

Groomer To Groomer

"THE GROOMING INDUSTRY'S
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GROOM EXPO

RECAP &
RESULTS

PET HEALTH
EXAM

HOLIDAY HAZARDS



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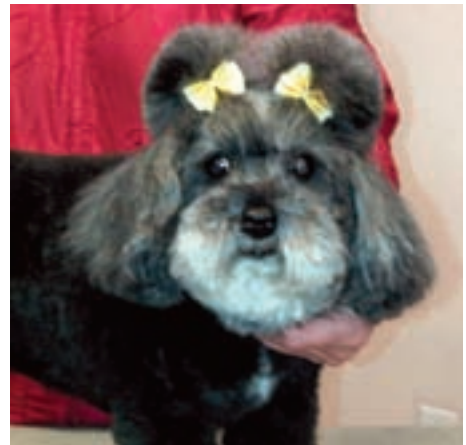
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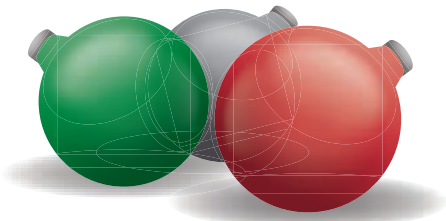
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ANGELS IN OUR PATH by Missi Salzberg

PAGE 45

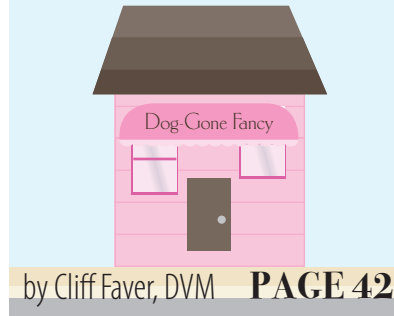


HOLIDAY HAZARDS



by Teri DiMarino **PAGE 10**

WHO ARE YOU?



by Cliff Faver, DVM **PAGE 42**

BREAD & BUTTER GROOMING COCKAPOO

by Kathy Rose **PAGE 52**



TRADING PLACES

by Emily Rupe **PAGE 6**

ALSO INSIDE

Groom Expo Recap and Results	20	Industry News	56
Emergency Preparedness	32	New Product News	58
Pup Graffiti	36	Classifieds	60
Pet Health Exam	38	Calendar of Events	61
Barkleigh Honors 2012 Winners	49		

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ON THE COVER: Jennifer Lee, Groom Expo 2012 GroomOlympics Best in Show winner with Connie Bailey of PetSmart. Photo by Animal Photography

Trading Places

By Emily Rupe

*Some things
are best left
to the pros*

An illustration of a woman with short, curly orange hair, wearing a purple short-sleeved shirt. She is standing behind a black grooming table. On the table sits a small, long-haired dog with grey and white fur, looking up at the woman. The background is a light blue wash.

I stared into my bathroom mirror in disgust and horror. Many women before me had faced this terrifying view and shared the same thought: “What happened!?” After two children and a career, the once-tiny blonde with the junk in her trunk now looked like a grizzly bear preparing for hibernation, and there was nothing perky about the effects of gravity. Then there it was: my first old hag hair, mocking me from its perch on my chin. That was it! No way was I going to take this lying down. I brandished my tweezers, ripped this symbol of decline

out of my face, and decided I was going to do something dramatic.

For the past few seasons, I had been a fiery red head, denouncing my once long blond locks. However, desperate times call for desperate measures, and the time for something new was NOW. I needed to whack Mother Nature and Father Time into the next county! Now, I have a high school diploma and some college education in my background, so why a concept I learned in kindergarten eluded me remains a mystery.

In a desperate gesture to reclaim

my youth, I grabbed a bottle of light blond hair color and proceeded to vanquish my enemy, or so I thought. When all the coating, marinating, and rinsing were through, a shriek rang out as I stared into my nemesis, the bathroom mirror. Emily! Red and yellow don’t make pretty blond... Red and yellow make ORANGE! Needless to say, I looked like I was from circa 1980-something with my brassy, orange hair. Fixing my mistake wasn’t going to be an immediate option either, since my hasty use of harsh product had fried my hair. I was going

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to be stuck like this for at least a few weeks, and I had to be back grooming the next day.

Panicked, I looked at my schedule and heaved a sigh of relief. Only one new client. The rest were regulars that might get a chuckle at my misfortune, but they already knew me and weren't going to get any wrong first impressions. When the next morning came, I had already accepted my fate and had come to terms with my new do.

The day's appointments unfolded without a hitch. I got a few questions, chuckles, and suggestions, but no biggie. The new client was my last of the day, so by the time her slot rolled around, I wasn't even thinking about the tangerine dream on my head.

As the front door opened, a young, chic-looking lady answered the door. She took a quick stare at my follicular flub and then hurriedly produced her

puppy. I knew something was up, as she handed me this tiny Maltese mix with her head hung in shame and refusing to make eye contact. It looked like it had been on the losing end of a weed whacker. There was no discussion on hairstyle, just a mutual understanding that this was a salvage job. The good thing was that I knew there was no chance of making it worse... We could only go up from here!

After spending a few hours blending and evening as best as I could, the dog looked somewhat presentable. I had done what I could, but I lack the ability to grow hair back instantly. This pup could have definitely used a puppy weave in some places. I considered it a learning experience for mom, and at least the dog made it through her at-home experiment physically unharmed.

I returned the Swiss cheese Mal-

tese, and mom seemed relieved that some improvement had been made. I even got a little chuckle when we talked about calling me first next time, and we'll take care of her baby. So as I bid adieu, I handed her one of my cards and smiled, but unexpectedly, I received another card from her in return. In a hurry to get home, I continued to smile and rush out to my van. As I sat down preparing to head home I took the card out and flipped it over.

On the front was the client's name, a pair of shears, and the title of master stylist! My jaw hit the floor, and I began to chuckle. I had been the pot calling the kettle black. I was just as guilty as she was with at home experiments. My nuclear orange tresses were my Maltese. Both of us had learned a valuable lesson that day... Leave it to the professionals, and keep each other's numbers on speed dial. ☺

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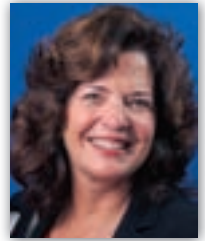
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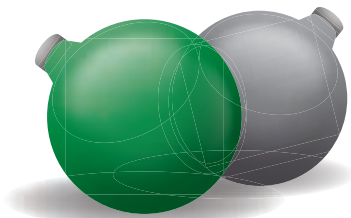
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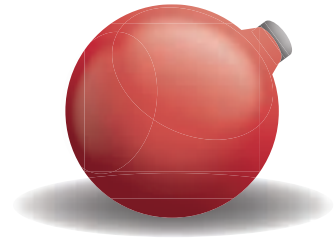
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HOLIDAY HAZARDS



Be aware of these
common dangers of
the holiday season



We've all heard the horror stories of holiday mishaps with pets: the poinsettia-consuming Pomeranian, the tinsel-ingesting cat, and the chocolate-eating Chocolate Labrador Retriever. As professionals, we are aware (or should be) of hazards around festively decorated homes, which can be harmful to the pets. As professionals we have the opportunity to warn customers of the dangers of some of these cheerful trappings, and if you have been in the business for any length of time, I'm sure you have witnessed your share of sick animals.

This is the kind of stuff staff meetings are made of: reviewing holiday red flags to recognize problems with

our grooming clients, tips on advising customers as to some of the hidden dangers, and revisiting some of the more "usual" things that can go awry this time of year. At the risk of being redundant, this November issue of *Groomer to Groomer* will serve as a seasonal refresher course in holiday hazards and things that can go wrong for our pets, our customers, and us during the holidays.

The first unwanted holiday by-product is something we all experience but fail to relate to our pets: holiday stress. Humans are busy bustling around their homes and jobs. Décor changes for many people, and the homes become filled with lots of different "stuff" that the pets do not see

at other times of the year. Decorations and weird boxes with ribbons all look like big toys. Owners may be attending holiday parties, thus spending less time at home. Or the home may be filled with additional company, which can make anybody crazy. While some pets may enjoy the additional attention they get with the holidays, others are hiding under the bed... especially when the guy in the big red suit walks through the door. Stress can be defined in many different ways, and everybody deals with stress differently, but with pets, anything out of the ordinary, everyday routine can be described as stressful. Good or bad, positive or negative, these differences and changes in everyday life can make even the best

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behaved pet have a bad day.

Stressed out pets are often reacting to their owners' own stressful situations. Environments are different. Pets are brought into super-busy grooming salons for their holiday hair-dos by their over-stressed owners, and we wonder why everybody (including the dog or cat) is having a bad day. Well-behaved pets can become nervous or anxious. Normally difficult dogs may become reserved or depressed. We must have a bit more patience, understanding, and compassion for these pets. They really don't know what's going on, and it is up to us to be the understanding ones.

We have no control over the pets' or owners' home-based activities, but as groomers we can control the amount of stress we bring upon ourselves. We overbook, squeezing in that last, begging customer. We try to keep everybody happy by promising things we may have trouble delivering. We say it will be different next year, but it never is.

STOP! We all know what stress can

We have no control over the pets' or owners' home-based activities, but as groomers we can control the amount of stress we bring upon ourselves.

do to us. It comes from all directions and can be extremely self destructive. There are a few things that can help us better prepare for the holiday crunch time. Pre-booking your appointments is a huge step in the right direction. Getting everybody on the books prior to November can be a tremendous help. I had a rule in my salon about not booking any new customers the week before Thanksgiving or for the two weeks prior to Christmas. This really cut down on the incidents of poorly behaved or once-a-year pets, as the owners of these animals tend to fail to plan. These pets are stressed out enough to begin with and don't need a grooming lesson in the middle of Hanukkah.

Not having the stress of overly stressed-out pets can really relax the days. Similarly, senior, high-maintenance, aggressive, or "special needs" pets as well as over-stressed customers (...you know the ones we're talking about) were also kept away from these busy days. We groomed cats but kept the kitty appointments away from the week before Christmas. Only the stable temperament "regulars" got those busy day bookings.

