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IN THIS ISSUE

Bonnie Wonders: Time for a Change	6
First Aid for Hyperthermia/Heat Stroke	14
Creative Attachments	20
Behavior Clips	22
PetQuest 2012	26
Customer Service for the Jet Set and the Pet Set	28
Deborah Ryan: 'Down Under' Groomer on Top of the World	34
Groom & Kennel Expo 2012 Recap and Results	40
Complementary and Alternative Medical Treatments	44
Taking Care of Ourselves	52
Easy Money: What is Infecting Your Business?	55
Bread & Butter Grooming: Shih Tzu Puppy Cut	58
New Product News	60
Classifieds	61
Calendar of Events	62

ON THE COVER



Deborah Ryan, Groom & Kennel Expo 2012 GroomOlympics World Champion with Mary Meeks of Nature's Specialties.

Designed by Lucas Colton
Photos by Animal Photography

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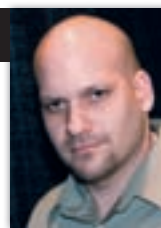
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Off the Top of My Head by Todd Shelly



The Iceberg

Putting on a show requires a lot more effort than people realize. Things can quickly become overwhelming. Just ask the producers of the Broadway version of Spider-Man. They had to stop production a few times, because they had people falling from the rafters. A show that teaches groomers how to do a better top-knot might not be as glamorous as the musical version of a crime fighter swinging from buildings on webs, but to us it is just as important to give our audience as close to a perfect show as possible.

I sometimes use the analogy of an iceberg. The attendees only see the 10% that is above water. The 90% that people don't see is all of the preparation and craziness that goes with putting a show together. I don't mind if there are breakdowns with the part of the iceberg that is below water as long as the section above water looks amazing.

To do that, a show promoter has to be able to delegate responsibilities to other people. For me, one of those people is Chanel Owens. She is responsible for getting dogs for our speakers. She also often gets dogs for many of the competitors.

I met Chanel several years ago when she was getting dogs for a few speakers. I figured if she can do it for them, she can probably do it for us. We started using her the very next year. The size and frequency of the shows that Chanel did grew incrementally. She was able to learn as more responsibility was added each year.

Chanel timed her first baby perfectly to work around the shows she needed to attend versus the shows she could work from home. I assume that was done on purpose. The second baby was not so well timed. That child made it impossible to attend the Pasadena show.

Chanel was kind enough to arrange for all of the dogs. She just needed someone at the show to handle things on that end. That person was Kelly Lewis. Kelly is a groomer from North Carolina that has worked for us at several shows. She is smart, motivated, and high energy. I figured she was the perfect person to handle the chaos involved with providing dogs.

I was wrong. I failed to realize that she doesn't handle stress all that well — and there was a lot of that. It is very difficult to have one person make all the arrangements before the show (Chanel), then have another person (Kelly) handle everything once the dog arrives (if it arrives).

Dogs are arriving at all times of the day and in all types of conditions. Some need to be bathed or prepped before the seminar. Some look like they need care but don't because that is part of the presentation. Occasionally, a dog arrives immaculate, and then there are those that arrive immaculate but were supposed to arrive flawed.

Saturday morning of the show, it all came crashing down. Dogs that were supposed to arrive prepped did not. Kelly spent the morning (starting at 4 a.m.) trying to get all the dogs ready. At about 8 a.m., she called me. I answered to hear a long, high-pitched, screaming rant. When she finally calmed down enough to make sense, I asked her what she needed me to do. Apparently, she just needed someone to scream at. With the help of phone calls from Chanel, Kelly was able to pull off getting all the dogs to where they needed to be and in the condition they needed to be.

I let Kelly read this editorial to get her permission to publish it. I don't want to embarrass her, but I think the article does show one of the many areas that present challenges to putting together a quality grooming show. Plus, I like my iceberg theory.

Kelly, however, was not so enamored with the theory. She feels that it dismisses all the effort that is necessary to pulling off a good show. She told me she was fine with the editorial if I added one quote from her, so here is the quote I promised Kelly:

You can take that stupid iceberg and stick it up your **[ERROR: Maximum Characters Used]**

Todd Shelly
todd@barkleigh.com

Time for a *Change*



By Bonnie Wonders

I am going to admit something that I am ashamed of - VERY ashamed of. Only because of an incident involving a Newfoundland, which I told all of you about last month, did I finally break down and change my ways. I have been grooming dogs for 29 years and have been in denial the entire time. No one could tell me otherwise. I didn't need anyone's advice about it. I had been doing this job long enough to know what was best for me and my clients' dogs. I wasn't about to be throwing away hard earned money on something that I have always been able to live without, but I finally caved... I bought a

REAL grooming tub.

Let me go back a ways, however, to a time when I first started in the grooming profession. I knew there would be many pieces of equipment that I wanted, and I knew I could definitely cut corners in the budget by making my own bathing area.

I knew exactly how I would make the tub area. I needed an old claw foot bathtub. They are deeper than a regular bathtub, and I knew I would need that extra depth for doing those large dogs. The tops of these tubs are rounded and curled under. A frame would be made and the tub set into it at the perfect bathing height for myself. I would

have a four-by-eight-foot sheet of plywood that would be covered with formica-type material. This would give me plenty of room to set up gallons of shampoo, spray bottles, or whatever I needed to be within easy reach. The underside of the tub would be enclosed with doors, and I would have tons of storage space. Giant eyebolts would be screwed into the studs on the walls behind the tub, which would also be covered with formica for easy clean up. This would allow me to secure any size dog to the tub area. Ah, yes. And so it was created.

It did look nice. I did have tons of room to store stuff both under

Continued on page 8

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the tub and on top of the extra counter space. I was able to do any size dog in that tub. It was the perfect working height for me. No dog ever got loose from the mighty studded walls. However, I did go through 29 years of grief because of that tub on an almost daily basis.

Unless you've had a tub like this yourself, you wouldn't believe how easy it is for a dog that weighs anywhere between two and 200 pounds to climb up onto the edge of the tub. I mean, this tub had an approximate four-inch ledge running along the back edge of it. I have had more German Shepherds, Collies, Golden Retrievers - you name it - be able to get up there and perfectly balance all four feet on the edge of that tub. Couple this with the fact that they are dripping wet, and soon the water was running down the extra counter space, thus creating a rather large "lake" to my immediate right. You had to be quick to get

the dog back down into the tub and wipe up the water before it flooded the floor. I often wasn't quick enough.

When those dogs keep popping up like that, they naturally had to splash 30 gallons of water all over you. There was no point in doing your own hair for the day since you were sure to be drowned about 20 minutes into the job. Of course, add this water to that puddle on the floor.

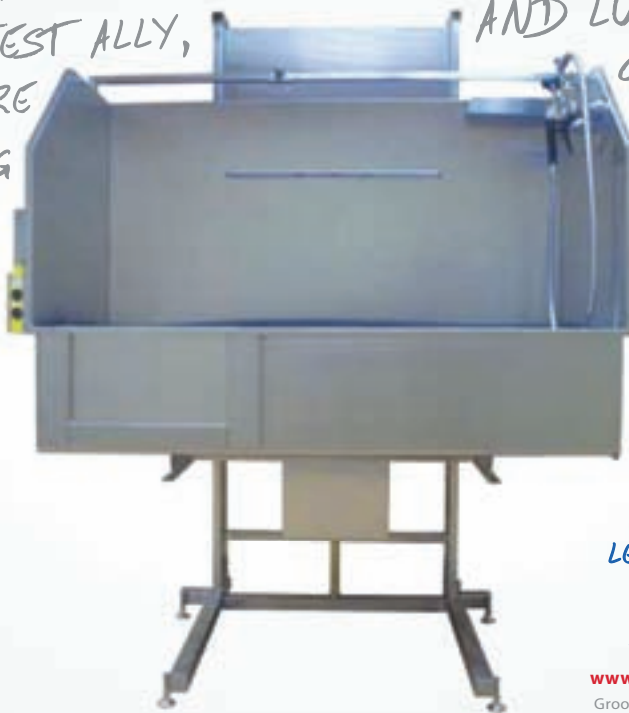
Then there was the ever present dog who seems to have the longest arms of any mongrel out there. Naturally, this one could reach over the right edge of the tub with amazing dexterity and speed that enabled

it to knock over five or six gallons of shampoo. Add to that several smaller bottles of shampoo, of which at least one had a cap that was not on right. Yes, it falls to the floor. Just add its contents to the water already on the floor, and now we're talking indoor skating rink.

Hoisting those big dogs up over the edge was no picnic either. We tried building a ramp once upon a time. That idea didn't go over very well at all with any of the larger dogs. The only ones who wanted to use it were the mini poodles who thought it was some sort of agility obstacle. They would fly up the thing if they got the chance and

Continued on page 10

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then run onto the counter space of the tub, running back and forth in a “catch me if you can” game.

More than once, I got on the snapping end of some of those that really didn’t want to be caught. The big dogs were just flat out refusals. I had two choices at the time. Either I make the ramp steep because the tub was so high or make a ramp that would have

been almost halfway across the grooming room. I chose steep. The

...the dogs were so terrified of their flight up to the tub’s height that they dropped onto their bellies on the table and clung to it for dear life.

dogs chose not to be into “spelunking” or “kerplunking” or whatever it’s called when you go to the top of a mountain and jump off. It was a steep drop into the tub from the top of that ramp. Believe me, when one of those 100+ pounders decides that it’s turning around and jumping to the floor via your face, you rapidly decide not to press the issue. Yeah, it happened more than once. I gave up the ramp idea.

Pushing a hydraulic table over to the tub and using it wasn’t much better. Although I did have a bit more success with this tactic, there were dozens of times that the dogs were so terrified of their flight up to the tub’s height that they dropped onto their bellies on the table and clung to it for dear life. You kind of had to push them into the tub from there, and it wasn’t pretty. Add to that the grooming post always seemed to be in the way, and you had a gap between tub and table edge that was just perfect for having a foot fall down through.

Then there were the faucets. Those infernal, horrible things of which only one style could be used. I can’t tell you how many handles snapped off after cranking down on them because you couldn’t keep their washers from needing constant replacement. Just try finding those types of handles. Every plumbing place within a 50-mile radius knows me.

