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Dogs of the Month



**Big Canoe Animal
Rescue Puppies**

Welcome to Luvk9s' December Newsletter

Luvk9s would like to take this opportunity to wish everybody a very happy holiday season.

While out of town visiting family for Thanksgiving, I read Dr. Patricia McConnell's newest book, "Tales of Two Species". I highly recommend it! Not only is Dr. McConnell a well-known dog expert, speaker and writer, she also has an incredible sense of humor. Her book is easy to read and contains 35 short essays on all sorts of dog topics. This month's newsletter expands on 3 of the essays in her book.

I would also like to invite you to read a Christmas poem written by a good friend of mine, Linda Johnson, who like me and many, many others volunteer at the Big Canoe Animal Rescue:

BCAR Holiday Poem

To all of you who work in animal rescue – thank you!

Wishing all of you a happy, healthy and prosperous new year!

What's in a Name?

One of the most important decisions you will make when getting a new puppy or adopting a shelter dog is what to name him, since this is a name you'll be using thousands and thousands of times over the lifetime of your dog! Patricia McConnell wrote an interesting essay on this topic in her book. She notes that since we are using our dogs name to get his attention, it is worth our while to think about how the name is structured. Our language is made up of hard and soft consonants and vowels. Research has shown that hard consonants, such as "k", "p", or "d", are good at getting your dog's attention, because, according to Dr. McConnell, "they stimulate more acoustic receptor neurons in the brain than do the flatter sounds made by vowels and soft consonants". This means that names such as "Kip", or "Drop" (our dogs name) are great, acoustically, in getting your dog's attention!

Dog trainers have always suggested that one (or two) syllable names are best. For dogs competing in fast moving dog sports, a one syllable name containing hard consonants works well.

Another thing to keep in mind is how your dog's name is going to work in conjunction with other words or commands. Our dog's name is unusual (Drop), until you pair it with the prior owner's last name (who

Dog Quote of the Month

"Dogs are not our whole life, but they make our lives whole."

Roger Caras

Contact us

By phone:

770-910-0423

By E-Mail:

Luvk9s@windstream.net

Our website:

www.luvk9s.com

was a football fan) – Kick. I'll never forget a service dog in training we named Jack. Imagine our dismay the first time we asked Jack to get "off" (Jack, off!) Oh my! It's also good to avoid names that could be confused with commands, for example Shay (stay) or Noah (no).

The best way to name your dog, though, is to pick a name YOU like and a name that suits his personality.

What were the top dog names in 2010? According to VPI Pet Insurance, the most popular male dog name was Max, followed by Buddy, Rocky, Bailey, Jake, Charlie, Jack, Toby, Cody and Buster. The most popular female dog name was Bella, followed by Molly, Lucy, Maggie, Daisy, Sophie, Sadie, Chloe, Bailey and Lola.

Jumping on Visitors

Last month, we talked about different techniques to use to keep your dog from jumping up on visitors. In addition to the conventional solution of having your guest turn his back on your dog until he does a nice sit, Dr. McConnell suggests another interesting solution in her newest book in the chapter on communication. Dr. McConnell talks about how perceptive dogs are to the slightest body movements we make, and how we can use this to our advantage. Instead of leaning back when your dog is getting ready to jump up on you, try leaning slightly forward instead! Dr. McConnell states that "when dogs jump up on us, we humans tend to pull away...but in dog language, your "withdrawal" really means "come forward." While you're speaking NO, your body is yelling YES. Surely that's one of the reasons that our dogs continue to jump up on us. Dogs stop other dogs with "body blocks", moving forward toward them and taking ownership of the space before the other dog can. When I want to block a leaping dog, I'm careful to avoid leaning or stepping back. Rather, I insure that my torso (the relevant body part) moves forward, into the dog. Move forward, most dogs stop; move back, they approach closer. We humans do it in reverse".

