**HAPPY WEEK TWO BIRTHDAY!**

Rose’s puppies are growing like weeds. They easily doubled their weight at the 10-day milestone. Nails have been trimmed three times and I am just about able to distinguish the rough from smooth coats. They have evolved from fragile wee pups and extensions of their mother into individuals on the cusp of socialization. Over the course of the next week or so, their eyes and ears will fully open. With the advent of vision, however blurred, and hearing, social bonds will readily develop and neural pathways built in earnest.

The first social bonds of chewing on one another have begun; mostly, quite gentle, and sometimes like a mini sumo wrestling contest. Each day this week, a tactile item will be introduced (larger soft crinkle or rope toy) or a brief new experience offered (toddling on a new surface, a new bed, and first non-family member guest cuddles) to broaden their horizons. I am not sure whether to describe them as little drunken sailors or blind-folded preschoolers playing pin-the-tail on the donkey, aka., “find the biggest nipple”! Tails wag while nursing to the beat of a jig sung in gleeful puppy grunts and squeals. When they sit up, sniffing blindly attempting to locate either Rose or me, you get a fleeting glimpse of their grown-up doggy self. Occasionally they make a bark that sounds more like a yelp and sometimes a guttural tiny low growl. Is it possible to use regal and rapscallion in the same sentence?

With raising of the young, a much-discussed topic is that of toileting habits. It is very easy to take their first weeks for granted when mama Rose did all the work. The whelping box was orderly and pristine. Well, let me tell you that those milk drunk sailors have become messy. We have changed up the whelping box to create a cozy nest area surrounded by potty pads. They get the idea that soiling the nest is not neat, and go outside the nest for the most part. The words to note here are *go outside, not in the nest*. And GO they do. Rose does give me one of those looks now and then; like, “Okay, your turn to clean up. I will wait.”

I expect that we will have our routine down solid by the end of this transition week, then the fun really begins. Puppies may be lapping a bit of goat milk, introduced to the litter box (yay) and will be, knowing this crew, trying to bust out of the whelping box. Mutiny will be attempted. Ahoy! No fear, curious puppies. We have all sorts of fun training and enrichment planned. Think Montessori Pre-School for adventurous pirate puppies.

*A sailor went to sea, sea, sea,  
To see what he could see, see, see.  
But all that he could see, see, see  
Was the bottom of the deep blue sea, sea, sea.*

