasures! Plus it's fun to watch them dig a hole big enough to disappear into. This compromise gives man and his best friend what they both want with no hard feelings between them.

Dear Lisa: I am entering my dog for his (and my) first Rally Advanced Class. When I began in Rally Novice, I entered in Novice B because members of my club told me if I had ever finished a title on a dog in my life, I could only enter for B classes (I had never showed before in Rally, but 35 years ago I had completed a CD on a dog). So, I entered and finished a title in Rally Novice B. My question is do I enter my dog in Rally Advanced A or Rally Advanced B for our first time out in Rally Advanced? –

Moving On Up

Dear Moving: You and the dog would be eligible to enter the Rally Advanced A class. For the Rally Advanced A class, the dog being shown must have earned the RN title, but may never have earned an AKC obedience title prior to the close of entries for the event being entered. Additionally, the handler of the dog must be the owner or a member of the owner's household or immediate family. The following are the entry requirements for Rally Advanced A & B.

The Rally Advanced A Class. To be eligible for this class, dogs shall have won the Rally Novice (RN) title but have not won the Rally Advanced (RA) title or any AKC Obedience title prior to the close of entries. A handler must own the dog entered or be a member of the owner's household or immediate family. A person may enter more than one dog in this class. After a dog earns the Rally Advanced (RA) title, it may continue to compete in this class for 60 days. No dog may be entered in both Rally Advanced A and Rally Advanced B at any one trial.

The Rally Advanced B Class. To be eligible for entry into this class, competing dogs shall have won the Rally Novice (RN) title prior to close of entries. A dog completing the Rally Advanced (RA) title may continue to compete in this class indefinitely. The owner or any other person may handle the dog in this class. A person may enter more than one dog in this class.

Bark Bark ~

Reader comments on the [February Column](#) regarding hot spots:

Dear Lisa: We have 4 Siberian Huskies and had this issue with one of them. Our vet could not find a reason as well for his chewing. She suggested we assume it is an allergy to start. We used some antihistamine. After a daily dose for a summer, he stopped chewing, his fur grew back, and he was more relaxed. Might be a simple solution to try. – **L. D.**

Dear Lisa: Another 'hot spot' problem could be the lack of a proper diet. My sheltie and lab/dalmation mix both had hot spots that drove them crazy. After medications didn't work, I did a little research and gradually changed their diet from a wheat based food to an animal based food. I also added salmon oil once daily to their dry food. Presto! No more hot spots, bald spots, hair loss and incessant itching. Even shedding has been minimized and their coats are thick and full. Happy pups, happy owner! – **T.C.**

Features

From Puppy Bling to Lavish Toys AKC Survey Finds the Family Dog Will Reap the Benefits of a Refund From Uncle Sam

Forget about self-indulgence, a recent American Kennel Club® (AKC®) financial survey revealed that 63% of dog owners who receive a tax refund will use the money to pamper their dog. The most popular splurge-worthy item was doggy bling (a rhinestone collar or fancy leash) however, other lavish items for Fido included a "specialized all weather dog run and play area," an "auto ball thrower," and "a posh puppy boutique."

In addition 31% of respondents have a savings account for their dog either for emergencies or to indulge Fido and 62% have considered starting one. And while many people will receive a tax refund, some Americans will end up owing the government. It turns out that most dog owners (81%) or their spouses (13%) will endure necessary cutbacks if they owe Uncle Sam, rather than take away from the family dog.

"It's not surprising that many Americans use their tax refund to buy gifts for their dogs knowing the benefits of dog ownership are priceless," said AKC Spokesperson Lisa Peterson. "Since dogs are considered valuable family members even those not in Uncle Sam's favor still put Fido first by cutting back on their own luxuries in order to indulge their favorite companions."

The survey also found that the top five items the family dog would buy if he were able to take out a loan are:

- 5. Membership to a dating service to check out other hot doggies**
- 4. Unlimited massage therapist services**
- 3. A personal assistant to clean up the yard after potty breaks**
- 2. Squirrel Hunting Trip**
- 1. Unlimited Kibble**

To learn about responsible dog ownership, visit the AKC website at www.akc.org.