It was, however, after doing a Newfoundland, which I had to re-wash one day with no help, that I decided it was time to get off the “cheap train” and buy a tub designed just for bathing dogs. I pored

Continued on page 12



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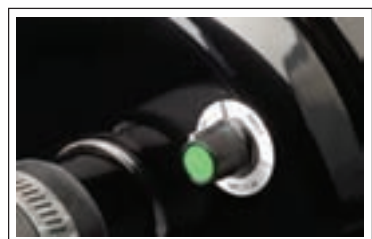
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over ads for all the brands, read countless reviews from other groomers, and searched the grooming bulletin boards for advice. I finally made my decision... Then I changed my mind. And changed it again.

After exactly eight decision reversals, my husband stepped in. He made the choice, and I was relieved. At least if I didn't like it, I would have someone else to blame for the next 20 years. I did let him know that, of course. That got me a pat on the head and a smile.

Several weeks later, the tub finally arrived. Due to a mix up, we had to go to the freight company to pick it up. Let me tell you now - don't ever, EVER go with my husband into a city when he doesn't know exactly where he's going. We left more than an hour early in case we couldn't find the place. Good thing, as we got lost thanks to his dysfunctional sense of direction. We were lost in a five-block radius, and

Two days, four men, and a giant pile of cinder blocks later, the old tub was out and the new one installed.

he kept going around and around those five blocks. He'd go down block number three and wind up on the outside of number five. Somewhere along there, he went down two and four and did the same thing. We got to the place two minutes before they were to close. They weren't too impressed by us, especially not with my husband who just had to hold them up even more by trying to shoot the bull with them after they loaded the thing into our truck.

Two days, four men, and a giant pile of cinder blocks later (don't ask), the old tub was out and the new one installed. I'd guess there was a bit of cursing going on during

those couple days.

It turns out I should have made him do this a long time ago. I LOVE the tub. I LOVE the ramp. Dogs actually walk right up it with very little coaxing for most of them. They aren't stepping into an abyss at the end of the plank. The dogs aren't standing in water that takes forever to go down. There are no more escapes to the outside edges. I don't have to wipe down walls after every dog. Hair is contained when dogs are dried in it. It was a very wise investment.

Call me sentimental, but I do kind of miss getting my smock caught on the edge of the metal rail going around the "old girl."

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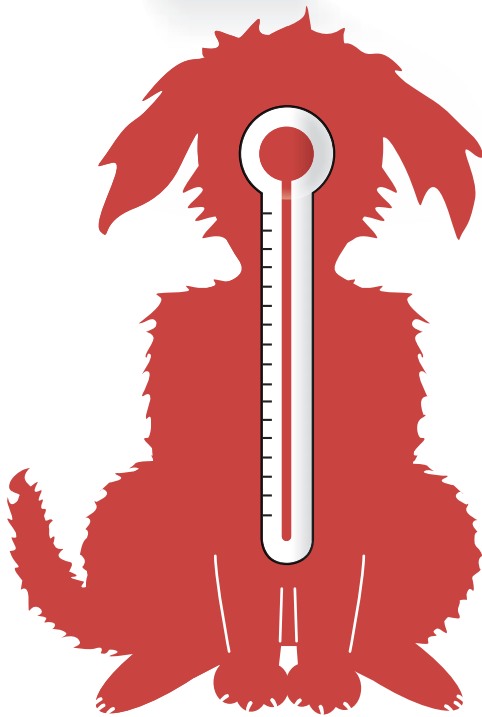
What All Groomers Need to Know!

By Donna Owens, ICMG

Hyperthermia is when the body has reached an above normal temperature, which can lead to stroke, coma, and death. With pets, this can occur for a variety of reasons. This article will focus on what happens when a pet overheats and the proper first aid steps you can take if this were to happen at your business/salon. I will also focus on the most common way this preventable accident occurs and how to prevent it from happening to you!

The normal range for a dog's temperature is 100° to 102° F; the same applies to cats. When the pet reaches a temperature of 104° F, the pet has overheated, and proper measures must be taken immediately to cool the animal's brain and body. When you recognize at the early stages that a pet is suffering from a heat-related illness, you can usually reverse it and have a positive outcome. Signs of heat exhaustion initially include excessive panting, rapid pulse,

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and weakness in the legs, so the animal will lie down due to the rise in body temperature. As the condition progresses and the pet's temperature exceeds 104° F, the pet is suffering from heat stroke, which is life threatening. Outward symptoms can include vicious drool and change to labored breathing, slow heart rate, wine-colored to bluish mucous membranes and tongue, fixed pupils, and no response to reflex stimuli.

The most important thing is to cool down the pet. The immediate

The most important thing is to cool down the pet. The immediate first aid is to get the temperature back to normal range and the dog/cat responsive and normal.

first aid is to get the temperature back to normal range and the dog/cat responsive and normal. If we were out on a hike with a dog, for example, on a warm summer day and this occurred, I would recommend wetting towels and wrapping it around the dog's head and body. If available, use a hose or other water source.

In the pet grooming situation, heat-related accidents/illness are primarily due to animals being left unattended in a cage dryer. That is why any animal being cage-dried should never be left unattended!

Unfortunately, if this does happen, remove the animal from the dryer immediately. If there is any type of collar or lead on the pet, that should also be removed.

Because we work in a salon, vet hospital, or kennel, we usually have a bathtub ready and available, so the fastest way to cool the pet down is to place it into the tub. Next, run cool water over the head and body of the animal, being careful not to get it down its nose and throat. It is important to note that cooling off an animal too quickly can be extremely

Continued on page 16

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dangerous, so we want to use only cool water! Never use ice cold water. While cooling the animal with the hose, I recommend laying cool, damp towels over the pet's head and body, and as the water is running, let the water pool in the bottom of the tub. This will cool the dog or cat through the pads and belly. A cooling fan will also help in the cooling process.

Remain cooling the pet in the bathtub until the pet can stand on its own, the pulse and respiration return to normal, and the pet responds normally. Transport to the veterinarian for further evaluation and treatment. A pet that has suffered from heat stroke can suffer from various other secondary health conditions that can be very serious and life threatening. In addition, if this were to happen just like any accident, it should be recorded or noted on the client card. Generally from that point forward, the pet will usually be hyper-sensitive to heat

and should only be hand dried.

This kind of accident is completely preventable. Unfortunately due to the improper use of "heat element" dryers and poor monitoring practices, this type of accident still happens. I'm not saying that it's specifically "heat element cage dryers." It doesn't have to be a "cage dryer." It's any dryer that heats up, be it by design as "heat dryers" or through the dryer motor heating. In other words, it could be a force dryer attached to the door of the

cage, it can be a stand dryer blowing into a cage, etc. I've heard of some salons advertising that they don't use manufactured, "heat-element cage dryers" but instead will use a stand or what I use as my "fluff/stretch" dryer, blowing into a cage to dry a pet, which, if left un-monitored, is just as negligent and dangerous! And although many cage drying systems have wonderful safety features, such as timers, etc., the most important thing in

Continued on page 18

Overweight and flat-faced breeds of dogs and cats will overheat much more quickly and at lower temperatures than other pets. Shar Peis, for example, will overheat inside the body before the odd coat would ever get completely dry on the outside.

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the drying of any pet is to monitor frequently the health of the pet even with those built-in safety features. Again, you're monitoring the pet's safety and health, not whether the coat is wet or dry!

There are a variety of things we need to consider, such as the breed, age, weight, and health of the pet, to prevent misusing the dryers. Overweight and flat-faced breeds of dogs and cats will overheat much more quickly and at lower temperatures than other pets. Shar Peis, for example, will overheat inside the body before the odd coat would ever get completely dry on the outside. Elderly pets with health conditions and young puppies can overheat quickly, as well. An over-stressed animal can overheat at a quicker rate.

In salons, doggie daycares, and kennels that have poor ventilation

or lack of air-conditioning during the hot summer months, the pets, as well as the humans, can overheat. All of us need to have an emergency plan of action for how we will cool the pets if there are high summer temperatures and the air-conditioning breaks. All the important health conditions and age factors need to be considered when play time, exercise, group play, and training activities occur for those pets that are in doggie daycare and boarding facilities. Animals can overheat through these types of physical activities, especially if they have the previously mentioned pre-existing conditions.

Please do not leave pets unattended, and have an excellent monitoring system when drying pets. Remember that overheating can be caused not just by misusing dry-

ers but also by excessive physical activity. You should always consider age, breed, weight, and health of the animal. Have a successful action plan for how you would cool the pets should the air-conditioner break down. Lastly, know the early warning signs of hyperthermia and the first aid necessary for the best outcome!

Donna Owens has been a professional groomer for over 30 years. She is also a Red Cross Pet First Aid and CPR Certified Instructor and a Certified Animal Hygienist. Donna was a 1993 USA GroomTeam member and gold medalist. Donna remains active in the pet industry as a respected industry speaker and consultant, salon design consultant, grooming demonstrator and contest judge. Donna has an Associate Science Degree and a California Teaching Credential from USD. She is an I.P.G. Master Groomer and I.P.G. Certifying Judge.

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Creative Attachments

By Dawn Omboy

There are many groomers that are new not only to the industry but also new to Creative Styling. There is a basic question that I have seen asked many times over the past few months: How do I attach things to my creative dog safely?

Things like gem stones, eyeballs and small props. First you have to remember to only use safe water soluble glues such as *Elmer's* washable school glue, that I find great for doing glitter stenciling work, or *Aleene's Tacky Glue* that is great for gluing items directly onto the short coat or even the skin. It is advisable to put a dab of glue on the item to be glued onto the dog and give it a minute to become tacky before placing on your dog.

The Original Tacky Glue is considered the ultimate in glues because it is incredibly versatile, dries clear and flexible so it will move with your dog. Both are easy to clean up with soap and water as they both are water soluble. You would never want to use super glue or anything of that sort, as it can

and will do damage to your dog's skin and coat. We would not want to risk injury for the sake of a bauble.