Another suggestion is to stagger the times pets come in. Having a salon full of dogs at 8 a.m. is enough to send anybody over the edge. How do you get them all done in a reasonable amount of time? The stress of a car ride also has a tendency to "rush the bowels"



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of every pet we service (hence those salon-entrance accidents), and dogs who spend the entire day in a salon are prone to more accidents as the day progresses, exasperating you and your staff. Staggered times in and out can help ease the stress of too many pets and not enough time.

Once those time slots are full, you are booked. Period. Start taking

a wait list. Call and reconfirm EVERY customer the day before, and if they can't make it, call your wait list and fill in that time slot.

One thing I observed early on in my career was the high incidence of sick dogs about seven to ten days after a holiday. We're not just talking lethargic, wimpy-feeling pets. We're talking explosive diarrhea and projectile vomiting.

Once again, think about what is going on at home. Thanksgiving was the week or so prior, and the owner is cleaning out the refrigerator, reassessing the remaining odds and ends of the feast: turkey, gravy, potatoes. Not quite good enough to be served up for leftovers again, but they look fine for the dog.

Fluffy gets a bowlful of scraps with a huge order of Montezuma's Revenge on the side. Then they come to the salon. The owner may say something like, "Oh, he's had some loose stool, but he's fine now." Translation: they woke up to a family room painted with "loose stool," and they just want him out of the house so they can clean it up. Never mind that the poor animal is feeling miserable and just wants to go home, but their problem just became your problem! It's okay to refuse service to a sick pet! If you do take this poor animal, make sure you have emergency phone numbers for the owner



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and that they can pick *Fluffy* up immediately in the event of a “relapse.” Help them understand that more stress is not what their pet needs right now.

Another area where I was very careful was in the handling of new pets. While most of us cringe at pets given as holiday gifts, it still happens. Santa still brings puppies or kittens — some from the shelters, some from pet shops. Be mindful of handling these new kids, as some of them may be fresh out of the shelter or shop and may be carrying communicable diseases, like kennel cough, with them.

Quiz owners on the health and condition of the pet, focusing on any unusual coughing, sneezing, or discharge from eyes or nose, as well as diarrhea and vomiting. If a pet is actively coughing or is obviously sick, refrain from handling them. Send them home with instructions to get clearance from their veterinarian before you groom

them. Explain to the owners that you cannot risk exposing the other pets in your care. Resist touching other pets until you clean and sanitize any area the sick one came in contact with. Some people call me an alarmist, but I feel you can never be too careful with the pets left in your care.

We’ve covered several holiday hazards many groomers may not normally think of, so for safety sake, let’s just review some of the ones that are “normal and customary” for this time of year. Sharing these tidbits with customers could save them a big vet bill at the very least or save the pet’s life. Here are just a few of the more common not-pet-friendly items found in our homes:

POISONOUS HOLIDAY ITEMS COMMONLY FOUND IN AND AROUND THE HOUSE

Lilies are not traditionally a winter

holiday flower, but it serves to mention it here, as many are found in holiday floral arrangements.

Poinsettias can be irritating to the mouth and may cause vomiting or diarrhea.

Mistletoe ingestion usually only causes digestive upset, but it can potentially cause cardiovascular problems.

Holly is another gastrointestinal no-no.

Batteries contain caustic, corrosive materials that can result in chemical burns if chewed or ingested.

Alcoholic beverages may be fun for us, but they can make your pet very sick. And we all know that chocolate is never to be fed to our pets.

Christmas tree water may contain fertilizers or preservatives that may be toxic to pets. Even if nothing is added, it can become stagnant, moldy, and not fit for drinking.

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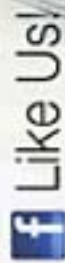
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MORE UNSAFE "STUFF"

Electrical lighting cords are often perceived as toys by some dogs. At the very least, this can result in severe burns in and around the mouth and gums.

Christmas tree tinsel or ribbon can be extremely dangerous if ingested. Balling up like an industrial sized hairball, it can cause intestinal blockages and can actually cut into intestinal tissue.

Glass ornaments are a favorite among cats, but many a canine has had one explode in their mouths, thinking it was a ball. To say the least, ingested glass can be very dangerous.

Potpourri smells nice, but simmering pots can be spilled, causing burns to the unsuspecting pet. The simmer-

ing liquid potpourris may contain toxins, and the dried ones may have toxic flowers in the mix. Keep these up high for safety.

OTHER WINTER PET HAZARDS

Antifreeze can be fatal to a pet if ingested. It has a sweet, pleasant taste, and even a small amount can be lethal. There are brands of anti-freeze

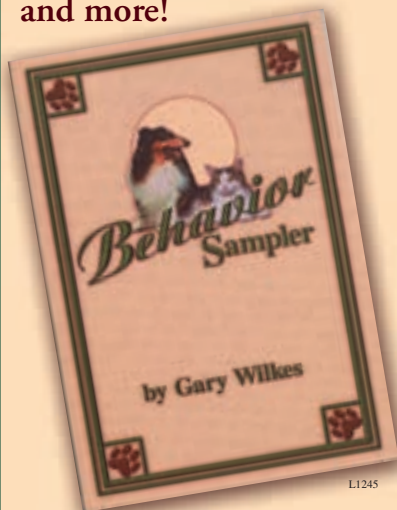
available that are pet-safe, but it's a good idea to keep these products out of reach and to clean up any spills thoroughly.

Ice-melting products can be irritating to the mouth and skin. Depending on the ingredients, signs of ingestion may include excessive drooling, vomiting, or depression.

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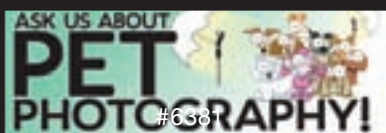
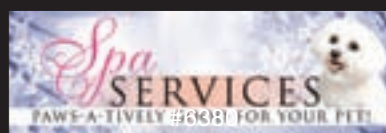
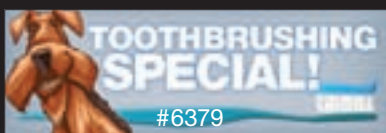
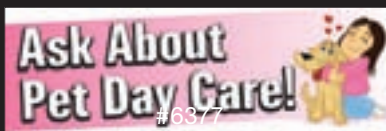
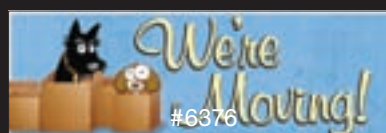
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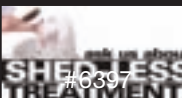
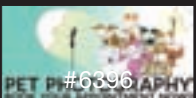
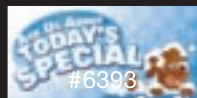
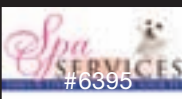
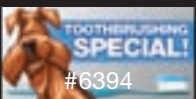
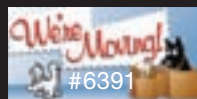
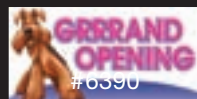
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The best advice we can pass on to our customers is to be observant of their pet's behavior and keep hazardous items out of their reach. We all know that sometimes our dogs and cats don't read the rule book, managing to get themselves into trouble despite of our best efforts.

In that case, "be prepared" is the best motto. Keeping your own veterinarian's phone number handy should be the first order of business. Another handy number to post by the phone is the *ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center*. This is an operating division of the *American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)* and is a unique, emergency hotline that provides 24/7 telephone assistance to

veterinarians and pet owners. While there is a \$65 fee charged to help defray the cost of providing this life-saving service, it would be money well spent if the life of your pet is saved. The phone number for the center is 1-888-4-ANI-HELP (1-888-426-4435).

Happy Thanksgiving, everyone! Now go out there, schedule your holidays comfortably, sympathize with the plight of the agitated pet owner, have compassion for the confused, stressed-out pet, and go book a massage for yourself. And don't feed those leftovers to the dog!!! ☺

Thank you!

I would like to thank each and every one of you for my recent *Barkleigh Honors Award* for Journalist of the Year. This is the second year in a row I have received this honor, and I am thrilled that

you are all still enjoying my material.

Last year was a tough one for California groomers, as you may have read in my columns, but the defeat of the potentially crippling legislation out here has brought with it a unification of California professionals. We stand solid in advancing the professionalism of our industry, not only here in California, but nationwide. This effort won both Judy Breton and me the *Barkleigh Honors Award* for Outstanding Industry Contributions. We thank everyone who voted for us, but we accept this award with every California groomer in mind. It was, after all, a group effort, and we are all pleased to take what we all have learned and move forward with these tools to make our industry better than ever. Thank you all, once again, for all you did to assure that a bad bill failed!



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GROOM EXPO 2012

BIGGER AND BETTER THAN EVER!

BY KATHY HOSLER

Nearly 5,000
attendees made this
year's Groom Expo in
Hershey, PA the largest
grooming show ever!

“**T**he best thing about *Groom Expo* is that there isn't just something for everyone; there's tons for everyone!” exclaimed Kim Gibson, a professional pet stylist from Manitoba, Canada. “It doesn't matter if you have been grooming for 30 days or 30 years. You will come away from this show with an amazing amount of information. You will make new friends, you will come home with many new toys, and you will remember or ignite the passion that you have for this industry!”

Kim and 33 other groomers from Canada chartered a bus, hired two drivers, and made the 29-hour trip to *Groom Expo* in Hershey, Pennsylvania. As they entered the registration area of the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, they were warmly greeted by Mr. Frank Brown, who did his best to welcome personally each one of them and the nearly 5000 others who would

attend *Groom Expo* 2012.

Yes, *Groom Expo* 2012 broke all attendance records and became the largest grooming show ever held anywhere in the world.

It was apparent from the beginning that the biggest problem most attendees would have would be deciding which seminars and speakers they wanted to see the most. The choices were almost endless. There were business building seminars, animal behavior and training seminars, creative grooming demos, breed grooming demos, topics for mobile groomers, and much, much more.

