

Briefs

The **Adogo Pet Hotel**, a high-end pet facility in a 16,000-square-foot former industrial warehouse, opened Feb. 1 in Minnetonka, Minn.

John A. Heyder replaced Dennis M. Dolan as president and chief executive officer of **Best Friends Pet Care Inc.** (Norwalk, Conn.). Heyder has been with the company since 1996 and was chief financial officer for 10 years.

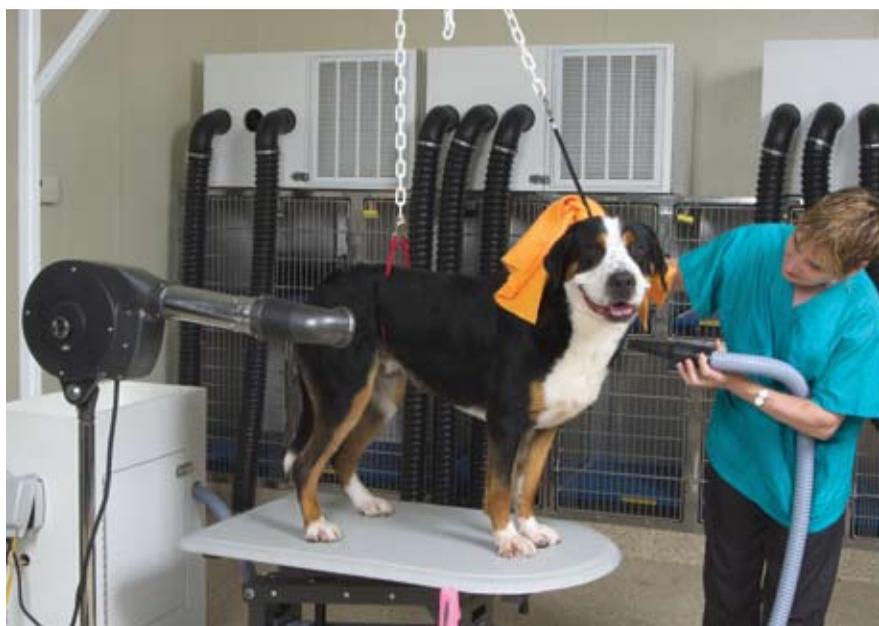
The company also hired Renee Coughlin as vice president of marketing.

Camp Bow Wow (Boulder, Colo.) now sells its three franchises—Camp Bow Wow, Home Buddies and Bow Wow Behavior Buddies—as a combined package called “One Brand, Three Solutions.”

Penny Dugan of Bothell, Wash., was named 2010 Groomer of the Year by **Kim Laube & Co. Inc.** (Oxnard, Calif.) at the 56th Annual Purina Pro Plan Show Dogs of the Year Awards, presented by **Dogs In Review** (Los Angeles). The awards are held in conjunction with the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show in New York.

At the same event, Barbara DeGroodt, owner of From the Heart Animal Behavior Counseling and Dog Training (Salinas, Calif.), was named 2010 Trainer of the Year by Comfort Zone with D.A.P., a registered trademark of **Farnam**, a division of **Central Life Sciences** (Phoenix).

Kennelwood Pet Resorts (St. Louis) opened a new location inside the Pet Supplies “Plus” store in Ballwin, Mo. The new facility, which will provide spa services as well as bathing and styling for both dogs and cats, is the pet resort’s seventh location.



A groomer at Best Friends Pet Care in Willow Grove, Pa., uses a superabsorbent microfiber towel in conjunction with a high-velocity dryer and stand dryer for increased speed and efficiency—and less energy usage.



The Greening of Grooming

From line-drying towels to composting cut dog hair, groomers are going green. By Barbara Bird

Environmental consciousness is sweeping the nation—and groomers are joining the revolution. It’s evident in their efforts to practice their craft in an environmentally responsible manner. That means recycling, conserving resources—especially energy and water—and choosing eco-friendly grooming and cleaning products.

