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AKC Breeder

SPRING 2014

THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR BREEDERS

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The Whelping Box

Questions for Puppy Buyers

There are things a breeder should expect from potential owners, and questions that they should ask.

It's important to know about the puppy's prospective living environment. How many people live in the house? How many are under the age of 3? Are there people in the household with special needs?

How many hours a day is the house empty? Will a dog be alone for long hours? How much time do the humans have for socializing, training, and just playing?

Are there other dogs in the house? Ages? Size? Breed? Placing a puppy of my breed, Chinese Cresteds, in a home with a large, dominant dog could easily spell disaster. Likewise, a very old, infirm dog would probably not appreciate a lively puppy invading his space.

How about other pets? Cats? These are probably OK with Cresteds. Birds? Maybe not. We had one disaster with a Crested who "played too hard" with a beloved parrot. Common sense goes a long way here.

What about a fenced yard? It's maybe not a necessity, but how will the new owners handle "going outside"? While it is a sensitive issue, it's important to be sure that a prospective owner will be able to afford to care for their dog. A red flag goes up when they ask me to lower the price I'm asking. And, of course, there are those who ask whether I make a lot of money selling puppies! (These folks would *never* get an intact dog from me. Probably not any dog.) As we all know, this is such a funny joke. Nobody who does it right can even break even, right?

—Adapted from an AKC Gazette breed column by Sue Klinckhardt-Gardner



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Free-Whelping After a C-Section

Performing a C-section does not necessarily prohibit future free-whelping.

By Jeff Grognet, DVM

Your bitch had a cesarean section last year, and you'd like to breed her again this year. Assuming everything goes well and she conceives, you are now plagued with thoughts about the whelping: Should you let her free-whelp, or should you plan a cesarean?

This is a question many breeders face. According to Dr. Corry van der Ende, a veterinarian specializing in canine reproduction and a member of the Society of Theriogenologists, it all comes down to why the bitch had a cesarean in the first place—why couldn't she whelp on her own? When asked for the main reason bitches have cesareans, Van der Ende suggests that the most common motivation is the owner, not the inability of the bitch to whelp. In many cases, owners become anxious with a protracted first stage of labor. They get nervous and then want a cesarean done.

The other side of the equation is the veterinarian. Faced with the prospect of repeated phone calls from a panicky client, the doctor may decide to do a cesarean and resolve the problem in an hour or two.

Van der Ende goes on to say that every mating should include good ovulation timing. By doing this, the breeder can pin down the exact due date for whelping, reducing much of the anxiety. The bitch could then go on to free-whelp. Side benefits include eliminating potential complications from surgery and avoiding expensive veterinary bills.

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AKC MISSION STATEMENT

THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB IS DEDICATED TO UPHOLDING THE INTEGRITY OF ITS REGISTRY, PROMOTING THE SPORT OF PUREBRED DOGS AND BREEDING FOR TYPE AND FUNCTION. FOUNDED IN 1884, THE AKC AND ITS AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS ADVOCATE FOR THE PUREBRED DOG AS A FAMILY COMPANION, ADVANCE CANINE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING, WORK TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF ALL DOG OWNERS AND PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP.

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“FREE-WHELPING AFTER A C-SECTION”

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Her summary is this: If a bitch has had a cesarean one time, it does not necessarily follow that she would require a cesarean section with each subsequent pregnancy.

If the bitch had complications that forced a cesarean last time, what then? For example, she might have sustained an injury to her pelvis, which caused narrowing of her birth canal. In this case, a cesarean is likely indicated each time she comes due to whelp.

Or, the whelping mother might have had disproportionately large pups that would not pass naturally through her birth canal. Singleton litters are a major cause of large pups. Alternatively, excessively large litters can cause overstretching of the uterus, leading to primary inertia and lack of uterine contractions. This could necessitate a cesarean. If these conditions recurred, the bitch might need another cesarean, but this can't be decided until it is whelping time.

She has seen the uterus torn in other places, but not where the surgical incision was made. Incisions in the uterus are routinely made in the body of the uterus. The puppy only enters this area during the birthing process and is there for only a short period of time before it is expelled.

As well, the scar tissue that builds up on an incision site is often stronger than the original tissue. It doesn't make sense that it would rupture there.