Many of the attendees chose the *Do-It-All* package that allowed them complete access to all of the seminars. They could see parts of the seminars that they were interested in and then order videos of the ones that they liked the best.

On Thursday and Friday, many

day-long programs were offered. The *Brusher-Bather Certificate Program* presented by Teri DiMarino was filled to capacity with industry newbies and veterans alike. They learned that there is far more to being a brusher-bather than what goes on in the bathtub. Knowledge of products, sanitation and safety, deshedding and dematting techniques, and much more were presented by Ms. DiMarino in a fun and easy-to-understand format. As an added bonus, everyone in her seminar got to share in Teri's joy when she got a phone call letting her know that her first grandson had just been born.

In her “Let's Get Creative” seminar, Dawn Omboy, the Queen of Color, showed attendees how to use stencils, apply colors and glitter, make bows, and add feather extensions and beads. She demonstrated how easy it is to add a little pizzazz to everyday grooms and set your salon apart from others.



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In their “Dueling Bichons” seminar, Lindsey Dicken and Nicole Kallish demonstrated the differences between show and pet trims. Lindsey’s Bichon was put in a show trim, and Nicole’s was given the shorter pet trim. They showed tips and tricks to give the pet dog the same look as the show dog while making it shorter and easier for the owner to care for. The use of big screen presentations on each side of the room made it easy for everyone to get an up-close and really clear view of their grooming techniques. The big screens were used throughout the weekend, especially for the many breed grooming demonstrations that were presented by the 2011 *Barkleigh Honors Awards* winners.

On Friday in the *Red Clipper Arena*, the first two *GroomOlympics* tournaments began, and the final two tournaments were held on Saturday. There were three levels of competition

in each tournament. The first place winner of each level in each tournament competed for the *PetSmart Best in Show* honors that were held after the Saturday evening banquet.

The *Opening Night Prom Party* gave everyone a chance to relax and enjoy themselves. Stressed out, overworked groomers cast aside all their troubles and workplace problems and let themselves be transported back to those carefree, happy days when having fun was the order of the day. Music and entertainment provided by Mr. B filled the ballroom as attendees danced and partied.

Saturday was packed with more speakers, demonstrations, and special events. A seminar on a subject that everyone in the pet industry should be aware of — “I Got a Disease From a Dog?” — was presented by Dr. Cliff Faver. Dr. Faver explained many fungal and bacterial diseases, how easily they can be

transferred, and how to avoid them.

“I want you to be aware of the potential risks and to take precautions to minimize those risks,” said Dr. Faver. “Don’t underestimate the potential seriousness.” After hearing about all the things we can get from the dogs we groom, everyone in the room made plans to scrub and sanitize their entire shop from ceiling to floor (even if they had already done it before they left) and were definitely thinking twice about letting their clients’ dogs kiss them.

Debby and Victoria Wineland, owners of *Knot 2 Shaggy Grooming* in Dallas, Texas, were first-time attendees of Groom Expo. “In ‘The One Hour Cat’ by Amie Hasler, we actually got to see a bad cat being groomed,” said Victoria. “Amie got that cat shaved, bathed, and dried in one hour — all the while explaining everything that she was doing. I also loved how every speaker

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was down to earth and answered everyone's questions. My favorite seminar was 'Tricks of the Trade' with Marlene Romani."

GroomerTV covered *Groom Expo* for those who were unable to attend in person. The show was broadcast to viewers from all over the world. Jay Scruggs, Jonathan David, Michell Evans, Missy Salzberg, and others did interviews with vendors, attendees, manufacturers, and contest winners.

When the doors to the gigantic trade show opened, enthusiastic groomers with their wish lists in hand streamed in. There were over 170 booths overflowing with everything a groomer could ever want... from the newest shampoos and styling products to tables, clippers, and bathtubs, and even complete grooming salons on wheels.

There was so much going on at the trade show that many attendees spent

the entire weekend there and still didn't see everything. Show specials, giveaways, and product demonstrations were everywhere — and the eager shoppers were out in full force.

Trade show exhibitor Kim Lautman, owner of Pet Passions and Fashions, said, "I knew the *Groom Expo* trade show was a big shopping event, but I was not expecting this many people. It was overwhelming. We sold out of many of our items and took lots of orders."

Gerry (Pop) Kass, owner of *Pop's Pet Organics*, spent the weekend talking shop with the trade show attendees. "More and more people are getting into the natural and organic products," said Mr. Kass. "Our sales were very good. It was a great weekend!"

Animology, a UK-based company that manufactures and sells shampoo all over Europe, was at *Groom Expo*. Their company won the 2010 Best

Product of the Year Award, is the official shampoo of *GroomTeam* England, and is now being distributed in the United States by *Frank Rowe and Son*.

Another hot spot at the Expo was the *Gifts of Love* silent auction. Every year attendees bid on unique and wonderful items. Good-natured bidding wars often erupt over the most popular items — sometimes exceeding the retail value of the item. Because all the proceeds from the auction go to help special causes, the generous bidders can have lots of fun and still win great items.

The Saturday evening extravaganza began in the ballroom with a fabulous *Barkleigh Honors* dinner prepared by the incomparable Hershey Lodge chefs. Following the dinner, the winners of the four *GroomOlympics* tournaments were on the stage once again vying for some of the over \$25,000 in prize money and top honors in the



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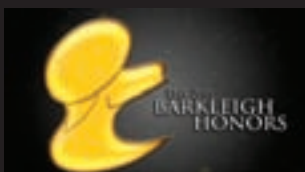
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Best in Show competition. One by one, the 12 finalists (four from each division) presented their dog to the audience and the IJA judging panel. Each dog was magnificently groomed — it would surely be a monumental task to select a winner.

With the Level 3 finalists center stage, the judges examined them and then made their decision. The excited crowd fell silent as they waited for them to announce the *Best in Show*. Accompanied by cheers and tumultuous applause, Jennifer Lee and her impeccably groomed Scottish Terrier were crowned the *GroomOlympics World Champions*. As tears of joy splashed down her cheeks, she received a huge check, the GroomOlympics Trophy, the John Nash Memorial Trophy, and a spectacular orchid.

A new addition to the Saturday

evening lineup was the *Abstract Creative Runway Competition*. Unlike the *Creative Styling Competition*, very little or no coloring of the dogs was permitted. The contestants sculpted intricate designs on their dogs to match their outfits, their shoes, or even their hairstyles — and then displayed their work as each one took a walk on the runway.

Then everyone's attention turned to the second annual *Barkleigh Honors Awards*. There were seventeen categories that covered many facets of our industry from Speaker of the Year, New Product of the Year, Blog of the Year, and Contribution to the Industry.

"Our goal is to recognize the groomers that go above and beyond in their contributions to our industry," explained *Barkleigh President* Todd Shelly.

Everyone in the audience was on the edge of their seats as the nominees

for each category were announced. When each winner was announced, they came up on stage to receive their award and make a short acceptance speech.

The final award of the evening was the Sally Liddick Lifetime Achievement Award. The winner of this honor was Mr. Jerry Schinberg. Jerry started his career as a groomer, went on to found the *All American Grooming Show*, and has dedicated the last 40 years to improving the grooming industry.

The Sunday morning gospel concert and breakfast was a wonderful way to begin the final day of *Groom Expo*. Old and new friends enjoyed each other's company over a wonderful breakfast and then were treated to a time of fellowship through music. Shay Kemp traveled from South Carolina to share an uplifting message through her beautiful voice.



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The first ever *Barkleigh Rescue Round-Up* was held on Sunday morning. The main objective of the competition was to give these wonderful dogs makeovers that would help them find forever homes. We all know that dirty, matted dogs don't have a very good chance of being adopted, but the *Rescue Round-Up* groomers worked their magic on them. Soon they were all ready to make a fresh start.

One of the competitors, JC Chismar from Youngstown, Ohio, shared her experience. "This was my first time competing," said a beaming JC. "I dreamed about dogs all night. I was really excited — not nervous at all. I was really happy with the little Yorkie I groomed, and I hope I helped her get a new home." Then JC quickly added, "I fear that I am now hooked on competing."

And speaking of competing, the most watched and highly anticipated contest of the Expo, the *Groomer to Groomer Creative Styling Competition*, was held on Sunday afternoon. The *Creative Styling Competition* is known far and wide — and not just by those in the pet care industry. TV cameras and crews, as well as celebrities, did tapings and interviews about the Expo and the events.

Bridget Marquardt of the *Yahoo! Live Animal Nation* was there to see the creative contest and do several interviews. *The Wall Street Journal* also sent a reporter to cover the competition.

It was absolutely amazing. The entire stage was filled with 15 multi-colored dogs and the artists that would transform them into unique and awesome creations. It was the largest creative competition ever held.

Many of the competitors traveled great distances to participate in this one-of-a-kind event. Sue

Weaver and her Standard Poodle flew in from England to be part of the contest.

"It's an incredible thing to watch," said industry icon Judy Bremer-Taxman. "The vibrant colors, the stage completely filled with dogs, and the artistry of the groomers. The best part is when the groomers become part of it during their presentations."

As the competition progressed, the creative artists trimmed and snipped away hair to reveal exotic birds, fierce sharks, futuristic cyborgs, *Sesame Street* characters, African hyenas, and much more. Soon, all the amazing creations were completed.

Every seat in the audience was filled with enthusiastic spectators. The crowd overflowed into the trade show and packed the aisles. It was time to select the *People's Choice Award*. Everyone had their favorite entry, and they were prepared to cheer them on to victory. Wild applause, appreciative whistles, and hearty cheers rewarded the efforts of each contestant. After narrowing down the field, the crowd's choice was evident. Jean Honsinger and her amazing entry, *Flash Doda*, was the *People's Choice Winner* and will appear on an upcoming cover of *Groomer to Groomer Magazine*.

After all the winners of the *Creative Styling Competition* were announced, everyone flooded into the contest area to photograph and record the entries and to congratulate the stylists and ask them all about their grooming.