To discover what steps groomers are taking to reduce their ecological footprint, I opened discussions on three Internet groomers’ groups. Some groomers cited the three basic tenets of green living: reduce, recycle and reuse. Many mentioned recycling of cardboard, paper and plastic as a no-brainer. Indeed, recycling seems to be a gateway habit from which other eco-conscious practices evolve.

Let’s take a look at what pet stylists are doing to groom greener.

Throwing in the Towel

Laundrying cloth towels is one of the most energy-consuming aspects of a pet grooming operation, especially for larger shops, which can wash and dry two or more loads of towels per day. Some groomers have installed energy-saving appliances and water-saving front-loading washing machines. Others have switched to line-drying much of the time.

But some groomers have ditched terry cloth towels all together and are using superabsorbent towels of alternative fabrics to save water and electricity. There are two types: microfiber and PVA sponge towels.

Microfiber towels, sometimes called “shammies,” feel like a cross between cloth and paper. They come in various sizes and thicknesses. They are lightweight and can be used more than once before needing

to be laundered and dried. They dry very quickly and work when damp.

PVA sponge towels, also called sham-mies, feel more rubbery and are heavier in weight. They hold more water, and one towel may be used all day, according to one manufacturer. PVA sponge material is very durable and is not affected by cosmetic or cleaning chemicals.

Both types of shammies share a downside: They must be wrung out between uses or even during use on a large animal. For some groomers, this is stressful to the hands and wrists.

Kim Scea, a Canadian groomer, said that using the Cool 'N Dry Pet Shammy, from Super Cool Products Inc. (Elmhurst, Ill.), has reduced her laundry from once a day to once a week. She hangs the towels to dry.

Regular towels are banned at Best Friends Pet Care, a nationwide chain headquartered in Norwalk, Conn., said Val Penstone, director of grooming operations. "Laundering and drying uses much energy and labor cost, and heavy towels wear out machines. Microfiber towels are lighter to launder, and need little or no time in a dryer—they work best damp dry—and soak up more water."

Reducing Water Use

Many groomers also are concerned with water usage and have started using bathing and shampoo application systems such as those from Hanvey Engineering & Design L.L.C. (Sunset, S.C.), Prima Bathing Systems (Hubbard, Ore.) and HydroSurge Inc. (Boca Raton, Fla.).

Curtis Hanvey, who designed the Hanvey Bathing Beauty, maintains that recirculating bathing systems result in

40 percent to 50 percent water savings over hand bathing. "There is an even greater savings in shampoo use," he said. "A typical groomer can go from using 2 to 4 ounces of shampoo per bath to using one-half to 1 ounce."

Hanvey and Penstone agreed that groomers tend to resist measuring shampoo and thus use more than necessary, which then requires more water for rinsing. "Not only is this wasteful," said Hanvey, "it also sends

unnecessary surfactant into the sewage system for treatment."

If you don't have a bathing system or shampoo application system, you can still cut your water usage, said Penstone. "Premixing 2 ounces to 4 ounces shampoo per gallon in a bucket and using a big car wash sponge to apply it to the dry coat saves gallons of warm water. Wet-down is swift, shampoo is spread evenly and penetrates faster, and rinse is quicker, because the correct dilution is used," she said.

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Briefs

Three members of the **National Association of Professional Pet Sitters** (Mount Laurel, N.J.) were elected to three-year terms on the board of directors: Jessica Dwyer of **Whiskers At Home L.L.C.** (Bellevue, Wash.), Michele Gonzalez of **Fur Feather Fin Pet Care** (Owings Mills, Md.), and Kara Jenkins of **TLC House & Pet Sitting Service L.L.C.** (Chandler, Ariz.).

Other board members include John D'Ariano of **A Pet Sitter Plus** (Boynton Beach, Fla.), president; Monica Leighton of **Professional Pet Sitting** (Venice, Fla.), past president; Sherry Suhosky of **Jack Rapid Runners L.L.C.** (Placitas, N.M.), president-elect; Kristen Burton of **Your Best Friend Pet Sitting** (Hamlin, Pa.), secretary-treasurer; Marcia Breithaupt of **Liberty Home and Pet Services L.L.C.** (Naples, Fla.), director; and Yvette Gonzales of **As You Wish L.L.C.** (Highlands Ranch, Colo.), director.

