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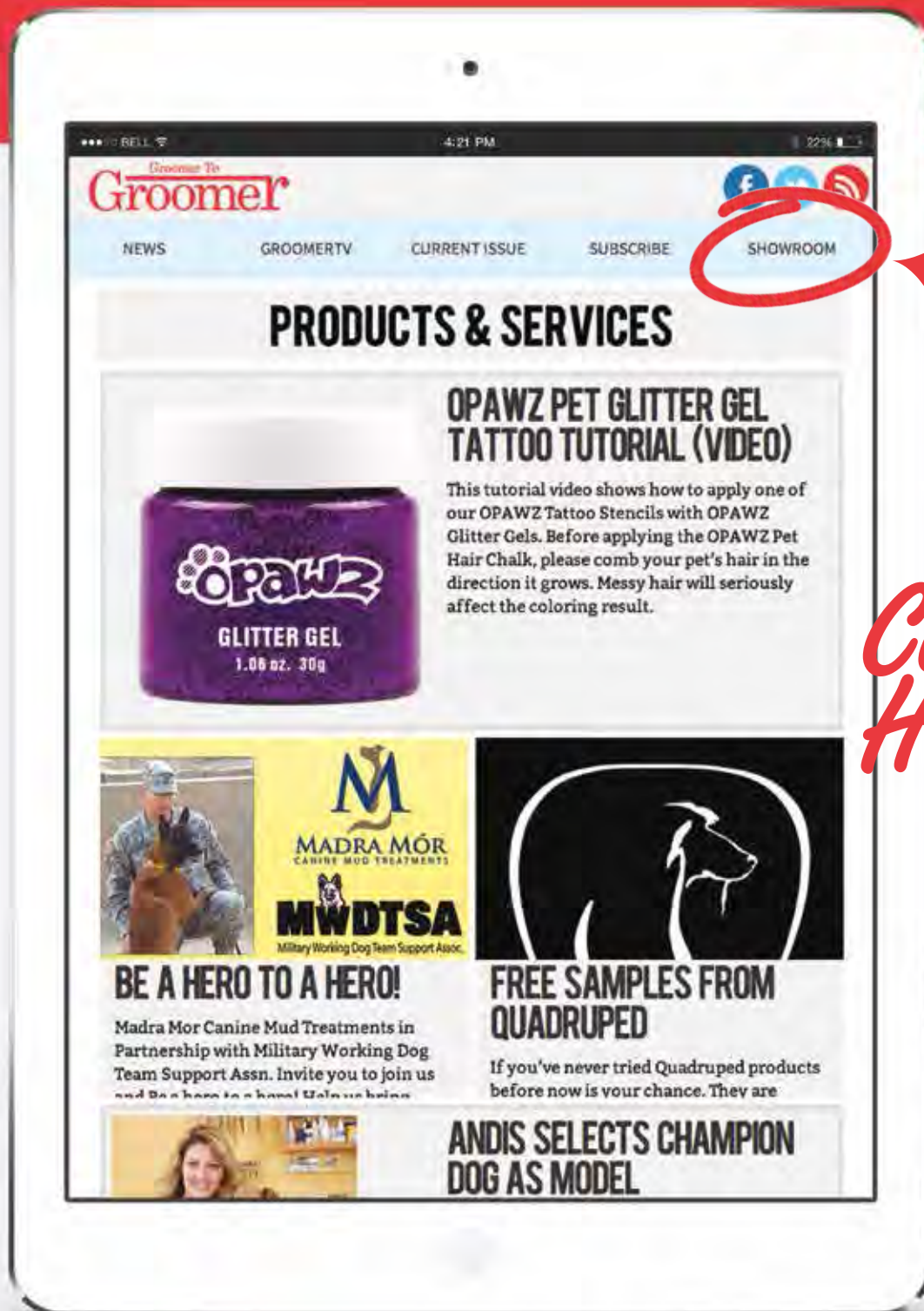
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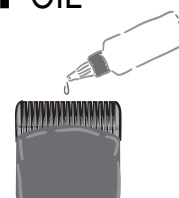
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NATIONAL RESCUE ROUND-UP INVITATIONAL

DEBUTS AT GROOM EXPO 2014

by Kathy Hosler

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OF THE CREATIVE GROOMERS
ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE!**



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NAUGHTY vs. NORMAL

by Gary Wilkes **PAGE 30**

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ON THE COVER: Mackensie Murphy, Groom Expo 2013 Best in Show winner with Connie Bailey of contest sponsor PetSmart. Photos by Animal Photography.

SO LONG!



✎ by Bonnie Wonders-Trent ✎

Apparently my career in the dog grooming world is coming to an end. I don't know the exact date, however, as no one has informed me yet. I rely on the "Doggie Grapevine" to let me know the scoop on the poop.

For about the seventh time in my dog business life, I (as usual) am the last to know that I am going out of business. Someday, yes, I will retire as we all plan to. However, now is NOT that time—not unless Publisher's Clearing House or the lotto comes screaming my way.

It all started months ago. One lady called and asked if I would do her dog "one last time." Usually, when I get a call like that, it means that 1) the dog

is dying, 2) the owner is moving, or 3) somebody's getting a divorce. During the call, I asked the owner why it would be the "last time."

"Because of you going out of business," she said matter-of-factly. "I'll really be sorry to see you quit," she added.

"Who told you that?" I asked her.

"Oh, Ron down the street said that someone told him. I don't know who it was," she said.

I chuckled. "Well, please tell him that it's not true," I said calmly.

"So Sissy won't have to go somewhere new?" she asked.

"No, not unless you're not happy here," I assured her. That was the first call that I remember getting about

it. From that point on, it just kind of snowballed. I started getting several calls a week to several calls in one day all about the same thing.

"Why are you quitting? I can't believe you didn't at least call us," one woman said as her tone got hotter and hotter. "We've been coming to you for almost 20 years and now you up and decide to quit without bothering to tell us at our last appointment? You should have said something without ME having to call YOU first," she practically yelled into the phone. During her rant, I couldn't find a break long enough to tell her that I had no intention of quitting. Finally, I did get in an "Ugh... It's not true. I have no plans to quit. I don't know who started it, but it is



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definitely not true," I told her.

"Oh... Well then sorry if I sounded a little miffed," the woman said. "I'm glad to hear that. You have yourself a good day," she threw in.

I've actually had a few people stop in with tears in their eyes over the whole thing. I will admit that it is nice to be that well liked by some. I've gotten two "we'll miss you" cards in the mail. The writing in one really sounded like it was a eulogy thing. Creepy, but nice.

Usually people call and start out saying, "I have something to ask you..." Then I know what's coming next. I'll just jump right in and say, "No, I'm not going out of business." Each time I ask someone where they heard it, no one seems to know where it started.