All too soon, *Groom Expo 2012*, the largest grooming show ever held, came to a close, but plans are already "in the works" for next year's Expo. Mark your calendars now so that you can be part of it! ➤

GROOM EXPO 2012 CONTEST RESULTS

Sporting, Terrier & More

Level 1

- 1st — Melinda Hedges
- 2nd — Stephanie Montreuil
- 3rd — Felicia Moran

Level 2

- 1st — Ashley Waters
- 2nd — Cindy Oliver
- 3rd — Lisa Baxter

Level 3

- 1st — Jennifer Lee
- 2nd — Greta Dalrymple
- 3rd — Nick Waters

All Other Purebreds

Level 1

- 1st — Julie Becker
- 2nd — Iolanda Viterbo
- 3rd — Midge Tressler

Level 2

- 1st — Debbie Davis
- 2nd — Marge Freibott
- 3rd — Yoshiko Winner

Level 3

- 1st — Olga Zabelinskaya
- 2nd — Cheryl Purcell
- 3rd — Lindsey Dicken

Salon Freestyle

Level 1

- 1st — Melinda Hedges
- 2nd — James Pesce
- 3rd — Rachel Perkey

Level 2

- 1st — Novica Zugic
- 2nd — Bridget Stewart
- 3rd — Ang Chee Meng

Level 3

- 1st — Jennifer Lee

Poodle

Level 1

- 1st — Naoko Masuda
- 2nd — Stephen Kropf
- 3rd — Lauren Behan

Level 2

- 1st — Sam Hoi
- 2nd — Kristen Pierce
- 3rd — Bridget Stewart

Level 3

- 1st — Julie Pantages
- 2nd — Olga Zabelinskaya
- 3rd — Cat Opson

Best in Show

- Level 1 — Naoko Masuda
- Level 2 — Ashley Waters
- Level 3 — Jennifer Lee

Abstract Creative

- 1st — Cindy Oliver
- 2nd — Linda Jomphe
- 3rd — Angela Kumpe

Rescue Round-Up

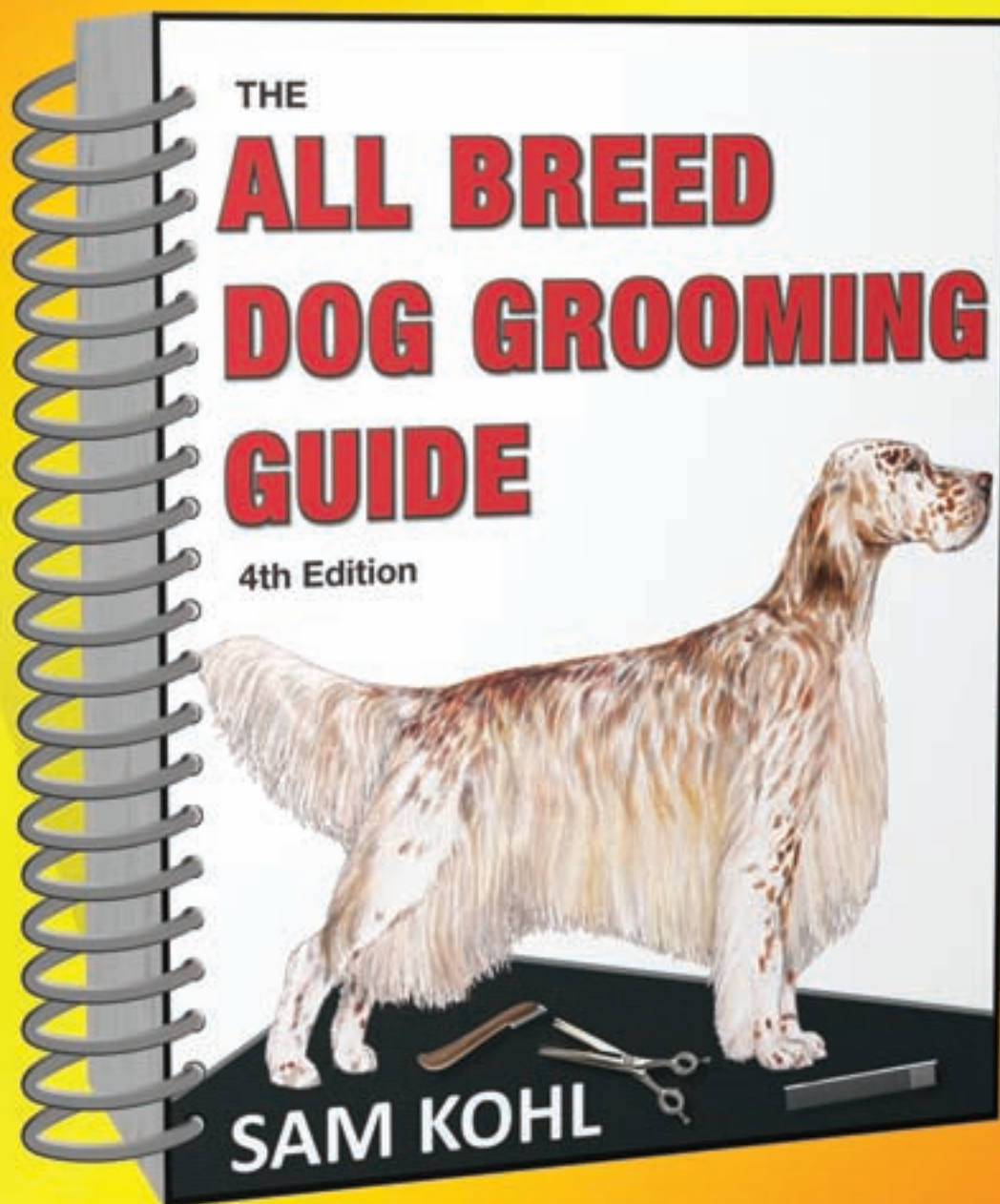
- 1st — Nicole Kallish
- 2nd — Lisa Kloid
- 3rd — Mary Miller

Creative Styling

- 1st — Cindy Oliver
- 2nd — Su Eld Weaver
- 3rd — Brynn Haynes
- People's Choice*
Jean Honsinger

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GROOM EXPO 2012 CONTEST RESULTS

PETSMART BEST IN SHOW



Level Three Best In Show winner, Jennifer Lee
with Connie Bailey of *PetSmart*.



Level Two Best In Show winner, Ashley Waters
with Connie Bailey of *PetSmart*.



Level One Best In Show winner, Naoko Masuda
with Connie Bailey of *PetSmart*.

Groomer To **Groomer** CREATIVE STYLING



Creative Styling First Place winner, Cindy Oliver.



Creative Styling Second Place winner, Su Eld Weaver.



Creative Styling Third Place winner, Brynn Haynes.

POODLES



Level Three Best in Class Winner, Julie Pantages with Felix Gresham of session sponsor **Andis**.

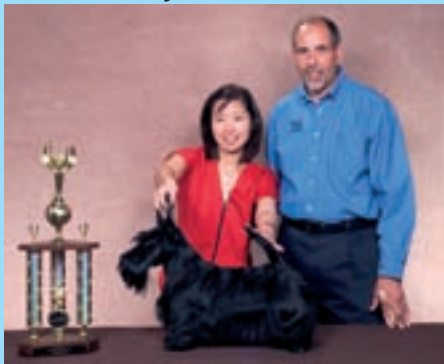


Level Two Best in Class Winner, Sam Hoi with Mary Meeks of session sponsor **Nature's Specialties**.

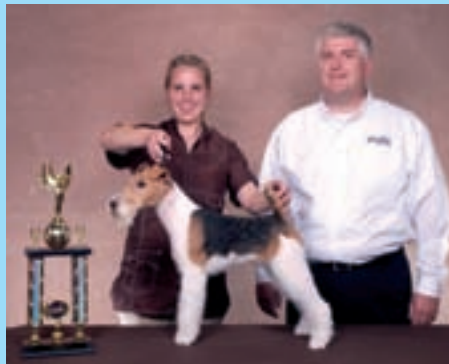


Level One Best in Class Winner, Naoko Masuda with John McGlynn of session sponsor **PetEdge**.

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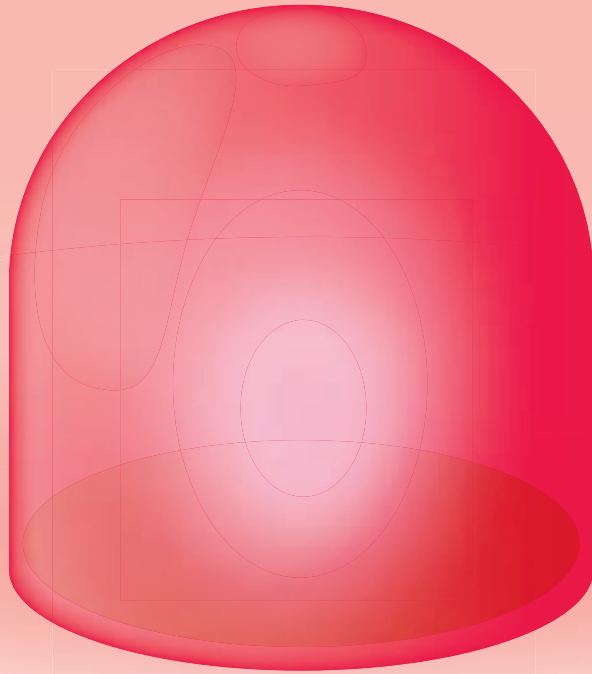
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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR GROOMING SALONS

✎ By Mary Oquendo ✎

On December 27, 2011, a high-speed police chase in Southington, CT, ended when the stolen car crashed into a tanker carrying 8,600 gallons of gasoline. Needless to say, it burst into flames, prompting a half-mile evacuation surrounding the accident scene. I can hear some of you saying, “Big deal.” True, unless of course, your grooming business was in that half-mile radius.

We do not always get a heads up when emergencies or disasters strike. It is a fact that people who plan for such events fare better than those who do not. If the situation is not safe for you, then it is not safe for the pets in your care.

