

Susquehanna Trail Dog Training Club

May 2026



Old Friends

by Connie Cuff

Why do dogs wag their Tails?



It's something we all know: Our dogs wag their tails because they're happy. Because they're thrilled to see us. Because they love us. This may be only part of the truth. It simply means the dog is stimulated with happiness or excitement, but it could also be anxiousness, fear, or aggression. You must carefully observe the dog's entire body to reach any kind of meaningful conclusion.

How did Tail-wagging evolve?

Four European researchers developed two main theories: First, over the tens of thousands of years that humans worked to domesticate dogs. Breeding them for traits like friendliness and tameness, we unintentionally selected for tail-wagging because it was linked to those positive characteristics. Second: We bred dogs for tail-wagging because of an unconscious human appreciation for rhythm. Humans have a sort of propensity for rhythmic themes and we were breeding dog that wagged more. We may not have been aware that we were doing it.

There are many meanings behind Tail-wagging. One research suggests that a tail that wags more to the right may suggest the dog is curious and wants to approach, while wagging to the left can mean the dog is uncertain wants to retreat. Then there is the position of the tail. When a dog is showing happiness or friendliness, their tail will be either parallel to the ground or held slightly upward or downward and wagging in sweeping, side to side movements. In times of extreme excitement, you'll often see what can be described as a whole-body wag.

Of course, in the contrary, a tail held low, pinned down against or tucked between a dog's back legs, strongly indicates insecurity and submission. Sometimes the low position can be accompanied by a fast wagging motion at the tip which tends to show

that the dog is anxious, fearful or wants to appease another dog.

Learning more about tail-wagging behavior could have profound animal welfare impacts. As an example is the practice of tail-docking which researchers and animal ethicists say not only causes unnecessary pain, it also may have an adverse impact on a dog's ability to communicate with other dogs. At the same time, it negatively affects a dog's balance and support.

Research into why dogs wag their tails would allow us to understand more about dog behavior and their interactions with both humans and other dogs. While science and our own experiences as dog lovers can offer some clues and ideas, a great many mysteries remain about why dogs wag their tails.

Till next time

Connie



Notes and Notices



We welcome new dogs to the Star Puppy Class:

Chris Schmader and Kathi Schmader with **Daisy and Wren**

Toni Rice with **Rosie**

Renee Garcia with **Willow**

Belle Ebright with **Reese**

Sympathies to **Phil Halden** with the loss of his beloved **Tripp**, a Labrador Retriever. He spent many hours as a Therapy Dog and will be greatly missed.

I wish to thank everyone who is very supportive in keeping up with our Therapy visits. Nursing homes do not require certification and it is a way to get our dogs comfortable in these surroundings when they are evaluated as a Therapy Dog.

I am looking forward to beginning classes at the Shikellamy State Park Marina on Tuesday, June 2nd. The Advanced Class is at 6pm and Beginners at 7pm. With training outside, everyone should check our web page for cancellations and we also send out an email.

Because Mother's Day is a time when many of us will celebrate, we will be cancelling classes on Sunday, May 10th. Also with Memorial Day weekend having many people with families, we will not hold classes on Sunday, May 24th. Since we begin our classes on Tuesday, June 2nd, we will not do classes on Sunday, May 31st at the Center, Please check our calendar for all these updates.

As many of us over the years are familiar with Dr. James Temple, we offer our sympathies to his family on his passing. He spent many years taking care of all animals and leaves a legacy for many years. Our Club has made a donation in his memory to the S.A.F.E. Fund at Sunbury Animal Hospital. This fund is used for urgent care and rehab of animals that are injured or sick and brought to them by good Samaritans to eventually be adopted.

UPCOMING THERAPY VISITS AND CLUB ACTIVITIES

May 1 (Fri)	Bucknell Langone Center (ATD only)	11:30 am - 1:00 pm
May 2 (Sat)	Bucknell Bison Sound @ Sojka Field (ATD only)	4:30pm - 7:00 pm
May 4 (Mon)	5 Star (Certified only)	12:15 pm
May 6 (Wed)	Heritage Springs	10:00 am
	Buffalo Valley	10:45 am
May 7 (Thurs)	Danville Middle School (ATD only)	8:15 am - 10:15 am
May 8 (Fri)	Midd-West Middle School Career Fair (ATD)	9:00 am - 1:00 pm
May 11 (Mon)	Selinsgrove R.E.C.	4:30 pm - 5:30 pm
May 12 (Tues)	Lewisburg High School (ATD only)	10:45am - 11:15am
May 13 (Wed)	Riverwoods	10:00 am
May 14 (Thurs)	Mountain View Manor	1:30 pm
	Bucknell Senior Festival (ATD only)	5:00 pm - 7:00 pm
May 15 (Fri)	Sun Vo-tech (ATD only)	11:00 am - 2:00 pm
	Shikellamy HS Fun Fair (ATD only)	1:00 pm - 2:30 pm
May 18 (Mon)	Columbia County Prison (Certified only)	1:15 pm
May 19 (Tues)	Nottingham Retirement Center	6:00 pm
May 20 (Wed)	Heritage Springs	10:00 am
	Buffalo Valley	10:45 am
May 21 (Thurs)	Mansion	10:30 am
	Danville HS Mental Health Event (ATD only)	6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
May 22 (Fri)	Kelly Elementary Field Day (ATD only)	9:15 am - 11:40 am
	Kelly Elementary Field Day (ATD only).	12:30 pm - 3:00 pm
May 26 (Tues)	Kelly Elementary Field Day rain date	

May 26 (Tues)	Penn Lutheran	10:00 am
May 27 (Wed)	Riverwoods	10:00 am
May 28 (Thurs)	Lewisburg Federal Prison Main (Badged only)	12:00 pm

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26 1pm - Advanced Training 2pm - Beginner Training	27 8am - Line Mountain (ATD)	28 10am - Penn Lutheran 6pm - Grand Slam	29 10am - Riverwoods @ 11:30am - CANCELLED -	30	1 11:30am - Bucknell (ATD)	2 4:30pm - Bucknell Bison
3 1pm - Advanced Training 2pm - Beginner Training	4 12:15pm - 5 Star (Certified)	5	6 10am - Heritage Springs 10:45am - Buffalo Valley	7 8:15am - Danville Middle	8 9am - MidWest Middle	9
10 1pm - CANCELLED - 2pm - CANCELLED -	11 4:30pm - Selinsgrove REC	12 10:45am - Lewisburg HS	13 10am - Riverwoods @	14 1:30pm - Mountain View 5pm - Bucknell Senior	15 11am - Sun-Tech (ATD) 1pm - Shikellamy HS Fun	16
17 1pm - Advanced Training 2pm - Beginner Training	18 1:15pm - Columbia County	19 6pm - Nottingham	20 10am - Heritage Springs 10:45am - Buffalo Valley	21 10:30am - Mansion 6pm - Danville HS Mental	22 9:15am - Kelly Elementary 12:30pm - Kelly	23
24 1pm - CANCELLED - 2pm - CANCELLED -	25	26 Hold - Kelly Elementary 10am - Penn Lutheran	27 10am - Riverwoods @	28 12pm - Lewisburg prison	29	30
31	1	2 6pm - Advanced Training 7pm - Beginner Training	3 10am - Heritage Springs 10:45am - Buffalo Valley	4 12pm - Prison Volunteer	5 11am - Special Olympics	6