I just keep repeating myself when asked about it and made another of my infamous signs to put up in the shop that says it's not so. Then I go on about

my life. I will admit, though, it really does get on my nerves that it hasn't yet died down. My husband thinks he's Columbo or something over it all. I keep hearing, "I'm gonna get to the bottom of this!" from him.

"Yes, dear. You do that," I mumble.

"What if people stop coming here?" he asked one day.

"Hello! Have you not heard me complaining about all the calls from people to find out if it's true before they go somewhere else? I could stand having a lighter load sometimes anyhow," I told him.

"That's it! I'm gonna do some investigating," he said, leaning over the counter.

"Okay, you go right ahead. I'm promoting you to damage control," I told him. He actually looked impressed. There. He had an official job. No idea of how to go about it, mind you, but a job none the less.

Apparently, the only people who haven't found out about my "retirement" are the telemarketers. I can't escape the day without having at least one call from them needing me to update my Google listing or help me collect on unpaid accounts. I keep telling them I don't have "accounts" and I keep hitting "2" to be removed from their lists. That is about as effective as me trying to squash this rumor.

Today, I think I finally got closer to the root of the problem. I had a call from one of my long-time customers today. He asked if the rumor were true. I told him no, but that I'd love to know where it was coming from. He told me he could easily find out for me. He said his uncle told him, and he knows where it originated. Unfortunately, the uncle is not home right now, and he'll talk to him tonight and call me tomorrow. Looks like I might crack the case wide open. (Don't tell Columbo...) <=

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Paw Inspiring

by Missi Salzberg



THE COURAGE TO CHARGE MORE

The following story is true. The names have not been changed to protect the innocent, because it was me and this guy that came to give me a quote on doing some work at my house, and I don't remember his name anyway. We'll just call him "the guy."

The guy came to the house after a hurricane damaged some windows, and we had some water damage. I was taking quotes on the work, and a dear friend referred the guy to me. My friend Bruce is a master carpenter, and he'd worked with the guy before and said he was reasonable and did a great job. Good enough for me.

The guy came out to the house, and we walked through the punch list of things that needed to be addressed. He told me he would be in touch with a

quote, and we went our separate ways. Days and days passed with no word from the guy. Finally, I called and got his voice mail. "Hey there. It's Missi, Bruce's friend. I was wondering if you were able to put together that quote for me. Let me know as soon as you can, because we need to get the work started as soon as possible. Thank you." Figuring that was fairly clear, I assumed (uh-oh) I would hear back from the guy. Nothing.

Another week or so went by, and I had a few quotes in hand, so I gave it one more shot. This time he answered. I will quote him as best as I can from memory. It went something like this: "Hi. I'm sorry it took so long to get back to you, but I really struggle with pricing my work. A lot of times, I underprice myself to get a job, and then

I end up really selling myself short. I have a ballpark for you, but it could go up or down 10 or 20 percent. It's something I'm really trying to work on and be honest with my customers about so I don't end up undercharging."

Immediately I recognized two things: 1) I would not be hiring the guy for the job, and 2) the guy needs therapy. I use this as an example of how not to approach raising your prices! Raising your prices is, however, what I would like to discuss. It is a new year, the economy is finding its feet, and my guess is that for many of you, it has been a while. I can hear the trepidation in your collective voice already.

"I must say I hate money, but it's the lack of it that I hate most."

– Katherine Mansfield

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These are the fears that keep us from raising our prices:

My customers will leave.

My clients are my friends, and I feel guilty about charging them more.

My customers will get angry.

My customers will get their dogs groomed less frequently.

I will end up sitting alone all day with no customers and no business, and my entire world will crumble into the abyss.

In reality, there is a possibility that some customers will flinch at a price increase but not nearly to the extent that you think. I had a store owner call me once and tell me that it just wasn't worth working this hard as a groomer to always be struggling. She told me that the only way she could stay in business was to raise all of her prices \$10.00 across the board. We discussed her cur-

rent pricing (way low at the time), her booking (no appointments available for weeks), and her relationship with her customers (they love her). After looking at her expenses and addressing her fears, she decided to go ahead and raise her grooming base by \$10.00—every dog, effective immediately.

The reaction she got from her customers might just blow your mind. They commented that they thought it had been a long time since she raised her prices. They offered great support and told her they wouldn't trust anyone else with their babies. They were genuinely concerned that she might close her doors, and then what? Admittedly, a few customers left, but she told me that by charging what she was actually worth, it didn't hurt her income to lose a few people. It really helped her confidence to be able to say that she understood that they needed

to go somewhere else, but she really deserved not to struggle anymore, especially offering the level of service that she did. In the end, she ran her business for a few more years and then sold it to one of her groomers and retired. Of course, her business was more valuable at the time of sale!

Losing a few customers across the full spectrum of your clientele will not adversely affect your business. As a matter of fact, in my mind, the grooming bargain shopper may not be a customer I want in the first place. When the phone rings and the first question is "How much to groom a dog?" I am often heard to respond, "Well, it depends on whether it's a Chihuahua or a Newfoundland, but let me tell you a little about who we are." Honestly, if they interrupt me and just want a price, I won't spend too much time on the call. Who we are, what we do, and



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what we offer has got to be part of the bigger picture, because there is no one else like us around! Thankfully our new customers are almost 100% referral, so this doesn't come up very often.

I acknowledge the fear regarding price increases. However, let me state a few facts about your business:

You actually deserve to make a profit! Many of us base our price structure on our comfort level around dealing with money. Especially in an industry that is still overwhelmingly female, it is not surprising that there is a certain level of discomfort around asking for a decent wage. It is, after all, something we are still struggling with as a society. Our lawmakers are debating actual legislation to make the earnings between men and women more equal. Listen, girl! You're a great groomer! You deserve to make a good living!

If you are "branding" your business properly, people are not going to

run screaming if you raise your prices a little. Your customer base is far more loyal than you may think. They trust you. They know that you understand the connection they have with their baby. Sometimes I don't think groomers understand the connection they have with their customers!

As I mentioned earlier, the customer searching for a "bargain groom" can find one, trust me! When you lower your prices once to seal the new customer deal, they will expect a lower price for the long haul. Right out of the gate, state your prices and be confident in them. The person willing to fight you tooth and nail over \$5 may not be your dream client!

If a customer does not see the value of the service that you offer, then you may not be doing your job! A big part of the dynamic between pet owner and business owner in this industry is demonstrating dynamic—making your

connection to the animals a palpable experience. How you greet them, how you pick them up, how you deal with issues that arise, and how you express your care for that pet all comes into play. If you are not offering something special, if you truly have to explain why there is a price increase, and why you're worth it, then perhaps that dynamic is dynamic enough!

"Being good in business is the most fascinating kind of art. Making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art."