WHAT ARE SOME POSSIBLE SCENARIOS?

While hurricanes do not sneak up on us, tornadoes, flash floods, nor’easters, and earthquakes can. Pay attention to your weather reports and the impact it may have on your business. In addition, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have estimated there are over 14,000 HHP (High Hazard Potential) dams, many of which are without emergency action plans in the event of a breach. To find out where your business is in regards to any dam, contact your local emergency management office. Every locale in the United States has an office.

What about damage to your shop, rendering it unsafe to be inside?

Structural damage to a building can be caused by excessive rain, wind, earthquakes, snow, or by an errant driver who has mistaken the front door of your shop for a parking spot. In the last two years, three such drivers in my community alone have shut down businesses after driving into them. It can also take the form of power outages. Is there heat for the winter or A/C for the summer? For those that have wells, you will not have water either.

On to gas leaks from the faulty installation of propane tanks and boilers, structural building damage, worn out gas lines, or that tanker trailer containing 8,600 gallons of gas that burst into flames in front of your shop. Install a carbon monoxide detector. If

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there are nearby propane tanks, add a natural gas alarm.

How about fires occurring from faulty or worn wiring, aromatherapy candles, smoldering cigarette butts, or tanker trailers bursting into flames in front of your shop?

Lastly, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation, 800,000 shipments of hazardous materials are transported daily over our interstates. In addition, there are 4.5 million facilities that manufacture or store hazardous materials. Your local emergency management office will know their locations in your community.

While I have tried to be complete, it is impossible to cover every potential situation.

How well are you and your staff prepared? Do you have a written plan of action in your employee handbook? Have you and your employees read it? Practice drills help to reinforce procedures. It's why emergency personnel schedule regular practice drills.

Your plan of action should take into account the many variables you may encounter in an evacuation or in staying put. Evacuations are not

always an option. Are you equipped to evacuate all the pets in your care? Do you have enough crates? How quickly can you load the pets into your vehicle? Who will contact those owners?

If you are staying put, are you equipped for your grooming clients to now become boarding clients? Are you prepared for owners who are unable to pick up their pets? Recommended supplies could include extra crates and bowls, a well-stocked pet first aid kit, bottled water, bleach or water purification pills, pet and people food, bedding, lanterns and batteries, kitty litter, extra leashes, kerosene heaters with fume-free kerosene, and a battery-powered radio.

Do you have a signed waiver to protect yourself? A simple waiver could read, "In the event of inclement weather or natural disaster, [Your Business Name] is entrusted to use their best judgment in caring for my pet. [Your Business Name] will not be held liable for consequences related to such decisions." (Thanks, Bernie!)

To guide you in preparation, there are many available resources. Start with your local emergency management

office for suggestions. The best class I have ever taken was the CERT (Community Emergency Response Training) program. It is a free 20-hour class, so there is a commitment of time. You will not regret it. Nice to see a good use of our tax dollars! Your local emergency management office will have a list of dates and locations. FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) offers free online programs, and you can download a free app to your smart phone. I offer a webinar on disaster planning with your pets, available for a fee in the On Demand Library at www.pawsitiveeducationtraining.com.

The time to formulate your plan of action is not as the police cruiser circles the block informing you of the immediate evacuation or when the smokes fills your grooming shop. ☹

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PUP GRAFFITI

By Dawn Omboy

Trying new products is always fun, especially when it involves dramatic color. I was recently working on a black Poodle with a haircut that I did not particularly like. With a little extra time to play, I picked up a couple cans of *Pet Paint* and did a little graffiti on the black mini Poodle before his haircut.

Bear, the Poodle, usually gets a Bichon-type head piece, a 7 body, and very short straight scissored legs. Wanting to see if this new *Pet Paint* would indeed show up on his dark coat, I grabbed a can of the green-colored hairspray and was really happy to see it show up quite brightly on his coat. Yay! I grabbed the blue next, and

it, too, showed up well on his coat.

Next I took my clippers with a 5 blade on and cut around the swirl pattern I had done across *Bear's* back, showing off his new temporary color so that I could take his picture for my photo album. *Bear's* owners are no-frills kind of folks, so I knew I could certainly not have any color on him when they came to pick him up (much less a funky swirling haircut). After playing dress up and picture time, I shaved it off.

Wanting to play more with this stuff, I used it on another black dog, whose owner gives me free reign with her dogs. I put her Standard Poodle, *Cleo*, in a mohawk. First I spray

painted it white. Then I added some of the blue at the front of the mohawk over the white, really making the blue pop. Then I added red stripes at a slant down the rest of the mohawk. It looked pretty cool and only took minutes to do.

This stuff is like the colored Halloween spray but with a stronger fixative so that it will hold a bit longer. It is labeled for pet use. It might just be a fun way to easily add a touch of color temporarily to dark or black dogs. Miss *Cleo's* mom reported the color lasted a couple of days, and then there was no evidence that it had even been there. ☺

Dawn Omboy, Queen of Color
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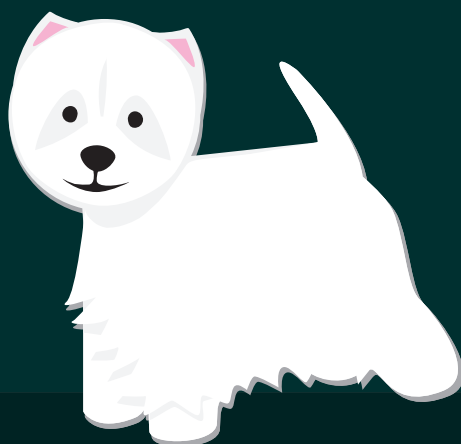
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A stylized illustration of a mountain range. The mountains are dark purple and blue, with white paw prints arranged in a path leading up the slopes. The background is a gradient of blue and orange, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

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PET HEALTH EXAM

Teaching your clients to do these simple home examinations on their pets can be a potential life-saver

This article isn't about behavior. It's not even something that I think most of you don't already know. This article is offered in the spirit of someone with many years of experience who is still capable of having an occasional lapse. It may also help new professionals develop habits that can improve their business and

their relationship with their clients.

A few weeks ago, I took my puppy to the vet for his vaccinations. As we were waiting for the exam, Amber, one of the veterinary technicians stopped to pat *Tug* on the head. As she was petting and rubbing his chin, she stopped for a second and asked, "Did you know that he has a lump

under his chin?"

Sure enough, *Tug* had a "button tumor." Even with all the affection and rubbing that he gets, the discovery of the tumor was almost an accident. No matter how much owners pet and touch their dogs, finding early symptoms of disease requires making a practice of regular basic examinations. As groomers, that's where you come in.

Of all the people who interact with a dog, groomers have the most intimate association outside the family — more than vets or trainers, by far. There are two ways you can assist your clients in maintaining their dog's health: keep your own records and teach them how to do a general examination. Keeping records is something you are probably already doing. Adding a few extra notes about skin tags, bumps, and the general feel of the dog can pay off big time in documenting the early stages of an illness or allergy. It also tells the owners that you are paying attention to their dogs as individuals. This is obviously not meant to replace the care and treatment of a veterinarian. However, I cannot imagine a

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vet who would be upset that a groomer found a cracked tooth and suggested that the owner have it checked.

I am going to describe the process as I teach it to my clients. I am sure you know all of it, but you may still benefit from the sequence as presented. It may also help you craft a simple handout to help your clients learn a potentially life-saving habit.

HOME HEALTH EXAM

Probably the best place to start your exam is with the animal's head. The eyes should be bright and clear. Older pets may have a blue-gray haze

that is a natural part of aging. Some dogs have a condition called entropion, which causes the eyelids to roll inward. The rolling of the lid forces the eye lashes against the cornea, which can cause impaired vision and ultimately blindness. Make sure the lashes point away from the eye.

While you are looking at your animal's head, take a look at the ears. Ears can be a source of infection for many animals. Cats and dogs whose ears stand up often collect dust and debris as well as parasites such as ear mites. Dogs whose ears flop have their own brand of problems. The ear lies flat

against the head like the front flap of a purse. While this prevents debris and dust from entering, it traps in moisture and heat — a veritable Disneyland for bacteria.

When you examine your dog's ear, try to look as far down into the canal as possible. If you see very dark "dirt" deep within the ear, your pet may be infested with ear mites. A trip to the vet is warranted whenever you suspect foreign matter in your pet's ears. Another good way to examine the ear is with your nose. A clean, healthy ear should smell like the rest of a clean, healthy dog. Any strong or offensive

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In general, routine examinations can help to further not only the health of your clients' animals but your business relationship with them.

odor should be investigated further – even if there is no outward sign of dirt or inflammation.

For your next target, take a look at your pet's mouth. Instead of a visual exam at first, again use your nose. Open your pet's mouth gently with your fingers. Place your nose close to the pet's mouth and breathe in through your nose. A foul odor usually means dental neglect or some other problem.

Your next observation is a visual check of the gums and teeth. Gums should be firm and pink. Press a spot on the gums and watch it closely. It should turn white as your pressure forces blood to recede. As you take your finger away, the rosy pink color should quickly return. If the pink returns slowly, it may be the sign of a circulatory problem. Your pet's teeth should be held to the same standards as your own. Dark tartar and stains

are signs of neglect. Broken or chipped teeth can be a source of general infection that could lead to serious medical problems and potentially death.

Moving from the head, it is a good idea to examine the animal's forelegs, neck, and shoulders. Ticks and fleas can infest your animal without your knowledge in a very short time. Flea colonies usually are accompanied by small scabby areas. Ticks swell as they engorge themselves on the animal's blood. They appear as a small, flexible sack about the size of a sunflower seed kernel. This is also a good time to examine for lumps and tumors.