Explanatory Notes:

The survey was conducted during a three-week period from March 10 through 30, 2011. A total of 689 surveyors responded voluntarily. Self-selecting methods were used in recruitment for this study. AKC does not guarantee that these statistics are scalable to the overall population. This data is for anecdotal purposes only.

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Helpful Tips

The Golden Years: Helping Your Dog Age Gracefully

Most dog owners consider Fido a part of the family and want him to live a long, healthy life. Dogs, just like humans, need special care once they become seniors. Generally, dogs are considered in the senior stage of life at seven years old, but how your dog ages will vary depending on what breed he is. The American Kennel Club (AKC®) offers the following tips to help you make your dog's golden years happy and healthy.

Pay attention to change. Older dogs have predictable routines and behaviors, so any change in his behavior, activity, weight, eating, and bathroom habits could be a sign that something is wrong. Be observant of any changes and go see your veterinarian to rule out any developing conditions.

Well visits. Since dogs age faster than humans, early detection of age-related problems is key to keeping your senior dog happy and healthy. Have your elderly dog examined by your veterinarian every six months. These regular exams will help you catch any age-related illnesses before they become too advanced.

Make your home senior-friendly. As Fido ages, he'll become less agile than he used to be. Smaller dogs may have trouble jumping onto or off of furniture, and larger dogs may have trouble getting in and out of cars. Set up carpet-lined steps or a ramp to help your dog do the simple things he used to do in a safe and comfortable way.

For more information on responsible dog ownership, visit www.akc.org.

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Spring 2011

Puppy Socialization: Key to Preventing Behavior Problems

By Arliss Paddock

After you have carefully planned a breeding for optimal health, temperament, ability, and breed quality, your primary responsibility as a breeder is to ensure a happy, permanent home for every puppy. An essential part of making sure that “forever home” will work out is seeing to it that each puppy is properly socialized during the early part of her life—especially during the most critical period of approximately 7 to 12 weeks of age.

During this special phase of development the puppy is particularly receptive to aspects of the outside world she encounters as she learns to identify new things as being “safe.” This can include different kinds of people, situations, and surroundings. In this crucial time she becomes accustomed to humans of many types, she figures out how to behave appropriately around other dogs, and she learns to face differing aspects of the world around her without fear.

It is important to understand that the amount of socialization a puppy receives—or doesn't receive—during this period shapes her permanently. Continuing, proper socialization during this time (and beyond) is vital to ensuring that she will reach her potential as a well-balanced, confident companion who adapts to and enjoys a wide variety of situations. Conversely, a too-limited range of experiences during this period can mean that as an adult she might never be accepting of certain kinds of people or circumstances. Although later training can sometimes help to make up for inadequate socialization during the critical early period, it might be extremely difficult or even impossible to correct certain behavior problems that can result. Unfortunately, behavior problems are the major reason that owners return dogs to breeders or give them up to shelters, so of course you want to do all you can to prevent such a situation.

Providing the best start

As the breeder, ideally you've been socializing the puppies from the beginning. You should handle them daily from birth and expose them to a wide variety of surfaces, objects, and sounds by 6 weeks. Get them used to being held in different positions and to having different parts of their bodies touched. Gently hold a paw for a few seconds while petting and talking to the pup. Introduce them to grooming in very short sessions.

Once they're past the newborn stage, consider situating the puppy pen near your home's center of activity rather than secluded outdoors or in the basement. This way, the pups can be exposed to different sights, to a variety of human voices, and to household noises such as that of the vacuum cleaner, the dishwasher, and the washer-dryer.