Just a word of caution – timing is very important here. If you lean forward too late, you may end up having a dog jumping up into your chin and chipping a tooth (says the voice of experience!) You must lean forward the split second before your dog flings himself upward.

Does Using an Alpha Roll on our Dogs Make Sense?

It is pretty common knowledge that domestic dogs are descended from the wolf. As a result of this, wolves and dogs share many of the same behaviors. Dogs and wolves use almost the exact same body language to initiate play, express fear, show appeasement or signal status. The instinct wolves have as far as hunting for food carries over to our domestic dog as well – despite the fact that most of our dogs get two square meals a day, they still will NEVER miss that opportunity to snatch something tasty off the kitchen counter. Wolves chase prey and practice territory and resource protection for their pack – so do our

dogs. Wolves do not eliminate in their den. That's why the best way to housebreak a dog is to use a crate. Wolves are pack animals and submit to dominant pack leaders through behaviors such as face licking and urination. So do our dogs.

But while there are many similarities in the behavior of dogs and wolves, there are also clearly many differences. You certainly could not keep a wolf in your home as a family pet. One of the big differences of opinion between positive dog trainers and traditional dog trainers is the use of the alpha roll, where you physically roll a dog onto his side or back and hold him down until he stops resisting and 'submits'. The reason this practice came into being is due to the common belief that this is what wolves do to establish dominance. The thought was since dogs are so similar to wolves, this method should work on dogs as well.

The problem with this line of thought is that wolves that were studied by humans were made up of unrelated wolves brought together in artificial groups. This explains why there were an abnormal number of fights and dominance struggles. Studies have shown that wolf packs made up of REAL family members live in harmony.

Pat Miller feels "canine social structure holds together because appeasement behaviors are offered by subordinate members, not because higher-ranking members strut around demanding subservience. Successful pack leaders were observed to calmly control the good stuff – an approach frequently suggested by today's modern, positive trainers as a much safer, more effective method for creating a harmonious mixed-species social group".

When dogs interact, it is very common to see one of the dogs roll over on his back. This is frequently part of their play behavior. Dogs also roll over on their backs as an expression of deference (to both dogs and humans). In an actual dog fight, a dog rolling over on his back is usually a signal to the other dog to stop being aggressive. Note that in all these scenarios, the behavior is offered voluntarily.

On the rare occasion of a real fight, a dog who is serious about doing bodily harm will force a dog off his feet. The dog that was knocked down will in turn fight back ferociously for his life. This is why so many people get bitten attempting to do alpha rolls on their dogs. Wouldn't you fight for your life if someone four times your size unexpectedly flipped you over on your back and forcibly held you down?

Positive dog trainers prefer to coach their clients to be benevolent leaders by implementing a leadership program that does not involve the use of fear, pain or alpha rolls. This protocol is commonly called the "Nothing in Life is Free" program, and simply has the owner asking their dog for a simple behavior (such as SIT or DOWN) before doing anything the dog wants (feeding, petting, playing, walking, grooming, etc.) Patricia McConnell has written an excellent book about this protocol titled "How to be the Leader of the Pack...and Have Your Dog

Love Your for it!"

To read more about the recent studies done on wolf pack behavior, access David Mech's article "Whatever Happened to the Term Alpha Wolf" online at:

<http://www.4pawsu.com/alphawolf.pdf>

Click here to see a short YOUTUBE featuring David Mech discussing the term 'alpha':

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tNtFgdwTsbU>

Katie's Bumpers



Katie's Bumpers carry all sorts of sturdy dog toys, made of fire hose, for the big chewers in your household. These toys do well in the water, in snow, or just on plain land! It's a great interactive toy, and best of all, is machine washable.

Katie's Bumpers currently has a 25 percent off deal (on 'seconds', products with slight blemishes). Enter the sale code of FORMYDOG to get the discount.

For more info, go to:

<http://www.katiesbumpers.com/>

Ending with a smile...this month's YOUTUBE

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-0WVfj76bo>

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