Amanda Lacey of **Happy Tails Dog Walking and In-home Pet Care** (Winchester, Va.) won the Individual 2010 Platinum PAW Award presented by Comfort Zone, a registered trademark of **Farnam**, a division of **Central Life Sciences** (Phoenix). The award was presented during the **Pet Sitters International** (King, N.C.) annual conference in New Orleans.

Nancy Fiorita, chairman of the **Greater Dayton (Ohio) Professional Pet Sitter Network**, won the Network 2010 Platinum PAW Award.

Wag'n Tails Mobile Conversions (Granger, Ind.) now offers a hybrid power supply system that utilizes a battery/inverter in conjunction with a 7,000-watt generator. According to the company, it reduces fuel and maintenance costs by at least half while doubling the generator life. ■

Disposing of Dog Hair

Sending off large bags of dog hair to the local landfill is an environmental concern for many groomers. Some have found creative ways to reuse the hair in the garden, at farmlands or releasing into nearby wetlands for birds and small animals to use as nesting materials.

A few have tried composting and found it a challenge, because hair is slow to break down and requires a large complement of brown (carbon) material such as yard rakings to encourage it to compost. Some Canadian groomers happily report that they have community-provided compost bins that accept pet hair.

Many groomers were happy to send off dog hair to be used as oil booms during the BP oil spill—so much so that Matter of Trust, the San Francisco-based organization making the booms, is no longer accepting donations of pet hair: The warehouses are full.

If you're left with no choice but to send mountains of dog hair to your local landfill, try using small, green, biodegradable bags rather than large heavy plastic bags. Or find out if your city will allow loose hair to be dumped into trash bins so it is scattered at the landfill rather than sitting in large bulk packages.

Choosing Green Products—Cautiously

Although eco-conscious groomers are demanding more environmentally friendly products, many groomers in the Internet discussion groups expressed skepticism about green products. Two key issues emerged: the effectiveness of alternative products and greenwashing—the use of language and images to suggest that a product is more environmentally friendly than it really is.

Several respondents reported trying new shampoos marketed as “naturally derived” only to be disappointed in

What's Your 'Green Paws' Score?

THINK YOU'RE GREEN? Give yourself five points for each of the following practices, systems and equipment you employ:

- Recycling all boxes, bottles and allowable materials.
- Disposing of hazardous waste appropriately.
- Unplugging electrical appliances when not in use.
- Using alternatives to traditional cleaners.
- Using steam cleaners instead of chemicals.
- Composting hair waste or using alternative disposal methods.
- Using biodegradable trash bags.
- Purchasing locally or regionally.
- Capturing and reusing gray water.
- Using natural grooming products.
- Drying with alternative-fiber towels.
- Line-drying towels.
- Hot water-on-demand or solar water heating system.
- Inverter energy system or solar energy for power.
- Water-saving bathing system.
- Shampoo and conditioner measuring system.
- Energy-saving washer/dryer.
- Eco-friendly building materials or insulation.
- Eco-friendly floor or paint.
- Office products made of post-consumer materials.

5–15 points: **You are starting down the green path.** 🐾

20–30 points: **You are turning green.** 🐾🐾

35–50 points: **Your commitment is clear.** 🐾🐾🐾

55–75 points: **Your greenness cannot be denied.** 🐾🐾🐾🐾

80–100 points: **You can't get much greener!** 🐾🐾🐾🐾🐾

—Barbara Bird



Emily Heupel of Furry Details (Minneapolis) recently installed glass block windows for natural lighting at her home-based grooming salon—one of many measures she has adopted that allow her to promote her shop as a green business.

product performance. “It didn’t clean so well,” was a common complaint. Having to give two baths rather than one would seem to offset the advantages of the more natural product.

On the other hand, some cleaners may

contain the same ingredients they always have, but those ingredients now are highlighted and described in green terms. (See “From Coconut to Shampoo.”)

There are good reasons why many shampoo manufacturers choose to redefine products rather than formulate new ones to meet the demand for natural and green: Ingredients that are found in mainstream products have been successful because they work well, can handle significant dilution and are cost-effective.