Another great way to attach small props and such to the coat of the dog is with small latex bands. My *Jester* entry from *Groom Expo 99* (pictured above) had large, heavy bells on each of the points on her colored collar and very small light ones on the points of her hat (which was all her own hair). I did this by pulling the band through the loop on the end of the bells and pulling it back through itself so that they could be attached to the coat (much in the same way you would put a bow on your client's dogs). Attachments properly banded in will stay until you remove them.

For larger props, hot glue your bands to your props, do more than

one so you have stability and not a lot of weight concentrated in one place. Make sure to practice with your dog so you are both comfortable with it. I'm sure there must be other methods, but these are the ones I know of that are tried and true and safe.

Dawn Omboy Queen of Color is a multiple Creative Champion, industry speaker and judge.

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Curcumin is the root of the turmeric plant, and is in our SunDancer dog food, Curcumin has a 4,000 year old history in India for helping a wide variety of health problems. Dr. Oz on TV frequently talks about curcumin. Edgar Cayce, the sleeping prophet, said the two greatest gifts from God to Man are curcumin and olive oil.

The Jan. 2003 issue of Cancer Research declared that curcumin has the ability to “suppress proliferation of cancer cells.” The October 2010 issue of “Nutrition and Cancer” indicated that curcumin makes chemo more effective.

Recently, a breeder of Dalmatians talked with our sales person about using our SunDancer dog food. He had been feeding a cheap, crappy dog food. He decided to continue to feed the inferior food and buy curcumin/turmeric in a health food store and add it to the dog’s food. BIG MISTAKE!

About a month later he called our store. He asked, “Have you ever seen a yellow Dalmatian?” He had one.

He had overdosed on the curcumin. First of all, curcumin has to be cooked at a low temperature and must be mixed with oils to release the active properties.

He rushed the dog to the vets. He never told the vet what he had done. So after extensive and expensive test, on the liver and kidneys, costing over \$350, he called us.

We put the dog on our non-curcumin Holistique Blendz dry dog food. Holistic does not mean natural or organic. It means that the whole body works together-mind, body and spirit. See the previous information on problems with white, near white or light colored dogs. White dogs absorb more ultra violet light (photo-aging) which may depress the immune system. Holistique Blendz is only 18% protein from fish, to spare stress on the organs. It is particularly effective on dogs with tear stains. Most of the tear stains are on white or light color dogs. So dropping the protein to 18% helps.

Sissy has an 18 year old Dane mix. She was all gray on the muzzle. After six months on the SunDancer, the black came back.

Now for our cute story – “A Wrinkle in Time”

It was during WWII, Sissy, the owner of Solid Gold, lived in N.J. Her father worked for the army getting hard to find products. One summer, he was transferred to New Mexico. Sissy and her mother went there for the summer to be with him.

In the cool of the evenings, the kids would go to a local stable to play with the horses. The kids loved to groom the horses. Sissy’s favorite was Fury, owned by Mr. O.

Mr. O. told Sissy that if she would give Fury a daily brushing, he would teach her how to ride. So the entire summer was a delightful experience. Eventually, the summer came to an end, and Sissy returned back home.

It was several years later, after the war was over, that Sissy was reading the paper. She saw a familiar photograph. She asked her mother why Mr. O’s picture was in the paper.

Her mother smiled, it was a picture of Dr. Robert Oppenheimer, the Father of the Atomic Bomb in Los Alamos, New Mexico. Just a Wrinkle in Time



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OBEDIENCE AND SURVIVAL



Millions of happy, well-adjusted adult dogs can't sit on command if their lives depended on it – and it does. Nor can they lie down or stay. By contrast, millions of American pups can't refrain from soiling the carpet, inadvertently puncturing human skin, jumping on guests, darting out the door, and chewing up shoes – and their lives end because of it. The overwhelming statistics show that the former group will live despite their lack of formal repertoires, and the latter group stands an 80% chance of never making it to their first birthday even if they can sit, down, stay, and come with 100% accuracy. Who'da thought?

Major pet store chains, community-sponsored classes, and freelance trainers provide training for millions of puppies every year. Despite this effort, the majority of America's pups never see their first

birthday. Long before they mature, they are taken to shelters, given away, or abandoned. Many of these lost pups know how to sit, lie down, and walk on a leash. Their puppy training was effective but ultimately useless. No one ever takes a pup to the shelter because it can't do simple obedience tasks. Pet owners take an animal to a shelter because it bites, soils the carpet, chews things to pieces, and jumps on children and guests. Without solutions to these problems, inexperienced pet owners eventually dump the pup – most often, reluctantly.

Despite the fact that releasing an animal to a shelter is the responsible thing to do, humane zealots uniformly denigrate these people as being somehow deficient because they draw the line at a bite mark on their child's cheek or repeated destruction of their carpets, furniture, and other possessions. Virtually

no shelters have training programs proven to stop such behaviors. The result is that the next time, the person is less likely to take an animal to a shelter or suggest that to a friend. In the world of the humane industry, we humans must choose to live with dogs rather than teach dogs to live with people. Not many people accept that choice forever.

The solution to this problem is a reevaluation of which behaviors are most important to pet owners and, therefore, most important to a pup's survival. Learning how to curtail unacceptable behavior safely and effectively is the key to this process and the key to the pup's longevity. As a groomer, you are a trusted professional and confidant. You have more contact with the owners and pups than anyone else – more than veterinarians, trainers, or shelters. If you can steer your clients through

Continued on next page



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the hazards of puppy ownership, the animal lives and you keep a client.

Practical Matters First

Not every groomer wants to be a trainer or provide training services. You don't have to. You do have to find someone who can help your clients. Here are some of the things you need to ask to make sure you find the right trainer for your clients' dogs.

1) Can you stop a single behavior now? For about half of the dog training and behavior world, this question will cause a seizure. They will stammer out some kind of nonsense about teaching an alternate behavior with treats (read: bribes) or "extinction" – meaning not giving a treat when the dog does the unacceptable behavior. These are pipe dreams. First, you didn't teach the puppy to sink his teeth into you. It's a nor-

mal behavior generated by instinct whether you reinforce it or not.

Teaching the dog to sit rather than jump on you is like suggesting that if I teach you French, you will never speak English. Animals use behaviors that work for them in specific contexts. If you go to France, you speak French. If you meet a French man in America, you speak French. If you meet an American in Paris, you speak English. If the dog is taught to sit as an alternative to jumping on people, it will still jump on people that look like anyone they have successfully jumped on, when no treat is present, or when they simply make a mistake.

2) Trying to extinguish the behavior by withholding reinforcement is equally mindless. If you go to a vending machine that eats your money, that will not stop you from using vending machines. You will simply seek another one. If that one pays off, the behavior of putting money in a vending machine regenerates instantly. Extinction leaves a permanent possibility that the behavior can come back at full force at any time.

Learning to stop a behavior now requires knowing how to inhibit a behavior – and that can only be done by tying an

Continued on page 24

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unpleasant consequence to it. You can stop a dog from jumping up on you by saying “NO” and swatting it with a throw pillow. Anyone who would rather see a dog dead than apply the equivalent of a serious pillow fight to save their life isn’t working with a full deck. There is no polite way to say that. Simply being in a shelter awaiting euthanasia is far more upsetting than a pillow fight in your own home.

It is considered unethical in all of the medical and psychological professions to withhold treatment known to be effective. Saying “NO” and bonking a dog with a pillow is effective at immediately stopping a dog from jumping on people. It is not harmful. It is lifesaving. (Do not use a pillow with piping or buttons that could scratch an eye. Otherwise, you are good to go.)

3) Do you know how to fix a house-

Putting a dog in a crate to stop a behavior like jumping on guests is a form of punishment. It is not the most powerful or speediest way of stopping the problem, but it does work.

training issue where the dog soils its crate? While most housetraining problems are not this severe, if a trainer understands how to turn around a dog that has absolutely no concern about where it eliminates, you have found someone worth knowing.

4) Do you use punishment for housetraining? This is a deal breaker. If a trainer attempts to scold or punish a dog for housetraining, the dog will normally sneak off and make sure no one is watching when it must pee or poop. Housetraining solutions must be positive – preferably with treats.

5) Are you “all positive”? If the answer is yes, this is also a deal breaker because it demonstrates a lack of logic. Putting a dog in a crate to stop a behavior like jumping on guests is a form of punishment. It is not the most powerful or speediest way of stopping the problem, but it does work. If someone claims they are “all positive,” it means they would not use this tool to modify a dog’s behavior. Likewise, they are implying that the unpleasantness of cutting out a mat somehow traumatizes a dog. After all, if “harsh” treatment causes behavioral trauma, grooming salons aren’t exempt in the dog’s mind. This is a clear indication that their agenda is more important than saving lives.

Teaching dogs to do mock obedience behaviors without teaching survival behaviors is a questionable and widespread practice. The most common complaint of pet owners after taking an obedience class is that it didn’t work in the real world. Finding a trainer who understands the needs of your clients is your best tool in keeping pets in their homes – and in your salon.



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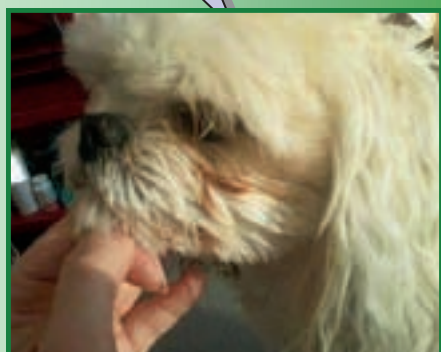
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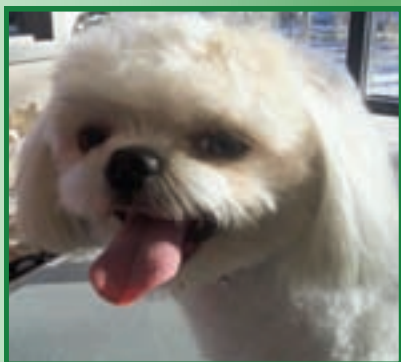
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CUSTOMER SERVICE for the **JET SET** and the **PET SET**

By Caroline Shin

Before I started *Store Vantage* and *Spot Pet Care*, my pet grooming store outside San Francisco, I used to run customer service for a private jet company. At first, the link between the jet set and the pet set might not seem obvious, but in reality, what it takes to make a high-flying billionaire happy is just the same as making a pet owner delighted with how you work with her puppy.

