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Mary Oquendo

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☞ by Bonnie Wonders ☞

Ithough there are times when I just can't, I usually take walk-ins for nail cutting. Last Wednesday was a particularly busy day, and I was letting the answering machine pick up quite a few calls as I tried to stay on schedule with all of the appointments.

At one point, the phone rang, and I let it go to the machine. The person hung up. A split second later, it rang again, and I still didn't answer. This caller hung up again when the recording came on. This happened about five or six times within the next three minutes. Finally, when the phone rang the next time, I was at a point where I had a free hand to answer it. "Wonders Sassy Pup," I said into the receiver.

"Do you cut dog toenails?" a

woman's voice asked rather loudly. "Yes, I do," I replied.

"Can you do it today?" she asked again too loudly.

"Sure. Just be here before 6:00," I told her.

"Are you next to Maggie Mae's?" she asked.

"Yes, in the same parking lot," I told her.

"That's a bar," she informed me, as if I didn't already know.

"Yes, it is," I said, matter of factly. "Are you the one across the road from the Dairy Queen?" she also asked.

"Yes, across the road from Dairy Queen and next to Maggie Mae's," I said, rolling my eyes at the dog that was sitting patiently on the grooming table.

"You're right up the road from the Harley Davidson place aren't you?" she asked.

"YES," I said equally as loud as she was.

"Oh, okay. Do you know what time they open?" she asked me.

"I really have no idea," I told her,

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beginning to get a little annoyed.

"That bar next to you has good pizza," she told me out of the blue, as if I actually cared.

"Okay." I responded flatly.

"How much is it?" the woman asked.

"I don't know. I really don't get food there." I said.

"What?" the woman responded.

"I don't get pizza at the bar. I have no idea how much it is," I told her as I stood there shaking my head.

"No, I mean to get the dog's toenails cut. How much is it?" she said in even a louder voice.

I just wanted desperately to get off the phone by now. "Five bucks," I said

hurriedly.

"Wow... wow... Is that for each toenail?" she asked.

"No, it's for all of them. All four feet, the whole dog, as many toenails as it has will be five bucks plus tax," I said, figuring that I would have covered every conceivable question that this loon could possibly have about these stupid toenails. I was really losing my patience now.

"You didn't say there would be tax the first time," she said.

"There's tax on everything here – services and products. It's all taxed," I told her. "I'm sorry, but I have to get off the phone now. I have a dog that needs my attention. Just stop before 6:00 if you want it done," I told her.

"Wait, what about the dew claws?" she asked.

"They're included in the price," I said.

"So will it still be five dollars and tax?" she asked.

OK. Now I really had it with this lady. There must be a hidden camera somewhere in here for this actually to be real, I thought briefly. Somebody had to be putting this lady up to this as a joke on me as payback for one of the myriad of things that I've done in jest to others.

"Did you hear me? Is it still five dollars and tax?" she asked again.

"Yes," I said again as I leaned on the grooming table next to the dog that was now lying down, waiting for me to bring my attention back to him. Even he was rolling his eyes upward looking at me. "She's nuts," I said to him as I covered the voice piece of the



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phone with my other hand. "Goodbye," I said, abruptly ending the call as I immediately hit the off button. I was done with this woman.

Before I started back to work on the dog, however, I pressed the caller ID on the phone. I jotted down the last caller's number and knew I wouldn't be answering if I saw the number come up again. I then turned my attention to the dog on the table. As I was scissoring his feet, my sister walked in.

You would have to know my sister to understand our relationship. She can be remarkably a lot like the toenail woman on any given day. I think it has a good bit to do with how well she adheres to her anxiety medication schedule. She says what she thinks, when she thinks, and WHEREVER she thinks it. Store, restaurant, bank, the Vatican... You get my drift. When she's having a good day, however, she is as sweet as a circus peanut. She appeared quite charming today until the phone rang and she heard the caller's message, that is.

It was the toenail lady again. As the phone rang, I saw her number on the display. This was her message: "Hello? This is the lady with the dog that needs his nails cut. Hello? Answer your phone. Come on, answer the dang phone. Well, you can call me back right away. I'm waiting on you. I need to know when I can bring him in." She had seemingly ended her message, and then my sister and I both hear her say plain as day to someone, "The heck with her!" which apparently was meant for me.

Not that I was impressed by this message, but I suddenly knew that my sister should have had an extra dose of her meds. She freaked. "What kind of message is that!?" she yelled at me. "Did you hear how she talked?" she asked as she stuck her rather long finger into the side of my arm. (I just knew I'd bruise from that one.) "How dare she have that attitude! Is she nuts or what?" my dear sister said.

"Yes, I think she is," I replied as I backed ever so slightly away from her still raised finger.

"Well, she'd better not show up here. You're not really going to call her back, are you?" she asked as both her eyebrows and ears went up.

"Calm down," I replied. "I told her twice that she could come in before 6:00, so there's no point. I'm not that hard up for five bucks," I said.

"Five dollars?" she said. "I'd charge somebody like that \$50!" she added.

"Okay, whatever," was my only response. I just wanted to get my sister off the subject and get back to working on the dog at hand.

I changed subjects tactfully by telling Maryanne that her hair looked exceptionally good today. That was a



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sure-fire way to get her onto something else. It worked. She went on and on about how she had changed the color or cut or something. I really wasn't listening very well. I do know she had started a conversation (mostly with herself) about some sort of office chair with expandable arms.

Then it happened. The front door fairly burst open, and before I saw anything, I heard a voice that I knew I recognized...Toenail Lady.

"Hey! Hey! I'm here. Hey!" she bellowed. Before I could take the dog that I was working on off the table, my sister was on her way out of the grooming room and around the corner to get out front. Eewwee. I just knew this wasn't going to be pretty.

"There's no need to yell. My sister will be right out," Maryanne said.

"I came in to get my dog's toenails cut. I called, and she didn't call me back," the woman said. "Oh! So you're the one! You know, I was just hanging around here and heard your message. It was very demanding and rather nasty of you. I heard what you said in the end of it, too. It wasn't nice at all. That's not how a lady should talk," my sister admonished her.

By this time, I had put the dog away and had made it out front. I was right. It wasn't pretty. The woman was several feet wide and must have been pretty close to six feet tall. My sister is also pretty tall but is about as big around as a fence post. It was going to be like a bear getting into it with a Greyhound. I think my sister could have out run her, but she'd need to have a clear shot to the parking lot. Thank God she's got those artificial hips now. Me, I'm not much of a runner anymore. I'd be more in the submissive peeing position if it got ugly. I really didn't want to have to go

there with this woman. I needed to take charge of the situation right now, or my sister was going to get both of us beat up...badly.

"Who are you?" the woman asked, squinting at me as if there were 60 feet between us rather than about nine at this point. "Are you the one who's gonna cut this dog's toenails?" she asked gruffly. She then took a step toward me and tripped on the rope that she had attached to the dog's collar. I swear I thought she was going to go head first into a giant display of cow ears. She caught herself on the edge of the wire display crate, though, and cow ears went flying across the room as she tipped it over. Her dog just collapsed on top of a pile of them. He was a huge brute of a thing. Someone had shaved him down, and for whatever reason, it wasn't too classy of a job. It really didn't matter to me, though. I just wanted to get his nails done and get



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him and his owner out of there.

"Yes, I'm the one who will cut them for you," I said to the woman as I focused back on her question.

"Then you'll need this," she said, handing me a chunk of rope that looked like it had come off a fishing vessel or something. The thing must have been about six inches thick and a couple feet long.

"What's this for?" I asked innocently, really not having the slightest clue.

"To tie his mouth shut," she said, looking at me as if I were the stupidest blonde on earth.

"Does he bite?" I asked at this point.

"Might, might not," she said. I looked at the rope that she had just given me, and there was no conceivable way that I was going to be able to get it on the dog's face.

"I'll just use a muzzle," I said to the woman, handing her rope back to her. "I'd rather you use this," she said, trying to hand it back to me.

"Believe me, one of our muzzles will work much easier," I told her, not taking the rope back from her. I went into the grooming room and fetched a large mesh muzzle for the beast. I figured I'd just take care of him out front since he seemed perfectly content to lie on the floor out there.

"Don't go choking him," the woman admonished me before I even got close enough to put the muzzle on the dog.

"My sister will not choke your dog. She knows what she's doing. Do you have any idea how many dogs she's worked on?" Maryanne said, jumping into the conversation. "You don't need to be so bossy," she added.

Oh, geez. Here it comes, I thought as I looked at the woman. She was going to choke one of us with that stupid rope of hers. I was praying she would go after my sister first. After all, she was the one with the big mouth.

"How many?" the woman said, thrusting her face forward at Maryanne.

"Huh?" Maryanne said.

"How many dogs?" the woman said again.

"How many dogs, what?" my sister asked, staring at the lady.

"Great time to lose your train of thought, Maryanne," I said silently to myself. "Lots of dogs, thousands," I interjected into the conversation. "I've done thousands, okay?" I said to both women.

I reached down, and without any grief from the dog, I placed the muzzle on his face. "He can't breathe," the woman said.

"He can breathe just fine," I assured her. "It's only going to take two minutes anyhow, and I'll be finished," I added. As promised, I was done in a flash, and the dog couldn't have cared



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less. "All done," I said to the woman as I stood back up. "See, he didn't mind it at all," I threw in.

"I guess not. You choked him with that thing on his face. He can't breathe," she added. "Take it off before he goes unconscious," she instructed me in a hot tone.

I reached down and unsnapped the muzzle. The dog still showed no concern. "He is perfectly okay," I said to the lady, just wanting her to leave.

"I'll sue you if he dies," she told me matter of factly. I looked at her incredulously.

"Are you kidding?" I asked her. "He's FINE," I said again, this time dragging out the word.

"No, she's not kidding. She's a nut case!" my sister said right in front of her.

"What?" the woman asked, turning to face my sister head on.

"Oh, crap. I need a panic button alarm thing. For sure we are going to be in tomorrow's paper," I thought to myself in rapid succession. "There is really no need to put my sister in my will, seeing as how we will both be killed by this woman at the same time," I thought. And to think my mother had always favored my older sister. So much for her lack of judgement on picking the smarter sister to baby.

