



Lake Eustis
Kennel Club

PAW PRINTS

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 4

APRIL 2020

President: Carolyn Hoppe

Vice President: Beverly Vics

Treasurer: Susan Prickett

Secretary:

Corresponding Secretary: Sharon Everson

BOARD:

Jackie Baudo, Sally Hensen, Norene Walzer,

Member: Marie Zaman Membership Board

In This Issue

The Puppy Brain Pg. 2

**Why Are Some Dogs
Anxious and Fearful** Pg. 3

Stray Dogs Understand

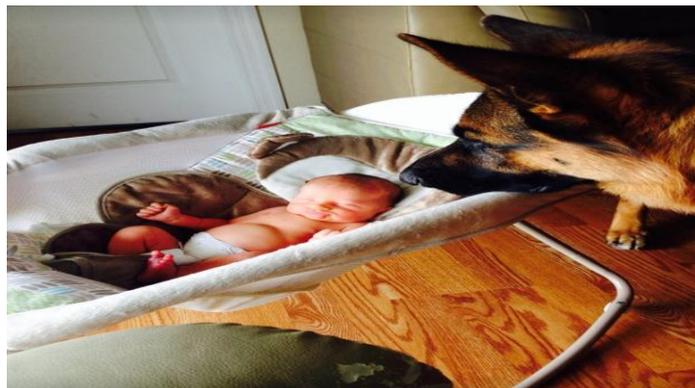
Pg. 6

The Nose Knows Pg. 7

LEKC meets the 4th Wednesday of the month

@ Lady Lake Library W. Guava Street.

Website: www.lekcdogclub.org



THE PUPPY BRAIN

*Maria Cecilia Martinez

We focus on early learning because a puppy's first seven weeks are a time of tremendous growth and development. Early learning experiences have profound implications for later success in life. From birth to seven weeks is the time when the greatest changes, physically and behaviorally take place and a time when basic personality is shaped. Behavior is never entirely inherited or entirely acquired. It is developed under the combined, interdependent influences of hereditary and environmental factors. However, it can be guided and modified by the influence of experience. Therefore it is possible to modify behavior by modifying the environment through early conditioning and training. Every experience a puppy has will stimulate neural development which results in brain development. As the brain develops, so does the learning ability which stimulates more neural development.

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT Research has shown that in moderation, stress stimulates the brain at the most crucial time in its development. When a puppy is stimulated during this time, his brain matures faster and he will grow up to have a larger brain with more cells... bigger cells... and more interconnections between them. Because the puppy's brain is still in such a formative state, the experiences it undergoes at this early age will have a tremendous impact on the development of his mind. This is why the first weeks are such a critical period in the pup's life.

By managing his environment we can therefore influence the final form and structure of his brain. The results of many behavior studies and EEG measurements demonstrate that 8 week old puppies function at nearly an adult level in terms of learning ability. However, as puppies mature, the ease with which they learn noticeably begins to decline by about 16 weeks. Research has also shown that by exercising the brain with mental challenges the total brain function improves, not just one area of it. Nerve conductivity is improved in both speed and accuracy, recovery time of the neural synapses is shortened as the chemical and electrical signals react faster, and the nerves can fire repeatedly quicker. The brain mass increases dramatically as nerve cell density increases, and overall brain efficiency improves significantly. So, with our early intervention, we're actually helping the puppy's brain develop to it's fullest potential.

WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY The most influential time of a puppy's life is between three and six weeks. Fear is not present in newborn puppies. It begins to develop slowly around five weeks of age, and increases gradually until it escalates in the fear imprint period during the eighth week. Therefore, there is a window of opportunity between three and six weeks of age when anxiety levels in the puppy are the lowest they'll ever be in their entire life. Anything the puppy is exposed to between this time frame will therefore be associated with low anxiety. It will be permanently ingrained in the central nervous system and forever remembered as something that is pleasant or neutral because happening when it does it is interpreted as a non fearful, non anxiety evoking object or experience. This is the time we look at the possibilities of what the puppy may encounter later in life and ensure he is incrementally exposed to the stimuli during this time frame. Because experiences are permanently ingrained during this time, we also work with puppies to develop their problem-solving abilities, mental agility and mental coordination. It's a perfect time to begin their assistance dog training too!