First and foremost, people are people whether they're rich or poor, famous or anonymous. Everyone expects memorable, proactive, and great service from their service provider. The same tactics apply for great customer service, whether

you're providing a \$30 bath for a beloved pet or a \$30,000 plane ride for a Hollywood star. Here are four examples from both the high-flying and tail-wagging perspectives.

RULE #1: Step into your customer's shoes.

To impress a Fortune 100 company CEO who was flying with us for the first time, we upgraded him to a bigger jet and arranged a limo to pick him up at his destination instead of his requested town car. After the trip, instead of thanks, we received a verbal lashing. Why? The CEO took a private jet not because of its luxuries but because it was the only way to make a meeting in

the middle of Oklahoma. The last thing he wanted was to look ostentatious, pulling up in a limo to meet a customer who already thought they were being charged too much. Lesson learned! After that screw-up, we made sure to learn the purpose of the trip so we could plan the flight from the customer's perspective.

Our staff applies the same rule to pet owners who request odd things, such as a cat owner who asks us to shave down her shorthaired cat every two weeks. We learned that the reason for the frequent shaving, and her obvious stress, was her new fiancé's allergy to cats. We made sure to go the extra mile by vacuuming

Continued on page 30



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loose hair in the cat carrier and communicating our admiration of her trying to make the new family work. She appreciated us being mindful of her situation and pays us back by referring us to everyone she knows.

RULE #2: Be solution-oriented, not defensive.

Here is a common issue in private aviation: customers call in furious, because the pilots are refusing to place their extra bags in the cabin once the luggage compartment is full, and repeating FAA rules that require all luggage to be secured on take-off only seems to make the problem worse. Angry and emotional customers are not in the right state of mind to listen to logic, so we handled these situations by offering solutions. Can we coordinate the luggage to be sent separately via FedEx? Can we purchase some necessities ahead of time to be

waiting for them at the hotel? Once the customer engages us in solutions, they often calm down enough to listen to why the problem occurred in the first place.

As we all know, emotional customers are common in the grooming world, too. A few days ago, a customer called *Spot Pet Care* after her husband picked up the dog, insisting we did not follow her instructions for a “puppy cut.” Instead of trying to explain that there is no universal definition of a “puppy cut” (or that her husband’s instructions were simply “do what you can”), we took a different approach. We apolo-

Angry and emotional customers are not in the right state of mind to listen to logic, so we handled these situations by offering solutions.

gized that she was not happy with the cut and asked if she could bring or send pictures of dogs with the haircut she was looking for. After we saw the pictures, we also offered a complimentary touch-up and asked if there were any modifications we could do to make the cut closer to what she wanted. As we continued to offer solutions, she calmed down and admitted she should have been more specific about her instructions. Win-win.

RULE #3: Don't punish everyone because of one bad apple.

We used to fly a customer, let's call him Mr. Tardy, who was notoriously late for all his flights. One time, even his mother had enough and ordered the pilots to leave without him. As the plane was taking

Continued on page 32



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off, Mr. Tardy was running on the tarmac after the plane. He created havoc on our flight operations, and we considered proposing a stricter rule around delays. In hindsight, I'm glad we didn't, because we would have lost the spirit of why customers fly privately and pay the big bucks; it's often not for the luxuries but for the flexibility.

Similarly, the *Spot Pet Care* staff considered taking credit cards with each appointment to charge a no-show fee. Understandably, the staff was frustrated as a no-show meant we turned away a paying customer who could have booked for that time. Before we made an emotional decision, we ran the numbers and found that we only had three to five no-shows at most in a month. We all agreed that requiring credit cards upon booking would hurt the business, making the scheduling process more cumbersome than it needed to be.

RULE #4: Proactively prevent a problem before it occurs.

Aspen may be known for its jet set lifestyle and residents, but it's a nightmare for everyone in the avia-

tion industry. The airport is surrounded on all sides by mountains, and even a little bit of snow and ice can create an unsafe take-off situation with planes often stuck for hours or days. Our service team was trained on how to warn customers (without frightening them) of the troubles they may face flying to and from the area. More importantly, we communicated every proactive decision we made to lessen their discomfort if they are delayed. From cars arranged at every backup airport to extra snacks if they're stuck for hours, we were able to make the customer laud our proactive service rather than be frustrated at weather we cannot control.

At *Spot Pet Care*, our staff can smell trouble when a new customer comes in coddling their shaking puppy, asking us 101 questions about how we ensure their "baby" will not be traumatized. If it's clear the dog is not used to grooming and the owner isn't helping the situation, our staff makes sure on pick-up to chat again with the customer before bringing the puppy to the owner. We reassure them that her puppy did well but is still nervous to be groomed, and we recommend

that the owner keeps on giving compliments to the dog today so she can start associating grooming with love. The customer sees her skittish dog as one that needs to be loved, not one that needs to be protected from the big, bad groomer!

Ultimately, good customer service is about properly managing emotions and expectations, regardless if the customer is flying privately or having her dog groomed. It doesn't hurt to have the patience of a saint when dealing with demanding customers, but anyone can deliver great service with a little practice. Your hard work will pay off in bounds through a stellar reputation and raving customers who love what you do for them and their pets.

Caroline Shin is the co-founder of Store Vantage, a cloud-based customer and appointment management software service. Caroline is passionate about customer service and has spent the bulk of her career working for companies, small and large, that embrace technology to deliver excellent customer experience. She is also the owner of Spot Pet Care, a pet grooming store in Northern California.

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by Sam Kohl

Deborah Ryan

'Down Under' Groomer on Top of the World

by Kathy Hosler

Walt Disney, the legendary visionary and creator of Disneyland in California once said, "All of our dreams can come true if we have the courage to pursue them."



In February, top stylists from all over the world met at the Pasadena Convention Center in Pasadena, California, to compete in the World Cup Grooming Games. All of them had their sights set on making their dreams come true.

One of those elite groomers was Deborah Ryan. She traveled from Australia to participate in the prestigious World Cup Grooming Games. This is her story.

Deborah Ryan was born in England and grew up on a farm. After being a veterinary nurse for four years, she attended grooming school and became an English Qualified Professional Stylist. She spent a lot

of time with "show people" to learn the fine points of grooming specific breeds and hand-stripping. Deb started her own dog grooming business when she was just 19 years old.

In 1997, Deb moved to Australia, where she continued her grooming career. She has been a mobile groomer as well as the owner and operator of her own salon. But Deb was not content with just grooming; she had a burning desire to help others, and she found that she could do it using many different methods.

Deb Ryan strongly believes that education is the key to success, and

she has made it her mission to help provide that education to the Australian pet care industry. Deb is the Grooming Director of *Dog Grooming International* and *Dog Grooming Australia*. She is the author of DGI grooming and training manuals and developed courses of instruction to help the beginner through the advanced stylist. She travels throughout Australia, organizing and conducting workshops and grooming seminars, and does tutoring.

Deb was also awarded the Kevin Pakes Perpetual Achievement Award, which was presented to her for recognition of her service to and

Continued on page 36

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achievement in the pet industry in Australia.

There was a time when there was only one major grooming competition in Australia per year. Deb was fascinated by the competitions, and she felt a desire to join in. "As I watched the grooming competitions, I would say to myself – I can do that. I do that everyday in my salon," said Deb. "I finally plucked up the courage to enter a competition.

"The first time that I went into the ring, I froze," recalled Deb. "It was just so scary to me. I felt like everyone else in there was better than me. I managed to finish the groom, but I wasn't happy with myself.

"The judge for that competition was Teri DiMarino," Deb continued. "She gave me the confidence to try again when she said, 'I can see that you know what you are doing – you've just got to lose those nerves. You know how to do it. Just go out

"I WANTED TO MAKE MY DOG PERFECT. IN THE RING, IT'S JUST ME AND THE DOG... AND I KNOW THAT I AM THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN LET MYSELF DOWN."

and do what you do best.'

"I did enter the next competition," said Deb with a confident smile, "and I won Best in Show. If I hadn't received those kind comments and sincere encouragement from the judge, I probably wouldn't have entered again."

Deb has been competing for five years now, and she has some pretty impressive wins to her credit. In 2008, 2009, and 2010, Deb was awarded Overall Winner/Best in Show for her hand-stripped Terriers in the Australian PIAA (Pet Industry Association of Australia) Annual

Grooming Competitions. In 2009, she was awarded the Cardinal Crystal Achievement Award for International Groomer of the Year.

"Every time I compete," said Deb, "I listen to everything the judges tell me during the critique, and then I try to improve myself. When I groom, the only person I compete against is myself."

Deb's trip to the 2012 Groom & Kennel Expo was not her first visit to the United States. Still, it takes lots of planning and preparation to travel from Australia to the United States to compete. "I bring all my equipment with me," said Deb with a chuckle. "I have bags and bags of chalk, my stripping tools, scissors, and other things I need."

Deb did not see the Wire Hair

Continued on page 38

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Fox Terrier that she groomed in the World Cup Games until the day before the competition. "It's a bit terrifying to groom a dog that you haven't done before," said Deb. "You just never know what you will have to work with. As it turned out, I had a beautiful dog, and I knew I could do a good job."

"I entered the ring to begin the competition," said Deb. "I wanted to make my dog perfect. In the ring, it's just me and the dog... and I know that I am the only one who can let myself down."

After the competition was over and the judging was finished, they began to announce the placements. Deb's heart was pounding. She knew that she had done her best – but – would it be good enough?

"When second place was announced, it went to my friend, Tammy Colbert," said Deb. "Then I

"THAT WAS THE ULTIMATE THAT I'D JUST WON. NEVER, EVER DID I THINK THAT I'D GO BEST IN SHOW. BEST IN SHOW! THAT WAS MY DREAM COME TRUE..."

said to myself – Tammy is brilliant, a fantastic groomer. This is it; I must be out of the running.

