

# Pet Services **JOURNAL**

July/August 2008



**Planning Is  
the Best Policy—  
Procedures for  
Successful Pet Care**

**Member Profile:  
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**Keeping  
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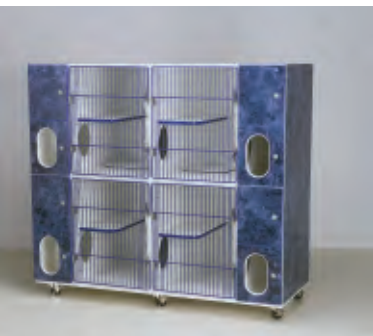
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**On the Cover:** The Golden Retriever is a gentle, loyal breed that ranks high in popularity. In 2008, this retriever ranked No. 4 on the AKC's most popular breed list. Photo by Joan Balzarini



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# PET SERVICES Journal

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*...for Pet Owners, about Our Members, about Your Pets, for Your Pets.*

**Pet Care Services**

Association

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**PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT UPDATES**

By Phil Samuelson

To say that PCSA is going through some busy and exciting times would be an understatement.

Besides our recent name change and the changes in branding and logos that goes with it, most departments are evaluating their programs and policies, and making changes where improvement seems possible.

The PCSA Publications Department is no exception. I recently fielded numerous bids from a variety of printers to see if I could streamline costs and provide a better journal package to our members. I believe I've succeeded on both counts.

The issue of the *Pet Services Journal* you now hold contains more advertising and color pages than ever before. Our press run was also the largest ever, thanks to an increase in active members. These are all good signs for our publication. We've doubled our color-page forms during the past few issues, and there's no reason why we can't continue to build on this trend. Color pages are an expensive proposition, and they can't appear just anywhere in the *Journal*. Specific color forms are printed once ad revenue justifies an increase in pages and/or color. (This issue has three inside eight-page color forms and one eight-page color cover form for a total of 32 color pages.) I'm encouraged by our increase in ad sales and predict this trend to continue, especially as PCSA increases our visibility to the general pet industry and public, which is one of our goals.

You probably noticed that your issue of the *Journal* didn't arrive in its usual white mailing

envelope. As a way of reducing mailing costs and increasing association advertising opportunities (convention reminders, department promotions, etc.) we'll now be mailing out our journals with a cover wrap rather than in an envelope. Our insert advertisers will now be "tip-in advertisers." Our tip-in ads are designed for easy removal, so this change should have a minimal effect on readers. With our new printer, all of the *Journal* will be printed with eco-friendly ink, a change I'm sure many of our members can appreciate. The new journals will be mailed straight from the printer rather than from a secondary mailing house like we did before. This new mailing process will be more cost effective and efficient.

One final recent change in the PCSA Publications Department is the manner in which we compile and mail our *Boarderline* e-newsletters. Along with our new Web site, I now have a new template, database, and method for completing and formatting our monthly e-mail material. Our old system was problematic, particularly with database issues. All too often, I would hear from a member who did not receive the e-newsletter. I expect this issue to end with our new system.

I hope everyone is enjoying their summer. As always, if you have a comment or suggestion for the *Pet Services Journal* or *Boarderline*, please don't hesitate to contact me at (877) 570-7788 ext. 25 or phil@petcareservices.org.

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**Pet Care Services Association**

# Pet Care Services Association— Industry Leader in Principle and Practice



By Charlotte Biggs, CKO  
PCSA President/CGO

*“In the area of education and information, the Level III CKO program is being updated and revised to reflect the current pet care industry information.”*

It is with great pride and respect that I watch and participate in the growth of this association. I have personally participated in the research and discussions; and ultimately the decision to change the name of ABKA to Pet Care Services Association (PCSA). As with all efforts extended by the association on behalf of its members, this decision was considered most thoughtfully and sincerely before the actual decision was made. This decision—as with many others that have been made over the years—is a reflection of the principles of this association as established by the founders of the association and carried through to the membership of today.

The Pet Care Services Association over the past five to 10 years has grown in its breadth of membership to include not just boarding services but dog daycare, grooming and mobile grooming, training, full-service pet care facilities, pet care chains and franchises. Our suppliers and vendors have grown, too, and now support the needs of not just building and operating a pet care facility, but how best to operate such a business in today's fast-paced and high tech world; providing information, products and services in the areas of human resources, insurance, software, staff development from a businesses' needs, as well as development in the hands-on care of pets, and more.