"How about if you just pay me for the nail clipping, and you can be on your way?" I said in a fake cheery tone.

"I think you talk pretty big," the woman said, glaring at my sister.

"Just stop it. Let it go, and get out of here, okay? I need to get back to the other dogs, and I really don't have time for all this," I said, trying to take charge of the whole situation. The woman put the money she owed me down on the counter without taking her eyes off my sister.

"You really think you're something, don't you?" the woman asked, stepping toward Maryanne. Wisely, my sister took a backward step, which put her close to the door.

"I," my sister said, "am a lady." With that, she spun around on her fake hips and swiftly stomped out the door that I was holding open for her.

The woman yanked on her dog's rope and waddled out right behind her. "I will sue you if he dies," the woman said in my direction as she went out the door.

I looked out the window to see my sister starting to get in her vehicle. Then she just had to go and start pointing at the woman as she approached her own car. I saw her mouth start running again, and I suddenly found myself hoping that she had the foresight to put me into her will. I really like her china closet... >







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MORE CONVERSATIONS FROM THE CONTESTARENA

My last two columns covered comments from both sides of the grooming table: the judge's side and competitor's side. There was a lot of good banter, and I'm sure there was some eye-opening all around. Thanks to everybody who sent me their comments. I would like to revisit those columns with a little more feedback that did not make it into the first two versions.

Questions of disqualifications, specifically on what I referred to as dirty and/or matted dogs or dogs with inadequate growth or pre-grooming, came up pretty consistently from competitors. Why doesn't a judge toss them out of the ring before the class starts? Well, as I had explained, pregrooming is very hard to determine, especially when the contestant tells us that someone else groomed the dog last or that they are going to make a distinct change in the dog. The dog may appear already finished, but unless a judge sees fresh clipper or scissor marks (and we do look for them), there's not a lot we can do except count it against the competitor in the final judging.

While show rules may call for a disqualification under these circumstances, it's difficult and sometimes unfair to DQ a dog on these shaky grounds. Judges DO look at what is under that table, and if all we find is lint while another dog has buckets of hair, it is all taken into consideration. Dogs that have mats and tangles or dogs that could have been better prepared also fall into this area for a lot of judges. I know that if most judges find knots and tangles in a coat in the pre-judge, they had better not be there during the final judging. To DQ a dog in the pre-judge for a tangle in the armpit is silly, and while some sets of rules call for it, I feel it's very unfair to pass judgment on something that the competitor just hasn't had an opportunity to brush out yet.

This brings me to an area that got a lot of attention: doing prep work in the ring. I think we can all agree that a certain amount of prep work should be done in advance and is for the benefit

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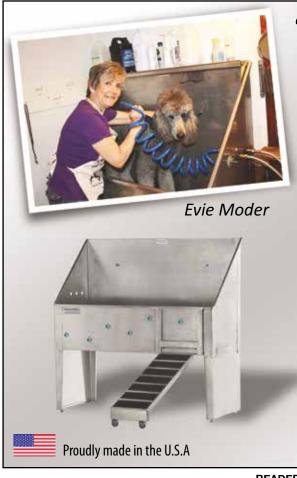
"While we do understand that not all prep areas are ideal, they are still better than using your hotel room (something that can get you tossed out of a show) or driving to an out-of-the-way salon."

and well-being of the dog. Nails should be trimmed regularly while ears and sanitaries should be kept clean and tidy for the dog's health. We do realize that some dogs are picked up right before the class, and the contestant has to deal with a lot of unknown issues.

One thing that many contestants echoed is the lack of real good lighting in many of the prep areas. Not only can it be poorly lit, but many contestants have to finish bathing and drying their dog and vacate the table to make room for the next competitor to bathe and dry their dog. I have to take a step back on this one. At the last couple of shows I attended, I made a point to go back to the prep areas and examine the situations, and the competitors are right! Poor lighting would have made it difficult, if not impossible, for me to trim a dog's nails or clean its ears and get them right without potentially injuring the dog.

While we do understand that not all prep areas are ideal, they are still better than using your hotel room (something that can get you tossed out of a show) or driving to an outof-the-way salon. If a judge comes to your dog for pre-judge and you are not ready, please tell us, and we will move on to the next dog. Just realize that show rules have contestants in the ring and ready for pre-judge at a certain time, and you must abide by that. Please have your dogs ready as close to that time as possible. If at all possible, keep up with your prep work outside the ring.

Someone suggested that it would be convenient if the judge were to critique their dog during the judging



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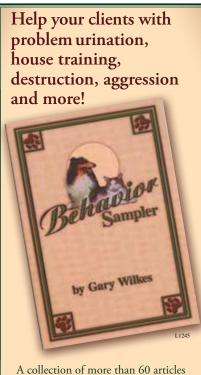
A judge has to answer to the 'ringside experts' who have not had their combs on the dogs. And remember: only one person walks out of the ring completely happy."

process. While I understand where this competitor is coming from, this could be very uncomfortable for all involved. First, judging must be quick, and spending time critiquing at the table is sure to raise the eyebrows of the show promoters who need to keep things moving in a timely manner. The competitor should be concentrating on showing off their dog to the best of their ability, and the judge should be concentrating on the groom. Passing a critique at this time would be awkward, as other people may be listening and privacy would be breached. Consider, too, that judges usually don't make their final decision until every entry has been gone over. It's only fair. Save critique time for after the class is over and the winners are announced.

Input from competitors-turnedjudges is fun! Believe me, we've ALL been there, and we ALL had the same reactions. It's really different on the other side of the comb! These new judges see all of the faux pas that you normally wouldn't see while you are in the ring competing. Presentation or lack of it becomes obvious. Prep work can be very disappointing when a judge gets "up close and personal." While some of the new judges focus on technical and finish work, others look to profile as a deciding factor. This is nothing unusual, as we all have our preferences. Deciding factors range from a judge asking themselves if they "would or wouldn't send that groom out of their salon" to asking themselves if they could fix a groom within five minutes. If it can't be fixed or if it is too unfinished, most judges eliminate it. If all it would take is a couple of



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snips or plucks, they may keep it in the consideration. You really have to trust when a judge says that it literally came down to hairs. I hate that line, but it can be and often is very true.

Profile is a big deciding factor for many judges, newbies included. Technical skills can be honed and improved, but if a competitor has "the eye" to nail a profile and get the trim in balance, minor technical infractions can usually be forgiven.

One new judge commented that she did not know how it was going to feel judging her peers, having come fresh from the contest arena. She is pleased (and, I believe, surprised) that she can tune out the people and just see the dog. That happens a lot.

Most judges, including me, have found that judging really helps their regular salon grooming. We see things that may look okay when we do it on a daily basis, but when we see it on a dog someone else has groomed, it's like an epiphany. "OMG! I do that same thing! I didn't realize how bad that looks!" We go home and make changes and improvements in our own work. Sometimes we can't see the forest for the trees, so stepping outside the forest and looking in can be a good thing!

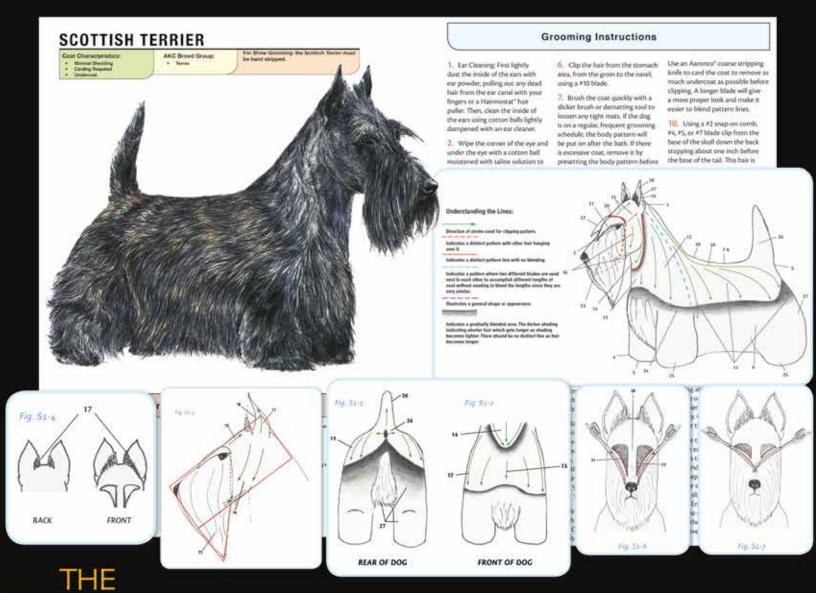
Judging is not easy. A judge has to make decisions that sometimes are not popular. A judge has to answer to the "ringside experts" who have not had their combs on the dogs. And remember: only one person walks out of the ring completely happy. As judges, we are all former competitors, and we know how much time, effort, and money goes into these contests. It's all hard work, and we appreciate everything that goes on behind the scenes to prepare for that moment in the ring.

But just remember, as a competitor, you are asking for your work to be judged. You are asking for an opinion. The judges don't like sending people out of the ring empty handed, but that's part of a contest. It would be nice if it were like kindergarten and everybody got a first place ribbon, but we don't learn like that. Take your wins graciously and your losses even more so. Understand that every dog (and groomer) has their day. Thank the judges for their time and please thank the sponsors for their continued support. Last but certainly not least, please take a moment to locate the show promoter and thank them for putting it all together and making it all happen. The show promoter is an unsung hero at these events, and maybe I'll shed a little light on what goes on behind the scenes at a convention next month from the promoter's point of view.

> Until then, see you ringside! ⊁ — Teri



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THE HOLIDAYS ARE COMING! THE HOLIDAYS ARE COMING!

es, the holidays are coming. Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas—the wonderful times of the year when we all shop, bake cookies, decorate, go to parties, and relax with our friends and family. Yeh, right... Not if you are a typical groomer. For most groomers, 'tis the season to work, work, work with very little time for relaxing or anything else, 🛪 by Kathy Hosler 🕷

but it doesn't have to be all work and no play this year. It's all in how you prepare for it.