After they've had their first shots, the pups can be provided with more new experiences beyond the home. The American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior recommends more extensive socialization beginning as early as 7 or 8 weeks, and well before 12 weeks of age:

“Because the first three months is the period when sociability outweighs fear, this is the primary window of opportunity for

puppies to adapt to new people, animals, and experiences. ... Veterinarians specializing in behavior recommend that owners take advantage of every safe opportunity to expose young puppies to the great variety of stimuli that they will experience in their lives.”

The AVSAB stresses the role of proper socialization in avoiding future behavior issues that can cause owners to give up their dogs. “Incomplete or improper socialization during this important time can increase the risk of behavioral problems later in life including fear, avoidance, and/or aggression. ... Behavioral problems are the greatest threat to the owner-dog bond. In fact, behavioral problems are the number-one cause of relinquishment to shelters.”

Exposure to a wider variety of experiences can include carefully planned outings to places such as the local park or shopping center, but perhaps most important is that it include a focused effort to have pups meet as many and as wide a variety of humans as possible—old people, young people, people of different skin colors, people using canes or wheelchairs, people wearing hats, and so on.

The benefit of puppy-socialization classes

It is also crucial for pups to meet a variety of other dogs during this period. However, it can be tricky to ensure that meetings with strange dogs will be safe and unthreatening to the pup. Ideally, most dog-to-dog socialization will be with canines close to the pup’s age. An optimal setting for this, therefore, is the organized puppy playgroup or socialization class, which provides socialization with both humans and other dogs.

What about the risk, though, of having a pup among a group of strange dogs before she has completed the full series of puppy shots? Veterinary behaviorist Valarie V. Tynes, in the article “10 Life-Threatening Behavior Myths” (Veterinary Medicine, September 2008), explains that the benefits of attending puppy class far outweigh the risk.

“Despite the growing body of data supporting the benefits of proper socialization, many veterinarians continue to be skeptical about the safety of puppy classes and the critical importance of these classes to their patients’ long-term health. Classes held in an indoor (and therefore easy-to-sanitize) area and restricted to puppies of a similar age and vaccination status are unlikely to lead to disease outbreaks.”

Tynes elaborates on the importance of socialization, and she goes on to describe the conditions that constitute proper socialization:

“Dogs are best able to form new relationships with those of their own and other species and to adapt to stimuli in their environment during their socialization period, commonly considered to be between 4 and 14 weeks of age. During this period, puppies begin demonstrating startle reactions to sound and sudden movements, as well as fearful body postures. Unsocialized puppies do not learn to discriminate between things that are truly dangerous and those that are not. Such puppies are likely to become increasingly fearful of novel objects, people, and environments. Proper socialization during this period is critical if an owner desires a dog that is tolerant of other people and animals and is unafraid of new environments and situations.

“Clients need to be educated about what constitutes appropriate socialization. Simply taking a puppy to a dog park and turning it loose with a group of dogs does not necessarily socialize it. Proper socialization means exposing the animal to a novel stimulus in a way that does not cause fear and should be an enjoyable, positive experience. Many dog owners force their dogs into interactions when the dogs are already showing signs of fear. This forced interaction only serves to convince the dogs that the particular situation or person is terrifying and to be avoided in the future.

“Well-run puppy classes are the easiest way to expose a dog to novel people, dogs, and situations. In a good puppy class, puppies will be exposed to children, men in uniforms and hats, wheelchairs, umbrellas, and other stimuli that are likely to frighten older dogs that have not had those experiences.”

Raising awareness among veterinarians

To help raise awareness among the veterinary community of the benefits of puppy-socialization classes, the AVSAB invited four vets with extensive experience with these classes to share their thoughts (“Early puppy socialization classes: risks vs. benefits,” Veterinary Medicine, December 2009).

The vets interviewed unanimously agreed that the benefits for puppies in attending socialization classes greatly outweighed any health risks, as long as basic precautionary strategies are in place. In the discussion they shared advice on protocols that can be followed to minimize health risk and optimize results of attending the classes, and some of their comments follow.