There is a reason why these members have come to our association. They recognize the principles of personal and professional growth through education, information-sharing, networking, and cooperation within the industry—the same principles we were founded on. These founding principles of Pet Care Services Association have brought us to a position of leadership within the pet care industry. It is these principles put into practice that truly brings the value of membership to our members. We are committed to continued practice of these principles as we move forward today and into the future. There is much activity going on within the association to insure that in practice we provide the best possible programs and services to our membership. We have established a set of “Standards and Practices” to add to the professional standards that our Ethics

Program and the Pet Owners Bill of Rights provides for us. We are in the process of establishing VFA (Voluntary Facility Accreditation) standards for Pet Dog Training and for Grooming.

In the area of education and information, the Level III CKO program is being updated and revised to reflect the current pet care industry information. Additional staff and/or management education programs are being looked at and developed. The Web site has been updated and expanded.

In the area of education and information, in addition to our annual convention we have added a second national meeting in the spring, providing an additional opportunity for educational seminar attendance, networking, and the latest information available from vendors and suppliers. The Basic Training program for those interested in getting into the industry—or those who may be interested in adding a new service to their already-established business—is offered twice a year and provides exceptional content. We are currently looking at how we might best expand the reach of the educational and networking opportunities that our regional meetings provide so that we reach more members on a local basis throughout the year.

There is much thought and analysis put into what value the Pet Care Services Association can best bring to you and your individual businesses. One of the most significant values would be to educate the pet-owning public to the fact that as a member of the Pet Care Services Association you are someone they want to know and use. This is the purpose of building a brand image. The initial efforts of building the brand image have begun and there will be a great deal more to come. This is an effort that will grow progressively upon itself. Building the brand awareness for the Pet Care Services Association based on these principles put into practice will truly reflect that we are leaders within the pet care services industry and within our own communities.

Have a wonderful summer season! I look forward to seeing you at the Pet Care Services Association Annual Convention & Expo in Pittsburgh this October. 🐾

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## What's in a Name? A Lot!



By Joseph Lyman  
PCSA CEO

*“When the association performed three separate pet owner awareness surveys over the past six years we learned that there was a dramatic lack of awareness of who ABKA was and what it did.”*

William Shakespeare wrote in Romeo and Juliet, “What’s in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.” Unfortunately, what may have been true during the age of the Montagues and the Capulets isn’t the same in the technology age we currently live in. Names, words and symbols mean a great deal. They form positive and negative public opinion, drive customer awareness and can mean the difference between success and failure in some cases. This is one of the primary reasons why ABKA recently changed its name.

Over the past 30 years and due to no one’s fault, we failed to proactively promote the positive benefits our industry has to offer to customers, mainly the quality pet care our members provide to pets in their care. We simply had concentrated on improving the quality of service offered to those operating in the pet care service industry. To many, this is commonly referred to as the “If we build it, they will come,” effect. Again, what may have been true decades ago isn’t true today. The rules have changed. Not only does one need to build it, it needs to be promoted and reinforced over and over again.

Although not everyone is happy with the name change, there were good reasons why the name was changed. First and foremost was the serious lack of awareness in the marketplace for PCSA’s old name, ABKA. When the association performed three separate pet owner awareness surveys over the past six years we learned that there was a dramatic lack of awareness of who ABKA was and what it did. Furthermore, names should speak to what we do, and having an acronym for a name does not speak to what we do. By reaching out to over 5,000 pet owners throughout North American, we were able to discover that the issue of pet care was an important theme to them. By obtaining this valuable information, our board of directors was able to craft a name that not only spoke to the business our members perform, but also reinforce the theme of quality pet care that our members offer to pets in their care. Additionally, these same respondents rated the association name Pet Care Services

Association highly. The pet-owning public is an important part of business and a massive source of potential revenue in the future. It should be our goal to reach out to these individuals, too.

Second, the association’s members have evolved over the past 30 years. Whereas the majority of members offered only boarding services 30 years ago, now the majority of PCSA members offer a multitude of services, including grooming, dog daycare, and pet training. To remain relevant and continue offering the services our members request, we needed to change the name to ensure that multi-service facilities are well represented. This ability to represent all our members will also increase the value we offer. By properly representing the four primary services our members offer (Boarding, Grooming, Dog Daycare, and Pet Training), this lowers the amount of money needed for members to pay additional dues to other organizations for the same services.