How do you look forward to the holidays? With eager anticipation and the confidence that you will be able to handle whatever comes your way? Or does the thought of the long hours, overbooked days, and short-tempered clients make you cringe and want to say "bah humbug"? Do the demands of the stress-filled season overwhelm you and make you feel like the frantic fairy tale character Chicken Little, who aimlessly ran to and fro while shouting, "The sky is falling! The sky is falling!"?

Let's make this the year you really enjoy a successful holiday season. The decisions and choices that you make right now will determine the kind of



A little over four years ago, we opened **Spot Pet Care**, our own pet grooming business in Mill Valley, California... just over the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco.



We loved our new pet business, but we quickly found that we were always short on time. Basic tasks, like calling customers to remind them about their appointments and keeping our paper calendar up to date, took up so much of our day. We knew activities we should do to grow our business, but they always got pushed to "tomorrow."

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Sincerely Ben and Caroline Co-Founders, Spot Pet Care and StoreVantage

Signup Today at www.storevantage.com Visit us at Groom Expo! ⁶⁶ First, take inventory of all your supplies—shampoos, styling products, ribbons, etc. and make sure that you have enough to carry you through this peak season. Stock your retail area and fill your shelves with an appealing assortment of holiday toys, gifts, and lots of impulse items."

holiday season that you and your salon will experience. Wise, advance planning can have your cash registers filled to overflowing.

First, take inventory of all your supplies—shampoos, styling products, ribbons, etc. and make sure that you have enough to carry you through this peak season. Stock your retail area and fill your shelves with an appealing assortment of holiday toys, gifts, and lots of impulse items.

Always use products and equipment that will help you speed through your grooming. It is very true: time is money, and every minute that you save is precious. If you can save five or ten minutes per dog, you will see a significant increase in the number of dogs your salon can groom, and you can realize a greater profit per pet by decreasing the time needed for each grooming.

Make sure that all of your equipment is in tip-top shape. This is crucial. Take the time to do the maintenance on your clippers, dryers, and bathing and vacuum systems – cleaning filters, changing brushes, removing built-up hair deposits, etc.

Always keep spare parts on hand so that you can quickly take care of a breakdown. If at all possible, have some back-up equipment – a new pair of clippers and lots of blades, a couple pairs of scissors, or an extra dryer. There's nothing worse than having a salon full of pets and nothing to groom them with.

Pre-book as many of your clients as possible. Let them know that your holiday appointments fill up quickly and you cannot guarantee that they will get in if they don't book now.

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Pre-booking appointments makes it possible to schedule your days in a way that works the best for you and not have six full-coated Cocker Spaniels or hand-scissored Standard Poodles on the same day.

As the holidays get closer, many salons let their answering machine pick up all their calls. Their outgoing message states clearly yet pleasantly that all of their holiday appointments have been filled but that they have a waiting list. Hearing that message when she calls your salon informs Mrs. Super-Picky that her little Poopsie will have to be on your waiting list if she is hoping for a holiday grooming appointment (maybe she should have pre-booked a holiday appointment like you suggested at Poopsie's last grooming).

Allowing your answering machine to take all calls while you are grooming means that you don't have to stop and talk to people who are price-shopping, the ones who want to tell you their pet's entire life story, and the ones that simply must get their dog in today – after all, they are a regular customer of yours... They got him groomed at your shop last Christmas!

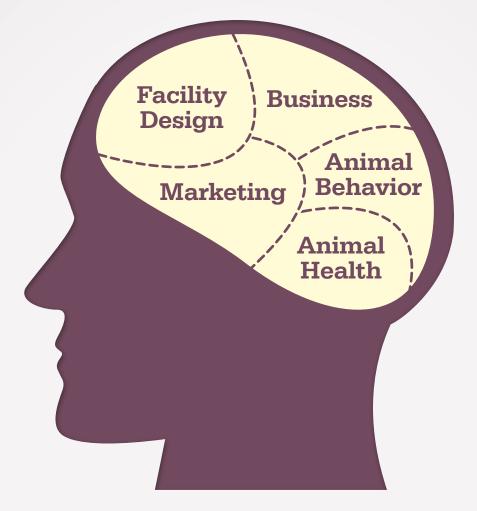
Having a waiting list also gives you the advantage of being able to select the clients that you want to work into your busy schedule. Often you can fit in two or three easy dogs instead of one difficult, time-consuming client.

The holidays mean long hours on your feet for most groomers. Make sure that you wear comfortable, supportive shoes and have anti-fatigue mats at every grooming station. Ergonomic equipment, like adjustable tables and bathtubs and hand- and wrist-friendly tools, will help increase your productivity without taking a toll on your body. Make yourself a priority. You are not a machine that can work 24 hours a day. You've got to get adequate rest and nutrition if you expect to make it through. Working long, hard hours can really be difficult on your staff, too. Show them that you appreciate them, and reward them adequately for all of their work.

If you can make this a time of pulling together and working as a team, this super busy season will be a happy one for everyone – the pets, their owners, your staff, and especially you. Don't be a bird-brain. Planning ahead and prioritizing things in their order of importance will keep you from being like Chicken Little...running in circles and getting nowhere fast. Instead, this busy holiday season you will be happy, in control, and you will be singing "jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way" to the bank! ≫



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While we are seeing more and more of it, cording the Poodle coat is not just a new fad. In the early 19th century, corded coats were very common and often seen in the show ring. Cording is not an instant grooming style. If you cannot handle your Poodle looking quite unkept for several months in the initial stages, this style isn't for you. Once the cords are formed, the upkeep on a pet coat is quite simple.

WHAT ARE CORDS?

Basically, cords are controlled matting. Most Poodle coats, when wet, separate into ringlets. Those ringlets, when left on their own, eventually ☞ by Dawn Omboy ☞ www.queenofcolor.com

become the cords. These are the words of a dear friend and fellow groomer, Barb Hoover of Leavenworth, Kansas. Many know Barb from the *Groomers Lounge* or *Groomers.net*. Barb has three Poodles that are in various stages of cording. *Addie*, her six-year-old, has well-formed cords about eight to ten inches long. Being a friend of the *Queen of Color*, Barb was inspired to color *Addie*, and I have been just dying to see the cords multi-colored!

"You must make sure to pick a color you really like, because it will not fade out of the cords as it does with a brushed coat, and you cannot just cut it off either," says Hoover. She was stuck with orange ears for a year and a half before it faded and grew out enough to cut some of the cord length off and cover the rest with another color.

To color the cords with a semipermanent dye, Barb diluted *Queen of Color Pink Petunia* (one of my favorites) into a squirt bottle and sprayed it on, working it into the cords. You must be sure to lift the cords to check for missed spots. Have them separated before you begin to ensure even color for initial coloring. Because it's sprayed on and because of the excessive amount of rinsing, it's pretty wet. After waiting out the processing time of about 30 minutes, rinse, rinse, rinse, rinse, rinse, rinse, rinse, rinse, oh and



rinse again! Barb says she has problems with color run off on the noncolored areas no matter what she does, since there's no quick rinse to avoid it. Leaving the uncolored areas unclipped until afterwards will help to catch it. Clip that part off after drying. It helps some, but so far, it is not fool proof.

For my part, I wanted to see Addie in multi-colored cords. I recently had the chance to do this at the All American Grooming Show in Chicago. Addie was a great sport as I used Pet Paint

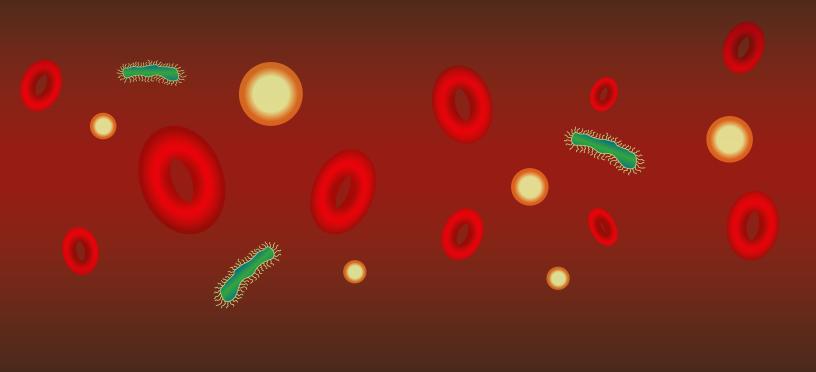


and *Pet Chalk* to get this great effect. With *Pet Paint*, I held up each cord I wished to color and sprayed the color onto the bottom half of the cord. For the *Pet Chalk*, it was just as simple to rub my thumb across the *Pet Chalk* round and then rub it onto the cord. Addie slept with us in the hotel room with absolutely no color transfer from the Pet Paint or the Pet Chalk, and when she was bathed two days later, all of the color was gone from the cords except the Queen of Color Pink Petunia. Addie was back to her normal color in the pink! It is great to know that even corded coats can be color cord-inated! \approx



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UNDERSTANDING WHY EPIZOOTIC DISEASES ARE IMPORTANT TO GROOMERS

জ by Dr. Michael Fleck DVM 😴

ccording to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), 300,000 cases of Lyme disease are diagnosed in the U.S. each year. This number represents an increase of ten times figures earlier reported by the government agency. Most of these cases were diagnosed in 13 states, primarily in the Northeast and Upper Midwest. Additionally, Antech Laboratory, a notable blood and tissue pathology testing facility, reported that up to eight percent of people and pets in Florida are infected with Giardia, an intestinal parasite. No part of the country is immune from epizootic diseases.

Why is this information important to the professional groomer? Because both Lyme disease and Giardia are examples of epizootic diseases or diseases transmittable between pet and human. Lyme disease is transmitted by ticks and Giardia by direct contact with individuals (pets or man) shedding the parasite. As a professional groomer, your health and that of your staff, your client's pets, and your business could be at risk.