What does Van der Ende recommend when



courtesy Kelly Carver

breeders want to whelp bitches that have undergone a cesarean? She suggests treating it like a normal whelping, which means monitoring the bitch closely using repeated body temperatures, checking for abnormal vaginal discharge, and knowing the exact due date from ovulation timing. The bitch is just as capable of free-whelping this time around as if she never had a cesarean previously. Van der Ende stresses that you should give bitches sufficient time to whelp and don't be in a hurry. One way to settle your mind is to monitor the pups.

A commercial service that can allow you to do this is WhelpWise (*whelpwise.com*). This service utilizes monitors that track contractions in the uterus as well as puppy heart rates. This tells you when (or if) it is time to do a cesarean.

Breeders can use puppy heart rates to indicate whether the pups are stressed or doing OK. Puppy heart rates should be significantly higher than that of the mother. This can be tracked with a Doppler or a stethoscope. In the first case, it is usually done by the veterinarian, but breeders can learn how to listen with stethoscopes to monitor their bitches.

Jeff Grognet is a veterinarian with a practice in British Columbia, Canada, and is a regular contributor to AKC Family Dog.

What to Look For

Most bitches are able to successfully free-whelp following a C-section litter, but certain complications are more likely to require a cesarean again. Consult your veterinarian to determine the bitch's capability of free-whelping in situations such as:

- Prior injury to the bitch's pelvis
- Disproportionately large puppies
- Singleton litter
- Excessively large litter

The other concern is that if a bitch had a cesarean, will she be more susceptible to complications?

One complication often touted is rupture of the uterus at the cesarean site. In more than 32 years of practice, Van der Ende has not seen such a rupture.

The Singleton Syndrome

Littermates are imperative for proper social development.

By Carolyn Russell Gold

For breeders who have experienced the joy of the birth of a healthy singleton puppy, along with this joy come concerns about the inability of that singleton to receive proper socialization in the absence of littermates.

Lack of “normal” litter socialization can lead to a variety of idiosyncratic personality traits, ranging from minor to more serious issues that can create mild to sometimes severe problems, where the puppy feels he is the center of a universe he does not want to share with another being.

I have had experience raising four singletons—three from AI breedings, and one from a live cover. The dams were not directly related.

In two of the three AI litters (which I bred), the singleton was the only puppy developing in the womb. In the third AI litter, the resulting puppy had a littermate who died at birth, so he was not alone in the uterus. In the live-cover litter (bred by someone else), the singleton was the sole survivor from a litter of three—so again, was not alone in the womb.

I stress this latter point because it is an extraordinarily important factor for a singleton. Having littermate(s) share the uterus eliminates the potential for singleton problems of “owning the universe.”

The “cause” of a singleton birth is most likely not genetic. Most often it is probably the result of breeding too late; that is, breeding at the very end of the fertile period, when very few eggs are available for fertilization—or maybe only one. There are many other possible causes. These include an infection; an older dam who did not produce many eggs, even at the height of her fertile period; and/or eggs that were resorbed.

A properly taken ultrasound can show the dam is in whelp, but the number of puppies actually born can change if some or all are resorbed after the ultrasound was taken. Exact factors causing resorption of a developing fetus remain a mystery known only to Mother Nature.

My first litter was a singleton. Since it was my first, I had no idea how important littermates were in the mental and physical development of a puppy. I read as much as I could, talked to as many breeders as I could, and worked exceedingly hard at socializing my puppy in as many ways as I could.

However, it wasn't enough. I learned you can never replace, replicate, simulate, or duplicate the myriad things a puppy learns from littermates.

It wasn't until a few years later, when I bred my second litter, that I could vividly (and sadly) see just how much that singleton had missed because of not having littermates while growing in the uterus and after birth.



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Finding a Foster Litter

When my second singleton, Reigna, was born, I immediately knew I had to find a “foster litter” for her. I knew littermates were imperative to her proper development if any could be found.

Having a foster litter for a singleton to visit is by far the best for socialization purposes, especially if the foster pups are near the same age as the singleton. If the foster litter is too old, the potential for the young singleton to be injured increases. Separating the singleton from her mom and introducing her to a new mom and litter require thought and planning.

Reigna visited her foster litter as soon as she could be away from her mom for short periods. I decided on 3? weeks, an age when (1) she did not have to be with Mom to keep her body temperature constant; (2) she did not have the

need to nurse so often; (3) her ears and eyes were open; and (4) she was up on her legs, scooting around.