"When the judges called my name as the winner – well, that was it. The flood gates opened!" said Deb breathlessly. "That was the ultimate that I'd just won. Never, ever did I think that I'd go Best in Show. Best in Show! That was my dream come true," she continued. "I received the John Nash orchid. Wow! That's the biggest honor that I could ever have. It means that I've proved to myself that I can do it,

and now I can help others.

"That's one of the reasons that I started competing," Deb said emphatically. "I'm not very good at shouting out, telling people that I'm good. I'm better at showing what I can do."

"Winning Best in Show and getting on the cover of *Groomer to Groomer* is my ultimate dream come true," said a glowing Deb Ryan. "I'm honored. I'm grateful. I'm the luckiest person alive! I'm proof that it can happen to anyone!"

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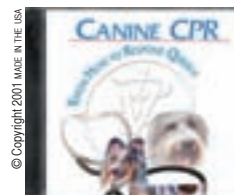
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Groom & Kennel Expo 2012 was held at the *Pasadena Convention Center* in beautiful Pasadena, California. Nearly 3000 attendees gathered February 2-5, 2012 to the educational and trade show event. Pet professionals were greeted by 72 exhibitors in 115 booths with new, innovative tools and tips to boost their business.

The event offered a large variety of seminars on grooming, health, training and business skills. Leading industry speakers included: Teri DiMarino, Jay Scruggs, Steve Appelbaum, Angela Kumpe, Lori Craig, Irina Pinkusevich, Kendra Otto, Jodi Murphy, Danelle German, Sherri Shinsky, Michell Evans,

Carol Hoover, Dr. Melissa Hall and Deanise Stoops.

Groom & Kennel Expo 2012 featured exciting *IJA* Sanctioned grooming competitions throughout the weekend. *The Nature's Specialties World Cup Grooming Games* included four classes sponsored by *Lambert Kay*, *Conair*, *Groomer's Choice* and *Geib*. *Andis* Sponsored *Best All Around* and *Tropiclean* sponsored the *Creative Styling* competition.

Nature's Specialties awarded *Best in Show* winners in all three levels. The Champion, Deborah Ryan of New South Wales, Australia, received \$2,500 in prize money. Level 2 *Best in Show* winner, Ta-

mara Anderson of Lincoln, CA was awarded \$1,000; and Level 1 *Best in Show* winner, Sharon Helgeson of Albuquerque, NM was awarded \$500 in prize money.

Andis' Best All Around was awarded to Deanise Stoops of Sunset Beach, CA with a cash prize of \$1,000.

As it turned out, *Tropiclean's Creative Styling Contest* fell on SuperBowl Sunday! Therefore, the contest was forced to compete with everyone's love of football! We are pleased to report that the contest still brought in a record crowd, with Sunday being the largest day of the show for "at the door" registrations. The attendees were not disappointed as world famous creative groomers unveiled amazing transformations right before their eyes. Cat Opson's "Rain Forest Friends" creation won first place with a cash award of \$1,500. *The People's Choice* award went to Angela Kumpe for her "Creative Southern Style" design and presentation, again securing Angela's place on the cover of an upcoming *Groomer to Groomer* magazine!

An additional show highlight was the *Gifts of Love* Silent Auction. Many pet industry products were available to the highest bidder, with proceeds from the auction going to *Gifts of Love International, Inc.*

For information on next year's *Groom & Kennel Expo*, February 14-17, 2013 visit www.GroomExpo.com or call (717) 691-3388.



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GROOM & KENNEL EXPO 2012 CONTEST RESULTS

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NATURE'S SPECIALTIES® BEST IN SHOW



World Cup Grooming Games Champion, Deborah Ryan with (from left to right) IJA Judges Christine Speerin and Vivian Nash and Mary Meeks of *Nature's Specialties*.



Level 2 Best in Show Winner, Tamara Anderson with IJA Judge Christine Speerin and Mary Meeks of *Nature's Specialties*.



Level 1 Best in Show Winner, Sharon Helgeson with IJA Judge Christine Speerin and Mary Meeks of *Nature's Specialties*.

andis® BEST ALL-AROUND



Best All-Around Winner, Deanise Stoops with Diane Betelak of *Andis*.

TROPICLEAN. BE CREATIVE! CREATIVE STYLING



Creative Styling First Place Winner, Cat Opson with her creation, "Rain Forest Friends," and Joe Zuccarello of *Tropiclean*.

ADDITIONAL COMPETITION RESULTS

POODLES

Level 3: Sharon Hall,
Cat Opson, Wendy Wouters;
Level 2: Tamara Anderson,
Kwan Kwi Kim, Mimi Hollis;
Level 1: Sharon Helgeson,
Anna Stroganova,
Keiko Shirakata

SPORTING / TERRIER

Level 3: Deborah Ryan,
Tammy Colbert, Wendy Wouters;
Level 2: Tamara Anderson,

Amber Lewin, Mimi Hollis;
Level 1: Allan Roston,
Cameron Adkins, David Estrada

ALL OTHER PUREBREDS

Level 3: Deanise Stoops,
Deborah Ryan, Wendy Wouters;
Level 2: Wendy Rodriguez,
Amber Lewin; **Level 1:**
Juan Amejia, Natsumi Ishii

SALON FREESTYLE

Level 3: Deanise Stoops,
Cat Opson, Randae Bither;

Level 2: Jessica Cave, Tamara
Anderson, Amber Lewin;
Level 1: Randi Star, Jessica
Rona, Patricia Sugihara

CREATIVE STYLING CONTEST

Cat Opson "Rain Forest
Friends," Angela Kumpé
"Creative Southern Style", Lori
Craig "Shake Your Tail Feather"
People's Choice: Angela Kumpé
"Creative Southern Style"

POODLES



Level 3 Best in Class Winner, Sharon Hall with John Vasone of session sponsor **Conair**.



Level 2 Best in Class Winner, Tamara Anderson with Dan Dressen of session sponsor **Groomer's Choice**.



Level 1 Best in Class Winner, Sharon Helgeson with Ed Geib of session sponsor **Geib Shears**.

SPORTING, TERRIERS & MORE



Level 3 Best in Class Winner, Deborah Ryan with Ron Iorio of session sponsor **Lambert Kay**.



Level 2 Best in Class Winner, Tamara Anderson with John Vasone of session sponsor **Conair**.



Level 1 Best in Class Winner, Allan Roston with Dan Dressen of session sponsor **Groomer's Choice**.

ALL OTHER PUREBREDS



Level 3 Best in Class Winner, Deanise Stoops with Ed Geib of session sponsor **Geib Shears**.



Level 2 Best in Class Winner, Wendy Rodriguez with Ron Iorio of session sponsor **Lambert Kay**.



Level 1 Best in Class Winner, Juan Amejia with Ron Iorio of session sponsor **Lambert Kay**.

SALON FREESTYLE



Level 3 Best in Class Winner, Deanise Stoops with Dan Dressen of session sponsor **Groomer's Choice**.



Level 2 Best in Class Winner, Jessica Cave with Ed Geib of session sponsor **Geib Shears**.



Level 1 Best in Class Winner, Randi Star with John Vasone of session sponsor **Conair**.

Getting Down to BUSINESS
BY TERI DiMARINO



Complementary and Alternative MEDICAL TREATMENTS

WHILE NOTHING
WILL EVER TAKE
THE PLACE OF GOOD
MEDICAL DIAGNOSIS
AND TREATMENT, I
FEEL WE MUST ALL BE
PROACTIVE IN OUR
OWN HEALTH CARE.

When we hurt, it is normal for us to seek “the magic bullet.” By this, I mean the easy fix that will get us “up and running” again quickly with little or no “down time.” The pet grooming industry is an extremely strenuous one, and contrary to popular consensus, we do not spend all day playing with the puppies. We spend long days at our tables and tubs, snipping, clipping, bathing, and brushing the pets in our salons, taking care to humanely control these guys without harm or injury. And we do a darn good job of this! In fact, most of us are so conscious in our care and handling, we usually risk (and suffer) injury to ourselves in our effort to keep these pets safe. We also have a tendency to put our own well-being on the back burner, waiting for things to get really bad before we see a doctor.

But many of us, myself included, do not like running to the doctor every time we twist wrong or strain something. Yes, rest is good and is usually recommended, but that just isn't in the schedule for many of us. While prescription drugs do help in many cases, sometimes they are just a temporary fix, and you feel bad again when you stop taking them.

While nothing will ever take the place of good medical diagnosis and treatment, I feel we must all be proactive in our own health care. We must be our own advocates to assure that what we do for ourselves is absolutely the best treatment options for the affliction. Sometimes this means that we must take our treatment option research into our own hands.

Continued on next page

Years ago, I discovered and took a liking to what is commonly called "Alternative Medicine." The world of alternative medicine, as it is commonly known, may invoke uneasiness to the uninitiated person. Visions of mysterious, dark rooms with spine-cracking and needle-poking individuals with voodoo dolls and herbal concoctions couldn't be farther from the truth. Alternative medicinal practices have been around for centuries, and while they are not considered mainstream in Western society, they certainly have their loyal following in many areas around the world.

The *National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM, a department of the National Institutes of Health)* is the Federal Government's lead agency for scientific research on complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). The mission of NCCAM is to investigate and define the usefulness and safety of complementary and alternative medicinal practices and their roles in improving health and health care through their meticulous scientific investigation.

COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE... WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

According to the NCCAM, complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) covers a group of various medical and health care systems, practices, and products that are not presently considered to be part of conventional medicine. (Conventional medicine practitioners are considered to be holders of Medical Doctor (MD) or Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.) degrees as well as other health care professionals such as registered nurses, physical therapists, psychologists, etc.)

The difference between the two terms is that complementary medicine is used together with conventional medicine and alternative medicine is used in place of conventional medicine. The field of CAM is very broad and is constantly changing. While the boundaries between CAM and conventional medicine are not cast in stone, CAM practices are becoming more popular and may,

Continued on page 46



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over time, become more widely accepted. According to a 2007 National Health Interview Survey, approximately 38% of American adults use some sort of CAM in their pursuit of their own health and well-being.