To combat these health problems and preserve the integrity and reputation of your grooming salon, the professional needs to take better precautions in handling the pets coming in daily for their grooming experience. Establish a spa policy and train your staff to take a few minutes and ask the pet owner a few simple questions before admitting the pet into your grooming facility. Questions should include (1) Has your pet been feeling well? (2) Have you seen fleas or ticks on the pet? and (3) Has the pet had loose stools? If loose stools or diarrhea are present, the pet should probably not be groomed that day. You can recommend immediate veterinary attention to your client and explain a reschedule can help their pet avoid stress.

Since both you and your clients

have time constraints, especially in the morning hours, you might want to have all of your clients sign authorization, which allows you to administer a Capstar tablet and give their pets a natural ingredient-based flea and tick shampoo with, of course, the appropriate additional fees, listed.

Furthermore, before caging the dog or cat and initiating the grooming process, it is extremely important to follow up with your own evaluation of the skin and peri-anal region for the presence of fleas, ticks, and loose stools. If fleas and/or ticks are present on the pet, the infested pet should be housed separately from the other grooms for the day, and the isolated housing area must be disinfected and treated for eradication of all the fleas and/or ticks left behind after grooming. Moreover, don't forget to treat the bathing area as well. Lastly, before releasing the pet, a thorough discussion with the pet owner should include insect management control for both

Both Lyme disease and Giardia may be life-threatening diseases if undetected and untreated. These two diseases represent only a small number of epizootic diseases that the groomer needs to be aware of.

the pet and the pet's environment (home, car, and yard).

Both Lyme disease and Giardia may be life-threatening diseases if undetected and untreated. These two diseases represent only a small number of epizootic diseases that the groomer needs to be aware of.

For more information about this topic and others, register for my Go Meetings webinar in October at *www. epi-pet.com* or by calling 866-204-0002. Attendance is based on a first come, first serve basis. ≫

Michael C. Fleck, DVM is the Director of the Animal Medical Center of Bradenton, Florida. He is the President of Epi-pet, creating skin treatment and ear cleaning products. He is a journalist and lecturer, specializing in pet skin issues.

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CHRISTMAS BLING AND THINGS

ell, another year has come and almost gone. The busy summer grooming season is winding down, and just when we think we can take a break and relax, we come to the realization that the holiday season is just around the corner. Every groomer knows what I am talking about. The season when every customer forgets about getting *Fido* groomed until three days before Thanksgiving or Christmas and then assumes you can squeeze in just one more when you are already triple booked.

The holidays are the best times to hook clients on creative grooming and reel them in. There are many creative services you can offer even during your busiest time of the year. The best part

☞ by Angela Kumpe ☞

of it is you will also be adding extra income to help you enjoy that slow start to the New Year. You know, the two weeks after Christmas when it should be mandatory for all groomers to take vacation because we groomed everyone's dogs just before Christmas. How do you have time to add on extras? There is no time for playing around with creative! Wrong!

I'm not only going to tell you how to earn extra money in almost no time with some creative services that your customers will be bragging about for months to come, but I am going to tell you how I prepare ahead of time for the holiday season. To prepare, you need to make a shopping list and either go shopping at a local craft store or get online and start making



orders. If you get everything you need now, you will save time by beating the rush of holiday shoppers. You will also have a much better selection, because holiday items are seasonal. Stores will not restock many items once they have sold out. A few things that I start stocking ahead of time are:

- Assorted sizes of holiday colored loose rhinestones
- Aleene's Tacky Glue
- Swarovski Crystals
- Rhinestone embellishments
- Glitter in holiday colors
- School glue

Although I make most of my bows for my clients, this time of the year, I

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either order extra nice bows or spend extra time making extra special bows. This is the time of year when my clients tend to be more generous with tips, and I personally like to encourage that type of behavior. I purchase my bows from www.aglamourbow.com. These bows are extremely elegant and will hold up very well. As a matter of fact, many of these bows are reusable when the dogs come back for their next appointment. When the holiday season is over, I can sell any of the bows I have left over as retail with no problem.

The assorted rhinestones, found at craft stores, I use as earrings and facial bling on the female dogs I groom. Simply apply a drop of the tacky glue to the back and apply the stones to areas with short coat. Female dogs that have naturally short hair on their ears or dogs that get their ears shaved or tipped get earrings. Dogs with naturally short hair on their face or that get the bridge of the nose shaved (we all have them!!!) or get a clean face get facial jewelry.

The Swarovski Crystals, found at *www.acreativecollection.com*, are on a tiny rubber bead. These are used on my dogs with longer coats and especially on dogs that get a ponytail or pulled up topknot. To apply these, you select a strand of hair, pull the hair through the threader, and slide the bead over the hair. The rubber bead holds the Swarovskis in place. I use these on male and female dogs. I figure if a male dog gets a ponytail, he probably won't be offended by a little sparkle.

The rhinestone embellishments, found at craft stores and *www*. *acreativecollection.com*, are what I call booty bling. Simply apply a thin layer of tacky glue and press onto short coats. These also are great for male and female dogs.

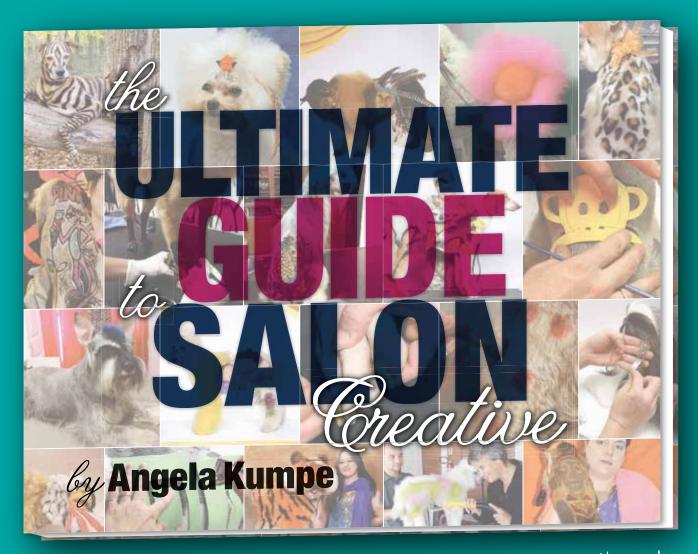
The glitter and school glue, both from craft or retail stores, are used to apply glitter body art designs. Mix a small amount of the school glue with equal parts of water. Mix in desired amount of glitter and paint on designs using a small craft paint brush.

All of the creative services above are non-toxic and temporary, so they can easily be removed at home after the holidays are over or if the pet simply doesn't like being bedazzled. Both the tacky glue and school glue will wash off with warm water and soap or a little rubbing alcohol on a cotton ball. To learn many more creative tricks and add-on services, check out my new book, *The Ultimate Guide to Salon Creative* published by *Barkleigh Productions, Inc.* It can be found at *www.barkleigh.com* or *www.acreativecollection.com.* S



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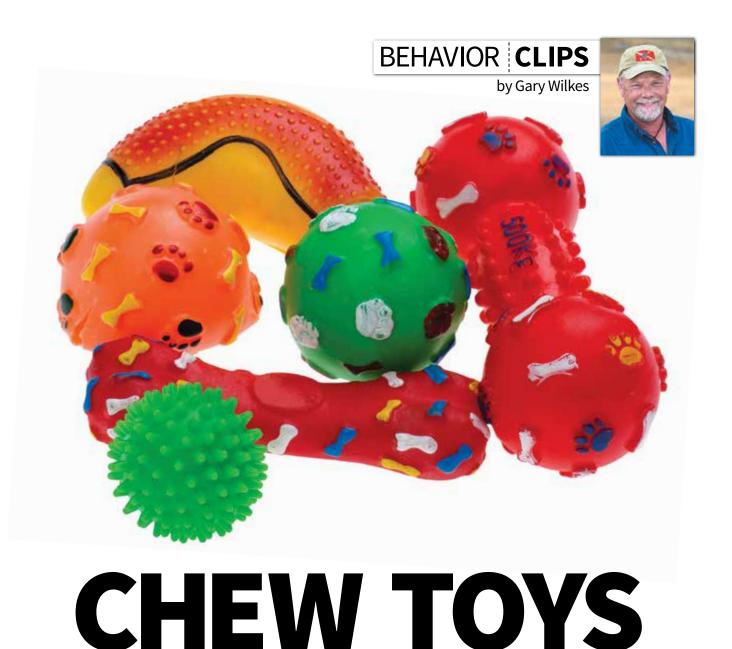
- Dawn Omboy, Queen of Color



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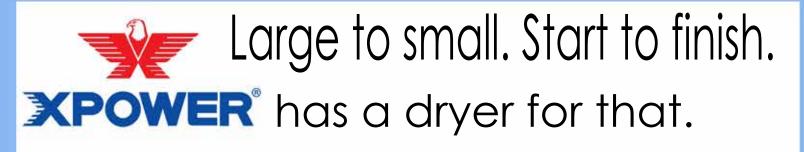


have a cattle dog that belongs to a common subspecies of domestic dog—*canis manducatione*—the chewing dog. He does have a small underbite, which makes me think part of his problem is improper occlusion. I will be fixing that problem in the near future, but for the moment (and for the last 10 months) I have been dealing with a super chewer. That brings up the topic of chew toys.

All dogs enjoy chewing to one degree or another. It's in their bones. When wild canids devour an animal, they strip off everything edible and leave very little to the buzzards. The design and variety of teeth lend to this picked-clean result. They have molars for crushing small bones, shearing large muscle, or breaking the plastic handle of an umbrella. The front teeth can skin the last vestige of meat from a bone or the laces off your running shoes. The canine teeth act as shears that can cut through tendons and sinew or drip irrigate hoses with ease.

For some owners, owning a dog is like having a school of giant, literally

omnivorous piranhas in the house. Chair legs, couch cushions, watch bands, hearing aids—just about anything that will fit in their mouths and some things that won't fit entirely is fair game. Even if you are indifferent to losing hundreds to thousands of dollars to this behavior, there is another serious aspect that has to be considered: pica, the ingestion of inedible objects. If your dog actually eats whatever they dismember, you can wind up with a dead dog. In all cases, it's a great idea to stop dogs







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from eating things that can kill them. I have seen the results of a dog that bit through an electrical cord. Unless you have the skills to inhibit a behavior, the next best alternative is to find appropriate objects to keep your dog's mouth occupied.