I call this part of the story “Reigna and the Redheads.” A friend had a litter of Irish Setters who were days older than Reigna. She generously offered, “Bring her to visit as often as you want.”

So began a fascinating and exciting learning saga for me, and life-changing experiences for Reigna. It was incredibly awe inspiring to watch this experiment unfold.

I began the weaning process a bit early with Reigna so she could be away from Mom. (The nursing turned out not to be an issue, as “Redhead Mom,” Brandy, accepted Reigna as her own and let her nurse with the gang of redheads.)

Reigna's own mom was very concerned when I took her puppy away. This was the hardest part in establishing what would become a routine five to seven days a week—for a few hours, then a half-day—until Reigna was 3 months old. Reigna had to adjust to being away from her mom and her familiar smells and surroundings, and to a new whelping box, five red foster littermates, and a big, red foster mom—Brandy!

What I learned from this very first visit with the redheads was so astounding that I videotaped it.

Reigna was understandably overwhelmed, through not terrified. I did not put her in the whelping box with the redheads, who were very accepting and nonaggressive, until the end of the visit. The redheads were six days older than she, and they were larger and had more-developed play patterns and body movements. I put Reigna outside the box, on the floor, on a “scented cloth” (see below), in plain view of the pups—but mostly for the sake of Mom Brandy to get used to an interloper and not feel threatened.

Brandy was just as sweet, loving, and accepting as she could be. She

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Inside AKC



AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB
**CANINE HEALTH
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CHF, Zoetis Offer Free Education for Breeders

The AKC Canine Health Foundation (CHF) and its corporate alliance, Zoetis, have partnered in a podcast series devoted to canine reproduction education for pet owners, breeders, and veterinarians.

Throughout 2014, podcasts will be released on topics such as pregnancy diagnosis, breeding method choices, semen storage, and more. Podcasts are free to download, average 15 minutes in length, and can be

accessed through the CHF website at akcchf.org/podcasts.

In June, CHF will release *Infertility in the Bitch*, followed by two podcasts in July and one each in August, September, and October. Past podcasts episodes, which covered brucellosis, tips for fresh and chilled-semen breedings, cryopreservation of canine semen and shipping canine semen, are available at akcchf.org/podcasts.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF PET FOOD **DIGESTIBILITY & PALATABILITY**

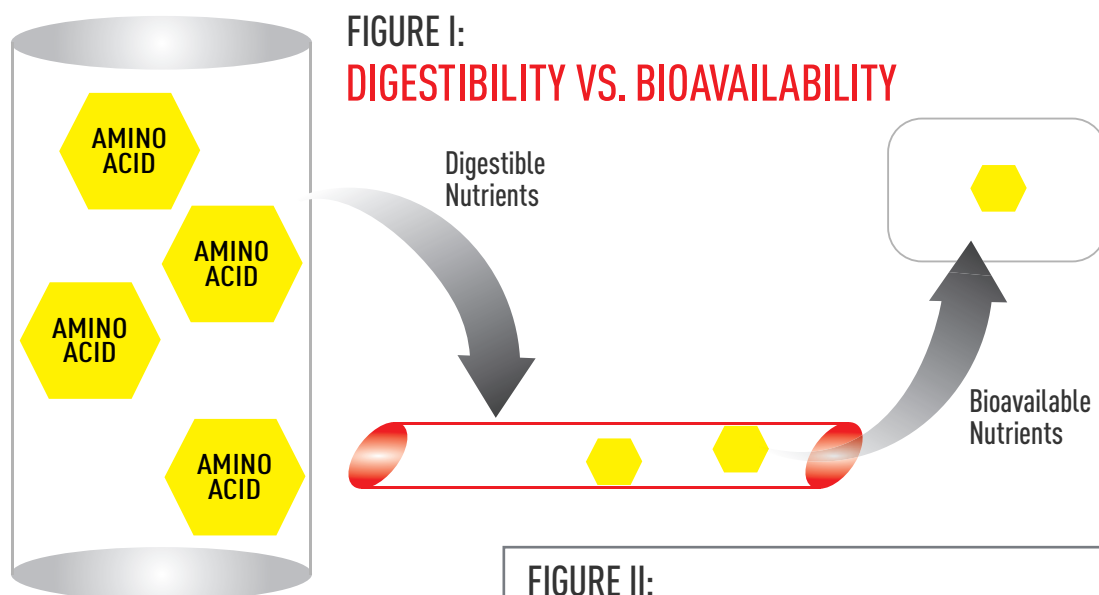
Jill Cline, PhD | Nutritional Insights Manager | Royal Canin USA

Digestibility determines how much nutrition a food provides in a given volume, while palatability affects how appealing a food is to the dog. Both of these characteristics are important criteria when selecting the best food for your dog.