Dr. Kersti Seksel: “Initial vaccinations must have been administered at least one week before classes start. Because the socialization period in dogs is between 3 and 12 weeks old, I recommend that puppies be at least 8 weeks and preferably less than 13 weeks of age when they begin classes. Classes run for four or five weeks, so a puppy that is 16 weeks when it starts will be 20 to 21 weeks old when it finishes. Juvenile puppies (4 to months of age) have very different mental and motor skills than younger puppies. We want them in a class with pups their own age.”

Dr. Brenda Griffin: “I recommend that puppies start class as soon as possible, ideally between 8 and 12 weeks old. The puppies should receive their distemper-hepatitis-parvovirus vaccinations, and vaccination against bordetellosis and parainfluenza is recommended.

“Generally the first class meeting would be just for the owners, who should be given basic information on housetraining, collars, leashes, positive reinforcement, socialization, and how to start training at home. We would also verify vaccination records and cover class rules. Owners are not allowed to bring their puppies to class if the pets have any signs of illness. Depending on the puppy’s origin, we may take other precautions. For example, if [one pup in the class] came from a high-risk

shelter environment ... we may keep the puppy out for two weeks. ... These owners can attend classes without their puppy.” Dr. Jennifer Messer: “All puppies attending our classes must be at least 8 weeks old. They must have had at least one distemper combination vaccination administered by a veterinarian at 6 weeks of age or older and at least 10 days before the first class. Instructors verify the vaccination record at the start of the session, and all owners are required to commit to completing their puppies’ vaccination series as recommended by their veterinarian.

“We take many precautions. Puppy classes are held indoors and conducted before adult classes each evening. The floor is sanitized with a 1:30 bleach solution at the end of the night; we only teach on nonporous surfaces we can sanitize.”

The AVSAB offers general guidelines that puppies can start socialization classes as early as 7 to 8 weeks of age and should receive a minimum of one set of vaccines at least seven days prior to the first class, as well as a first deworming. Additionally, puppies should show no signs of illness during the classes and should be kept up-to-date on vaccines throughout the class. Whether you or the new owners will be taking pups you’ve bred to a socialization class, do all you can to learn about classes available in your area, and be sure to discuss with the class leader and your vet any concerns or questions you may have.

An ongoing process

Dr. Ian Dunbar stresses that socialization should not end once pup and owner have finished the course. “Keep in mind that socialization is an ongoing process. Breeders must never forget that by 8 weeks, the sensitive period of socialization is two-thirds over, and they must expose the puppies to a variety of people before [they go to their new homes]. Likewise, owners need to introduce their young puppies to people in their homes. We also encourage owners to participate in additional training classes after they’ve completed the first course. To remain socialized, we recommend that adolescent dogs continue to meet and interact with at least three unfamiliar people and three unfamiliar dogs a day until they are 3 years old.”

What about taking your pup to a dog park for socialization? This might be a good option when the pup is a little older, but Dr. Griffin explains why dog parks don’t work well for early socialization:

“I generally don’t like dog parks for young puppies. Behavioral risks—especially injuries from rough play, dogfights, or other sensitizing stimuli that can result in generalized fear responses or aggression—associated with dog parks are present as much if not more than health risks for young pups. I prefer that puppies socialize in class with puppies of the same age group and with familiar, gentle, dog-friendly dogs that belong to friends and neighbors.”

The AVSAB notes that proper exposure to new experiences during the early, critical period is the foundation for continuing socialization. “Early and adequate socialization and programs of positive training can go a long way to preventing behavior problems and improving bonding between humans and dogs. While the first three months is the most important socialization period in a puppy’s life, owners of puppies that have passed this milestone are strongly encouraged to continue to socialize their puppies to as many people, pets, and locations as is practical.”

Your role

As a responsible breeder, you are dedicated to doing all you can to ensure that the pups you breed will have long, happy lives ahead with their human families—whether those pups are destined to be show dogs, field dogs, participants in companion events, service dogs, or “just” pets. By seeing that each pup receives proper socialization at an early age, you greatly reduce the chance of future behavior problems and help her to become the best she can be.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING:

Books

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