TEXTURE, SIZE, DURABILITY, AND INTERACTIVITY

There are four criteria that make up a good chew toy: texture, size, durability, and interactivity. If the texture of the toy is objectionable or not interesting, the dog won't chew it. If the size is too big or too small, it can either be too difficult to chew or an intestinal blockage waiting to happen. If the object can be dismembered rapidly, then it isn't going to keep the dog occupied for long. The last criterion is interactivity. If the toy pays off, the behavior of chewing that toy will be reinforced. Once you have found the combination of these features that a dog prefers, you can moderate



READER SERVICE CARD #10496

problems like chronic boredom and destructive chewing.

They also are profitable for your business. While most groomers do not like to carry product lines that are not directly connected to their business, effective chew toys benefit your clients directly. Your choice is whether you wish to have the big box stores pocket the money or keep it yourself. Being helpful to your clients in areas that are important to them also helps retention. Note: This isn't a consumer reports style review. If I mention a product, it is to help you find general types, but I am not recommending a particular brand (i.e. I don't do paid endorsements, but I will tell you what I use).

TEXTURE

Dogs like things that resist their jaw pressure. That is why rawhide chews are so universally loved. This "squeezability" is reproduced in the texture of rubber balls, bones, and objects to one degree or another. The most common rubber compound used for dogs' toys is cressite. Newer

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which, we were back. Josh was regain-ing his strength, but we had sat out of the competition and lost valuable time. I wasn't sure if I could complete him with the time I had left. Kathy er all that coat growth, I just ve time to finish what I had We still managed to get third d the coveted People's Cl ori again got first place aged to remain

feated. ecided to go ahead and take the in to one more show. Atlanta Pet just had to complete this design had worked so hard to perfect. a couple weeks before Atlanta, m her passed away; I was devastated tentions of going anywhere to soon after her death. My my soul, my greatest far ess, and my inspiration.

y seamstress, and my inspiration. In the days before Atlanta, my tire family pushed me to go on and what my mom would have wanted e to do. "She would want you to go, igela!" is what my dad was telling eed to go but wasn't sure if I impete. I just wasn't up to it. t before we left. I told my da on my dog, and if I can d e to get the dogs re

le I was working on *Josh*, he was standing there. When he was standing there. when he, I was so excited. It was I, and win or lose, I was happy. I together and completed the ulled it together and co

Top: Preparing for Atlanta Pet Fair just after Pasaden - Angela thought about a more tribal eagle at first. Middle and bottom: At Atlanta Pet Fair, where "Chemkee Heritage" took First Place









formulas by companies like Kong are more chewy than old, hard rubber toys. Another modern innovation is cotton rope toys with knots. They are wonderful until the dog starts to cut through the rope with their molars. If you go with rawhide, my recommendation is to stick to compressed rawhide. This is a stack of layers of rawhide punched with a large die that cuts it to the shape of a bone. They are very dense. As in all things, watch out when pieces are small enough that a dog might ingest them.

SIZE

If a dog can get their open jaw around something, they can dismember it. Small toys for big dogs are dangerous. Big toys for tiny dogs may cause a lack of interest. Try to find something that is large enough to fit sideways through the dog's mouth behind the canines and large enough so that it sticks out on the sides.

DURABILITY

With serious chewers, this is always a problem. Even the most durable dog toys can be sliced and crumbled. Harder rubber-type toys may resist chewing for awhile but may dry out and then be vulnerable. Daily examination of chew toys is a must for dogs that are especially ardent in their chewing.

INTERACTIVITY

Over the last ten years, this aspect of chew toy design has increased dramatically. Inert play toys, like tug-ofwar rings, have been around forever. The new variety allows you to stuff the toy with everything from peanut butter to proprietary treats. Some require the dog to drop the object repeatedly to get a treat to pop out. Others drop treats through holes in the toy or allow crunch-style chewing to crush the treat so that it falls on the ground. Premier Pet Products has a new style of chew

toy with thin vanes that flex and allow the treat to be dislodged. These vanes can be trimmed with scissors or removed to allow a specific sized treat to escape.

Proper chew toys can prevent destruction and keep a dog occupied for hours. Knowing which type to recommend to your clients is a powerful tool to help them survive puppyhood and beyond. It also presents a revenue stream that pretty much sells itself. While you may not be able to undercut the cost of the big box stores, being the client's primary advisor on such topics gives you a huge advantage. To get started researching for yourself, an Internet search will overwhelm you. A better idea is to hit a pet store with a great selection and then physically examine the ones that strike you as best in class according to your new criteria. 🛰

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WHAT WE GIVE...

"We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give." — *Winston Churchill*

hen I lived in Memphis, I operated a house call pet grooming business for many years. One of my favorite customers did a good bit of community volunteer work, including delivering Meals on Wheels. One day, she told me about a lady (and I am not making this up) named Miss Magnolia. Miss Magnolia had a little dog that was in dire need of grooming. My customer asked if I would go take care of the dog if she paid me. I got the contact information, refused the extra pay, and set up what would be the first of many appointments.

Miss Magnolia lived in a very poor part of town. Her small house was cheek and jowl with other little houses on the street. The road was dirt, the yards were weed choked, and a railroad track ran so closely past that the houses shook when trains blew by. The dog that needed me? It was a little Spitz mix, matted and hosting a variety of external parasites. I set my tools up on the open front porch and did the best I could with her. Soft spoken Miss Magnolia sat on an ancient rocking chair with a magazine for a fan and rocked in that Memphis heat, telling me stories of her family. Her husband was gone; her only daughter had been murdered. She'd done the best she could for her grandson, but he was running the streets and rarely came by. Her little dog was her sole companion. She wasn't complaining, just sharing.

The neighbors crowded up on their porch to watch. At first they were awfully suspicious of me, but before long, we were talking and laughing like old friends. The dog was suspicious in the beginning, too, but she soon realized I was helping her and submitted to the process graciously.

I went back about once a month for that summer and fall. One day, Miss Magnolia told me her dog wasn't acting right. One look at her lethargic form told me she needed to see a veterinarian, and I transported her to the closest one. She had advanced cancer and not long to live. I made arrangements and then brought her home so her owner would have a chance to say goodbye.

Before I left that afternoon. I asked if I could wash my hands. As always, the house was immaculate with fans humming in the windows to move the sweltering air around a bit. I reached for the dish soap on the counter, and Miss Magnolia exclaimed, "No! Wait!" She shuffled off to the back of the house and emerged with something small in her hands: something round and carefully wrapped in

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tissue paper. I watched as she carefully unveiled a bar of soap. "I save this for special," she told me. I'd just told her that her little dog was going to die, yet I was worthy of "special." Miss Magnolia joined her beloved pet not too much later. I think of her often. She gifted me with renewed gratitude for the abundance of simple things in my life like soap.

MJ Vaskorlis and Michelle Semken, co-owners of Pet Bath and Beyond (Camp Hill, PA) and their staff are wonderful examples of the giving spirit that resides in the hearts of so many pet groomers. "We felt from the moment we opened that we needed to give back to rescues and the community we live in. We want that when people hear the shop name, they don't



** There is an organization called Ani Meals, which delivers pet food and serves to counties here. It is 100% staffed by volunteers and donations. It all came about when a woman named Theresa Fazzolari realized that when she delivered Meals on Wheels to people, much of the food was being fed to pets."

just think it's a great grooming shop. We want them to know that our devotion goes beyond the care of their pet. The girls at our shop are always ready at a moment's notice to help when needed." They groom homeless pets taken in by Castaway Critters (Elizabethtown, PA) and have been involved in grooming pets taken in during puppy mill seizures.

They go above and beyond in other ways, too. "There is an organization

called Ani Meals, which delivers pet food and serves to counties here. It is 100% staffed by volunteers and donations. It all came about when a woman named Theresa Fazzolari realized that when she delivered Meals on Wheels to people, much of the food was being fed to pets." Fazzolari is a customer at Pet Bath and Beyond, and she mentioned to them that there was a need for grooming services to go to these homes.

"Our wonderful groomer, Maria Stafford, has gone out dozens of times to groom cats and dogs for elderly shut ins." Maria added, "It is a very rewarding feeling to be able to help those who cannot help themselves. A kiss on the cheek from one of those sweet babies is all I need to know that I am doing the right thing." One woman that Maria regularly helped out is blind and 100 years old. She once "paid" Maria



for her services with a container of opened ice cream.

Recently, a home in their area had a serious fire. The couple that resided there were cat breeders. The husband died in the blaze. Staff groomer LeeAnn Menut didn't hesitate. She volunteered to groom all of those cats. "I feel blessed to have been given the skills at the right time to help with the cats rescued from the fire to ease the discomfort for all of them. The reward for me is knowing that I am able to surround myself with kindhearted people. I knew as I watched those previously stressed out cats chasing the pom-poms on each other's tails that leaving the stress of middle management in health care was the best decision I ever made. Helping 35 rescued cats helped to heal me as I was helping them. They gave me as much as I gave them."

MJ and Michelle offer other assistance as necessary. "One of our customers had a much loved adopted dog that became ill. They took it to the University of Pennsylvania for a diagnosis, and it turned out that the dog had an inoperable lung tumor. The owners were terribly distressed. They wanted to bring the dog home and have it euthanized there, but they didn't know how to make the arrangements for that. We were on the phone back and forth for hours, but we managed to find a veterinarian willing to provide that service for them. We set it all up so they could take care of their pet and get home safely, not worrying about the details."

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☞ by Mary Oquendo ☞

have a riddle for you. What can go from minor to major in a blink of an eye? The answer is... eye injuries. It is why you should take a good look at a dog's eyes during the check-in process. Check for excessive blinking, squinting, discharge, blood, cloudiness, bulging eyes, rubbing, or redness, all of which could indicate a pre-existing condition that may be aggravated during grooming. Bring any concerns to the owner's attention beforehand.

Let's begin with a quick anatomy lesson. The eye is composed of three layers: the sclera, uvea, and retina.