— **Andy Warhol**

Once you wrap your mind around raising prices, here are a few suggestions to make the transition easier:

Explain your price increase to the degree you feel you need to, but do not apologize. If you have proven the worth of your services, your customers

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will stick around.

Be forthcoming about the increase. Whether it is a verbal notification or something in writing at the front desk, let them know it's coming. People don't like surprises.

Be confident in your decision and your delivery. Everyone is in business to make money and earn a living.

If you provide benefits to your staff, be proud of the fact that you are supporting the people that support your business. Doing the right thing by your staff is one of the best reasons to raise your prices! If you don't offer benefits, maybe it's time to reconsider.

Remind yourself that you deserve to make a living—not just survive—in a trade as physically demanding as professional grooming. You deserve the security that extra money in the bank provides, both professionally and personally.

Play favorites! For your old-time

customers or seniors that you know are living on a limited income, take this opportunity to pull them aside and let them know this doesn't apply to them. A little extra lovin' for the people that you know need it is fine, and it feels good.

And a final thought: If you are one of the hold outs that still doesn't charge for extras, now is the time. New year, new plan, new income! Remember, anal glands at the vet are three times what most groomers charge.

Medicated shampoo is considerably more expensive than stock shampoos. Dematting is more work, more hassle, and more damaged coat for the next groom. Brushing teeth is also more time, more cost, and a great convenience service, but I know many of you are still not charging for these add-on services.

Just out of curiosity, I ran a report for the last five days to tally the charges

for the add-on services. The grand total is just shy of \$600—anal, medicated baths, a few flea baths, dematting, and teeth. I am not sure what bills you could pay with an extra chunk of change or something special you'd just like to do for yourself or your staff, but I would be happy to make suggestions!

"Money, if it does not bring you happiness, will at least help you be miserable in comfort."

– Helen Gurley Brown

As you stand here at the beginning of the new year, stop and make a decision now. Do I want to be more successful? Do I want to make more money? Whether it's baby steps with a slight increase across the board or charging for all of the extras for the first time in the history of your business, your professional destiny is in your hands. Be courageous and be successful! ☺



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NATIONAL **RESCUE** **ROUND-UP** INVITATIONAL

DEBUTS AT 2014 GROOM EXPO

✧ by Kathy Hosler ✧

We groomers have a real soft spot for an underdog. Just walk into any of our country's animal shelters and you will see that they are overflowing with the unwanted, unloved, and neglected—shelters full of underdogs. That's why countless groomers already donate their time and grooming services to help them.

To showcase the plight of these surrendered and abandoned dogs, many grooming shows have instituted rescue rodeo and rescue round-up competitions. The show organizers arrange to bring dogs from local animal shelters and rescue organizations to their shows. The groomers that have

entered the competitions work their magic to transform those sad and neglected throwaway dogs into sweet-smelling cuties ready for a new home. It's a real win/win for everyone: the dogs become adoptable, the shelters get publicity, and the groomers get a deep satisfaction.

2014 may certainly become the Year of the Rescue Dog for these waiting orphans. The National Rescue Round-Up Invitational is about to put a huge spotlight on this important subject. It's a rescue grooming event unlike any other—and you have to earn your way into the competition.

Todd Shelly, president of Barkleigh Productions, explains this unique Res-

cue Invitational. "The National Rescue Round-up Invitational will be held on Sunday at the 2014 Groom Expo in Hershey, Pennsylvania," says Mr. Shelly. "The way that you get invited to participate in this competition is to enter a Rescue Round-Up tournament at any of the Barkleigh Shows or rescue competitions held at other shows like the Atlanta Pet Fair and SuperZoo. The winner of each of these competitions will advance to the National Rescue Round-Up Invitational at Groom Expo.

"There will be a limit of 16 entrants in the National Rescue Round-Up Invitational," Todd continues. "In addition to all the competitions that will be held throughout the year, there



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As the audience watches the transformations taking place on the stage, it becomes very apparent that they are truly watching a rescue operation. The grooming these dogs are receiving might actually be their last chance at getting adopted.

will be a final Rescue Round-Up competition on Saturday at Groom Expo. Its purpose will be to fill any remaining spots for the Sunday competition with at least two spots guaranteed to be available.

"Saturday's competition for the final spots will be a 'down and dirty'

competition. It will take place in the dog holding area of the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center," says Todd. He adds, "It will be just like the rescue work many groomers do every day—it's not glamorous, it's reality—and it's done with love."

Sunday's National Rescue Round-

Up Invitational will feature the winners of each of the 2014 participating rescue competitions. The contestants will not be grooming show ring champions or breed perfect specimens. They will be working on the same kinds of dogs that walk into your grooming salons every day, except that some of these dogs may have never seen the inside of a grooming salon in their life. As the audience watches the transformations taking place on the stage, it becomes very apparent that they are truly watching a rescue operation. The grooming these dogs are receiving might actually be their last chance at getting adopted.

Knowing that they are helping these dogs in the best way they can is very rewarding for the groomers on stage, but these compassionate groomers may reap other awards as well. "Our ultimate goal is to raise public

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awareness of the vast numbers of dogs in shelters and the great need for these dogs to be adopted into forever homes," shares Todd Shelly. "All of the 2014 rescue competitions will reward and bring recognition to the groomers who have done this kind of grooming for so long on their own. It's a way to show everybody that this is something that our industry does and something that we take very seriously."

The shelters and rescues that participate will be provided with financial contributions and will receive product donations, and the raised public awareness will help more dogs get adopted. All of the competitions before the National Rescue Round-Up Invitational at Groom Expo in Hershey will offer cash awards and prizes for the winners. At these competitions, there will be sponsors that will provide awards to the competitors or the shelters—or both! The first place winner of the 2014 National Rescue

Round-Up Invitational will be awarded a spectacular Barkleigh Cruise and will also appear on the cover of Groomer to Groomer Magazine!

Cheryl Purcell, coordinator of the Rescue Round-Up, encourages groomers to enter this competition. "It's a great chance for a groomer to jump in and get their feet wet in the competition ring," stresses Ms. Purcell. "Just do what you do everyday... Make the dogs feel good for themselves and make them look and smell good for the owners."

Before each competition, Cheryl evaluates the dogs that are brought in for the contest. She checks their temperament and observes them to see how they react to all the noises and activity. She assigns each dog a number. The groomers come down a half hour before the contest, draw numbers, and then are matched up with the corresponding dog. They get 30 minutes to interact with their dog before sign-in.

The judging of a rescue grooming competition takes into consideration what you started with, what you did with what you had, and what the finished groom looks like. For the past two years, every dog from the Rescue Round-Ups held at Groom Expo in Hershey has found a forever home. In 2013, a viewer watching the competition live on GroomerTV saw one of the dogs and immediately contacted Barkleigh asking how they could adopt the dog.