Finally, PCSA reached out to our members not only in focus groups, but also to the membership-at-large during the 2007 Annual Convention in Sacramento, California, to ask their opinion about a name change. Although there was no clear consensus about what the name should be changed to, a majority did agree that the name should be changed to better represent association members.

Although change is not always easy, the opportunities to reach out to the pet-owning public-at-large to promote the quality pet care our members offer is lucrative. Currently, the percentage of the pet-owning public that utilizes our industry’s services is in the single digits. With over 100,000,000 dogs and cats kept as pets around the world, just a 10-percent increase in business equals \$780,000,000. To this end, PCSA plans to spend roughly \$5,000,000 over the next 20 years to promote the quality pet care our member facilities offer to drive potential customers to use their services. It is our mission to improve our member’s business by not making their piece of the pie larger, but to increase the size of the pie. If we can do this, then we have succeeded. 🐾



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## Caring for Senior Pets in Your Facilities



By Patricia N. Olson, DVM, PhD  
Morris Animal Foundation  
President/CEO

Over the years you've probably seen an increasing number of older pets visiting your boarding facilities. Thanks to better nutrition and healthcare, pets are living longer, but that means they also may require more specialized care. They may need specialized diets, medications or modified accommodations to keep them comfortable. Senior pets face a number of health concerns, such as cancer, kidney disease, heart disease, osteoarthritis, and dental problems. Morris Animal Foundation has funded many studies into these diseases. At [MorrisAnimalFoundation.org](http://MorrisAnimalFoundation.org), you can learn more about this research and download our AnimalNews 8.2 newsletter, which focuses on senior pet care.

It may surprise you to learn that, on average, dogs and cats are considered seniors at 6 to 7 years of age. That may seem young to those of us who have had pets live into their late teens and even 20s, but the main reason to start senior care early is to gather baseline data. Early information is used as a comparison as the pet ages to help the owner and veterinarian detect subtle changes before the pet shows clinical signs of disease.

be difficult. Older dogs and cats may need specialized diets to manage health conditions such as kidney disease. A cat with arthritis may need modifications on placement or type of litter box to make access easier. An arthritic dog may need extra bedding or orthopedic beds in its kennel. Both dogs and cats may need additional grooming because arthritis or another medical condition inhibits their mobility and ability to clean themselves. Also be sure to prevent older dogs from slipping on wet floors as this can exacerbate orthopedic conditions.

Exercise keeps both the mind and body healthy, but older animals may need shorter, less intense play sessions. They may also need a bit more supervision when playing with younger animals that may get too rough.

An aging pet may need medications as well. Be sure you and your staff are educated about the medication, its side effects, and its administration. Maintain contact information for the animal's veterinarian in case of emergency or if you simply have a question.

Because you don't see the pets in

*“It may surprise you to learn that, on average, dogs and cats are considered seniors at 6 to 7 years of age.”*

Encourage your clients to talk with their veterinarians about senior care. In 2005, the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) developed the “Senior Care Guidelines for Dogs and Cats” for veterinarians. These guidelines include information on frequency of physical exams and blood and urine tests that help rule out or diagnose urinary tract infections, kidney problems, diabetes, dehydration, and many other conditions. AAHA recommends that middle-aged pets undergo at least annual laboratory tests. Pets with special needs or illnesses may need more frequent tests.

Caring for senior pets doesn't need to

your care every day, you may recognize physical and behavioral changes that their owners have missed. One of the best things you can do for your clients is to alert them to changes you see. Also, check out AAHA's pet owner Web site, [Healthypet.com](http://Healthypet.com), for clinical and behavioral signs in senior pets that can indicate a problem (this information is also available in this column's sidebar). If a pet demonstrates these signs, alert the owner and veterinarian immediately. By making small adjustments to care and helping clients recognize changes in their pets, you can be a true partner in helping pets stay healthy well into their golden years. 🐾

If you have specific health concerns, please e-mail me at [mailbox@MorrisAnimalFoundation.org](mailto:mailbox@MorrisAnimalFoundation.org), and I'll try to address them in an upcoming column.

## SIGNS OF HEALTH ISSUES IN AGING PETS

The American Animal Hospital Assoc. provides the following list of physical and behavioral problems that can indicate health issues in aging pets.