Now pass your hands across the rest of the dog's body. You are looking for abrasions, cuts, and bumps. In most cases, the pet's coat should be shiny. Mats and tangles that do not show up visually are best found during this type of examination. This is also a good time to check on weight. Other

than pugs and other barrel-chested dogs, there should be a definite "waist-line" from the back of the rib cage to the hip. Placing your hand on a dog's rib cage can detect a layer of fat that may be the first indication of obesity. After you look at the dog's general physique, pay close attention to paws, toes, and nails, as well as the rectal area. If your animal will allow it, roll it on its back and look at the chest, belly, and groin areas, too.

In general, routine examinations can help to further not only the health of your clients' animals but your business relationship with them. For new groomers, don't be shy about asking your vet to give you some pointers about the signs of ill health. Many vets and techs are willing to come to a salon to give a short class on examinations. This can lead to grooming referrals and a better, more cooperative relationship with local clinics. There is no one other than the groomer in a better position to follow and promote the continued health of an animal or spot irregularities that may be the first signs of illness. <



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Who Are You?



By Cliff Faver, DVM

As a business, who are you? Who determined the type of business you have become? Did your customers define you, or did you make a conscious decision as to what type of business you want to be? Just as important, are you doing what you want to be doing in 10 years, or do you have a plan?

These are all important questions that you need to answer whether you have a veterinary business, a grooming spa, or any type of business. It is important that you have a clear understanding of who you are and what you want to accomplish. Unfortunately, we often go into business and let our customers, our competition, or the economy determine who we are.

In order to succeed, you have to create and write a plan of who you are and what you are trying to accomplish. When creating this plan, you need to determine what your demographics will support. In fact, if you are opening a new grooming salon, check your demographics before signing your lease. They say in business, "location, location, location." If you are looking in a low-income area, a high-priced spa is a quick road to failure no matter how good you are. These areas are always tempting because rent is usually cheaper, but there is a reason why so many grooming salons fail in these areas. If you are looking to do high-dollar services, really focus on your demographics and choose wisely.

Low-cost grooming salons can make it in high-dollar areas, but high-dollar spas will not make it in low-income areas.

There are two different ways to make money in any business. One is high volume/low cost; the other is high cost/low volume. Anytime you start out, you will be low volume, but your game plan will determine the type of customer you will eventually select for. Yes, YOU will select.

If you choose high volume/low cost, realize the big grooming stores or franchises will be your competition. They commonly will have a larger advertising budget, and they are usually the popular one-stop shops that have other commodities to draw customers into their grooming

establishments. This can be very profitable if you are capable of competing at that level. Also ask yourself, "Can I do this by myself or will I need to add other groomers?" and "Will I be able to keep up this pace in 10 years?"

On the reverse, if you decide to run a high cost/low volume business, it takes a little different planning. This type of spa isn't about setting up things to run hard to beat the competition on price. It is about what you can do to set yourself apart from the competition to impress the customers. This typically involves a higher level of customer service than customers would get in the high-volume grooming shops.

My basic definition of customer service is exceeding the customer's expectations. How do we do this? We already said it is not about the price. In fact, that is the first pitfall business people fall back into. When their

The target to success is customer service. You have to do something differently, better, or with more flair than your competitor down the street to make a positive impact on your customers.

customers complain about the price and threaten to leave, the owner is tempted to lower prices. You have to have your eyes on the goal and realize you are not going to please everyone. Even if you were the cheapest spa in town, there will still be people complaining about your prices. Something one veterinary consultant said in my earlier days that has always stuck with me is this: "If 20% of your customers are not complaining about your price, then it is time to raise your fees. In fact, 20% are going to complain no matter what!" You find the longer you are in business the more that makes

sense. Truth be told, the only fees the customers are okay with are free!

The target to success is customer service. You have to do something differently, better, or with more flair than your competitor down the street to make a positive impact on your customers. This can come in many different forms. Are you the likeable, caring sort of person that everyone loves? Play to your strength! Are you great at social media and advertising? Play to your strength! Are your products superior or do you have above-average abilities? Play to your strength! Or maybe being a manager

The advertisement for Kenchi Professional Grooming features a black background. At the top left is the Kenchi logo, which includes a stylized sunburst icon and the brand name 'Kenchi' in a script font, with 'PROFESSIONAL GROOMING' in a smaller sans-serif font below it. To the right of the logo is a detailed illustration of a white dog, possibly a poodle, with its body and legs covered in intricate, colorful floral and vine patterns. The dog is standing on its hind legs. Below the logo, the word 'EVOLUTION' is written in large, bold, blue capital letters. Underneath this, the text 'Limited Time Offer' and 'Only \$199' is displayed in white. A small line of text indicates 'MSRP \$298'. Below that, it says 'Any Evolution Shears or Thinners Expires 9/30/12'. Two pairs of grooming scissors are shown: one pair is open and positioned diagonally across the lower half of the ad, and another pair is closed and positioned horizontally below the first pair. Both pairs of scissors have ornate, silver-colored handles with blue gemstones. At the bottom of the ad, the words 'Performance', 'Innovation', 'Luxury', and 'Style' are written in a cursive font, separated by small circular icons. Below this, the website 'WWW.KENCHI.COM' and the phone number '1-888-453-6244' are listed in white capital letters.

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There is a reason why there is so much variation in successful businesses. The key point of all successful businesses is that they defined who they are and set obtainable goals all while determining their customer's needs. How do you determine your customer's needs? Don't assume you know what they need. Ask them! Send out surveys, make follow-up calls, ask for testimonials, and interact with them on social media. You'll find you not only get to know their needs better, but the communication will create a relationship that forges a bond for repeat service and great word-of-mouth.

The secret is to find out what you do well that pleases your customers and do it well.

Don't be like the average business that is still trying to find themselves and their identity -- I define these businesses as "me too" businesses. If you ask them what they do, they will describe themselves like every other spa or grooming salon down the road. If you don't offer anything different or unique, it makes your services a commodity that will be shopped based simply on price.

If you are indeed different, first tell the price shoppers about who you are, what unique services you offer, and what kind of spa experience their

pet will enjoy before you give the price. Often customers only know to ask for price. Once they find out all that you offer, it increases their perception of value and will arm them to make an educated decision when price shopping. You, not your competitor, will often get the callback to schedule the groom.

Just like a rare coin, it is hard to put a value or price on something the client can't find anywhere else when you provide something special. You will fit a specific niche. The customers that like that niche will love you and think you are the best. Even more importantly, as mentioned before, YOU will select your customers by appealing to the people that like what you do.

By defining who you are, knowing your demographics, setting goals, and sticking to your plan, you will not only know who you are, but so will everyone else! ☺

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Angels in Our Path

If you've never had one of those "made for *Lifetime*" moments full of tears and last minute promises, then let me be the one to tell you that they actually do happen in real life and stick with you forever. One of those moments came 16 years ago in the final days of my father's life when he asked me to always take care of my mom. Of course he didn't need to ask, but these are the things we grasp onto when we need to leave, I think. I have watched over my mom my whole life, anyways, because it is what daughters do, but I remember feeling a different sense of responsibility that day. There was no buffer now between the things in the world that my mother may need protection from and me, her "little pit bull," as she has lovingly referred to me on more than one occasion.

When I woke up on August 19,

2011, and began my morning routine of dogs out, coffee on, email up, and cell phone checked, there were missed calls from my mother's boyfriend. I immediately knew intuitively that something was wrong — very wrong. Deep in my being, I knew things had somehow changed overnight. I hadn't even listened to the messages, but the sense of terror that ripped through my heart was something I had never known before. The voicemail confirmed my worst fears. I don't remember the whole message or the conversation that ensued. I just kept hearing "massive brain hemorrhage," "911" and "transferred to Mass General."

Almost as if I were standing outside of myself, I see me screaming, "No! Not Mama! Not my mom!" I remember my wife coming into the kitchen and trying to make sense of my eruption of emotion. Somehow she

got me into the car, and we were on the road to Boston.

The bizarre thing about a sub-arachnoid hemorrhage, which is the kind of stroke my mother had, is that the person who suffers the bleed actually is pretty aware that something has happened for several hours after the event. It takes a while for the brain to be enveloped by the bleed and CFC fluid. When we arrived at the hospital (with no confirmation that my mother was even still alive) and walked into the room where they were trying to stabilize her, she opened her eyes and said, "Hi, honey."

The initial shock that she was alive was so overwhelming. I completely lost my composure, but that didn't last long. My mother had a list of things she needed done, and since she was "probably going to be laid up for a while," she needed me to take care of

I was standing over my mom... and I felt someone staring at me. It was one of those moments when you know someone is blatantly staring but you don't want to acknowledge it because you don't know why they're staring.

some loose ends. She rattled off the following demands, these things that were so vitally important to her in the face of this demon brain bleed. "Call my contact at The Dog Channel and let them know I need more time. Call my editor at The Cape Cod Times and tell her my article will be late. Call Lynn timer and tell her I can't come to the writing group this weekend. Oh, and call my hairdresser and tell her I need to reschedule my appointment." I smiled and suggested that these things really weren't of any concern right now, and she looked at me with a little fire in her eyes and said, "Just do these things for me. I don't want anyone to think I blew them off." Within a few more hours, my mom disappeared into a sea of raging temperatures, blood pressure irregularities, and ultimately a coma.

It would be four months before I got to speak to her again.

Then the angels started showing up — right there in the Neuroscience ICU at Mass General. That's where things started happening that would continue to guide me through the next several months. I was standing over my mom, who had now been enveloped by this traumatic brain injury, and I felt someone staring at me. It was one of those moments when you know someone is blatantly staring but you don't want to acknowledge it because you don't know why they're staring. Am I crying hysterically? No. Am I doing something I'm not supposed to do? No. I was thinking through this list of questions when the woman on the other side of the hospital bed asked, "Aren't you *The Village Groomer*?"

I looked up and saw *Kemper* the Pekingese's mother looking back at me. "I'm Suzanne, *Kemper's* mom." She was a nurse in the Neuroscience ICU! Throughout the next few months, Suzanne would be my sounding board, my expert, and most importantly my friend and support. In these delicate medical situations, the doctors don't always tell you everything for a variety of reasons, but I now had *Kemper's* mom on my side, and she watched over me when there was absolutely nothing I could do for my mom. Through conversations about resuscitation plans, concerns about permanent damage to my mother's brilliant brain, and the worst weeks of my life, she watched over me. I think *Kemper* sent her to me.