The sclera is the outer layer. It

protects and maintains the shape of the eye. The sclera is often referred to as "the whites of the eye."

The cornea or uvea is the pigmented area of the eye. It has three components: the iris, ciliary body, and chorid. The cornea contains the blood vessels, which feed the eye and are responsible for light absorption.

The retina contains the rods and cones, and it triggers nerve impulses to the brain. The rods "see" in black and white and in lowlight. The cones "see" in color and need bright light. It is hypothesized that dogs and cats see mainly in black and white, because their retina is mainly made up of rods. The nerve impulses sent to the brain are what create the image. In addition, both dogs and cats have a tapetum. It is a membrane that reflects light at night. It's why we can see them when a light is flashed at them at night.

In addition, the eyes have eyelids, eyelashes, and the third eyelid. The eyelids contain the lacrimal gland, which produces tears. These tears keep the cornea moist. There is a drainage system that leads the tears to the nasal cavity. Eyelashes are found on the upper lids only. The third eye is also known as the haw or nictating membrane. The third eyelid is located under the lower eyelid near the nose. Its function is to keep debris out of the eye.

What are the issues affecting the eyes in a grooming environment?

PRODUCT IN THE EYE

This can lead to ulceration, burns, and abrasions. The irritation may cause the pet to scratch at their eyes, leading to infections, both fungal and bacterial. Pets with bulging eyes, such as Pug, Shih Tzu, and Pekingese, have more eye surface available for environmental debris. The best defense is to exercise caution with any products around faces. There are eye ointments available, but it produces a greasy discharge and you must be careful to avoid touching the eye with the applicator tip. If you get product in the eye, rinse with eyewash for ten minutes and notify the owner.

CONTACT INJURIES

The tip of ointment tubes, clipper blades and clip-ons, scissors, combs, brushes, and pets scratching at their eyes can cause it. If an object is embedded, do not remove. Cataracts can result from head trauma from a fall or a thrashing pet hitting their head against a grooming arm.

PROPTOSIS

Otherwise known as a popped out eyeball. Dogs with shallow eye sockets and large eye openings, such as Pugs and Shih Tzus, are prone. In addition, it is not difficult for this to occur in these breeds. In such cases, I use no restraint, have the owners sign a waiver, and will stop the groom if they struggle. Should the eye pop out, cover it with a cool damp cloth and call



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the veterinarian to inform them you are on the way. There is a very short window to save this eye.

What pre-existing eye conditions impact grooming?

ENTROPION

The eyelashes fold in rather than out, causing the lashes to rub against the cornea. In itself, entropion can cause scar tissue, infections, and blindness. This pet eyes are more sensitive if there is product contact.

CHERRY EYE

The third eyelid slips out of place and swells. The risk is a contact injury by grooming equipment used around the face. Breeds pre-disposed are Beagles, Bloodhounds, Boston Terriers, Bulldogs, Bull Terriers, Lhasa Apsos, Saint Bernards, and Shar Peis.

GLAUCOMA

Increased pressure within the eye caused it to swell. It will appear swollen and bloodshot. This is painful, and this pet may pose a bite risk.

DRY EYE

This pet does not have normal eye lubrication. Any product in the eye will cause more damage. There is usually a gooey, yellowish discharge associated with this. Some of the causes include head injury, antibiotics, and immunological disorders.

HARDENED DISCHARGE

Many times we are uncertain as to the degree of injury underneath. I have seen everything from minor irritation to open wounds.

CONJUNCTIVITIS OR PINK EYE

It is an inflammation or infection

in the outer part of the eye. The eye will appear puffy and red along with discharge. Allergies, systemic diseases, or foreign bodies cause pink eye. Certain strains are zoonotic. It can pass between other pets as well as yourself.

As groomers, we are limited in our ability to treat eye injuries, as we can often cause more damage. To minimize our liability, ensure that the owners are present during the intake. Take note of any eye concerns that need to be addressed by a veterinarian before grooming, and note any necessary precautions for chronic conditions. As minutes matter, our time is better spent in contact with a veterinarian for specific instructions and to give them time to prepare for our arrival. Since the potential exists for the loss of both vision and eye, leaving for the veterinarian in a timely manner can make that difference. >



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THE DAILY GOALS OF A PET GROOMER

o be successful in this business doesn't just depend on your knowledge of grooming or the equipment you use. It can also depend on some very basic goals that you accomplish every day. They are simple goals, such as making money, customer perspective, and safety. These three little goals pass through our minds, but we never really think about how much they impact us every day we work.

MAKE MONEY

We all know making money is one reason we get into this business in the first place, but how we make money is important. You make money several different ways, like by saving money. Trying to get the best deals on products you use, like soaps, conditioners,

☞ by Jeff Andrews ☞

and the products your shop runs on every day is essential. Care for your equipment and do some repair work yourself as opposed to paying someone else to fix things for you.

Compulsive spending is the biggest thing you have to watch. Do you really need that pair of shears everyone is talking about? If you can curb compulsive spending, you will see a huge increase in your net income.

Watch your utilities. Are you running dryers longer than needed? Air conditioning set too low? The little things add up at the end of the month.

CUSTOMER PERSPECTIVE

This is the most important of the three goals. It can actually make or break you in this business. Customer perspective contains three parts as well. Your customer has to have a good perspective of your work, your shop, and most importantly you! You can be the best groomer in the world and not be successful. Customer perspective of your work doesn't include how perfect the groom was, but does ask if you did what the customer wanted.

Sometimes you have to leave to the side your idea of how a groom should be and do exactly what the customer wants you to do. Making your customer happy is the ultimate goal, even if the groom isn't what you prefer. If it made your customer happy, they will be back.

Customer perspective of your shop is also important because they are leaving their "child" with you. Is your shop clean and uncluttered? Can a customer sense danger in your shop? Does your shop smell clean or can you smell the cages in the parking lot? A good shop can bring customers back just for that reason alone.

Finally, your customer's perspective of YOU! Do you treat the pets as if they were your own? Are you a pleasant-natured person, or do you easily let things get to you? Do you carry an attitude all day if something happened or something is bothering you? If a customer senses animosity in any form toward them or their pet, they may take it personally and never come back. A good example of displaying animosity in the shop is when a customer comes early to pick up their pet and their pet isn't done yet. It's very easy to make that person feel bad for coming early, and you may not even realize you're doing it. One time can change that customer's perspective of you forever. Try to be happy; it can be profitable for you.

SAFETY

When we think of safety, we think since no one got bit and no one got hurt, it's good. That's not all. We have to go further and think of other things like controlling unsafe acts and near misses. A grooming shop is a haven for near misses and unsafe acts, because it's the most aggressive form of hair care in the world. Our clientele just doesn't come in and sit down. Sometimes we have to wrangle with them just to get them into the tub and washed. If you really think about it, there are things you do every day that can actually injure you with no real fault of your own.

Near misses are accidents that almost happened but didn't, and most of these can be prevented from turning into a real accident that could injure you. A good one that comes to mind is when you're getting a wet dog out of the tub and your feet slip a little as you're trying to get to the drying area. You didn't slip and fall with the dog and hurt either of you, but the potential was there for some serious injury. To prevent the near miss situation, have the floor dry or put some sort of non-slip media on the floor to prevent slipping. Just think about the near misses you've had in your shop and what you can do to prevent them.

An unsafe act is something you



do that you know you shouldn't, but you still do it anyway for some reason. We have all done stupid things that we shouldn't have done and got away with it, but remember this: Mr. Murphy (Murphy's Law) walks back and forth in front of our grooming shop every day. We don't want him knocking on the door. Please, don't be unsafe by cutting corners, not following directions, etc. It's not worth it in the long run. You are in control of 90% of what happens in your shop. Use that control to be safe, and you and your clients go home every night uninjured. ≫

Jeff Andrews is a world class sharpener and owner of Northern Tails Sharpening, Inc. He is an author and pioneer of many equipment maintenance videos and how-to articles that are appreciated by groomers worldwide at no cost. Jeff is a member of NDGAA, IPG, and NAPCG, and still grooms at his shop in Mobile, AL. 251-232-5353 http://www.northerntails.com



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s professional groomers and certified (or certifiable!) dog lovers, we are all aware of the beauty, adaptability, and smarts of the Golden Retriever. We've seen them in action as service dogs for the physically disabled, guide dogs for the blind, comfort dogs for the traumatized in times of national disasters, therapy dogs for the sick, and reading dogs for children with learning difficulties. These living rays of sunshine are proving themselves once again in a new arena: psychiatric service dogs for veterans who suffer from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and/or traumatic brain injury.

PTSD, once called shell shock or battle fatigue, is a serious condition that can develop after a person has experienced or witnessed a traumatic ☞ by Kathy Salzberg ≈

or terrifying event in which physical harm or witnessing the death of others has occurred. It is a lasting consequence of such ordeals, causing intense fear, helplessness, or horror, often occurring in veterans after they have returned home from war. Most people who experience a traumatic event will have reactions that may include shock, anger, nervousness, fear, and even guilt. For a person afflicted with PTSD, however, these feelings continue and even increase, becoming so strong that they prevent the person from living a normal life, often causing them to no longer want to live at all.

Patriot Rovers founder David R. Cantara created an organization to help war veterans afflicted with this disorder and other brain injuries. A North Carolina-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit, it provides canine therapy using rescued and trained Golden Retrievers, each dog named after a soldier who has died in combat, providing healing to those that have returned from war and a living memorial to the heroes who have given their lives in service to our country. The program is free for veterans.

An Army vet himself, David's own dogs always helped him cope with losses in his life, helping to steer him to a career as a Canine Behavioral Expert and Master Dog Trainer. Growing up, he lost a teenage cousin with severe medical problems to suicide, and his father, a military man who had worked for the Department of Defense, died of cancer shortly after he retired. David and his wife Pam also lost their firstborn daughter in infancy. Their surviving child, Maggie, was gravely ill with necrotizing enterocolitis as a baby and was given a less than 10% chance to live. Miraculously, she survived six major surgeries and is now a healthy 13-year-old. He credits the unconditional love and support provided by his dogs as immensely important in helping him deal with these events.

