



# Susquehanna Trail Dog Training Club

April 2021



## Old Friends

by Connie Cuff

With the start of our classes on Tuesday, May 4, it is nice to look forward to getting our dogs together and us as well. Our recent visits outside of Penn Manor and Grayson View went very well and I know all the residents enjoyed our visit with so many smiles.

As we spend more time outside and away from our dogs, it will be a life change for our dogs. Dogs are creatures of habit and spending so much time with us, they now will feel distressed at being left alone and wondering when we will be back and may lead to behavioral problems. These are some measures, that may help with separation anxiety:

Keep a schedule. If you normally take morning walks, keep those walks at the same time during your extended time at home.

Create a crate routine. If your dog normally stays in their crate while you are away, practice keeping them in their crate for short periods of time while you are home, gradually lengthen the time they are crated.

Practice leaving the house for short periods of time. I have found using the same phrase when leaving your dog. I have used "I'll be back". This also can be used if you hand your dog over to someone while you use the rest room, etc.

Keep leaving and coming home low-key. This increases your dog's excitement. When you return say a quick hello and do not interact until your dog calms down.

Desensitize signals that you are leaving. Patterns that we use can buildup tensions in your dog and can be a precursor to separation anxiety. Cues are:

Getting coffee/making breakfast, Putting on your shoes, Grabbing your car keys, Walking to the front door, Jiggling the handle of the front door, Opening the front door.

To desensitize, practice the cues randomly throughout the day. The idea is that you will present the cues but NOT actually leave.

To take it a step further, you could even pair the cues with positive rewards like praise and treats. The goal is to have your dog respond to your "leaving" cues with expectation of a reward rather than anxiety about you leaving.

All of the above should be coupled with regular mental and physical exercise.

Till next time,

*Connie*



## Notes and Notices



**We will begin classes at the Shikellamy State Park Marina on Tuesday, May 4. Advanced at 6pm and Star Puppy at 6pm for pre-registered dogs only. Puppies should be 6 months or younger. Basic Obedience is at 7pm. Anyone who has not received their CGC should join that class. If you intend to participate in the Beginner Class would you please notify us as we would like to prepare a schedule with handouts. Connie will be available for anyone who needs help working on their Therapy Title at 7pm.**

**With classes outdoors, you should check our web site and emails for cancellations due to weather conditions. These will be posted by 5pm.**

**Anyone who has attained their ATD Therapy Title should check an email sent by Kelly for a schedule of visits at Bucknell University for April. You can add your name to a list that she has posted. There is a map with locations added to the email.**

**If your dog has had their Rabies vaccination recently or in the future, would you please make a copy for our records.**

**Sally Thomas has added Gertrude, a King Charles Spaniel, to her household. She has quite a following and can be viewed on an Instagram @gertrudeckcs. She was rehabilitated by Dagny Leininger with a physical disability. It is amazing to see the progress this dog made in such a short time. Thanks to Dagny, this dog will be on its way to becoming a Therapy Dog.**

**Elaine & Bob Walz welcomed Wiggles to their home and joined the other beagle family.**