My mother was transferred to a nursing facility for a brief period after seven weeks in the ICU. It was my choice as to where she would go, and I chose a place right near the business. I had been pretty checked out for the last few months, but this way I could get back to work part-time and see her every day. On the day she arrived, I was looking for a nurse and saw Leigh, a regular customer at *The Village Groomer*. Her dogs were addicted to *Flossies*! She told me she would keep an eye on my mom, and even if she didn't have her as a patient, she'd check in on her every shift. She gave



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me her cell phone number just in case I had any questions.

Later that day as I was leaving the skilled nursing facility, I saw Mrs. Moriarty. Mr. and Mrs. Moriarty have been coming to *The Village Groomer* for many, many years. Mr. Moriarty always buys the little 99-cent fuzzy mice and cat food for their cats. Mrs. Moriarty worked in administration at the facility and promised to keep a close eye on my mom. Cat angels this time.

The stay at this facility was short-lived, and my mom suffered a pretty major setback. She was back at Mass General within a week and back to the ICU. Admittedly I was relieved to have Kemper's mom back on the case. The Neuroscience ICU at Mass General is one of the best in the world, and I had an ally.

Next stop, rehab. After improvement for several weeks, my mom was transferred to Braintree Rehab. The

rehab was far more overwhelming in some ways than the hospital. This was where the real work began. My mother had to relearn everything. She would need to learn to walk again, talk again, and even work at remembering her own name.

While I was standing at her bedside on one of the first days at rehab, a woman walked up to me and asked, "Don't you own that pet store in Walpole?" She and her husband had been buying their dog food from us for years. They owned Border Collies. She was one of the nurses on my mother's unit. She told me she would check in on Mom every shift. This was during a period when my mother was experiencing a lot of confusion and having strange delusions, which is quite common when the brain is healing. It was very comforting to have another ally at this juncture.

The way they tell you someone is

finished in rehab and no longer has coverage for this level of care is by calling you and telling you that they need placement within 24 hours. One day. I had one day to find an assisted living facility with skilled nursing.

The next morning at 7:30 a.m., another angel crossed my path. She came in as I unlocked the door. One of my regular customers, Sam, came in to buy dog food: her standing order of two 30-pound bags of *Taste of the Wild*, four bull pizzlies, and two cases of *Dave's* cans. She looked at me, fresh off of another sleepless night, and asked me what was going on. She didn't say I looked terrible and overtired, but I could hear it in her voice. Through some major effort not to unravel, I gave her the nutshell version of the rehab and needing to find a skilled nursing facility stat.

She replied, "You know how your family owns *The Village Groomer*, and

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What came back to us throughout the challenges and experiences of my mother's illness proved to me that people don't ever forget people that love their best friend.

you know it's the best place in the world for dogs? Well, my family owns *The Maples* over in Wrentham, and it is the best place in the world for your mom." Another angel in my path. Sam's family not only owns this magnificent care facility, but her aunt and uncle are *Mustard's* parents. *Mustard* is a little terrier cross that comes to get groomed and plays in the daycare! I knew I had found the place for the next step in her recovery.

I was on my way to *The Maples* within a few hours, namedropping and trying to work my way in the same day. The place was gorgeous, but there were no beds available. As I left the tour and walked out of the building feeling kind of defeated that there was no bed for my mom, I heard a window slide open behind me. "Excuse me." I turned around and replied "Yes?" The woman who was calling out to me through

the window smiled and asked, "Aren't you *The Village Groomer*? Come back in here. My name is Kathy. I brought my pug *Max* to your dad years ago."

She told me a story about how when she picked up *Max* as a puppy 20-plus years ago, he had fleas, and she called *The Village Groomer* in a panic. My father told her to come right down, and he would take care of it. She told me that when she returned to the store a few hours later, my dad had *Max* up on his shoulder like a little baby and was carrying him around the store. She never forgot that image, she told me, of the hippie groomer bouncing her little black pug on his shoulder like an infant.

There was a beautiful portrait of *Max* in her office, and I recognized him immediately. "*Max Turk*?" I asked. My mom had a bed the next day. She stayed there for the next month or so, and they brought her back. When she

left *The Maples*, she was walking and feeding herself, and her memory was well on its way back from the abyss. *Max* and *Mustard* sent me a miracle.

My mother is 99 percent healed from an aneurysm that the doctors told me was typically fatal. She is back in her own home, writing again, driving again, and living her incredibly full, vibrant life. *The New England Pet Grooming Professionals* honored her with *The Pinnacle Award*, a lifetime achievement award, in July. She beat all of the odds and came back from a devastating brain injury. She had the best medical care in the world, a family that never left her side, and more prayer than any one person can inspire.

My daughter Evangeline, her sixth grandchild, was born while she was "away," and she told me that she thought of Evangeline along her entire journey. Then there were the angels, those four-legged little angels, that kept putting the exact right caregivers and allies in my mother's path. Maybe my father had something to do with it, but I have a feeling the animals had their paws in on it, too, with a lot of help from St. Jude and St. Francis.

Caring for these animals is a joy, an honor, and a generational commitment for my family. What came back to us throughout the challenges and experiences of my mother's illness proved to me that people don't ever forget people that love their best friend.

This is the subject for my first article for *Groomer to Groomer*. Sally Liddick gave me my first writing assignment over 15 years ago, and Todd Shelly has invited me back into the Barkleigh family. So much of what I base my business on is this emotional connection we have with our animals and recognizing that magic between owner and pet. I am looking forward to exploring the business of grooming in new and different ways to help you grow your business back at home. ☺

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BARKLEIGH HONORS

2012 winners announced at gala event

by Cindy Agoncillo

Saturday evening at *Groom Expo* 2012 was a night to celebrate the best of the grooming world, culminating with the Second Annual *Barkleigh Honors Awards*, a prestigious affair that recognized the incredible achievements of the grooming industry. Show organizers Todd Shelly and Adam Lohr knew they had set a high standard for themselves in 2011 with the inaugural *Barkleigh Honors*, but this year's event did not disappoint.

The festivities began with a sold-out dinner provided by the talented chefs of the *Hershey Lodge*. Groomers, speakers, and vendors enjoyed this respite from a busy weekend of shopping, seminars, and grooming competitions. The dinner also provided the opportunity for groomers to rub el-

bows with industry icons and mentors like Jerry Schinberg, Sam Kohl, Vivian Nash, Kathy Rose, and Teri DiMarino.

The celebration continued with the *PetSmart Best in Show Awards* presented by *PetSmart* representative Connie Bailey. Level One competitor Melinda Hedges had entries from two classes, but Naoko Masuda took home the Best in Show prize with her winning Poodle. Though her brother Nick was the Waters sibling to receive a *Barkleigh Honors* nomination for Up and Coming Competitor of the year, Ashley Waters won the Level Two Best in Show trophy for her beautifully hand-stripped Wire Fox Terrier. In Level Three, Jennifer Lee and her Scottish Terrier were declared the 2012 *GroomOlympics World Champions*. Perhaps none was

more surprised than Lee herself, who let out a shout of shock and excitement when her name was announced. Lee had a look of elated disbelief on her face as the judges congratulated her for her victory.

After the *Best in Show Awards*, contestants lined up to begin *Barkleigh's* first ever *Abstract Creative Runway* competition, which was hosted by Jonathan David from *Groomer Has It*. Groomers prepared their dogs — and one cat — with beautifully simple abstract designs that used minimal color. Many groomers based their designs on their own outfits, sculpting polka dots and other elaborate patterns into their pets' coats. Justine Cosley even fashioned her own hair into a mohawk to match her dog's rockstar hairdo. One



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highlight from the competition was second-place winner Linda Jomphe of Quebec, Canada, whose Cocker mix was met with an awe-struck audible gasp that spread through the crowded ballroom. Overall, the competition was an impressive display of creativity and beautiful simplicity.

The main event of the evening was the 2012 *Barkleigh Honors Awards* ceremony with returning host Jay Scruggs. "These awards are about the groomers and the people in the industry," said Scruggs. For most categories, the nominees were selected by popular vote among groomers; nominees and winners in other categories, like Groomer of the Year, were determined by competition results.

For some nominees, this year's awards ceremony was a family affair. Tip Campbell received a nomination for Up and Coming Speaker of the Year; her parents' facility, Village Groomer & Animal Inn, was nominated for Website of the Year. Jodi Murphy was nominated for Video, Judge, and Book of the Year, and her daughter Mackenzie won the Barkleigh Honors Award for Up and Coming Competitor



of the Year.

Teri DiMarino and Judy Breton received the award for Contribution to the Industry in recognition of their efforts to defeat the California SB 969 bill. In her acceptance speech, Teri passionately championed the power of the grooming industry to change the world through grassroots efforts. She applauded the *Project Liberty* volunteer groomers from *Pet Bath and Beyond*, whose assistance with puppy mill rescues was featured on the news and during the awards ceremony. Representatives from Pet Bath and Beyond had received a special Barkleigh Honors Humanitarian Award earlier in the evening.

Presenting the final award of the

evening was Ann Stafford, who introduced Jerry Schinberg as the 2012 recipient of the Sally Liddick Lifetime Achievement Award. Schinberg recently announced his retirement from managing the *All American Grooming Show*, which he founded 40 years ago. Speaking with much emotion and gratitude, Schinberg expressed immense pride in the grooming industry, its progress, and its accomplishments.