Along the way, he founded Carolina Air Canine LLC, a grooming, boarding, daycare, and training facility in High Point, NC. It also includes the Bark & Fly Ranch, a dog sports park where pets and their owners enjoy activities such as flyball, Frisbee and agility training. Before he and wife, a professional groomer, built their facility, David and his dogs earned six state and regional Canine Disc championships, appearing at sporting events and halftime shows all over the country. He also did Canada Geese control in open spaces and in-home obedience training.

After attending some 200 funerals of fallen soldiers as a member and Ride Captain of the Patriot Guards, an organization that attends the funerals of veterans to shield grieving families from protestors, David became aware that a vast number of these veterans had taken their own lives after returning home. Statistics indicate that 22 soldiers commit suicide every day because of their invisible wounds. That's one every 65 minutes.

"It is distressing to be at the gravesides with families when they are suffering the loss of a child in a combat fatality," he says, "but it's twice as disturbing when these kids made it back and are suffering from PTSD issues, ultimately dying of overdoses, self-inflicted gunshot wounds, or by other means. This was not acceptable to me."

Combining his compassion for his fellow veterans, his love for dogs, and knowledge of canine behavior and training, he used most of his savings and maxed out his credit cards to create Patriot Rovers, a non-profit organization that helps heal vets, saves unwanted dogs, and brings comfort to families of the fallen by having a service dog named after their loved one who made the ultimate sacrifice. "We are basically providing a living memorial for their son or daughter so their stories can be told and their memories kept alive," said David. "It is a healing mission for the dogs and the soldiers but also for the fallen soldiers' families."

The dogs, mostly Goldens but some Golden/Lab mixes, are obtained

from shelters that notify David when they are brought in and from pet owners who have unwanted litters or are coping with circumstances where they must surrender the pups. "One breeder had 13 puppies," he told me. "The mother dog had a tear in her uterus and died." The ratio between adult dogs and puppies is about 60:40.

Adult dogs from the shelters arrive in varying degrees of condition. That's where Pam comes in, grooming the dogs and helping to restore their Golden good looks. She and David often need to nurse them back to health, as well. I recently met one, a handsome Golden named "Nick" (named for Corporal Nicholas G. Xiarhos, USMC, of Yarmouth, MA, who died in Afghanistan on July 23, 2009). His father, Deputy Chief Steven G. Xiarhos of the Yarmouth Police Department, organizes "Big Nick's Ride for the

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⁶⁶ Golden Retrievers are David's breed of choice for this work because of their calm nature, trainability, and physical strength ... In addition, these dogs have been proven to be highly susceptible to the bio waves or vibrations that emanate from a person, picking up on anxiety buildup and thus forewarning a panic attack."

Fallen" every year to raise money for veterans' causes and honor his son's memory, this year bringing out 1,000 motorcyclists and including a trolley car for the 13 Gold Star families here on Cape Cod. David was on hand with his family to speak about Patriot Rovers, bringing "Nick" along to meet his new partner, Curtis Frye, a Falmouth resident who will soon become the third Cape Cod veteran with a Patriot Rover dog by his side to help him heal.

"When we got Nick, he was emaciated," David said. "He was being fed about once a week, and he couldn't handle more than a handful of food at a time. He had Giardia and heartworm. It took us six months to get him healthy."

All dogs begin with general training including certification as either AKC Star Puppy or AKC Canine Good Citizenship (CGC). At the on-site training school, dubbed "Rover Academy," the professional staff has over 35 years experience in canine behavioral training. They teach prospective Rovers to do a variety of obedience and service dog tasks. During the final week, their new owners are brought in to complete their joint training together. (David foots the bill for their stay at nearby hotels.) In this phase, the soldiers bond with their service dogs and learn



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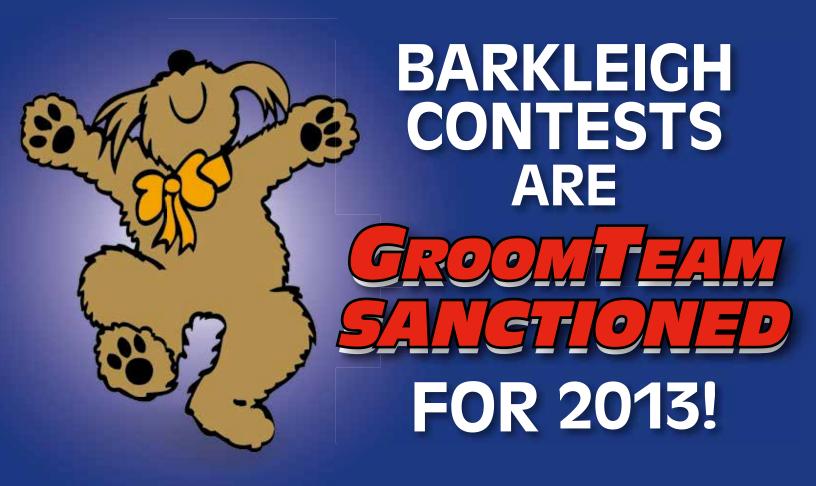
about dog care and animal behavior. Classes are held on-site in the hotel meeting rooms and in public settings such as stores and restaurants.

Training these teams consists of classroom, hands-on application, and homework. The soldiers must complete the course and keep up with their assignments to earn their certificate and receive their dog. Training of the dogs is first performed on a basic level and then moves toward customized training focused on socialization and performance of specific tasks, depending upon each soldier's individual needs. This is vital in order to make sure the dog is fit and ready to perform all requirements of a service dog under the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Tasks include tactile stimulation, alerting, interrupting, stabilizing, calming, waking, initiating activity, interpersonal interaction, and the creation of personal space by forming a living barrier between their owner and people who approach too closely. The dogs provide a constant reassuring presence, unconditional love, and companionship while occupying the mind of the soldier, helping their human



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partner to focus on something other than depression or reliving traumatic events experienced during deployment. In their role, the dogs address the issue of suicide prevention and reintegration into daily functioning for the vet. Nearly 400 hours is invested in each dog and soldier. To date, they have graduated 55 such service dogs. It costs about \$10,000 to train each four-footed hero. David and his wife find homes as pets for those dogs that do not make the grade as service dogs. Vets who want one of these dogs can fill out an application on his website, www.patriotrovers.org.

On graduation day, a Gold Star parent vests the dog with its Service Dog vest. Families and veterans come together to celebrate this living memorial that will carry out their hero's mission of helping a fellow soldier, and the ceremony is recorded on a CD for their use. Lifetime support, opportunities for further training, quarterly camaraderiebuilding get-togethers for vets and their dogs, and volunteer service are also integral components of the program.

Golden Retrievers are David's breed of choice for this work because

of their calm nature, trainability, and physical strength. (He used to own one named "Daisy Dukes.") In addition, these dogs have been proven to be highly susceptible to the bio waves or vibrations that emanate from a person, picking up on anxiety buildup and thus forewarning a panic attack. In such circumstances, they will place their paws on the soldier's chest and help him or her to slow down their breathing and redirect their focus. (Both are taught this in their training.) As these dogs support their owners, they do everything from alleviating anxiety with a gentle nudge to interrupting nightmares, turning on lights, and searching the house for intruders. On its vest, each dog wears a sign that says "ask to pet me," providing a way for withdrawn veterans to interact with people.

Once placed with their owner, each dog receives a year's supply of dog food and Trifexis, a once-monthly tablet that kills fleas, prevents heartworm disease, and controls adult hookworm, roundworm, and whipworm infections. All their vaccinations are up to date when they leave, but when they need



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renewing, David covers that bill as well.

On Cape Cod where I live, Patriot Rovers has some avid supporters. Cyndy and Ken Jones of Mashpee lost their son and only child, helicopter pilot Marine Captain Eric A. Jones, in Afghanistan in 2009 and founded Heroes in Transition (www.heroesintransition.org) to assuage their grief and complete Eric's mission to serve his fellow troops. Their non-profit organization provides home modifications for disabled veterans, support for military families of the deployed, transportation to take vets to medical appointments, and PTSD support group therapy. They lend financial support to Patriot Rovers, as well, hosting annual galas on Cape Cod and in New York City to raise money for their work. They sponsored a service dog named for their son's radio call name, Jethro, who was placed with U.S. Army vet Christopher Cahill of Bourne, and another dog named Tracy is with Marine Lance Corporal Adam Babiarz of Sandwich. "Nick," their third sponsored dog, is now completing his training, named for Steve Xiarhos' son Marine Cpl. Nicholas G. Xiarhos. This dog will soon graduate with his new owner, Falmouth resident and Army veteran Curtis Frye.

"To take a puppy, save its life, train it, love it, and teach it to help keep alive a vet who made it home in the name of one who did not make it – it's full circle," said Steve Xiarhos.

"We are very happy to be working with David," added Cyndy Jones. "His heart is in the right place." I suspect it might be made of gold like those fourfooted angels he shares with those who have given so much for the rest of us.

Note: Patriot Rovers is supported entirely by donations with 91% of its revenue going directly back into the program and only 9% going toward administrative and development costs. To find out how you can help, go to *http://patriotrovers.org/donate.* \approx

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he Havanese is the native dog of Cuba. Once known as the Havana Silk Dog or Spanish Silk Poodle, he has rapidly gained popularity in the AKC show ring since his Toy Group recognition. This sturdy little dog has an amicable temperament and sports a wavy, long, and non-shedding coat that comes in a variety of colors. With these endearing qualities, the Havanese is fast becoming a popular Bread & Butter client.

Breed standard dictates that for the AKC show ring, they are shown natural with only minimal trimming of the sanitary and the feet. For the B&B client, however, a shorter more manageable trim is usually requested.

The double coat requires thorough coat preparation with a quality pet shampoo and conditioner, followed by fluff drying. Customary prep work, such as ear cleaning, nail clipping, sanitary and pad trimming, should also be completed.

Fig. 1 Lift the beard coat and ears, and then trim, beginning just under the jaw with a "0" snap-on comb. Clip down the sides of the neck and chest and between the front legs.