Insurance companies are still having trouble defining what sort of CAM they will endorse and cover, if any. It is interesting to add that Hippocrates (an ancient Greek physician) noted the moral and spiritual aspects of healing and believed that successful treatment of an illness could only occur with consideration of attitude, environmental influences, and natural remedies.

In this article we are going to take a brief look at some of the most common CAM practices. These are often grouped into rather broad categories, such as natural products, mind and body medicine, and manipulative body-based practices. Although these categories are not

formally defined, it is beneficial for us to understand them better. Keep in mind that some CAM practices may fit into more than one category.

NATURAL PRODUCTS

This area of CAM includes the use of a variety of herbal medicines (or botanicals), vitamins, minerals, and other "natural products." Many are sold over the counter as dietary supplements, but they should not be confused with the taking of common multivitamin, mineral, or calcium supplements used to meet minimum daily nutritional requirements. These common supplements are not thought of as CAM.

CAM "natural products" can include live bacteria (e.g. probiotics) that are similar to what is already found in the human digestive tract. Let's face it. As groomers, we often do not take care of ourselves as well as we should. Eating "on the run"

is common, and we routinely short ourselves in our nutritional needs.

Herbal or botanical treatments have been around for centuries. In fact, the mummified remains of the "Ice man" found in the Alps in the early 1990s were found with medicinal herbs. Many native cultures continue to use these natural treatments. Common modern day medications include popular products such as echinacea and fish oil/omega-3s. In fact, the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) found that over 17% of American adults used some form of non-vitamin/non-mineral natural product.

MIND AND BODY MEDICINE

Mind and body practices focus on the connection between the brain, mind, body, and behavior, helping to influence and use the mind to promote good health.

Continued on next page

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This is the idea behind many CAM methods. Whatever your beliefs, you must have a certain amount of faith in CAM. Results in the different methods may vary, and results may not be the dramatic “instant fix” that many people are looking for (although, sometimes they can be). This can be frustrating for some people who are expecting miracles right out of the gate. You must give your chosen CAM some time and personal dedication.

MEDITATION

Good meditation techniques can increase your relaxation and your ability to deal with stress, which is a big part of our job. The intent of meditation is to help us relax, increase our calmness, help us to focus, cope with illness, improve our psychological balance, and improve our overall health and well-being.

YOGA

Opposed to how it may appear to some, yoga can be a very strenuous routine! There are various styles of yoga, ranging from simple to challenging, but they typically combine physical postures, breathing techniques, meditation, and relaxation. Many people routinely incorporate yoga into their weight loss exercise regime. Yoga can be effective in increasing strength, muscle tone, and stamina.

ACUPUNCTURE AND ACUPRESSURE

These techniques have their root in traditional Chinese medicine. Based on the concepts of the body's natural energy, qi (or chi), and imbalances in the forces of yin and yang, it is believed that disease or injury disrupts and blocks the natural balance and flow of the body's energy. The practitioner attempts to remove these blocks and restore the flow of the natural

forces using various techniques. Acupuncture and acupressure are among the oldest healing practices in the world. The typical procedures involve the stimulation of specific points on the body using techniques that include penetrating the skin with sterile needles that are then stimulated by hand or electricity. Herbs, meditation, deep breathing exercises, and massage all work together in this ancient art.

Hypnotherapy, progressive relaxation, tai chi, and qigong are all part of the traditional Chinese medicine practices and focus on controlled breathing, movement, and meditation. These techniques may take practice to master, but the benefits can be extraordinary.

MANIPULATIVE AND BODY-BASED PRACTICES

These treatments focus mainly on the structure and system of the body, including the bones and joints, soft tissues, and circulatory system. Two commonly used treatments fall within this category: spinal manipulation and massage therapy.

SPINAL MANIPULATION

This technique is usually performed by chiropractors or other health care professionals such as physical therapists, osteopathic physicians, and some conventional medical doctors. Typically, these people use their hands or simple devices to apply controlled pressure to a joint of the spine, moving it beyond its passive range of motion. Spinal manipulation is among the common treatment options used by groomers with back pain. This technique is also used to treat such afflictions as carpal tunnel syndrome, migraine headaches, and shoulder issues, which are all common in our industry. Many a groomer standing at their table today owes it to their chiropractor. I know I am on a first

Continued on page 48



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name basis with mine.

MASSAGE THERAPY

This term is music to my ears! There is nothing like a nice, relaxing massage at the end of a busy day, but the benefits are so much more beneficial than just the “feel good” factor. A good massage increases blood flow and oxygen to the massaged areas. Professional groomers have long recognized the calming effects that massage can have on a stressed pet. What makes us any different? It’s hard not to feel good after a massage!

Years ago I went to a massage therapist at the recommendation of my chiropractor. She did not know what I did for a living, but she did note that I did something that made me pull with my left arm and push with my right. After thinking about it, I realized that she was reading my body like a book. As a right-handed groomer, I restrain the pet with my left hand while I brush or scissor with my right. Pull to restrain with my left, and push the brush with my right. Wow! I was impressed!

Manipulation of the muscles



and soft tissues is used for a variety of health-related purposes. Massage can improve job- or sports-related injuries. It can relieve pain, increase relaxation, reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, and aid in your general well-being. I see no downside in this! Some types of massage are more aggressive than others, so it is important to talk with your therapist and discuss your tolerance to aggressive massage. Shiatsu massage has its roots in traditional Chinese medicine and is usually, but not always, coupled with acupuncture. It can be a bit deep and

aggressive but not as aggressive as Roling, which involves very deep tissue massage and is considered by some to be quite painful! If it hurts, tell the therapist to “back off”!

OTHER CAM PRACTICES

As I mentioned earlier in this column, there are many techniques that transcend classification in just one field. Acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine are good examples of this, as they are considered to be a part of mind and body medicine but are also components of energy and natural product medicine as well as manipulative and body-based practices. There are a variety of other alternative methods, too numerous to mention in this column, but here are some that many of you may be familiar with.

Herbs - Traditional Chinese medicine may include the use of herbs and other natural concoctions put together by a trained expert. Do not try to medicate yourself, as there are many herbs that can conflict with medications you are already taking. Many herbal remedies remind me of a challenge on *Fear Factor*, but they can be effective under the right guidance. My acupuncturist uses herbal-infused steam along with the needles, so there is nothing to ingest.

Pilates helps build strength and good health through stretching,

Continued on page 50

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exercise, and controlled breathing. No one muscle group is overworked or underworked. It concentrates on core strength, posture, and balance.

Reiki is a practice familiar to many pet groomers, as classes are often conducted at grooming conventions. It is a therapy where the practitioner attempts to transmit a universal energy to a person or animal either from a distance or by placing their hands on or near that person. The intent is to heal

the spirit and, therefore, the body; it has been a beneficial tool for many groomers.

Magnet therapy, also known as biomagnetic therapy or electromagnetic field therapy, is the application of magnets to affected areas of the body, sometimes in the form of mattresses, blankets, jewelry, or clothing in an attempt to increase the energy and blood flow in the body. Many arthritis sufferers find some relief in this treatment.

Homeopathy attempts to encourage the body to heal itself by giving very small doses of highly diluted substances that treat the affliction in an approach called "like cures like." Larger doses of these substances might produce illness or symptoms. This is different from immunization or desensitization as it uses minute amounts of the offending substance to treat the affliction and not enough to cause illness.

Continued on page 50

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Naturopathy is a system of therapy based on preventive care, which encourages the body's ability to heal itself through the use of heat, water, light, air, and massage as well as dietary and lifestyle changes. Some naturopaths use no medications, either pharmaceutical or herbal. Some recommend herbal remedies only.

Biofeedback is a method of training the patient to recognize and control physiological information of which they may be otherwise unaware. Training oneself to control "involuntary" processes such as blood pressure, brain wave activity, or digestion is done with the help of monitors. Biofeedback has been used to treat conditions ranging from stress and sleep disorders to migraine headaches, partial paralysis, or incontinence.

SAFETY AND EFFECTIVENESS

As with any medical treatment, there can be risks with CAM therapies. Select a practitioner that you are comfortable with and ask about their training and experience. Get recommendations from your doctor, friends, clients, or other groomers.



Communicate with these people! Tell them what is wrong. If you have fears or apprehensions, discuss it with them. Talk with them about your expectations and goals of the treatments and how long you should have to continue with them.

If you plan on taking any supplements, be aware that some may interact with medications or other supplements. They may have side effects of their own or may contain ingredients not listed on the label, as many of them are not regulated. With that said, keep in mind that

many of these supplements have not been tested in pregnant women, nursing mothers, or children.

Tell all your regular doctors or health care providers about any complementary and alternative practices you are considering using. This means everything, including massage therapy, chiropractics, acupuncture, or supplements. This will not only give them an idea of what you are doing to manage your health, but it also tells them that you are an active participant in your own well-being.

Now go book a massage, then let me know how you feel!

Jay Scruggs

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An industry veteran, Teri has owned and operated successful salons and mobiles in Florida and California. A winning grooming contest competitor, Teri was a member of three GroomTeam USA Gold Medal teams. A multi Cardinal Crystal Award winner and Barkleigh Honors Journalist of the Year, Teri is a popular speaker and judge at seminars and trade shows across the United States, Canada, Europe, South America, Korea, and Australia.

Teri has written for all the industry publications, calling Barkleigh Productions home in the position of Industry Consultant and author for Groomer to Groomer magazine.

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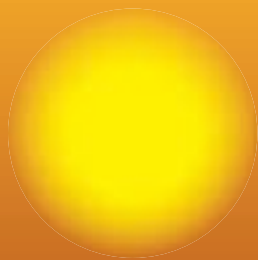


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Taking Care of Ourselves

Part One



By Mary Oquendo

Zeus, the mighty Shih Tzu, is on your grooming table doing his impression of a whirling dervish. During his rendition, he kicks your brush onto the floor. You bend over to pick it up, and what flashes through your mind is, "Oh crap, I can't straighten back up." Now Zeus, who is still in the midst of his performance, is in danger of falling

off and injuring himself.

This is why the first thing I teach in my pet first aid class is your safety, because if you are injured, then the pets in your care are at risk. In honor of April being Pet First Aid Awareness Month, let's talk about your well-being.