Cheryl strongly suggests that anyone who wants to compete should sign up early, as the space for each competition is limited. Groomers, here's your chance to really make a difference. Come out and show us what you've got. Just do what you do in your shops everyday, and you will change the life of a dog, educate the public, and maybe even set sail on a fabulous cruise! ☺

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TEACHING TALENT

“My mother was a public school teacher,” said Debi Hilley.
“She taught first grade and Head Start. She instilled in me the importance of education and went over and above teaching her kids. Maybe her work has something to do with me wanting to help teach other groomers.”

Debi's Fan Mail:

I first “met” Debi on the original online grooming education site, The Groomers Lounge (www.groomers.net). She and I were early members of a growing group of groomers thirsty for knowledge and incredibly excited to have a forum where like-minded people could share the intricacies of the unique career of pet grooming. The Lounge gave us a place to blow off steam, tell funny tales, and best of all teach each other things we had learned while up to our elbows in dog hair. Debi was a vocal member, always anxious to share new ideas. She wrote fluidly and clearly had the gift of being a natural teacher. She could explain even complex ideas so that most anyone could understand them without ever making the reader feel talked

down to.

Some of what she shared was controversial, and she was sometimes the target of criticism about her methods. “I think it is funny that newer people in the industry consider controversial things that some of us have been doing for years—wet clipping, for example. It is fine to disagree and discuss, but it gets annoying when people attack me personally and not the idea I am sharing. It would be so much nicer if personal attacks were avoided; that would make the world a better place.” I asked why she continued to put herself out in such a way as to invite criticism. “It’s the Army brat in me, I guess!” she replied.

I love your blog. I am new to grooming and get the most valuable real life application from your blog. I didn't have a great education in the shop I paid to be trained in. I purchased some DVDs, and your blog is very valuable in providing little tidbits that aren't always explained. I would suspect you have a natural teaching ability. Thanks so much!

Debi shares her expertise on many online forums now and writes a monthly column for Pet Age magazine, as well. Her blog, “Grooming Smarter,” which can be found at www.groom-wise.com, has been viewed 245,000 times in the past three years. She was nominated twice for the coveted Barkleigh Honors award for Blog of the

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I am so glad to have found your blog, and thank you for taking the time to share and help all the groomers. You are wonderful!

Year. Grooming Smarter is not just words on the screen; Debi adds helpful photos and also films brief videos so people can see her performing certain grooming tasks up close and personal. "A short little two-minute video can take me five or six tries to get it to where I want it to be. People walk in front of the camera or a dog acts up, but I keep at it."

She tries to publish three blogs every month. Her topics are widely varied. "I get inspired to cover a topic when someone at my shop asks me

how to do something or if I read a post online where someone has a question. My blog on how to cut a bandana was one of the most popular ones I've ever done," she said. "It has been viewed 1,200 times!" She recently published a short video showing how groomers can blend lines on a dog's coat using clippers. "500 people viewed that in five days!"

All this teaching takes time. "I dedicate two to ten hours per week working on my blog." I happen to know that Debi is a busy wife, mother, grandmother, and owner of a high-volume grooming shop. I asked her, "Why do you spend so much time doing that?" She replied, "People were very generous with me when I first started. People like Lisa Leady and Scott Wasserman shared so much. And the Internet was new. Groomers



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Debi's Fan Mail:

Debi, May God bless you abundantly. You are a wonderful person and mentor. Keep up the great work.

were sharing everything with each other. It was a giant brain dump! I learned so much from everyone else; now I feel like I want to share what I learned both from others and from years of experience. Not many people are doing that for free now, but I think it is important to give back even though I don't get paid. At least, not with money!" she laughed. "But sometimes I get a letter from someone thanking me, and that just blows me away. Or I will be at a grooming trade show and someone will

come up and say, 'I've read your stuff, and I learned so much. Thank you!' These things make me feel like I am affecting someone's life in positive manner, and that is such a good feeling."

Debi has taught groomers in person, too. "Too many to count, really," she said. "I've trained eight fully all the way through to where I would call them groomers. Two of those have gone on to compete and win. I have also taught about 20 people to bathe and dry pets, and some of those employees I've trained have gone on to become husbands!" Debi's husband, Chuck, worked for her weekends and on his days off from his regular job for two years. "I figured if he knew what I did for a living, he'd go away. He didn't." The two have been married for 13 years, and Chuck still sometimes finds himself in front of a grooming tub.

A man named Ralph Marston wrote "...If you wish to learn, then take time to teach. If you wish to climb higher, then lift others up. If you wish to be wise, then share what you know..." It is said that what you put out into the world comes back to you tenfold. If that is so, Debi's future should be rich in generosity, because to this helpful teacher, grooming matters. ☺

Debi's Fan Mail:

Your blog made me cry today. I would love to meet you one day! Thank you for sharing so much with us throughout the year and may God bless you richly in the year to come.

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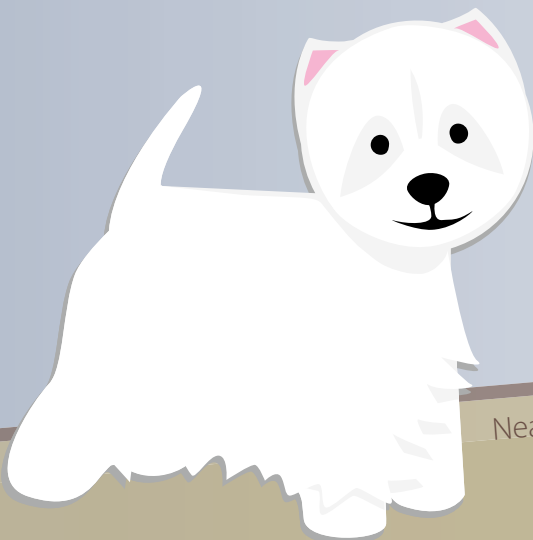
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NAUGHTY *vs.* NORMAL

My first cattle dog was named Megan. When I met her, she was four months old and on “death row” at my shelter. She was about to be killed because of the heinous offense of chasing livestock—a task she was genetically designed for. Go figure. Eventually she worked as an animal control dog for three years, more than ten years as my wife’s hearing dog, and my demo dog at seminars.

Outside the dog fancy, this scenario is common. Many dogs are unfairly classified as behavioral misfits by

people who seem clueless about their genetic gifts. Terriers that dig holes drive their owners nuts. Beagles that bay at the moon and Retrievers that kill birds are good examples of dogs that are condemned for displaying perfectly normal, but often unacceptable, behavior.

Ironically, most of these behaviors are simultaneously prized and despised by humans. It’s like the old saying about the three most important things in real estate: location, location, location. The farm terrier that kills small animals is highly valued, while a

city dog that performs the same behavior may be branded “vicious.” Beagles whose baying can be heard for miles earn praise from a hunter and a criminal citation for the urban pet owner. The farmer’s dog who chases away transients is contrasted by the suburban dog who bites the letter carrier.

