

## **Northwoods Humane Society – Deanna Persson, President**

**Three Days to decompress - Three Weeks to learn your routine – Three Months to start to feel at home!** You may have heard these words of wisdom if you have adopted a pet recently. We recently adopted ‘Sonny’ on June 12. He was one of 21 dogs scheduled to be euthanized in Texas but rescued and transported to the Northwoods Humane Society. We have accomplished the first 3 days and now the first 3 weeks and entering in to the three month stage. Sonny is a love but he also has some challenges – primarily separation anxiety and house habits. My husband and I have implemented a training routine and we are seeing some progress. When he lays in my lap, I forget about the challenges. Chip, our other dog, thinks Sonny is the best ever.

The following is from UKUSCA Doggie: Think of your new dog’s first 3 days as their time to decompress as they transition from a shelter or foster home into your home. This period can be overwhelming for many dogs, especially those that were not previously in a home environment. Make sure to start with a long walk in your neighborhood on that very first day. A long walk establishes the boundaries of your relationship and how to walk well with you and listen. This also helps your rescue dog adjust to their new environment, including all the sights, smells, and sounds of their new neighborhood. Once your walk ends, it is time to bring them into the house, but don’t take off the leash just yet. Your new dog should be following your directions and not wandering. Slowly bring them from room to room. Spend a few minutes in each room and once the inside tour is finished, do the same with each exterior space. During the tours, petting, eye contact and talking are not recommended since your new dog will already be overstimulated by the new environment and new people. The less stimulation you can create the better their transition will be. Think of your home like it is the first time at Disneyland for your dog. This extreme level of excitement requires calm energy from you. As exciting as a new member of your household can be, it’s important to establish your relationship, starting off on the right foot. You can have moments of excitement, but in general your calm energy should be given to your dog at all times in the first 3 days especially, but the same goes for the first 3 months.

Once the tour is complete, it is now time to establish some basic boundaries for your rescue dog! Continue to lead them on leash to their feeding area, with some water and a little food. This establishes an area that your dog is familiar with. After the feeding area is introduced, take your dog to its bedroom. If it is a crate, let your dog investigate that space by smelling, walking around, or just being curious. Open the crate and throw some treats in the back. It is possible your new dog may just walk right in after them! If he settles into the crate, feel free to remove the leash and shut the door. This will give him some time to decompress. If he seems anxious, you can always leave the door open and allow him in and out access. If, however, you choose not to crate your dog, let him off the leash and let him investigate the area. If he immediately lies down on his new bed and ignores the family, do not worry! This means you completed the process correctly and he is already comfortable in the pack!

Remember your new dog won’t know what you expect from them, where to go potty or whether they’re allowed on the furniture. They might not know that your shoe is not a chew toy, or that the kitchen trash is not where your dog is supposed to find their dinner. Your dog will settle into your routine with time and patience. The first 3 days are important to given them space to

explore, rest and establish boundaries! It is normal for your dog to sleep a lot in the first few days, not want to eat, and not crave interaction from their new family as they adjust. Take comfort in knowing that it gets better as the weeks go on.

**After 3 Weeks** - After 3 weeks, your dog is starting to get used to your comings and goings from the home, learning the daily routine, and starting to figure out the timing for their next meal. Your dog will learn that you walk with them at the same time every morning, and that they go out for regular potty breaks. You'll start to see more of your dog's true personality and less of their first response – whether that was fear, excitement, stress or some combination when you first brought them home. They will begin to feel settled in their new home. When they start to feel more comfortable, they will start to test the boundaries you've established. Remember to give calm feedback when they misbehave and be sure to praise each success. This is the time when you can start to work on basic commands, and you might have begun to narrow down your dog's behavior problems (if any). If you have uncovered some, then this is the time to consider training classes or seek help from a professional dog trainer. Keep in mind that your really can't expect your dog to be absolutely perfect right from the beginning, but any issues will become less frequent and less stressful with the help of a professional.

**After 3 Months** - When you get to 3 months with your rescue dog, most dogs know they are "home." It may seem like a long process to get there, but with patience they will learn to trust you, understand their routine and build a bond. You can use affection as a resource for good behavior. It is very important not to ease up on training sessions, the more the better, and if any issues arise, it's best to seek out help sooner rather than later.

Dates to Save: NHS Tag Day – August 5 – volunteers needed for short shifts call Deanna at 715-634-4543

August 30 – Friday – Sawmill Saloon – 6:30 p.m. Major summer fundraiser featuring the music of the Been There Done That Band, Hot Dogs on the Grill and live and silent auctions.