

*"Whoever Said You Can't Buy Happiness Forgot About Little Puppies"- Gene Hill*

Hi Everybody!

With the intense summer heat and rainy days, finding a cooler drier opportunity to train our dogs has certainly become a challenge! Fall starts this week and hopefully the weather will be more cooperative!

**No Classes:**

We will have no classes on Friday, September 25

**From Sally Alford:**

Hi Ileana,

***I was hoping you could help me out-*** by giving me contact info on any of your 'kid friendly' students who are accomplished OB or Rally that might be willing to volunteer their time to teach kids from 9-11, have a lunch break, the Judge OB or RL from noon to about 3:00. Info attached.

Please help spread the word about our Oct. 17th Training & FUN Match event (**open to kids & Adults**) I can forward the match flyer to anyone that is interested. These events are lots of fun for people and their dogs!

If any of you can help with this 4H event, please contact Sally directly at: [horsepny@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:horsepny@tampabay.rr.com)

**Also from Sally Alford:**

*New Information on Creeping Indigo: Pet Foods Made from Animals Who Ingested CI Found to be Fatal to Dogs*

Just when you thought you'd heard everything you need to know about creeping indigo, the toxic weed that's killing Florida horses, there's news that dogs have been dying when fed pet foods made from animals that had consumed CI. Though not documented in the U.S. yet, it's happening in Australia, and scientific research now confirms the deaths of this second-hand killer's victims. Australia has both *Indigofera linnaei* and *Indigofera spicata* species of CI, and the condition it causes there is known as Birdsville disease. Creeping indigo is a legume, just like alfalfa, and horses love it. It can kill not only horses, but cattle, goats, deer, rabbits, and birds... and has caused abortions in cattle and birth defects in lab rats. Now we find, from Australian studies, that dogs have died when they're fed foods made from CI-poisoned animals. More than 30 dogs died from liver disease in Alice Springs, Australia, when fed meat from slaughtered horses with Birdsville disease. The active chemical, indospicine, is the lethal

ingredient in the deadly varieties of CI. (Oddly enough, hairy indigo, a cousin of the weed, is not toxic and is baled for hay.)

While they don't process horses for human consumption, Australian pet food makers use horsemeat and wild camel meat in their products. Not only are domestic horses hauled to its many abattoirs, but Australian wild horses (known as 'brumbies') are trapped and used for pet food, as are the out-of-control feral camels... and all have grazed on CI. So huge is the wild horse population in Australia that every few years aerial culls by rifle are done lest the brumbies starve to death in the cruel droughts that have ravaged the country over the past decade. This occurs especially in its desert-like central regions, when all the water holes and springs dry up.

And there's more: In testing, Florida's prevalent variety of creeping indigo, *I. spicata*, appears to be more toxic than the type that's killing dogs Down Under, *I. linnaei*. Both can cause the same symptoms in horses-- ataxia (stumbling gait), weight loss, weakness, neurological signs including paralysis, inner lesions and opaque eyes. This could mean the theory might be wrong that horses get sick after eating 10 lbs. a day of *I. spicata* over three weeks' time; perhaps a smaller amount over less time could cause severe damage and death. More studies need to be done immediately. Being cumulative, signs of poisoning are not identifiable until the toxic threshold is reached.

Florida horse owners and boarding barns have been inspecting their pastures, turn-out areas and paddocks for creeping indigo... and breathing a sigh of relief when they don't find any. Preferring tropical and subtropical conditions, CI had migrated to South Florida (even growing in Key West)-- but was thought to have spread no further north than just above Gainesville. But this past August it was discovered growing in the Panhandle. The University of Florida Vet School and IFAS (Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences) continue to get the word out around the state about the dangers and identification of creeping indigo, and horsemen everywhere are grateful for their efforts.

### **How to Choose a Puppy:**

If you are considering buying a new puppy, what is the selection criteria that you would need? Let's say that you have done your homework (researched which breed is best for you, and so forth), located a breeder with a litter available, and you are now surrounded by all those adorable puppies. How do you choose one?

A reputable, experienced breeder would have **interviewed you** ahead of time, and based on the information you gave (and of course, you were very candid about your objectives), would recommend the puppy that would best suit your life

style. My boxers were handpicked for me by the breeder, and I was never been sorry. They were perfect for me.

If the decision is left up to you, try to look at the litter objectively and evaluate the choices scientifically. Remember, the puppy that you choose will be a part of your family for many years. An emotion, triggered by something cute that one of the puppies does, might lead you to make a wrong decision that you might regret later. For example, the puppy sitting in a corner by itself might trigger your maternal instinct to pamper it, but in reality could be too shy or timid for a household with children.

First, observe the condition of the whole litter. The mother might not look her best after caring for a litter of puppies, but the environment should be very clean and the puppies well fed and active. If the sire is not available, ask to see his picture, as well as a picture of the mother before she was bred. Both parents should look healthy and sound. If you are choosing a large breed, ask if the parents have had their hips x-rayed, and if the breed happens to be one of those prone to other genetic problems (such as eye or heart complications), ask if both parents are free of those problems.