Though simple ignorance is often blamed for this paradox, that may be mistaken. A person who buys a Malamute pup invariably brags about the fact that they are used as sled dogs. This claim is usually left unfinished as their dog drags them briskly down

The real culprit in this cross-species dilemma is probably not ignorance but fantasy. A common reason for picking a particular breed is not the reality of the animal's behavioral traits but the image it will project to others.

the street. The same owner who revels in the fact that their Pit Bull Terrier comes from a lineage of fighting dogs is apparently mystified when Chopper kills the neighbor's Shih Tzu. It is obvi-

ous that the owners are both proud and apologetic for the same behaviors.

The real culprit in this cross-species dilemma is probably not ignorance but fantasy. A common reason for

picking a particular breed is not the reality of the animal's behavioral traits but the image it will project to others. Books about various breeds and species of pets pander to this process. Giant breeds, such as Neapolitan Mastiffs, are often described in terms such as "powerful" and "fiercely loyal" and at the same time called "gentle giants." Border Collies are reputed to be "intelligent" and "obedient" while herding the children dangerously around the family pool. The animal is selected because of the slogans attached to it—not because of any actual knowledge of the breed.

Most often, basing the selection of an animal based on reputation leads to problems. The regal-looking Mastiff will grow to be a 170-pound slobbering

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beast that may casually eat the neighbor's cat and splatter long tendrils of drool on the walls. As groomers, this may be to your advantage. If the owner can't handle the dog, you may be the solution to regular grooming. The Border Collie, without daily opportunities to chase sheep, may develop aberrant behaviors such as chasing shadows or nipping the heels of small children. Each animal will offer perfectly normal behavior that represents the reality behind its image. The new owner will be frustrated and disappointed that the dog does not live up to "unrealistic" expectations.

Selecting a dog based on real, rather than imagined, qualities is the first step toward building a successful relationship. As groomers, you are in a position to help inject a dose of reality into the equation before the deed is done. Here are some thoughts that

may help you give wise counsel, which is unlikely to be taken. That is the genetic nature of humans.

- It helps to remember that for almost any "beneficial" trait, there is an equal and opposite drawback. Labrador Retrievers love to swim. Burt, the "incredible diving dog" is a show stopper in the summer and a muddy, cold, and wet lapful in the winter. The Whippet that can run at 35 miles an hour chasing a Frisbee can be impossible to catch if he decides to take off after a friendly female Foxhound.

- Suggest an objective examination of the pet owner's lifestyle. If the husband works 80 hours a week, the wife is likely to be the person dealing with the dog and should have the final say in what kind she's going to have to control. Most dogs are dynamic creatures who need mental stimulation and physical activity. If your clients re-

ally want a behaviorally robust animal, such as a Doberman or an Irish Setter, they should consider waiting until they can devote more time to a pet or getting a less reactive dog.

- Help the client research the type of dog they want in advance, and let it be known to your clients that you have that expertise. Let them know that most dog books and magazines are written by enthusiasts who voluntarily accept all of a dog's rough edges. Help them decipher "breed bragging" by asking some basic questions. First, what was the original purpose of the breed? If a dog is designed to herd sheep by biting them, it may transfer the behavior to small children. If Iraqi Camel Dogs were originally bred to hunt dromedaries, the pet llama may become the target of the dog's affections.

- Try to keep track of local breed clubs so you can refer prospective



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dog owners to knowledgeable people. Seeing a single example of a breed may cause the client to assume all of that breed are identical. A breed club can provide access to more than one or two examples.

Suggest that they foster a dog of their breed of choice. There is noth-

ing like living with a dog for a month to tell you if you like being heeled by your heeler as you run to answer the door. Many humane organizations and rescue clubs are looking for foster homes for pets. Actually caring for an animal is the best way to know if you have made the right selection.

As groomers, you are in a unique position to be the center of a dog's life in the eyes of their owners. When you help them pick the right dog, you may make the difference between having a life-long client or a dead-file on your computer. ✂

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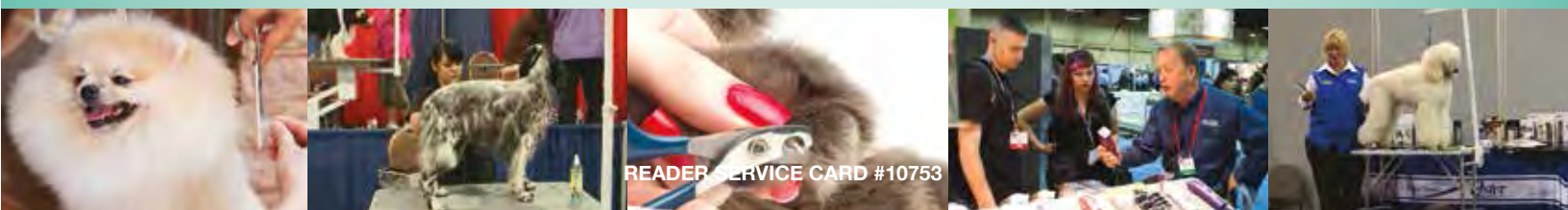


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PET FIRST AID KITS



by Mary Oquendo

We all have a couple of grooming clients we will remember forever. Some clients are reminisced with fondness, others not quite so affectionately. Casey falls somewhere in the middle. She was an adorable, well-behaved Golden Retriever who inspired my love of the breed. Casey would rest her head on my shoulder during grooming and just loved to give kisses. She was also my first grooming accident. Casey

licked my scissors while I was trimming up her feet. Tongues bleed. A lot. My grooming manager pulled out the pet first aid kit and thankfully took over.

I learned two things that day: the importance of knowing where your scissors are in relation to the pet's body and of having a pet first aid kit. My own pet first aid kit has evolved over the years and currently contains the following:

Activated charcoal is used to absorb ingested poisons. In my kit, any item that is intended for poisoning will NOT be used unless directed by a veterinarian. Protocols vary, and what will help in one instance can cause harm in another.

Antibiotic cream for wounds. I do not use triple antibiotic, as I groom cats. While it is rare, cats may have an allergy to such products. The combination of the three ingredients may cause



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Bandanas have multiple uses. They replace triangular bandages and can be used as slings to take the weight off of an injured limb.

a fatal reaction in some cats. I prefer to use all-natural products, but most contain essential oils and botanicals. I do not rely on manufacturer's pet safe labeling. There is no regulatory agency that oversees such labeling. It is up to the manufacturer to determine its safety. Instead I look for complete disclosure on the label and research the individual ingredients.

Antihistamine and safety pin for minor allergic reactions. I specifically look for diphenhydramine gels with a liquid center. The safety pin is used to puncture the gel cap and squirt the liquid directly onto the tongue of the

pet. It is the fastest way for an anaphylactic pet to absorb the antihistamine. Consult a veterinarian for proper dosing. Not all pets can safely use antihistamines, as it may interfere with other medications and medical conditions.