WHAT ARE DIGESTIBILITY & BIOAVAILABILITY AND HOW ARE THEY MEASURED?

A food's digestibility is the collective proportion of all nutrients in a food that is available to the dog for absorption from the intestine into the bloodstream. Nutrient bioavailability is the proportion of the absorbed nutrients that are carried to target tissues and are available for use by the body. Because a highly digestible food provides a higher proportion of absorbed nutrients than a less digestible food, digestibility provides one measure of a food's nutritional value and quality. In general, as the quality of ingredients in the food increases so will the food's digestibility and nutrient bioavailability.

Pet food companies measure the digestibility of their products using several tests which are a combination of laboratory tests and feeding trials. In the case of feeding trials, the food is fed to a group of dogs for a selected period of time and the level of undigested matter excreted in the



**FIGURE I:
DIGESTIBILITY VS. BIOAVAILABILITY**

DIGESTIBLE NUTRIENTS OR DIGESTIBILITY refers to the absorption of nutrients from the intestine into the bloodstream.

BIOAVAILABLE NUTRIENTS OR BIOAVAILABILITY refers to the nutrients in the bloodstream which pass to the cell.

feces is measured and used to calculate nutrient digestibility. Although all reputable manufacturers conduct digestibility tests on their foods, the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) has not yet established a standard protocol for digestibility studies.

Commercial foods vary significantly in digestibility and ingredient quality so it can be difficult for pet owners to differentiate between super premium, premium and economy products. For example, the labels of two pet foods may have the same ingredient panels and guaranteed analysis, but when fed may have substantially different digestibilities (see Figure II).

**FIGURE II:
TOTAL PROTEIN VS. DIGESTIBLE PROTEIN**

The pet food label provides an estimate of a food's crude protein content on its guaranteed analysis panel. The measurement "crude protein" reflects only the total amount of protein and does not indicate differences in protein digestibility between high and low quality protein sources.

FOR EXAMPLE:

DOG FOOD A: Contains 24% crude protein and is 90.0% digestible

$$24\text{g protein}/100\text{g diet} \times 0.90 = \mathbf{21.6\text{g protein absorbed}}$$

DOG FOOD B: Contains 26% crude protein and is 76.0% digestible

$$26\text{g protein}/100\text{g diet} \times 0.76 = \mathbf{19.76\text{g protein absorbed}}$$

DOG FOOD A Ingredient Panel	DOG FOOD B Ingredient Panel
Chicken by-product meal, wheat, rice, animal fat, vitamins and minerals	Chicken by-product meal, wheat, rice, animal fat, vitamins and minerals

Although the crude protein value reported for "Dog Food A" is lower than that for "Dog Food B," "Dog Food A's" higher digestibility results in more protein being available to the dog, in a given volume of food.

WHAT FACTORS AFFECT PET FOOD DIGESTIBILITY?

A number of pet food characteristics influence nutrient digestibility. These include:

✓ **FORMULA:**

The food's formula refers to the type and quantity of different ingredients that are included in the product. Because pet food ingredients vary significantly in digestibility, the overall product formula is influenced by the digestibility and nutrient bioavailability of its various ingredients.

✓ **INGREDIENT QUALITY:**

Overall pet food digestibility is increased by the inclusion of high quality ingredients and decreased when poor quality ingredients are included. For example, a pet food's digestibility is decreased by the presence of poor quality protein, high amounts of ash, certain types of dietary fiber and phytate (a component of plant ingredients that decreases the availability of certain essential minerals in the diet).

✓ **PROCESSING:**

Proper processing techniques, cooking temperatures and storage procedures support optimal nutrient digestibility and bioavailability. Conversely, digestibility and nutrient bioavailability can be significantly reduced by improper processing or excessive heat treatment. For example, excessive heat damages protein resulting in decreased digestibility of the protein and reduced bioavailability of certain amino acids. This means that a smaller proportion of the protein is digested and absorbed.

WHAT IS PALATABILITY AND HOW IS IT MEASURED?