It starts before you arrive at work. A strong body and mind is

more resistant to injury as well as more alert to possible dangers. Begin your day with breakfast, and skip the coffee. You need breakfast for the same reason your car needs gas; it simply works better with fuel. Gasp! You read that correctly. Skip the morning coffee, because coffee is dehydrating. We already work in an environment that dehydrates us because of the heat from dryers going on all day. If we are in a state of dehydration, our organs become stressed. Stressed organs lead to disease and illness. My basic rule of thumb is drink eight ounces of water per pet.

Continued on next page

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Let's look at the safety equipment available to us:

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3. Face masks protect your lungs from hair and the goop that flies around when you use HV dryers. Take a look at your walls, and you'll see what's also in your lungs.

4. Muzzles and other protective gear, such as *Bite Busters* (RSC #8807), protect your body parts as well as your livelihood.

5. Closed-toe, waterproof, comfortable shoes. Closed toe shoes keep hair splinters out. I used to love to wear sandals in the warmer weather until the day I got a hair splinter in both feet. Waterproof shoes keep your feet dry, which is especially important in the winter months. Dry feet are more resistant to fungus than wet ones. Comfortable shoes reduce stress on your body.

6. Humane restraint systems, such as hip supports and the *Groomers Helper* (RSC #8808), will reduce musculoskeletal injuries caused by out of control pets... or from being knocked out after the head butt from that Lab.

7. Well-stocked first aid kits should include the number to poison control. Attending to injuries quickly will speed healing and reduce complications.

There are changes we can make

*Be aware of what's going on around you.
We work with sharp instruments. It's why
there are band-aids in my pet first aid kit.*

to our work environment:

1. Good quality ortho mats. The \$20 ones are not going to cut it. Everywhere I stand has a mat.

2. Stools. Changing up positions throughout the day reduces stress to your musculoskeletal system.

3. Adjustable tables and grates for the tub. Working at the right height reduces back injuries.

4. Ground Fault Interrupters (GFI) outlets installed near wet ar-

eas will prevent electrocution when you combine water and electrical equipment.

5. Climate control. If it's hot, turn on the A/C. Neither you nor the pet needs heat stroke.

6. Non-slip flooring and wrapping up hoses and cords will prevent falls and the subsequent broken body parts.

7. Good air circulation and air cleaners help prevent contaminants in the air from finding your lungs.

Continued on page 54

When you need some friendly **MUSCLE**



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8. Cleanliness. Cleaning removes the biologicals, such as hair, feces, urine, blood, and dander, all of which are common vectors for the transmission of zoonotics.

9. Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors as well as a fully charged fire extinguisher.

10. Consider using a vacuum system such as the *Clipper Vac* (RSC #8809). *Clipper Vac* is a product designed primarily to remove hair and dander helping to prevent the risks of respiratory health issues. The clipping of hair on pets, over and over again can cause repetitive motion injuries and carpal tunnel. The *Clipper Vac* lifts the hair and reduces resistance; making clipping very easy, while increasing the speed of grooming.

Be aware of what's going on around you. We work with sharp

instruments. It's why there are band-aids in my pet first aid kit. Pay attention to the pet you're working on. Are they warning you they are ready to bite? While some pets don't warn, most do. If you are continually getting bitten, it might be time for some pet behavioral classes. Any continuing education not only makes you a better groomer, but it also keeps your mind sharp. When your *Zeus* knocks something off of your table, squat down to pick it up rather than bend over. If your back spasms, you will need assistance. Make sure your cell phone is fully charged and in reach if you work alone.

As a mobile groomer, I contend with more issues:

1. Vehicle must be in good repair (e.g. brakes, tires, and exterior lighting). Will our vehicles stop when we intend them to? Can other drivers see us in fog and low light?

2. Road conditions. Is it safe to be on the road, or do I run the risk of totaling my van with me inside?

3. Extreme weather conditions including high winds, heat, and cold. The vans are essentially big metal boxes. They are not stable on the roads during high winds. I have been pushed two lanes over. That also got the attention of the other drivers on the road. You can bet they turned off their cell phones and kept their distance from me. The vans heat up very easily in the summer and, by the same token, freeze up quickly in winter. This becomes the question: can the A/C cool it off enough to prevent heat stroke in summer or can the heater warm it up enough to stave off hypothermia in winter?

So many of us are busy looking after everything and everybody else that we forget to take care of ourselves. How we treat ourselves impacts those around us. Honor the pets in your life by looking after your safety and well-being.

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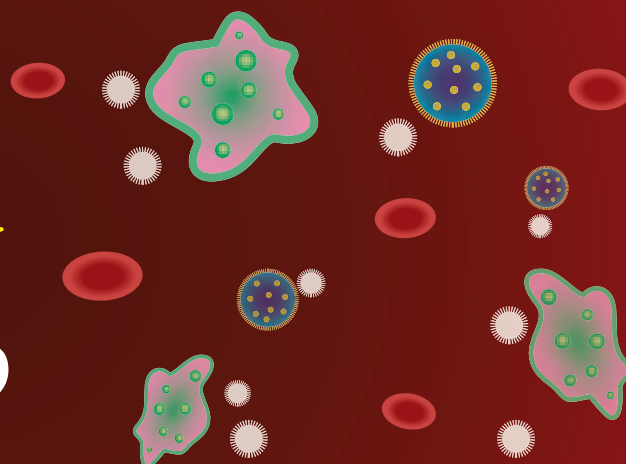
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What is INFECTING Your Business?



A problem employee can impact staff morale, customer satisfaction and your ability to manage effectively. Left untreated, they can kill your business. Here are some tips to help you cure this infection.

My wife and I recently had a rare moment out at the mall - by ourselves - without the kids. I am not a mall shopper but more of a people watcher, but this day we actually had some things to get at specific stores only located at the mall. We finished our shopping and took a few minutes to grab a quick lunch at the food court before departing for home.

A few hours later, we knew something was not right. Our stomachs started to grumble, our bodies started to cramp, and other unmentionable actions were about to take place, which would result in a completely miserable, bed-ridden weekend. Yep, you guessed it. Food poisoning! To those of you who have experienced this, you know how awful this can be. For those of you who have not experienced this, consider yourselves fortunate.

You may be asking yourself, "Where is Joe going with this story?" I have often written about how we should pay close attention to our surroundings and how life imitates business in more ways than we think. This particular occurrence reminded me about a variety of times in management when I felt that I had exercised some disregard for warning signs. That "little voice" we all have tries to warn us against doing something that would eventually come back to haunt us. Did my "little voice" suggest we not partake in the food at the mall? Yes. Did I listen? No. Did I pay for this decision? YES!

Continued on page 58

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For all of you who manage someone else, the following may sound very familiar. Just like the food poisoning punishment we endured because we didn't listen to our instinct, many of us managers make the same mistake of keeping on our payroll certain employees who cause us distress and discomfort. You know who I am talking about. Maybe right now you have a picture in your mind of someone who is, or who was, working for you.

Sometimes we hire people after scrupulous screening, background checks, interviews, and even tryouts just to find out, once we have them on our payroll, they have become an "infection" to our business. Harsh words of comparison, but give me a minute and you will see just how true and appropriate this description is.

This person who you decided at one time could benefit (feed) your team with their experience, ability, or knowledge has, in fact, started to impact negatively (poison) your staff morale, customer satisfaction, your ability to manage effectively, and overall daily activities of the business. They are an infection. They suck the life right out of you.

Just like your body knows what particles are not welcome, you must be able to isolate the root cause of the problems and shield others from their influence. Do this quickly.

They seem to come out of nowhere, multiplying by recruiting others to their way of thinking and tearing down the strength of the business you have built. Left untreated, they can kill your drive and maybe your business.

I have studied many different business models over the years, and those who require skilled talent (e.g. construction, mechanics, artists, groomers, etc.) seem to have more of these infectious people working for them. Although some use their infectious powers for good, some will purposely or even subconsciously use this influence solely for themselves and will destroy everything else around them. These people cause you the most effort, the most dismay, and the most pain than other employees will. These people, because they know their skill is in

high demand, can sometimes hold that over our heads, making us their puppets. The people whom we have welcomed into our businesses, whom we trusted, whom we thought had promise, hold us hostage.

The human body is an incredible machine. If I had a tiny camera when I ingested the food that made us ill, I bet I would have seen my body identify this poison and immediately go into protection mode, planning whatever action was needed to evacuate the poison as quickly as possible and not stopping until the infection was completely clear. Yes, this effort is exhausting and really takes a toll on the body; compared to allowing the infection to remain, the body is much better exhausted and in a rebuilding stage than seriously injured or dead. If

Continued on page 60

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our management style could be based on a survival and health perspective, then we would be better at addressing and curing ourselves of this type of employee.

As you focus on becoming a more efficient machine, here is a quick prescription to jump-start your immune system:

1) Be sensitive to what is ailing you. Learn to read the signs and “feel” what is going on. Listen to your little voice. It can easily tell you when you are about to get sick.

2) Identify the poison. Just like your body knows what particles are not welcome, you must be able to isolate the root cause of the problems and shield others from their influence. Do this quickly.

3) Attack. Voraciously attack the infection by putting a plan in place to rehabilitate this person or to remove this person from your business. During this stage, make certain the person knows what it is you want and what steps you feel are appropriate for them to take to fix things. After all, not every infection is discharged, though many can be remedied with treatment.

4) Cure. Once you have at-

tacked the situation and identified action steps to curing the infection, put your plan to work and be diligent. If you miss a step (dose), it could set you back a step or two.

5) Heal. Continue to strengthen the healthy parts of your business so that future poisons have a much more difficult time even existing in your surroundings. Encourage loyalty, foster growth and learning, accept nothing less than perfect, and counsel weaknesses.

Of course I would have liked to add a number six: “Don’t eat at the mall.” But that’s not completely fair. Things happen to all of us for a reason. Open your eyes to your surroundings and see what is going on around you. Pay close attention to the well-being of your business and everyone who is affected by it.