Baking soda to absorb topical poisons or chemicals.

Band-aids for myself. This is the one item that is replenished on a regular basis.

Bandanas have multiple uses. They replace triangular bandages and can be used as slings to take the weight off of an injured limb.

Expired gift cards are always

saved. They are a perfect size to cushion pad injuries on larger pets. I place gauze on both sides of the card and securely wrap the cards and gauze to the paw with vet wrap. In addition, the cards can flick out bee stingers. Place the card at the base of the stinger where it meets the skin and lift up and out.

Eyewash serves double duty. It can be used to flush out both eyes and wounds.

Gauze comes in three varieties: gauze roll, gauze pads, and nonstick gauze pads. The gauze roll is wider and is good for larger wounds. The nonstick gauze is more expensive, but I will use it as the first pad on the wound and then place the cheaper gauze on top of it. The nonstick gauze will not remove the scab when it is time to replace the bandaging. Pawflex makes a nonstick bandage designed for dogs

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Muzzles are a must. If you need to use your pet first aid kit, this pet is likely in pain.

Any pet that is in pain is a bite risk.

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Honey packets for hypoglycemic pets. Stress, seizures, as well as an owner giving a pet too much insulin can result in low blood sugar. This is a serious condition that may result in the death of the pet. Signs include listlessness, staggering, tremors, muscle weakness, and seizures. Do not give the pet honey unless directed by a veterinarian.

Hydrogen peroxide to induce vomiting in a dog. As this is used for poisoning, consult a veterinarian first. Dosage will vary. Vomiting is not a

given for poisoning. If it is caustic, it will burn the throat on its way out. You cannot use hydrogen peroxide to induce vomiting in cats. Cats cannot metabolize hydrogen peroxide.

Ice will constrict blood flow and slow bleeding. I do not keep ice in my pet first aid kit. Most people keep ice in a freezer, unless, of course, you are my husband. Ask me about that if you see me at a trade show.

Liquid bandage is an asset if you know how to use it properly. Used incorrectly, it can damage surrounding tissue, as well as trap bacteria in the

wound. Your veterinarian can instruct you in proper usage. I do not use superglue. It is not manufactured for medical use, and as such, the manufacturer can change ingredients and formulation without consideration for safety on wounds.

Muzzles are a must. If you need to use your pet first aid kit, this pet is likely in pain. Any pet that is in pain is a bite risk.

Plastic baggies to collect a vomit or fecal sample. This may be necessary if the pet has been poisoned and you are unsure of what was ingested. When not in use, it can store smaller items for easy accessibility.

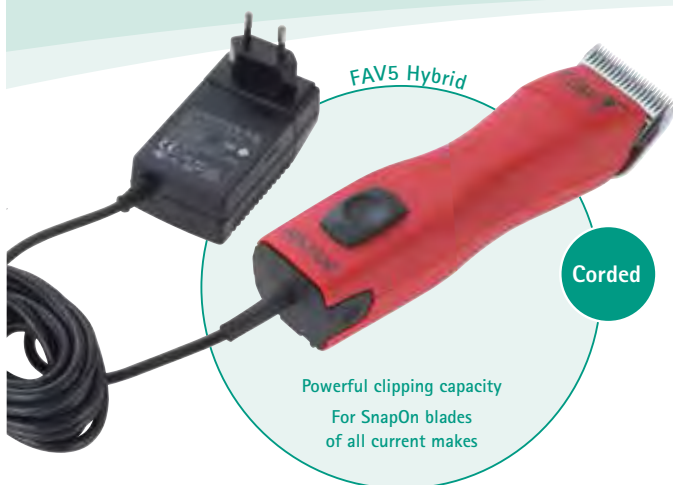
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Tea bags contain tannic acid. It is effective in stopping bleeding. In Casey's situation, we used sugar. While sugar is effective, I do not recommend it, because the pet may be diabetic.

peroxide down the throat of a dog. Styptic powder for use on nails only. It stings, and this pet is already in pain. In addition, styptic powder is not sterile, and you may introduce bacteria into the wound.

Tea bags contain tannic acid. It is effective in stopping bleeding. In Casey's situation, we used sugar. While sugar is effective, I do not recommend it, because the pet may be diabetic.

Vet wrap is wonderful. It keeps the

wound secure and dry. Vet wrap is also expensive. The human counterpart, which is the exact same thing, is a fraction of the cost.

Wound cleanser. You have several options. The first is sterile saline solution, also known as eyewash. The second is a chlorohexidine-based cleanser. This is easy to find. Almost any store that sells first aid items carries it.

The third is my personal choice. I use Vetericyn products. Do not use

hydrogen peroxide, as it degrades surrounding tissue and cats cannot metabolize it. Do not use alcohol, as it stings. Do not use sterile, tap, or bottled water, as it disrupts the salt balance of the cells and slows healing.

Many of these items have expiration dates and should be checked periodically.

Because we treated Casey promptly, her wound healed quickly. As a result, Casey was in less pain. The hardest part was telling Casey's mom what happened. Casey's mom shrugged it off, telling us that it was an ongoing problem, as Casey loved to steal her sewing scissors. That brings me to the third thing I learned that day. When I ask the owner if there are any conditions I should be aware of and the owner cannot think of anything, I offer a couple of medical AND behavioral possibilities. ☺

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INSIDE THE NEW 4th EDITION

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- Clipping Required
- Undercoat

AKC Breed Group:

- Terrier

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Grooming Instructions

1. **Ear Cleaning:** First lightly dust the inside of the ears with ear powder, pulling out any dead hair from the ear canal with your fingers or a Flammostat® hair puller. Then, clean the inside of the ears using cotton balls lightly dampened with an ear cleaner.

2. Wipe the corner of the eye and under the eye with a cotton ball moistened with saline solution to

6. Clip the hair from the stomach area, from the groin to the navel, using a #10 blade.

7. Brush the coat quickly with a slicker brush or deslating tool to loosen any tight mats. If the dog is on a regular, frequent grooming schedule, the body pattern will be put on after the bath. If there is excessive coat, remove it by presetting the body pattern before

Use an Aaronco® coarse stripping knife to card the coat to remove as much undercoat as possible before clipping. A longer blade will give a more proper look and make it easier to blend pattern lines.

10. Using a #2 snap-on comb, #4, #5, or #7 blade clip from the base of the skull down the back stopping about one inch before the base of the tail. This hair is

Understanding the Lines:

Direction of stroke used for clipping pattern.