Palatability refers to perceptions of a food's taste, smell and texture. It is an important food characteristic because dogs must be willing to eat adequate amounts of the food to meet their calorie and nutrient needs. Unpalatable foods will be rejected, regardless of the quality of their ingredients or balance of essential nutrients.

Dogs make decisions about the palatability of a food based on three sensory characteristics: aroma, texture and the macronutrient profile of the food. Dogs have a hypersensitive nose and aroma plays an important role in food selection. Although dogs find the aroma of the food enticing, it is not always the same as the ones humans find palatable. In addition, the texture, size and shape of food pieces (kibble) are important; scientists who study palatability refer to this as "mouth feel." The macronutrient profile refers to the optimal blend of protein, fat and carbohydrates for a dog. The fusion of these macronutrients affects the post-ingestion feeling that a dog has after consuming a meal and some dogs may be sensitive to this feeling. Finally, in addition to the dogs sensory preferences, scientists who study palatability also consider the dog's

environment and age, as well as, the owner's reactions to different types and flavors of food.

Similar to digestibility, there are a number of ways that pet food companies evaluate a food's palatability. Tests that measure the dog's preference when initially presented with a new food provide information about the immediate appeal of the food's smell, appearance and texture. Long-term interest is measured using food preference studies. Each dog is offered a choice of two diets that are presented in identical bowls to the left and right. Surplus food is offered in each bowl so it is not necessary for the dog to eat both foods in order to meet his energy needs and the positions of the bowls are switched daily to account for dogs with right or left side preferences. The amount of food that is consumed at each meal is measured over a period of several days. These tests provide information about a food's acceptability to dogs over time and its relative palatability when compared with other foods. Finally, the ultimate test of palatability involves presenting the food to pets in homes where both the pet's and the owner's perceptions of the food are considered.



Jill Cline, PhD
Nutritional Insights Manager at Royal Canin USA

Dr. Jill Cline has spent nearly 20 years in the pet food industry. She has had a diverse career which includes pet food formula development, research methodology design and communications. She has a keen interest in sporting and working dog nutrition and the link between nutrition and cognitive function as well as expertise in skin and coat health.

HERE ARE A FEW HELPFUL TIPS FOR SELECTING A FOOD THAT IS BOTH HIGHLY DIGESTIBLE & DESIRABLE (PALATABLE) FOR YOUR DOG:

- ✓ A product that is highly digestible will produce normal stool volumes and well-formed and firm feces. In addition, the fecal matter will not contain mucous, blood or any recognizable components of the food.
- ✓ Highly digestible foods result in relatively low defecation frequencies and bowel movements that are regular and consistent. Foods that are not highly digestible may cause excessive flatulence, loose stools or diarrhea.
- ✓ Your dog should readily consume and enjoy the food in a quantity that promotes normal growth rate and optimal body weight. There should be no need to entice your dog to eat the food by adding treats, table scraps or other human foods. An excessive quantity of food should not be needed to maintain your dog's normal body condition.
- ✓ Dogs are not instinctively "picky." When the right combination of aroma, texture and macronutrient profile is found in a particular food, your dog will be satisfied with it for his current lifestage.



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Socialize Early and Often



Diane Lewis for AKC

By Cassandra de la Rosa

Technology requires that hardware devices—computers, smart phones, and so on—have software operating systems that enable them to perform the tasks we want and need. Dog personalities are not unlike technology. Temperament is hardwired into the individual and governs the opportunities and limitations of the personality. Behavior is the operating system we are capable of controlling and modifying to our needs.

How do we program the behavior we want in our dogs, to meet our lifestyles and needs?

One way is socialization. Early socialization is imperative, but equally important are a variety of experiences throughout life from which the dog learns coping skills.

When in New York City for Westminster, I had the opportunity to compare two dogs from our breeding program who had similar early socialization.

The first is Charley Lhasa, age 7, destined early for a pet home because of a cosmetic fault. Charley's owner flew cross-country to pick him up at age 10 weeks. Until then, as is common here, he lived with littermates in the laundry room off the kitchen, exposed to household and people noises, with trips outside for exercise and potty training, and playtime with willing adult dogs. He interacted with strangers in our home and rode by car and motor home while in a crate. With his doting new owner, Charley immediately learned airplane rides, strolled the streets of Manhattan, rode cabs, played in Central Park, rode the subway in his carrier, and became a photo star.