1. **SCIENTIFIC STUDIES** Scientific studies have established that various types of stimuli can have marked, long-term effects on the behavioral and physical development of some mammalian neonates including puppies. These effects include accelerated maturation of the nervous system, more rapid hair growth, and weight gain, enhanced development of motor and problem solving skills, and earlier opening of the eyes. In behavioral terms, canine neonates exposed to varied stimulation from birth to five weeks of age were found to be more confident, exploratory and socially adept when tested later in strange situations than un-stimulated control groups. Researchers have discovered that in order for puppies to develop confidence, trust and a positive approach to learning, they require certain types of handling and experiences during specific times in their early development. By giving a puppy this upbringing he will be more capable of interacting normally with his surroundings and will have an increased capacity to learn.

CONCLUSION: Since a puppy has the brain of an adult dog at seven weeks of age we take advantage of this developmental stage through our Early Learning Program, which produces dogs that become puppy prodigies.

Why are Some Dogs Anxious and Fearful?

Many dogs develop phobias associated with a variety of circumstances. Most typically, we find dogs that are afraid of loud noises, such as thunderstorms, loud screeching noises and fireworks, but also they can become fearful of children, men,

riding in cars, going down stairs and such, or esoteric things, such as birds, butterflies or moving shadows.

The signs indicating that a dog is experiencing fear or anxiety include body language such as flattened ears, tail lowered between the hind legs, cowering, slinking, yawning, hair raised on the back of the neck, trembling, avoidance, drooling, or panting. The dog may also cling to the owner, whine and whimper, or even dribble puddles of urine. In extreme cases, the dog may show distressed behaviors, ranging from pacing and destructive chewing to growling or snapping at individuals who are the source of its fear, or even at its owner or other family members.

Although some dogs are born with a genetic predisposition toward fearfulness, most fears that we encounter in dogs are due either to experiences that they've had during their lifetime or experiences that they've failed to have at certain times in their development. Probably the most important factors in whether your dog develops into a confident or a fearful animal is its early socialization and lots of Sensory Experiences that stimulate their response to be Positive and Assertive.

Socialization is simply the process by which a young dog has experience with a variety of people, places, and situations while it is still young. There is a fairly narrow window of opportunity to socialize the dog. After eight weeks of age, puppies start to become shy and wary of unfamiliar people, and this tendency must be dealt with before the puppy reaches fourteen weeks of age.

A second window opens between five and eight months of age, when dogs become fearful of strangers and will often single out certain groups, such as children or men, as the target of their fear. This condition worsens quickly, and it may turn into aggression. If such fears are not redirected in time, you may end up with a dog whose life is burdened with enough stress and anxiety to make him useless as a working, competition, or protection dog, and perhaps even as a satisfying companion dog and may end in a shelter or in a death penalty waiting list.

Shy and fearful dogs can be rehabilitated to some degree, but it takes a lot of work, and they will never be as reliable as a well-socialized dog. Fortunately, the process of socialization is really quite easy and enjoyable. The idea is to safely and pleasantly expose the puppy to all sorts of different people, strangers, men with beards, children, people wearing glasses, smokers, people who are old, the infirm, those who use walkers or canes, people carrying bags, and so forth. The pup should also be exposed to a variety of different places, different rooms, paved streets,

parking lots, public buildings, gas stations, and any other places that the dog is likely to encounter. Lots of treats, petting, happy talk, and interactions with friendly people will make the dog glad to engage in such exercises.

Although the pace of these new experiences can ratchet down after the puppy reaches the age of 18 weeks, they should not stop until you've made it all the way through the second window of time—that is, until the pup is about nine months to a year. While using socialization to prevent fears from developing in the first place is the ideal situation, there is always the possibility that a later traumatic event will cause a fear or phobia to arise. That appears to be the situation in the case of a dog and her fear of toasters. Apparently her owner was preparing breakfast one day and had just clicked on the toaster, when a contractor who was helping to remodel their home, dumped a large quantity of construction materials in the driveway beside the kitchen, causing a loud and frightening clatter. From that point on, the click of the toaster and the smell of browning bread would send this dog into a panic.