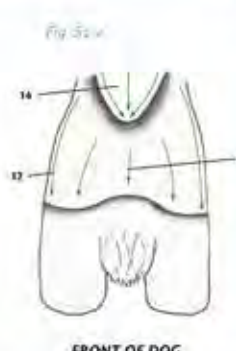
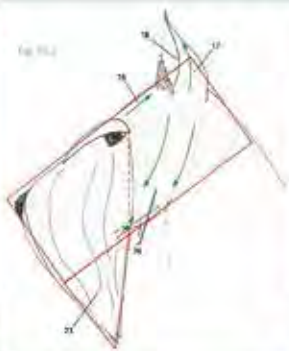
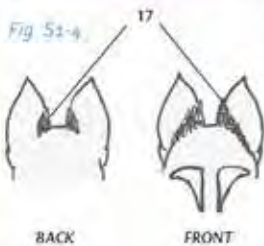
Indicates a distinct pattern with other hair hanging over it.

Indicates a distinct pattern line with no blending.

Indicates a pattern where two different blades are used next to each other to accomplish different lengths of coat without needing to blend the lengths since they are very similar.

Illustrates a general shape or appearance.

Indicates a gradually tapered end. The darker shading indicates shorter hair which gets longer as shading becomes lighter. There should be no distinct line as hair becomes longer.



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THE DAMAGE TO A DROPPED CLIPPER

by Jeff Andrews

We all hold our breath when we drop a clipper, because we hope it still runs when we pick it off the floor. Our clipper is one of the most important tools, so we have to take care of it. We do our monthly maintenance, clean the hair from it daily, and above all, make sure it doesn't hit the floor. All clippers have the same problems when they are dropped, but let's look at the Andis AGC Ultra Edge, because it's presumably the most common clipper used among most groomers.

THE SWITCH

When the clipper hits the floor, it jars the insides terribly. The switch has

a capacitor on it, which can break loose from the circuit board. It has two small wires that are only soldered to the board, and when the clipper hits the floor, they can break. If both of these wires are broken, the capacitor will be loose, and it will sound like something is rattling inside.

If just one of these wires is broken, you will lose your high speed. The switch is screwed into the rear motor mounts of the clipper. The motor mounts are just two plastic posts located on the bottom clipper body that holds the rear of your motor. If either of these mounts break off when the clipper is dropped, it can cause

your clipper to get hot when running. The motor vibrates, because nothing is holding it at the back, thus causing the heat. Lower clipper bodies are about \$10.00. Have you experienced any of these problems?

THE MOTOR FIELD

This is a big thing that can short out your armature, blow your switch,



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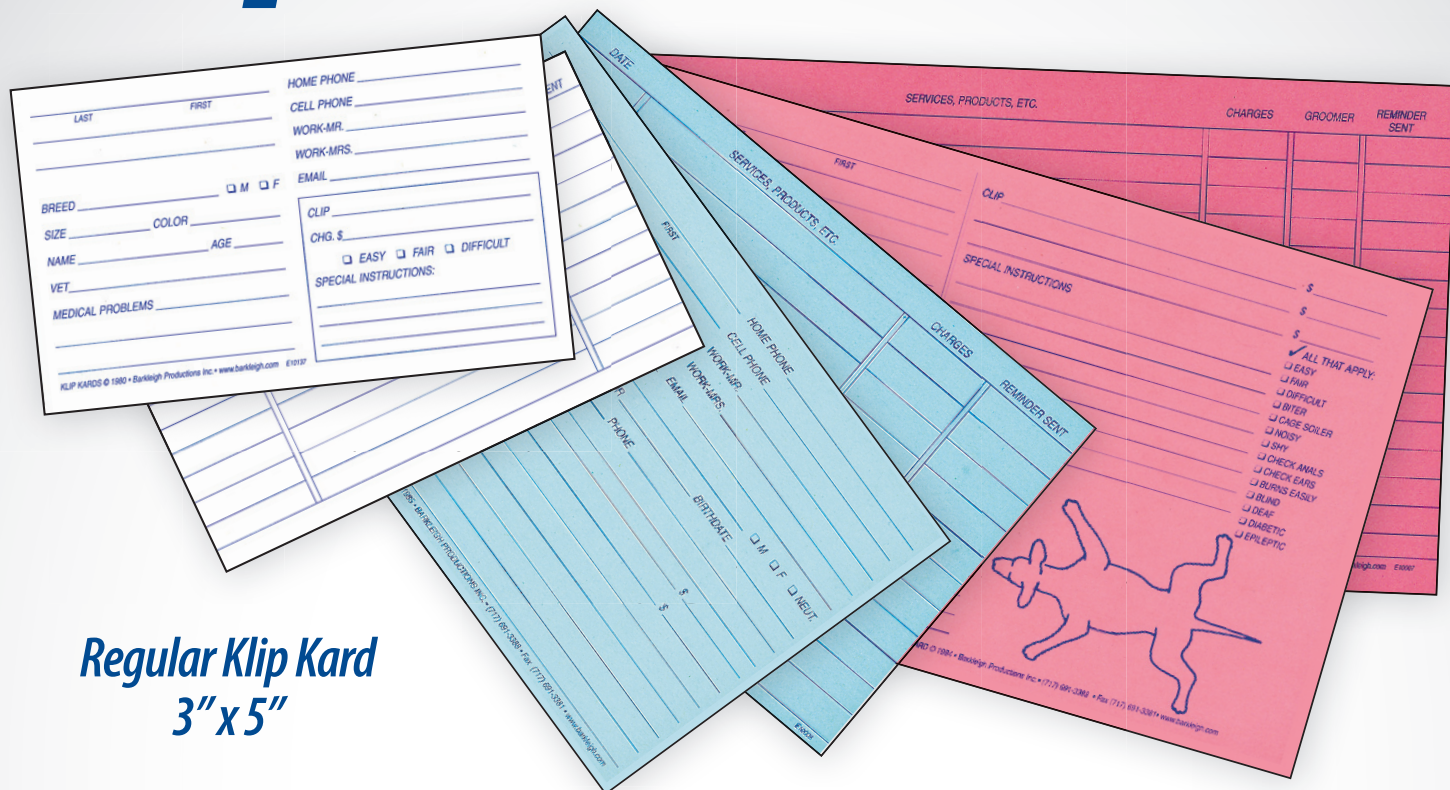
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and possibly cause smoke to come from the clipper. Figure about \$90 to fix this if the damage is this extensive. The motor field is a round steel tube lined with two curved magnets. Your armature spins inside this tube. When your clipper is turned on, your brushes cause a negative polarity to the magnets. This causes the armature to spin, which moves your blade drive back and

forth, making the blade cut.

If you drop your clipper and it hits hard enough, you can crack these magnets. They can fragment, causing shorts, which can blow the armature and switch. If one of the fragments is small enough, it can lodge against the armature inside and pin it so it doesn't move. Usually when this happens, you can hear the clipper "hum"

when you turn it on, but it won't run. If you experience this, don't try to use it anymore and send it in for repair. A new motor field can cost about \$25; armatures are about \$40 and switches are about \$15, plus the labor charge. It can get expensive to fix any clipper with this kind of damage.

