



# “Musing from the Hill” by Susan Crossett

as seen on the *Dunkirk Observer* on Fridays  
and the *Jamestown Post-Journal* on Saturdays

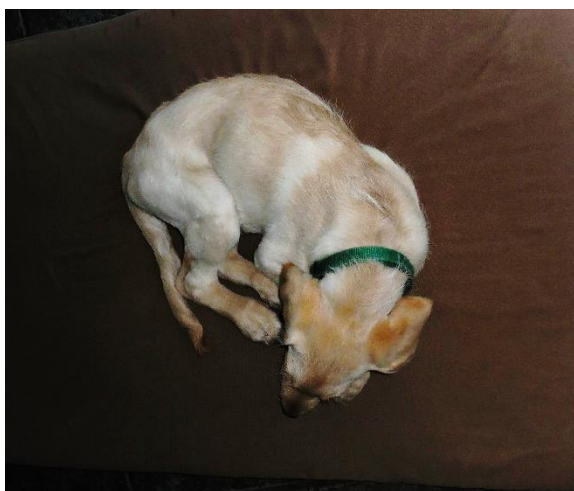


## Sick Puppy

Published June 4, 2021

My apologies to any reader with youngsters around for I know the pain and worry you experience with a sick baby can't be compared to a dog.

But to those of us whose grandchildren have settled in the farthest reaches of our country, acquiring a puppy is a second chance to enjoy those early days again.



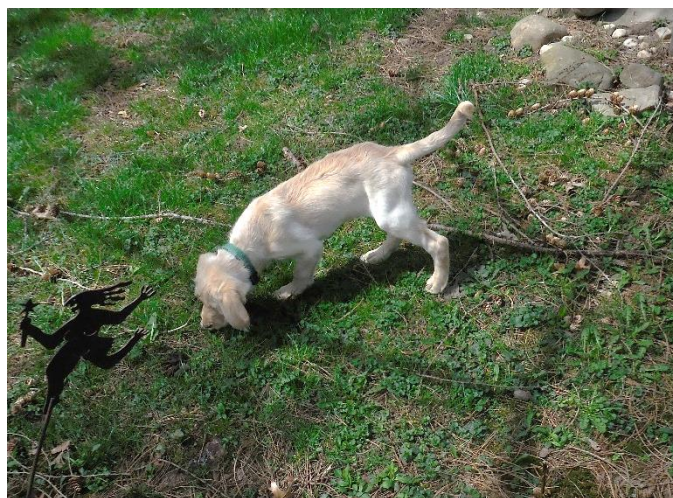
Howie was fine Monday morning. I thought nothing of his not eating breakfast for food hardly ever interests him. (I wouldn't like that stuff either.) Foreseeing a long, lanky dog, his vet said to let him graze. So, grazing it's been.

Howie was in the bathroom when I showered (safest way to keep an unhousebroken dog on a tile floor), exploring the shower when I stepped out. It was a repeat of his new discovery yesterday. Only this time, when I dropped my towel, he curled up on it . . . and stayed. I sat beside him as the hours slowly passed, often with his head on my leg as I stroked it and his long back.

Then he was up! On his feet and eager to go outside, actually passing up the carpet for the steep stairs to the yard. There he behaved as a happily “trained” doggy might. It seemed like we'd had a real victory, turned a real corner. It also seemed safe to let him back in the house.

Big mistake. He chased the cat down the hall and, before I could retrieve the mischievous retriever, he'd suffered two bouts of diarrhea. (I fear for the rug but that's hardly my worry now.)

He then followed me back to where I usually sit to eat, read and write. (This morning while he slept on my bath towel, I was able to finally work at my desk – Howie in sight and comforted by my presence. Fully carpeted and not close to any exterior door, that room's been off limits. I had columns to type and a letter I was hoping to answer.) That was it – back then to head on my foot.



Ultimately, I gently dislodged him long enough to get the second foam pad and cover. Much gratitude to those guardian angels for making it easy (well, easier) this time. It's smaller. Whatever happened to Drs. Foster and Smith and their fabulous catalogue of pet supplies? I suspect now Chewy controls the monopoly.

UP! As I wrote the words three lines back, Howie walked across the length of the room to that door to – well, my kids understand “piddle.” For the rest of you, can we agree on “wet”? My mother would have called the p-words vulgar, or at least unrefined. Howie then checked his water but, if he sipped, it was only briefly. Definitely not of interest.

Back now to the foam filled pad I'd laid on the floor. It's smaller but seems more acceptable so it can go in his crate tonight. I'll have to latch him in while keeping an ear open for any untoward sound.

So, what happened to my writing about sick puppies?

Like an infant (obviously I've been there), it's the dreadful uncertainty combined with the worry. A little one is so terribly vulnerable. Unable to say what's wrong or to help you know what to do. Call the doctor? Nine times out of ten (the odds are probably much higher), it's nothing to worry about. I don't like to bother any kind of doctor unnecessarily. Personally, I can treat most of the wounds and assorted pains which sometimes beleaguer me. (Warning if you don't already know from



experience or talking to friends: Do NOT go to the E.R. Call an ambulance or you'll be stuck sitting there in the waiting room for hours. I was bleeding so heavily from a bad cut that they finally took me ahead of the other wait-ees.) Of course, I'm calling my vet (who blessedly in these few days has already met a healthy Howie) but then see him sleeping restfully and decide I'll wait to see what morning brings.

Now it's bedtime – Howie's and mine.

Lots of prayers to add tonight.



Howie was quickly taken to his doctor the following morning, diagnosed with Parvo and – one hopes – will recover.

*He succumbed to the disease Friday, April 16. I was blessed with his presence for just five happy days.*

Written April 13, 2021