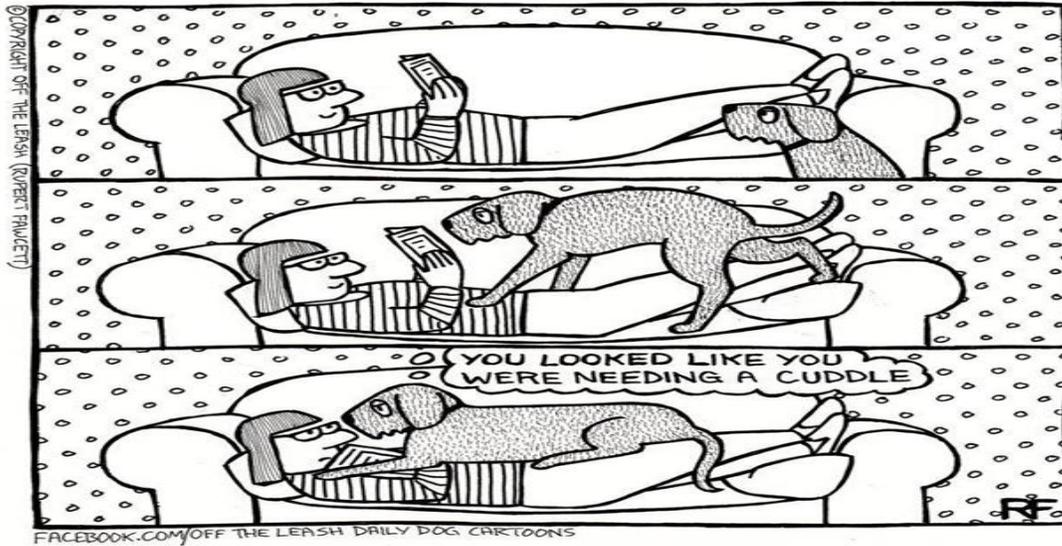
What do you do if your dog has already developed a fear or phobia? The most natural response of most dog owners is to treat dogs much the way we would treat young children who were acting fearful—namely, to comfort them. *With dogs, however, this is exactly the wrong thing to do. Petting a dog when he's acting in a fearful manner actually serves as a reward for the behavior; it's almost as if we're telling the dog that being afraid in this situation is the right thing to do. Such treatment actually makes the dog more likely to be afraid the next time.*

ignoring the dog's anxiety and going about things normally is often the best way to blast through this emotional problem. For example, suppose your dog is afraid of thunder. If the dog has already had obedience classes, clipping a leash on him during a thunderstorm and practicing some of the simple exercises he has learned will help assure him that things are normal. Reward the dog with treats, petting, or praise—the way you did when you first trained him. The dog may at first appear puzzled by the fact that you're ignoring the state of affairs that is frightening him, but ultimately he will decide that if you—leader of the pack—are not bothered by the situation, then everything is all right and his fears are unfounded.

So not all fearful and shy dogs are a result of mistreatment like many people think, there is Genetics as well as lack of socialization, relations with spooky experiences and many other environmental issues may have triggered the threatening emotions. Make certain your dog receives the most possible positive socialization and that you manage his puppy hood experiences. SWK believes that

Obedience, Structure and Management is the most important issue in developing a healthy mental puppy with good strong nerves and self-confidence!

*Maria Cecilia Martinez



*Stray Dogs Understand

They respond to gestures.

A new study found that dogs may have an innate connection to human behaviors. Researchers at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Kolkata, India, approached solitary stray dogs and placed two covered bowls by near them.

A researcher then pointed to one of the bowls, either momentarily or repeatedly, and recorded whether the dog approached the indicated bowl. They also recorded the perceived emotional state of the dogs.

Approximately half of the dogs did not approach either bowl. However, the researchers noticed that these dogs were anxious. The dogs who approached the bowls were noted as friendlier. Of these 80 % correctly followed the signals to one of the bowls, regardless of whether the pointing was momentary or repeated.

The results suggest that dogs may have an innate ability to understand certain human gestures. However, since the more anxious animals tended not to participate, future studies are needed to determine more precisely how an individual dog's personality affects their ability to understand human cues.

***The Nose Knows**

The canine nose proves to be invaluable to farmers.

According to a report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, dogs are showing that they have the “right stuff” when it comes to screening citrus orchards for citrus greening disease or huanglongbing. This problem is caused by bacteria and spread by insects that feed on the leaves and stems of orange, lemon and grapefruit trees. Orchards in Florida, Texas, and California have reported cases. There s no cure, so an infected tree has to be removed.

Current methods of detection involve people collecting hundreds of leaves for laboratory analysis. But dogs, once trained to sniff out these bacteria, can detect them weeks to years before it shows up on the trees. Early removal means reduced chance of spread.

As well as being highly accurate, the dogs can move quickly through an orchard. Their accuracy reduces the need for expensive and time-consuming laboratory analysis, while the disease is spreading.

*Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine May 2020)