

## **WHO IS #1? - Canine Social Structure within the Pack Family.**

The first lesson the dog usually gets in her new home is housetraining. Because a housetrained dog is SO important to us, the moment the dog goes to the door and indicates to us she wants to go out, we drop whatever we are doing, rush to the door, praise/reward her and swiftly take her outside, and again reward her lavishly. Lesson #1—the dog is now beginning to understand how to make us hurry up and open the door, and also get a treat out of it!

In the absence of a defined social structure within the home, the dog has the innate ability and requirement to establish one. She instinctively knows how to lead and, in most cases, the dog's new family won't even realize she is systematically learning how to be the leader of her new pack family.

An inappropriate social structure can be the major cause for misbehavior problems with dogs—the dog thinks she is #1 and we thought we were #1 =equals= PROBLEM!

Turning this around can be relatively simple with some training. The owners also must be taught how to use that training in solving dog misbehavior problems and how to establish an appropriate social relationship for the dog within the family.

The Humane Society offers three Puppy & Dog Training Classes each week—Wednesday at 11 AM, Thursday at 7 PM and Saturday at 1 PM. The class is a 6-week session; each once-a-week class is about 1 hour. For information contact Connie at 772-388-3331, Ext. 19.