**HAPPY WEEK SIX BIRTHDAY:**

The puppies are becoming “bilingual,” speaking both dog and human. Although they rely heavily on their sense of smell and body language, they are digging their lessons with their people and the treats that go along with them. They certainly know what the clicker means, and are beginning to “mand” for attention. Which simply means that rather than jump up, nip or bark for attention, they sit and look at their person. The presence of a person is the cue. The new families will build upon this foundation. The puppies want attention and, more, will want to belong to their human pack.

This is what I like most about Puppy Culture. It is a puppy-led enrichment and socialization program. As well as teaching me to be a keen observer of each individual puppy, I am giving them a voice in our relationship. I believe this creates a deeper and more authentic relationship with the humans in their lives.

A completion exercise of the communication trinity is the box game. The puppies enjoyed the box game that we did several times. They happily engaged and I could readily see the gains with each time we played. They had a reflexive head turn towards me upon hearing the clicker, knowing the sound means a reward/treat, and then would eagerly seek out the box again. I loved seeing the “lightbulb” go off in their heads. This gave them agency and a sense they could make things happen. Their families will find a primed and ready to learn puppy.

We also continued with a bit more complex scent profiles, hiding the “find” (cheese or bit of chicken) in an upright box to amplify the smell. We did a scent circle with three different treats resting in different types/heights of dishes. The puppies loved it, if wagging tails are any barometer! In a few weeks, when we start individual crate training, I will hide the treats in a series of puppy crates for the puppy to find, making going into the crate a game.

We are now ready to start learning a few basic positions like down, stand and sit. I like to teach puppy push-ups from a stand to a down, skipping the sit if possible. It is a very good upper body exercise. It is a good exercise to learn while the puppies center of gravity is smaller/shorter.

Finally, the litter has a sweet music all their own. You can tell when play is happy, when they are content or, conversely, when they need stimulation, exercise, or food just by listening. A content litter is a happy sound. I am content and so very much in love.

