

Susquehanna Trail Dog Training Club

October 2026



Old Friends

by Connie Cuff



How do dogs communicate with each other? Dogs communicate through body language, facial expressions, vocalizations and scent and they do it constantly, with each other, with us and with the environment around them.

A dog who is confident will carry themselves in a relaxed way with their weight evenly distributed and their movement loose and free. An aroused dog might shift their weight forward and stand tall. A dog who is unsure will do the opposite and lower their body.

The play bow - it's an invitation to play.

Tail position and movement - a tail held high and wagging rapidly signals arousal and confidence. A tail held low tucked, is a sign of fear. Research has discovered that a loose, mid-height, loping tail wag is usually a good sign.

Ear position - ears carried forward signal alertness, ears flattened against the head show fear, appeasement or submission.

Dog calming signals - these are behaviors used to communicate peaceful intent and to de-escalate tensions: yawning, lip-licking, turning the head or body away, blinking slowly, sniffing the ground and moving in an arc rather than a straight line towards the other dog. Calming signals are not random behaviors. They're intentional communication and signal the dog is not a threat or that they are uncomfortable. If calming signals are ignored, tension can easily escalate.

Understanding facial expressions - soft eyes signal comfort and relaxation. Whereas a hard stare where the whites of the eyes are visible is a warning. It's one of the clearest signs a dog is feeling threatened. A relaxed, slightly open mouth shows a dog is calm and comfortable. A tight, closed mouth is a sign of a dog who is assessing the environment.

Scent to communicate - urine marking - the information contained within dog's urine includes their sex, reproductive status and health. Anal glands - when dogs greet each other nose to rear,

they are exchanging chemical information about how the dog is feeling and what they've recently eaten, and the information is gathered in seconds.

What happens when dog communication breaks down - dogs that missed critical socialization in puppyhood struggle to read and respond to signals. Physical alterations such as docked ears and tails can affect communication. If warning signs are ignored, a growl, snap or bite can occur. The most important thing an owner can do is to learn to read and respond to your dog's signals. Give dogs time and space to communicate on their terms and be ready to intervene if needed. Dogs are sophisticated communicators. The more fluent you become in reading your dog's body language the better equipped you are to support their interactions with other dogs and their relationship with you.

Till next time

Connie



Notes and Notices



As our weather changes, we will keep an eye on when our classes will move to the Selinsgrove Center. Please check our web site and emails.

Our annual Club Picnic was a huge success and I thank everyone who participated. The food was amazing and our Chines Auction gave us wonderful items for people and our dogs to enjoy.

We have quite a few visits in October. A nice visit is at the the Trunk or Treat at the Christ Community Church on Park Road, Saturday, October 10th from 11am - 1pm. We dress our dogs in costumes for the children to visit with us. Please keep checking the web site calendar for additional visits and we would appreciate that you sign up on the appropriate spread sheets for ATD visits so we know we have enough dogs.

We made a donation to the Selinsgrove Center Sundry Fund to benefit the clients that live there. We appreciate the Center for allowing our dogs to do training there.

UPCOMING THERAPY VISITS AND CLUB ACTIVITIES

Oct 2 (Fri)	Bucknell Paws for a Shake (ATD only)	11:30 am - 1:00 pm
Oct 5 (Mon)	5 Star (Certified only)	12:20 pm
Oct 6 (Tue)	New Story School (ATD only)	9:30 am
Oct 7 (Wed)	Heritage Springs	10:00 am
	Buffalo Valley	10:45 am
Oct 8 (Thurs)	Mount Carmel Senior Living	11:30 am
	Mountain View Manor	1:30 pm
Oct 9 (Fri)	Shikellamy High School (ATD only)	8:00 am - 10:00 am
	Bucknell Paws for a Shake (ATD only)	11:30 am - 1:00 pm
Oct 10 (Sat)	Trunk or Treat @ Christ Community Church	11:00 am - 1:00 pm
Oct 13 (Tues)	Mifflinburg Elementary School (ATD only)	9:30 am
Oct 14 (Wed)	Riverwoods	10:00 am
Oct 15 (Thurs)	Mansion	10:30 am
Oct 16 (Fri)	Bucknell Paws for a Shake (ATD only)	11:30 am - 1:00 pm
Oct 19 (Mon)	Columbia County Prison (Certified only)	1:15 pm
Oct 20 (Tues)	Bucknell with Sorority (ATD only)	11:30 am - 1:00 pm
Oct 21 (Wed)	Heritage Springs	10:00 am
	Buffalo Valley	10:45 am
Oct 22 (Thurs)	Heather Court, Nottingham	6:00 pm
Oct 23 (Fri)	Bucknell Paws for a Shake (ATD only)	11:30 am - 1:00 pm
Oct 26 (Mon)	Lewisburg Middle School (ATD only)	10:30 am - 11:30 am
Oct 27 (Tues)	Penn Lutheran	10:00 am
Oct 28 (Wed)	Riverwoods	10:00 am

Oct 30 (Fri)	Bucknell Paws for a Shake (ATD only) <i>Last one for Fall Semester</i>	11:30 am - 1:00 pm
Oct 31 (Sat)	Unhindered Steps	10:45 am - 11:30 am 2:00 pm - 2:45 pm

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27 1pm - Dog Club Picnic 1pm - No Classes - 2pm - NO CLASSES -	28 10:15am - Lewisburg HS	29 10am - Penn Lutheran	30 10am - Riverwoods @	1	2 11:30am - Bucknell Paws	3
4 1pm - Advanced Training 2pm - Beginner Training	5 12:20pm - 5 Star (Certified	6 9:30am - New Story (ATD	7 10am - Heritage Springs 10:45am - Buffalo Valley	8 11:30am - Mount Carmel 1:30pm - Mountain View	9 8am - Shikellamy HS (ATC 11:30am - Bucknell Paws	10 11am - Trunk or Treat @
11 1pm - Advanced Training 2pm - Beginner Training	12	13 9:30am - Mifflinburg	14 10am - Riverwoods @	15 10:30am - Mansion	16 11:30am - Bucknell Paws	17
18 1pm - Advanced Training 2pm - Beginner Training	19 1:15pm - Columbia County	20 11:30am - Bucknell (ATD	21 10am - Heritage Springs 10:45am - Buffalo Valley	22 6pm - Heather Court	23 11:30am - Bucknell Paws	24
25 1pm - Advanced Training 2pm - Beginner Training	26 10:30am - Lewisburg	27 10am - Penn Lutheran	28 10am - Riverwoods @	29	30 11:30am - Bucknell Paws	31 10:45am - Unhindered 2pm - Unhindered Steps