Since your clipper is so important to you, working or not, you need to take care of it. I learned by experience a long time ago that setting a clipper under a dog on the table can really ruin your day. I use a small table next to my grooming table, and I set both shears and clippers on it when I'm not using them. It may be a lifestyle change for you to start doing that if you're having your equipment kicked off the table on a regular basis. Animals are spontaneous, and they won't be looking for your tools underneath them.

Read those labels, and have fun grooming! ☺



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BREAD & BUTTER GROOMING:
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PET TRIMS FOR THE SALON

by Kathy Rose



Double Coat Comfort Clip: *the* **WOOLIE AKITA**

Our Bread & Butter client list includes an abundance of thickly double-coated breeds such as the Golden Retriever, Keeshond, American Eskimo dog, and the occasional Long Coated Akita, just to name a few. Most of these breeds are shown with a natural look with minimal scissoring. This can prove to be a challenge for the average pet owner who may desire a tidier, cleaner-appearing dog adorned by coat furnishings that are less likely to attract every sticker, twig, and leaf in the yard.

Any profusely double-coated breed that is not being shown can be toned down to a smarter coif by following the same techniques. This complete “tidy

all over” trim was done with Katana Super Blenders and Blue Breeze™ shorter blenders, made by Geib Buttercut.

For this segment of Bread & Butter Grooming, our model is the large, sweet, and abundantly coated Woolie Akita. I should first make this point about the Akita: the correct Akita coat is void of any indication of feathering or ruff, according to the AKC breed standard. There is, however, a recessive gene that when present in both parents may produce the long coated or “Woolie” Akita. This longer coat is considered a fault in the AKC conformation ring and LCs are rarely seen in the show arena. Until recently, this va-

riety has not been a regular among our Bread & Butter clients. The amiable dispositions, lion-like appearance, and definite “cuteness” factor are increasing their popularity.

PREPARING THE THICK DOUBLE COAT

These profuse double coats can really muck up the drying room! I recommend trying a few tips during the bathing process to help speed up the procedure and cut down on the volume of coat blowing around the wet room.

Fig. 1: Remove the excess, dead undercoat before beginning the bathing procedures. With one hand, gently grasp the loose skin to hold it in place



FIG. 1



FIG. 2



FIG. 3



FIG. 4



FIG. 5



FIG. 6

and stretch out folds. With the other hand, use a FURminator or coarse undercoat stripping knife to remove excess dead undercoat. It is important to evaluate the skin condition before implementing this procedure. Always card following the coat growth direction and secure loose skin.

Fig. 2: Use a high-pressure nozzle

such as the Sav-Ur-Fur sprayer nozzle for undercoat removal. While holding the nozzle fairly close to the skin, work the shampoo and spray into the coat, pushing the dead undercoat out.

Fig. 3: When the coat is fully lathered with shampoo and conditioner, use a high-velocity blower pointing downward to blow out dead undercoat



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FIG. 7



FIG. 8



FIG. 9



FIG. 10



FIG. 11



FIG. 12

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into the tub. You need not dry the dog; just use the velocity to blow some of the excess coat out before the final rinse. The wet hair is heavier and less likely to blow all over the salon. I recommend only doing this in an enclosed tub and not near the dog's head so shampoo-soaked hair can be contained and not blown into the dog's face.

These steps will greatly reduce the amount of dead coat being blown around the salon when you begin the actual drying procedure. Finish the bathing process with a thorough rinse.

Use a high-velocity dryer to complete the drying process.

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STYLING PROCEDURES

Fig. 4: Starting at the neck, use super blenders to top thin the mane, neck, and chest. When top thinning, it is important to keep the blenders on top of the coat and only go with or against the coat growth direction—not across it.

Fig. 5: Following the coat growth direction, top thin downward following the spring of rib.

In an upward motion, follow the bottom of the rib cage and trim the flanks. Angling your blenders so that your wrist is slightly under the dog will help you to achieve a rounded rib cage.

Fig. 6: Lift the foreleg and trim the underline from between the front legs to the tuck up area.

Changing direction, now work forward from the tuck up, following the natural underline between the front legs and up to the chest.

Fig. 7: Trim the tuck-up to follow the natural underline of the dog.

Top-thin the coat on the middle and upper thighs and between the rear legs.

For particularly bushy areas, you can “bulk-thin” by placing the blenders deep under the coat against coat growth direction (not across) and bulk thin some of the excess. A word of caution: blenders remove a lot of coat, so make only one snip then comb.

Fig. 8: Lift the tail up and over the back, and round the hips, blending onto the back.

With your blenders either up or down, never sideways, trim the outside of the rear legs and the stray hairs on the inside of the rear legs. Trim the hocks so they are parallel to each other and perpendicular to the table.

Fig. 9: With your blenders pointing

upward, blend the front leg coat to the elbow.

Fig. 10: Lift the front leg and trim the feathering on the back of the front legs.

Using smaller blenders or thinning shears, trim the tufts between the toes to form compact, round feet.

Fig. 11: Hold the ear in place and trim the bushy feathers on the inside of the ear. Blend the entire ear.

Fig. 12: Lift the tail straight and trim the untidy hair on the tail furnishings.

Finish up with a coat polish or finishing spray, then brush with a bristle brush. This will tame the static and fly always. Keep in mind that this trim style is for pet dogs and could spell disqualification for a breed currently showing. Conversation and a thorough evaluation of the pet will ensure you are meeting your clients' expectations, and your Bread & Butter clients will thank you for assisting them in the reduction of hairballs throughout the house and presenting them a tidy family member! ☺

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Alpha Grooming Products Launches

January 2014 marks the official launch of Alpha Grooming Products, a manufacturer and designer of professional grooming and veterinary products, tools and equipment. The founders of Alpha Grooming Products include Troy Ratliff, an award-winning professional groomer, and Joshua Vandgrift, a Owensboro-based entrepreneur and business developer. Both founders have spent the last three years creating

and testing tools and equipment that are designed to make grooming more efficient, ergonomic, profitable and enjoyable for the groomers. Troy and Josh are planning on rolling out their new product offerings, one each month or so throughout 2014, which will include a wide range of products - from shampoos, shears, combs and various other hand tools, to innovative grooming tubs, grooming tables, mobile grooming vans/trailers and other large equipment.

Their first product for 2014 is their "Alpha Grooming Loop". This loop is made here in the USA from a coated rope material bearing a tested break strength of over 800 pounds (the clamps are designed to break first for safety purposes). The loops are waterproof, stink-proof, stain-proof, rip-proof, chew-proof (pretty much dog proof) and are available in orange, black, pink, blue, and red. \$24.95 ea. or 3 for \$59.95 + shipping and handling.

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