Continue to strengthen the healthy parts of your business so that future poisons have a much more difficult time even existing in your surroundings. Encourage loyalty, foster growth and learning, accept nothing less than perfect, and counsel weaknesses.

Nobody will take care of your “business body” better than you can.

Stay healthy.

Joe Zuccarello has excelled in the pet industry since 1986 and is National Accounts Sales Manager for Tropiclean Shampoo and Fresh Breath Made Easy! Dental products for dogs and cats. To find out more about Tropiclean Shampoos and Tropiclean Fresh Breath Made Easy! dental products, please visit www.tropiclean.net or call 800-542-7387.

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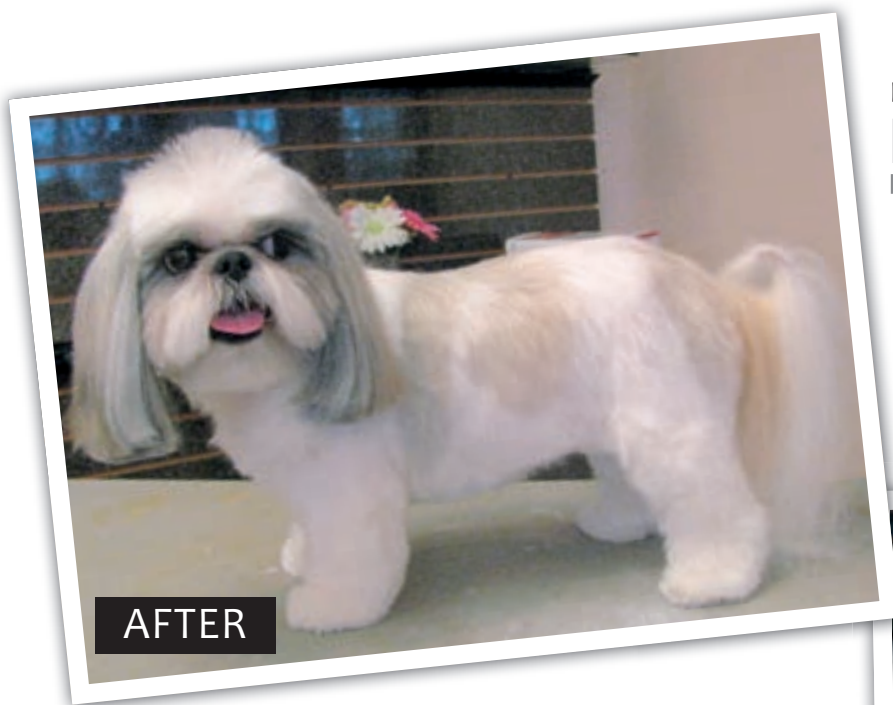
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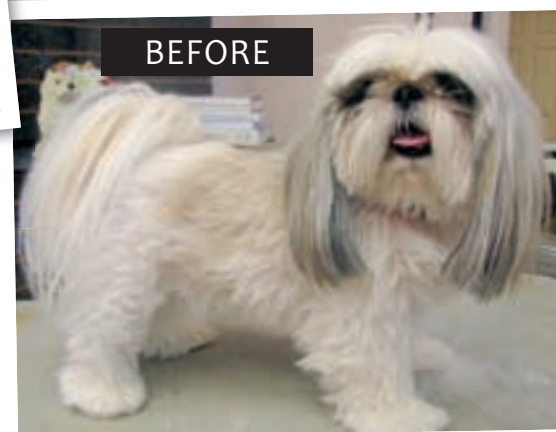
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BREAD & BUTTER GROOMING:
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 PET TRIMS FOR THE SALON

By *Kathy Rose*



SHIH TZU: THE 'PUPPY CUT'

So many of our clients waltz into our salons and ask for a "Puppy Cut." What exactly is a puppy cut? I interpret a "Puppy Cut" as a trim that is kind of fluffy all over and looks like the dog looked when he/she was a puppy. Right? So let's look at this trim, the Shih Tzu in a "Puppy Cut," the same way as any other small, drop coat breed that enters our salon. The basics are the same, whether you have a Shih Tzu, a Lhasa, or any other small drop coated breed: a short but fluffy all over trim with a round head... A "Puppy Cut."

In this case, I used snap-on combs ("1" body and "A" legs) and then tidied up the stray hairs with scissors and thinning shears. The length will depend upon the client's desire, pocketbook, and ability to keep up with the coat, so you can advise accordingly. Usually, leaving the legs a bit longer than the body

looks best but is more difficult for the client to keep up with, so most of the trims I do will be a "0" or "1" all over. Tidy up with scissors and thinning shears, then finish up with a round head, slight trim on the ears, and tidy the tail.

Following the coat growth direction, begin clipping just behind the occipital bone (base of the skull). Continue clipping down the back, sides, and rear.

Clip the forechest, beginning just under the jaw.



While supporting the rear legs, clip the undercarriage and rear legs.



Create tight round feet (cat foot). First create a square by combing the foot coat outward and trim straight across the front of the foot, holding your scissors at a 45-degree angle. Next, trim the sides in a straight line to form the square. Using a curved shear, held at a 45-degree angle, trim the corners off the square to form a round foot.



To complete the round foot, lift the leg and scissor around the pad. Do not place your scissors across the pad.



To complete the front legs, lift the leg slightly and scissor a straight line upward toward the chest. Then, with the dog standing, scissor the stray hairs from the outside and rear of the front leg.

With the dog standing close to the edge of the table and working from below the table, scissor upward on the inside of the rear legs and then downward on the outside to create parallel columns.



Using curved shears on the rear, round to create a nice curved butt. Then tidy the underline, following the natural undercarriage of the dog.



While supporting the rear leg, tidy the inside and front side of the rear leg.

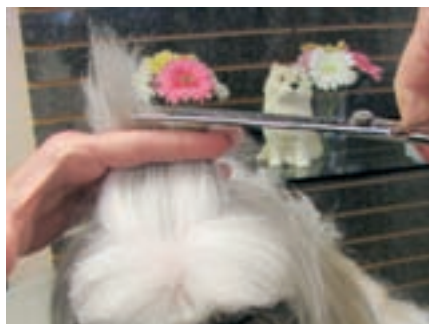
Using thinning shears, blend the chest and "erase" the clipper marks.

THE HEAD

Comb the bangs forward. Using curved shears, trim across the front of the eyes to the eye corners.



Lift the long top knot coat between your fingers and trim across the top.



Using thinning shears, remove the excess coat at the eye corners.

While holding the eyelashes out of the path of the scissor, trim the

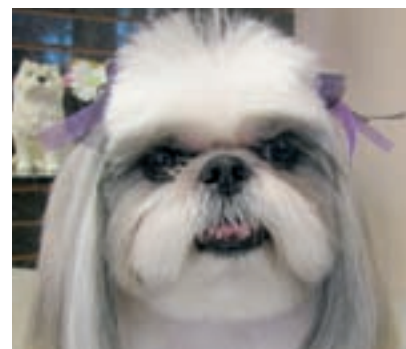
bangs to blend with the topknot. Hold the scissors at a 45-degree angle to form an overhang. Then fold the ear back and trim the ventilation strip (the coat in front of the ear) and blend. When viewed from the side, the eye should be visible.



Finish the face by rounding the chin and "softening" with thinning shears.

Complete the head by trimming the ears and applying bows.

This so called "puppy trim" is adaptable to any breed and with the use of snap-on combs is an easy bread and butter trim for your clients. Adapt the length by changing your snap-on combs; I usually advise one length shorter on the body than the legs. Remember when using a clipper vacuum system that everything will be approximately one blade length shorter.



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New Product News

The Art and Magic of Creative Dog Grooming



Barkleigh Productions Inc. has released a new book, *The Art and Magic of Creative Dog Grooming*. The full color paperback publication measures 8 1/2 x 11 inches, the size of a

standard magazine. The 96 page book features behind-the-scenes, personal stories from award-winning creative groomers along with the past cover of *Groomer to Groomer* magazine featuring their creation. Groomers such as Angela Kumpe, Lori Craig and Dawn Omboy share their challenges and memories of creative competitions. *The Art and Magic of Creative Dog Grooming* is an informative and entertaining look at the art of creative grooming. For more information, request Reader Service Card #8813.

Supreme Bathing System

Sav Ur Fur introduces *The Supreme Bathing System*, a six-product system developed especially for groomers who want versatility in flow rates and products. The system comes with your choice of either six high-flow or three high-flow

and three low-flow connections. The high-flow system comes with one regular nozzle and can be interchanged with the undercoat nozzle for dropping undercoats. The multi-flow system comes with the Foaming Wand. This system also carries a three-year warranty on all parts. Both systems come ready to install with all hardware, hoses and instructions. For more information, request Reader Service Card #8812.



Professional Care Shea Butter Hand Cream



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The Groomer's Tool Caddy



The Groomer's Tool Caddy is designed to safely and securely hold grooming instruments while keeping them readily accessible and preventing accidental

injury to the groomer or animal. Manufactured of sturdy injection molded plastic with an aluminum blade cooling shelf, the *Tool Caddy* features slots for up to seven scissors, additional openings for combs, brushes, etc., hooks for hanging clippers, etc., a tray to hold miscellaneous items, and a shelf to hold/cool clipper blades. The *Tool Caddy* mounts to the grooming arm post, is supported by the grooming arm clamp, and allows for unimpeded vertical (up and down) movement of the grooming arm post. For more information, request Reader Service Card #8798.

EZ-Groom Lemon Grass



EZ-Groom, a leading manufacturer of all-natural pet grooming products, is pleased to introduce *Lemon Grass*, an Asian-inspired shampoo. This new formula contains lemon grass oil, which boasts a subtle scent often associated with Asian cooking. A natural pesticide and preservative, lemon grass oil has been shown

to have anti-fungal properties. *Lemon Grass* is excellent for deodorizing and freshening even the dirtiest pets. Easy to lather and easy to rinse, the groomer's hands will reap the benefits of the lemon grass oil extract. The product is appropriate for dogs and cats and is veterinarian recommended. This shampoo concentrate is available in 16 oz. bottles or one gallon plastic jugs. For more information, request Reader Service Card #8795.

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