Fig. 2 Lift the dog (providing he has a sound back) and trim the under-carriage.

Fig. 3 Stand to the rear of the dog

and continue clipping from about two inches behind the occipital bone (rear part of skull) toward the tail and down the flank and loin, following the coat growth direction.

Clip over the rump, down the rear part of the back leg to just above the hock.

Fig. 4 While supporting the hips, gently lift the rear slightly and clip the undercarriage, trimming against the coat growth direction.

Fig. 5 Change the snap-on comb to a longer length (in this case, a "C"). Trim the legs following the coat growth direction.

Grasping the topline coat between



your index and middle fingers, tidy to form a straight topline that rises slightly from the withers to the croup.

Fig. 6 Blend the coat at the croup and hips.

Round the rear feet by first trimming the sides of the foot and then across the front.

Fig. 7 If the dog is dancing, gently lift the rear leg while supporting his thigh, and trim with his leg elevated.

Use curved shears to bevel the back part of the rear foot.

Fig. 8 Shape the inner part of the rear legs with blenders or thinning shears so they appear parallel.

Tidy the stray hairs and smooth out the rear leg. Tidy the coat to form a slight bend in the stifle (knee).

Fig. 9 For tuck-up placement, lift the rear leg, bending at the knee naturally. The spot where the knee is positioned at the loin is where to place the tuck-up.

Fig. 10 With your curved shears inverted, trim the tuck-up. At a little more than mid-point, turn your shears so they curve the opposite way, and trim forward all the way between the front legs, curving upward as you reach the forechest.









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Round the front feet, and then shape the legs to form parallel columns.

Fig. 11 Use blenders to shape the shoulder angulation so there is angulation from the upper arm onto the shoulder. This will help create the visual of the dog's front assembly being placed well under him. Without this angulation, it will look as though his legs are sprouting from his neck instead of his shoulders.

Use thinning shears to trim the eye corners.

Fig. 12 With a #10 blade, trim the hair on the front of the lips.

Fig. 13 With curved shears held at a 45-degree angle, trim the bangs. Then use your thinning shears or blenders to blend back to the outside corner of the eyes. You should be able to see the eyes when viewed from the side.

Fig. 14 Lift the top knot coat up between your index and middle fingers, and then trim with blenders or thinning







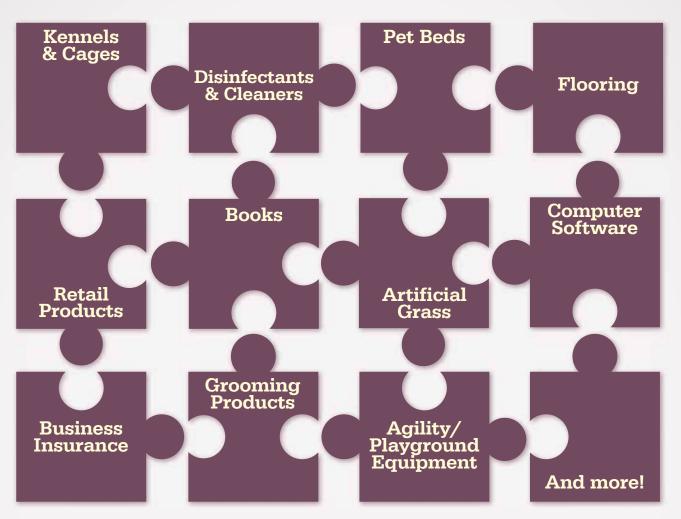






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shears. Soften his expression with thinning shears, blending the lines.

Fig. 15 With blenders or thinning shears, trim the beard and ears to one length.

Finish your groom with a light spritzing of finishing spray, and then blend all of your lines and erase any scissor marks with your blenders.

The double coat of the Havanese will mat easily and requires diligent maintenance, even when trimmed shorter. Less coat will, however, keep him looking smart longer and provide you with yet another Bread & Butter client! >

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he 2013 Pet Boarding & Daycare Expo will return to the Sheraton Baltimore North from November 11 to 14, and it will be bigger and better than the 2012 inaugural show. Attendees can expect more events, larger seminar rooms, and a bigger trade show. Seminars will reflect a wide variety of topics, and events will offer plenty of opportunities for discussion and networking.

This year's expo will kick off on Monday evening with a keynote address by Eileen Proctor. At age 44, Eileen abandoned a 25-year career in corporate marketing to pursue her passion of quality dog care. All are invited to join Eileen as she tells the inspiring and motivating story about her journey from boardrooms to biscuits.

Seminars will begin Tuesday morning and will address a variety of topics, including animal behavior, animal health, daycare, business, and facility design. "Last year's seminar attendance far exceeded our expectations. Classes sold out and rooms were beyond full, because the space we had simply was not large enough," explains editor Cindy Agoncillo. Though the show is returning to the same venue this year, seminar classrooms will be much larger, allowing all who are interested in education to attend the classes of their choosing. It also affords the freedom to register for seminars at the door.

In response to additional feedback, some of the seminars will be offered multiple times throughout the three days of education. There will be multiple opportunities to attend "Reading Canine Body Language" with Dr. Valarie Tynes, "Can't Miss Customer Acquisition and Retention Strategies" with Eileen Proctor, and "Dog Bites and Dog Fights in an Off-Leash Play Setting" with Robin Bennett. On Tuesday afternoon, Robin will join Susan Briggs for a four-hour session on temperament testing. They will also offer a one-hour condensed version of this class on Thursday afternoon.

Dr. Valarie Tynes, a board-certified veterinary behaviorist, will present several sessions on animal health and behavior, including a four-hour seminar on understanding exotic pets like rabbits, birds, and ferrets. Throughout the expo, she will also address feline body language, how animals learn, and how to read veterinary records. Animal health topics also include seminars with Chris Quinlan, who will explain how to prevent infectious diseases and will emphasize the importance of proper cleaning procedures and hand hygiene to keep both clients and staff healthy.

The trade show hall will also increase in size, which will allow for

more space and additional vendors. At the *Pet Boarding & Daycare Expo*, the trade show is an excellent opportunity to learn about new products for your facility and purchase old favorites at special show prices. Vendors offer a variety of products from kennels, cages, and dog beds to sanitation systems, artificial turf, and facility design services. The trade show will be open on Wednesday and Thursday and will feature over 30 different vendors.

In addition to the seminars and trade show, attendees will have the opportunity to network with fellow pet boarding professionals at the meet and greet luncheons. On Wednesday and Thursday afternoon, the hotel restaurant will be reserved exclusively for attendees of the Pet Boarding & Daycare *Expo*. Luncheon ticket holders can enjoy a delicious meal while discussing the industry with those who are just as passionate about caring for pets. Share stories, "talk shop," or use the provided discussion questions to guide your conversation during this time of camaraderie with like-minded pet care professionals.

Mark your calendars for November 11–14, 2013, and join us in Baltimore for the *Pet Boarding & Daycare Expo*. Registration and more information is available at **pbdexpo.com**. ><

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cost of veterinarian expenses to treat animals reimburse expenses to clean and disinfect your facilities the cost to restore your operations and reputation due to "Canine Cough" related instances. For additional information, request Reader Service card #10520.

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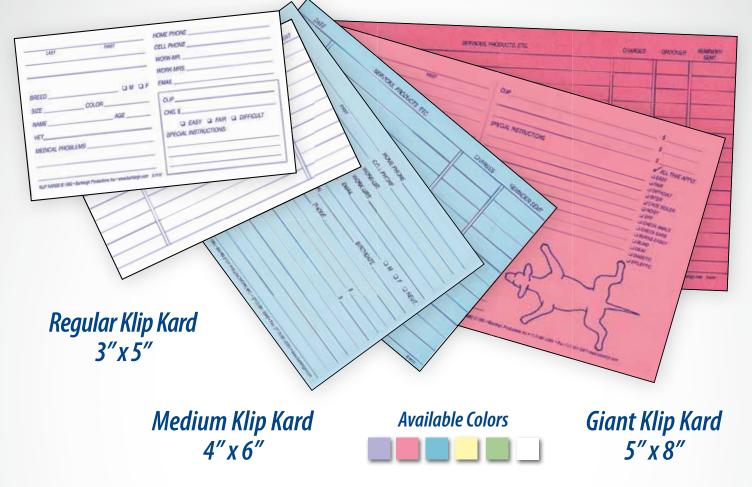


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Q: When you are asked to give a price quote over the phone, what are the factors that you consider to determine the price of the grooming?

66 How you handle the call is more important than the final dollar number you quote. If you just spit out a number they will say Thank-you and hang up the phone. You want to communicate the value the customer is receiving for the dollar value you are quoting. Once you give the price you want to book the appointment. There are people who want the lowest price in the phone book, but the customers you want are the ones who see the value in what you have to offer." — Derek Ripley

Callers who are just getting price quotes from every groomer in a 25 mile radius are sometimes told (nicely) to keep in mind that price is no indication of the quality of the work they will receive. I try to never give a guesstimate without first telling them what the guesstimate includes. Blame it on antihistamines or something but I did just that yesterday. Oops. No to the dollar quotes on the phone. The question I ask about temperament works every time. "And how is your dog for the vet when you go for his regular checkup?"

— Diamond Springs Pet Spa

That is the most popular phone question ever. I give a breed price quote and mention \$5.00 off their pet's first groom and no taxes charged. Usually if they question the price they dismiss it w/the \$5.00 discount." — Belle Wead

G Always quote for the coat being in good to average condition and dependant on what they want

done. Have also learnt to ask owners of Goldens if the dog is overweight. Being mobile, trying to get an obese Golden out of a bath when it's lying down in the water is not fun. Oh, and add \$10 if they talk to the dog like it's a child/human."

— Brendan Gay

66 Hmmmm. If the person has a snotty attitude on the phone their price goes up!"

— Kristina Middelstetter

Ljust explain that l charge an hourly rate and the final price will depend on the dog's condition and temperament and what sort of clip they are requesting, as these all are factors that can effect how long a groom takes. I then ask what breed they have and give a broad ball park estimate."

— Meghan Kaminski



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