With his closing statement, Jerry Schinberg echoed the sentiments of the entire evening: "You say 'I'm a professional dog groomer,' and people look up to you today. We're artists. We're sculptors. We're amazing." <

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BARKLEIGH HONORS 2012 WINNERS



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Contribution to the Industry



Lindsey Dicken — Competitor of the Year



M.J. Vaskorlis and Michelle Semken of
Pet Bath & Beyond — Humanitarian Award



Dan and Debbie Rowe of *Frank Rowe & Son*
— Vendor of the Year



Lisa Leady — Judge of the Year



Melissa Verplank — Speaker of the Year



Jerry Schinberg — Sally Liddick Lifetime
Achievement Award



Sue Zecco — Congeniality Award



Sue Zecco & Jay Scruggs — Video of the Year



Mackensie Murphy — Up and Coming
Competitor of the Year



Cindy Agoncillo of *Barkleigh Productions* —
Recently Published Grooming Related Book



Jonathan David — Up and Coming
Speaker of the Year



Angela Kumpe — Creative Competitor
of the Year



Not Pictured:
Barbara Bird
Blog of the Year

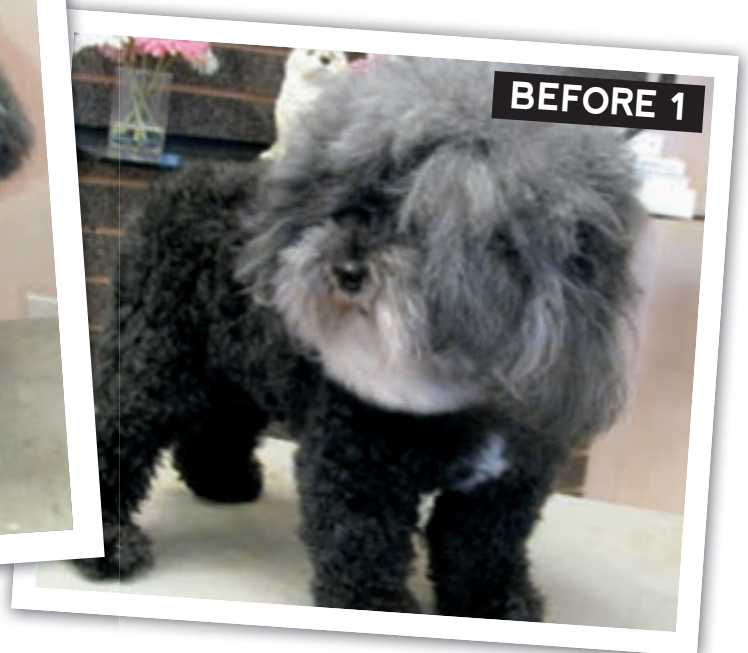
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BREAD & BUTTER GROOMING:
FAST & EASY
PET TRIMS FOR THE SALON

by Kathy Rose



COCKAPOO

Long before I had ever heard of the various Doodles, Schnoodles, and Puggles, one of my consistent Bread and Butter clients was the Cockapoo. Back in the '80s, I had more than a few discussions with my clients, who claimed that their baby was a pure-bred Cockapoo and that they had the "papers" to prove it! Alright then... Who am I to argue? So we gave them "Cockapoo" trims. Of course the trims would vary as dramatically as the specimen, but the idea was to provide a cute "puppy cut" that was easy to maintain but still left a bit of fluff, a clean butt, a cute face, and a bow, of course.

The size and coat of a Cockapoo can range from toy to mammoth, depending upon the parentage. Most

often they are sturdy, small to medium dogs with curly coats and those endearing, large, round Cocker eyes.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of proper preparation, so I will always include a word or two about it. There are many opinions regarding pre-bath prep. I generally follow the old school method of "if he is matted and has to be shaved, shave him first." If he is matted but the coat can be saved, use a good silicon coat spray and let the pet soak a bit prior to bathing. One word of warning: avoid using silicon sprays after the bath, because it can damage the coat if consistently left in the coat.

If he is just dirty, send him straight to the tub. I usually reserve prep work such as pads, underwear



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FIG. 4

(sanitary), nails, and ears for after the bath, but that is a personal choice. Depending on the individual situation, it probably doesn't make a lot of difference either way.

The choice of face styles is abundant and limited only by your imagination and the preferences of the owner. For this trim, I have chosen a simple, almost all one length body trim with an alternative to the typical round, teddy bear face.

Begin with an "O" snap-on comb, which is placed over a #10, #15, or #30 blade. I do find a cleaner cut with a #30, but it depends upon your choice of snap-on combs, as some are adjustable and some are not.

Moving in the coat growth direction, clip the back and flanks, continuing over the croup and hips (**Fig. 1** and **2**). Continue clipping all four legs with the "O," following the contour of the legs.

Switch to a "1" and continue clipping the undercarriage against the coat growth direction (**Fig. 3**). With the coat growth direction, clip down the rear thigh to just above the hock (**Fig. 4**).

Moving to the front of the dog,

continue clipping the throat and forechest with the "1" (**Fig. 5**).

Using a straight shear, level out the topline (**Fig. 6**).

Using a straight shear, level out the underline, following the natural undercarriage of the dog.

With a curved shear, blend the croup area, rounding out the rump.

Continue with the curved shear and round the rear feet (**Fig. 7**).

Blend the clipper work on the rear and front of the thighs using long curved shears, following the natural angulation of the dog (**Fig. 8**).

With straight shears, trim the outside and inside of the rear legs, creating parallel lines.

Round the front feet and trim the edges of the front legs to form straight parallel posts.

Fig. 9 shows the correct shape of the front leg compared to the leg not



FIG. 5



FIG. 6

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yet completed.

Trim the eye corners with a 10 blade (**Fig. 10**). If the dog is very wiggly, use thinning shears.

For the pom-pom face, part the hair on the topskull and secure with bands. Tidy the pom-poms with curved shears and apply bows.

Trim the beard to form a semi-circle, and then blend with texturizing shears. Finish off the face by tidying the stray hairs on the ears in a rounded fashion.

You can adapt your styles to suit the client's specifications, but don't be afraid to experiment with head styles. A unique headpiece will draw attention to your grooming and open your doors to more Bread and Butter clients. <3



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Animology Goes Stateside! Multi-Award Winning UK Brand In Distribution Agreement with Frank Rowe & Son

"The British Are Coming"! *Animology*, the multi-award winning UK brand of shampoos and grooming sprays, is launching in the United States. *Animology* products are now distributed in the US by *Frank Rowe & Son*, from their base in Hershey, Pennsylvania.

Animology is owned by *Group55 Ltd*, a British company based in Preston, Lancashire, and which has a long standing pedigree as a respected supplier of products to the pet trade.

Group55 first launched their *Animology* brand in early 2010, with an initial range of just eight retail products. In a relatively short space of time, the brand has enjoyed a rise to prominence and is one of the fastest growing and most talked about grooming ranges in the UK.

The principle of *Animology* products is simple – to provide top quality grooming products, that deliver excellent results, at realistic and affordable prices, and this successful formula has seen *Animology* become a sought-after brand within the grooming and pet retail sectors.

Animology products are now sold in around 30 countries worldwide, with China, Russia, and now the United States of America

the latest markets to welcome *Animology*.

Animology offers a comprehensive range of professional shampoos, sprays and conditioners and is used by a rapidly growing number of professional groomers around the world. In addition, there is also a range of *Animology* retail products, which are ideal for re-sale by groomers, pet stores and veterinary practices.

Stephen Turner, Managing Director of *Group55*, the company behind *Animology*, commented; "We are absolutely thrilled to be working with *Frank Rowe & Son* and to be introducing *Animology* to the groomers and dog owners of the United States. *Animology* has enjoyed great success in every market that it has entered so far, and so we are very excited at the prospect of bringing it to the US, where we feel the high quality of our products and the excellent results they deliver will be recognised and appreciated.

We are particularly happy to have *Frank Rowe & Son* as our distribution partner, as we know that their knowledge of the professional grooming market in the United States is second to none, and their reputation and standing within the industry is exemplary. It is a partnership that suits both our companies perfectly, and we cannot wait to get started!"

Dan Rowe, owner of *Frank Rowe & Son* commented; "*Frank Rowe & Son* is proud to announce our partnership with *Animology*. At

Frank Rowe & Son, we have focused on offering outstanding customer service and superior products for nearly 40 years. We have never offered a full line of shampoo products. We truly believe that the entire line of *Animology* products is so remarkable that we had to offer them to our customers."

NEPGP announce return of FallFest in 2013

By popular demand, *The New England Pet Grooming Professionals* announce that their three day conference will be moving in 2013 from the July *SummerFest* back to the *FallFest*. It will be held October 12 – 14, 2013 in Warwick, RI. They will continue to have their Trade Show, educational seminars and three level grooming competition including *GroomTeam USA* Open Division.

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Rescue Remedy and a chicken sandwich, we were back. Josh was regaining his strength, but we had sat out of the competition and lost valuable time. I wasn't sure if I could complete him with the time I had left. Kathy Rose announced "scissors down" just as I added a couple feathers for a headpiece. After all that coat growth, I just didn't have time to finish what I had planned. We still managed to get third place and the coveted People's Choice Award. Lori again got first place, and the "Lion King" managed to remain undefeated.

I decided to go ahead and take the design to one more show: Atlanta Pet Fair. I just had to complete this design that I had worked so hard to perfect. Just a couple weeks before Atlanta, my mother passed away. I was devastated. I had no intentions of going anywhere, especially so soon after her death. My mother was my soul, my greatest fan, my seamstress, and my inspiration.

In the days before Atlanta, my entire family pushed me to go on and do what my mom would have wanted me to do. "She would want you to go, Angela!" is what my dad was telling me. I agreed to go but wasn't sure if I would compete. I just wasn't up to it. The night before we left, I told my dad, "I will work on my dog, and if I can do it, I will. For my mom!"

It was time to get the dogs ready, and I am sure everyone thought I had lost my mind. I just kept talking to my mom while I was working on Josh, just like she was standing there. When I was done, I was so excited. It was beautiful, and win or lose, I was happy. I pulled it together and completed the design; my mom would have been so proud. We won first place and People's Choice.

Top: Preparing for Atlanta Pet Fair just after Pasadena
- Angela thought about a more tribal eagle at first.

Middle and bottom: At Atlanta Pet Fair, where "Cherokee Heritage" took First Place



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