Explained Sandy Gyorgyi, president of Show-season Animal Products (Tucker, Ga.): “Newer, more truly natural ingredients are very costly. Groomers who are used to paying about \$25 a gallon are now going to want to pay three or four times as much for a product that can’t be diluted or won’t work in a bathing system.”

One of the most challenging aspects in developing the Showseason Naturals line of products was telling the truth that her products were not 100 percent natural, said Gyorgyi. “Unfortunately, science has not developed effective alternatives for

all the traditional ingredients that go into making an effective cleaner for dirty dogs,” she said.

Gyorgyi made the choice to list all the ingredients of each product by chemical name on the label and make a truthful statement about the natural content (usually 92 percent to 99 percent) of each product.

Marketing Your Business as ‘Green’

At what point might groomers advertise themselves as green? Emily Heupel of Furry Details in Minneapolis reached that point about a year and a half ago. “I did a web search and did not find many green groomers showing up,” she said. “After looking at several websites, I realized that I was doing as many things or more than most of the groomers calling themselves ‘green.’ Although Minneapolis has great environmental consciousness, there were no groomers in my area identifying their business as such.”

Up it went on her website: “Proud to be a GREEN BUSINESS!” followed

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From Coconut to Shampoo

SODIUM LAURYL SULFATE is an example of a cleansing ingredient that has been used in pet shampoos for decades but now is described in more eco-friendly terms, such as a “coconut oil-based cleanser” or “naturally derived from coconuts.”

Here are the steps involved in the journey of sodium lauryl sulfate from the coconut to the shampoo:

1. Coconut oil is extracted from dried coconut meat (copra). This is often done by hydraulic press.

2. Lauric acid is extracted from the coconut oil. This is done by heating it in the presence of sodium hydroxide—a chemical process.

3. Lauric acid is converted into lauryl alcohol. This is done through a process called hydrogenation, which adds

hydrogen atoms to the acid.

4. Lauryl alcohol is sulfonated, which creates lauryl sulfate. There are special plants devoted to this processing.

5. Lauryl sulfate is reacted with sodium hydroxide to produce sodium lauryl sulfate.

To create sodium laureth sulfate, another very common surfactant used in shampoos, a sixth step that adds oxygen molecules (ethoxylation) is needed.

All told, turning elements of a coconut into a surfactant cleaning ingredient requires a long and complex chemical journey. While calling these chemicals “coconut-based cleaners” may not be untruthful, it is certainly oversimplification and possibly misleading.

—Barbara Bird

by a list of her eco-friendly practices. Heupel has not regretted her decision. Her declaration has resulted in new customers and pleased her existing ones. “Old customers are happy with the label,” she said. “It makes them feel they have made a wise choice.”

Other groomers, such as Meghan Kaminski, hesitate to call themselves green and use it as a marketing device. “I would never call my shop green, but I do use a lot of green methods. The green client is a very savvy client as a general rule, and if you are claiming to be green, you better darn well have every facet of your shop be green from the products and methods you use to the paint on the walls and how you handle your waste.”

For Heupel, green grooming was a natural extension of her own personal growth and commitment to a low-impact lifestyle. In addition to making eco-friendly choices in shampoos and cleaning products, line-drying towels when possible, conserving water and using fluorescent lighting, Heupel recently

installed new insulation and glass block windows in her home-based salon. She also replaced her original furnace with a more efficient forced air furnace with side venting and a more efficient hot water heater.

Heupel is constantly searching to find the next step to take. Her plans include installing some solar energy panels and a grey-water tank to capture used water, which can then be used for landscaping or gardening. It also prevents surfactants from entering the sewage system.

Don't worry if you're not 100 percent green. It's the commitment and the journey that count. ■

The winner of the Cardinal Laboratories' Crystal Award for Outstanding Grooming Journalist of 2006 and 2007, Barbara Bird has written more than 100 grooming-related articles on the Internet as well as Beyond Suds and Scent—Understanding Pet Shampoos and Conditioners. A popular speaker at trade shows, she is the owner of Transformation Pet Center, in Tucson, Ariz.

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