Charley met us in our hotel lobby and greeted us confidently—then played on the floor, completely relaxed. He allowed touching and

holding, but when I tried to peek at his bite, he firmly resisted, but without aggression. As he and his owner left, I watched him march down the busy avenue with great aplomb, lift his leg on a lamppost (he is neutered), and wait at the corner for the light to change. His owner keeps him in coat worthy of a competitive Open Dog and grooms him daily to keep him clean. Dirty sidewalks did not interfere with his metamorphosis into a city dog.

The 2-year-old dog we took to New York to show at Westminster shares close ancestors and the same early rearing as Charley. He then was socialized at dog shows, in parking lots, and at our vendor booth. He is eager to travel in our motor home and van, and he likes our vet.

With advance practice, he tolerated confinement in the Sherpa carrier on his first plane trip. However, he was unprepared for being in our hotel room, which was a new and strange territory to him. He refused to eat and would hardly relieve himself in our travel ex-pen.

Once at the dog show, he immediately relaxed on the bench, amid the chaotic crowd and dog-show noises. He ate food that was offered, kissed spectators, and watched other dogs. He is well socialized by many standards, but he is considerably younger and less cosmopolitan than Charley. His solid temperament allowed him to cope with the hotel situation without panting, drooling, or whining, but his behavior reflected a stress level we did not anticipate. Obviously, we need to expand his socialization.

Just as we regularly update software programs, socialization is not a done deal at any age. We should anticipate gaps in our dogs' experience base and continuously refresh their social competence.

Cassandra de la Rosa (dlrcas@msn.com) is the *AKC Gazette* columnist for the American Lhasa Apso Club (lhasaapso.org).

This column first appeared in the March 2014 *Gazette*.

“THE SINGLETON SYNDROME” *continued from page 3*

thoroughly sniffed Reigna and tilted her head as though thinking, *Hmm, I didn't think there was another one—especially a black one—where could this one have come from?*

The Honorary Redhead

Brandy's owner presented Reigna to Brandy by holding her out to be examined, sniffed, and licked. It was important that the owner, and not I, present Reigna to Brandy so that Reigna was associated with a familiar human scent. Prior to this, we had taken a clean cloth and wrapped several of the Redhead pups in it and rubbed them to get their scent on the cloth. Then I rubbed Reigna with the “scented cloth” so that when she was presented to Brandy, Reigna was wrapped in the scented cloth and had a familiar odor, not a foreign or potentially threatening one.

We repeated this “sniffing exercise” several times in the course of an hour. After each, Reigna was placed back outside the box, on the cloth, for Brandy to “monitor.”

At first Reigna was quiet, a huddled lump. Gradually, she began to look around. When it was clear that Brandy was not going to be alarmed by Reigna (Mom did not even get out of the box), we placed her inside the box.

Again Reigna was a black, huddled lump. The redheads were very curious: they sniffed Reigna, jumped on her, pawed and pulled her ears, bit her neck, pushed her, and tried to play with her as with their own littermates.

Reigna did not respond. Being a singleton, she had no idea what they

were doing. She let them crawl on her. Then they all piled together, with Reigna, and slept. After the nap, Reigna got bolder, guardedly getting to her feet, and she slowly blossomed.

Thus the three-hour first visit ended. But what happened at home, when I placed Reigna in her own whelping box, with her stuffed black and tan surrogate puppy toys, is what was so utterly astounding: Reigna mirrored exactly what her foster littermates had done to her with her stuffed toys! She pulled their ears, bit their neck, pawed them, pushed them, licked their face, and piled on them.

With just one visit, it was abundantly clear just how much Reigna was going to learn from her foster littermates, and just how exceedingly important what I was doing was to Reigna's development, mentally, emotionally, and physically. She had, with just one visit, learned how to interact and play.

After the first visit, concerns about being away from her mom for nursing vanished. “Irish Mom” took Reigna as her own and fed her with the redheaded gang. Initially, worry from Reigna's mom made establishing the six-day-a-week visit routine difficult.

We continued Reigna's foster visits until she was 3 months. She thought she was a redhead, and touchingly, she always had a deep affinity for her “redheaded relatives” and foster mom. She had to learn she was a Gordon!

After our first visit with the redheads, I knew the effort I was making was going to be well worth it.

Carolyn Russell Gold, is the *AKC Gazette* columnist for the Gordon Setter Club of America (gsca.org).

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