The best age to observe a litter is between 4 and 6 weeks of age, and at a time of day when the pups are naturally active (not after a meal). Ideally, watch from a secure spot where the puppies can't see you. That way you can see them interact with each other naturally. All litters have their loners, aggressors, and retreaters, as well as bullies, and shrinking violets. Each type of personality has its unique training requirements, and for which you must be prepared. For example, dominant, outgoing dogs, will need a stronger leadership than soft, timid ones.

In order to make a decision, however, puppies must be evaluated individually. Ask the breeder if you can spend some time with each puppy alone in a room, as this is the only way to get a better idea of the personality of the dog. If

the breeder refuses, my advice is to go elsewhere.

The following is a "puppy test" that I use in evaluating a litter:

**Following:** Place the puppy on the ground and walk away, if the puppy follows readily, then it will bond easily to you. If the puppy ignores you, you, or runs in the opposite direction and refuses to follow even with encouragement, then it is very independent will have a tendency to "do its own thing". If the puppy runs to a corner and shakes, then it's got problems.

**Social attraction:** Place puppy on the ground, walk to the end of the room, crouch down, and call the puppy enthusiastically. The quicker and happier the puppy comes in, the better I like it. The puppy that tries to run and hide, is not the dog for me.

**Retrieving instinct:** With the puppy sitting on the ground, roll a ball so that it goes past the puppy. Does the puppy chase it? Good! If it picks up the ball, even better. If it brings the ball to you, its a winner!

**Noise sensitivity:** Make a loud, startling noise. I have used two metal pans banging together; but if you blow air into a paper bag and then strike it against your hand, it will make a loud noise as well. The loud noise will startle the pup, and I carefully note how quickly it recovers. Does it then come to investigate the source of the noise?

A puppy that goes into a corner shaking and refuses to come out, or one that squats and urinates in terror fails the test, as well as a puppy that shows no reaction to the noise. That pup could be deaf!

**Restraint dominance:** Place the puppy belly up on the ground and hold it there for about 30 seconds. The puppy should squirm and struggle at first, but then relax. The pup that keeps struggling fiercely, growls, screams, tries to bite, and refuses to be dominated, would probably

challenge your leadership constantly. The puppy that cries and goes limp immediately is too submissive.

**Pain threshold:** Take the puppy's paw, and pinch it between the toes. If the puppy reacts instantly, it has a low pain threshold and will not need heavy corrections.

**Food drive:** Show the puppy a treat, such as a hot dog, and keep it just out of its reach. How much effort will the puppy put into getting that treat? Dogs with a strong food drive can easily be motivated to learn anything.

All summed up, carefully evaluate all choices in a litter. Sometimes, we make concessions, such as when we are looking for a particular color or markings on a dog. However, temperament should be considered as carefully as structure and soundness. Also, remember that, by law, a breeder must provide a health certificate with every puppy.

### **Congratulations to Our Latest Graduates!**

#### Super Puppy:

Lori Korte & Jake (Labradoodle)  
Jane Bugni & Bella (Russell Terrier)  
Dawn Firestine & Athena (All American)  
Brittany Parsons & Tilly (Italian Greyhound Mix)  
Don Lemons & Cooper (Aussie)  
Denise Sellers & Skye (Mini Aussie)  
Heather Alford & Willa (German Shepherd)  
Michaela Walker & Kaiser (German Shepherd)  
Buffie & Douglas Maytum with Rockstar (Labradoodle)

#### Basic Obedience

Greg Dean & Jax (Bichon Frise)  
Jackie Bowman & Samwise Gamgee (Rough Collie)  
Joanne White & Olaf (Newfoundland)  
Joe Gerace & Sasha (Staffordshire Bull Terrier)

Lois Cozzi & Harvey (Malinois)  
Emily Benson & Lilo (All American)  
Louva Hemingway & Dixie (Golden Retriever)

### **Class Schedule:**

Monday:

6:00 to 7:00 PM - Super Puppy (Next class starting October 19)  
7:00 to 8:00 PM - Basic Agility (Next class starting in October 26)  
8:00 to 9:00 PM - Intermediate Agility

Tuesday:

8:30 to 9:30 AM - Advanced Agility  
9:30 to 10:30 AM - Intermediate Agility  
6:00 to 7:00 PM - Weaving Proficiency Class (Starting October 27)  
7:00 to 8:00 PM - Distance Class

Wednesday:

6:00 to 7:00 PM - Super Puppy (New class starting November 4)  
7:00 to 8:00 PM - Intermediate / Advanced Agility

Thursday:

7:00 to 8:00 PM - Basic Obedience (Next class starting November 5)  
8:00 to 9:00 PM - Rally Obedience

Friday:

8:30 to 9:30 AM - Advanced Agility  
9:30 to 10:30 AM - Intermediate Agility

...and now, time for a paws...

Ileana