- Sustained, significant increase in water consumption or urination
- Sudden weight loss or gain
- Significant decrease in appetite or failure to eat for more than two days
- Significant increase in appetite
- Repeated vomiting
- Diarrhea lasting over three days
- Difficulty in passing stool or urine
- Change in housebreaking
- Lameness lasting more than five days or lameness in more than one leg
- Noticeable decrease in vision
- Open sores or scabs on the skin that persist for more than one week
- Foul mouth odor or drooling that lasts more than two days
- Increasing size of the abdomen
- Increasing inactivity or amount of time spent sleeping
- Hair loss, especially if accompanied by scratching or if in specific areas (as opposed to generalized)
- Excessive panting
- Inability to chew dry food
- Blood in stool or urine
- Sudden collapse or bout of weakness
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# Keeping Daycare Dogs Clean



By Jaime Van Wye

A few years ago, I was sitting in my vet's waiting room when a woman walked in with her yellow Lab and sat down next to me. "I'm so sorry for the smell," she said. "He's just been at daycare." And, in fact, she was correct to apologize. The dog could have come out of the city sewer. What was most amazing to me was that, despite how filthy the dog was, she seemed to accept that if the dog went to daycare, he simply came home smelling like an outhouse.

Some daycares believe that dogs are dogs, and they're going to get dirty. Preparing your clients for a little bit of filth is smart business. No one wants to be on the receiving end of a snobby client who complains about every little speck of dirt. However, with more and more daycares entering into the industry, making sure that yours is the cleanest is even smarter business. Since owners are paying a premium to have their dogs in daycare, they deserve to have a dog that was at least as clean in the evening as it was in the morning.

agencies will keep your clients happy.

Daycare dogs seem to get soiled from one of two things: the daycare environment itself or specific messes, like vomit, slobber, feces, or mud. The environment is often the biggest cause of problems like doggy odor or a greasy coat, while the occasional mess will start with one dog and then spread throughout the daycare by his compadres.

The biggest culprit for doggy odor problems is a lack of adequate ventilation. This is especially problematic for indoor-only daycares. Stale air in a daycare quickly takes on a "doggy" scent that will be absorbed by the oils in the dog's coat. Scent issues are often hard to diagnose internally, because you and your staff may be completely acclimated to the day-to-day odor of the daycare. A good way to check for off odors is to come in on your day off, or after lunch, and ask that a daycare dog be brought outside to you (it is crucial that you are wearing clean clothes, because your nose will be accustomed to doggy odor if you

*“The biggest culprit for doggy odor problems is a lack of adequate ventilation. This is especially problematic for indoor-only daycares.”*

Certainly, keeping dogs in daycare clean is no picnic. It can often feel like you're trying to herd cats. Just when one gets clean, another will go find a mess to roll in. Group more than three dogs together and someone's bound to get dirty, smell bad, or get slobbered on by a more effusive friend.

However, taking some simple steps to keep the majority of your dogs clean during the day will go a long way towards overall cleanliness among your daycare pack. And, when your safeguards fail (as they inevitably will—they're dogs, after all, and love messes), developing a backup plan for dirt emer-

are wearing your work clothes). If the test dog smells bad, you may need to evaluate whether you are getting enough air changes in the daycare. A good rule of thumb is 15 air changes per hour. Sending your daycare charges home with a client feedback form is also a good way to gauge odor issues.

The substrate, or flooring, in your daycare can also be causing a lot of dirt and odor build up for your daycare dogs. If you have outdoor yards, are they draining properly? Pooled urine or standing water can cause a multitude of odor-causing bacteria to proliferate. Is your substrate easy to clean and disin-

**For questions or concerns regarding dog daycare, contact PCSA's Dog Daycare Section Chair:**

Heather Staas

Email: K9capers413@aol.com

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fect? More importantly, is your staff actually cleaning properly? Daycare yards and pens should be thoroughly disinfected every 24 hours at minimum, and preferably more often. If your dogs spend the majority of their time indoors, do you have enough staff to keep up with the messes, or are dogs often running around in urine? Could your facility benefit from an indoor potty area? Are your cleaning agents getting rinsed properly, or is a layer of grime and sticky disinfectant building up? A lack of baseline cleanliness indoors is a sure sign that you will have dirt and odor issues.

Once you have evaluated the environment and corrected any problem areas, institute a go-home exam among your employees. Once the daycare dogs leave the main group, they should be quickly wiped down with a clean, damp towel. A trick used successfully by AKC show handlers is to wipe the dog with a 1:10 solution of Listerine and water. The Listerine cuts through the surface bacteria and leaves the dog smelling fresh and clean, without a strong perfume scent. Some daycares, like Dogma Pet Care in Massachusetts, stock up on sensitive skin baby wipes, which work well for dogs with skin allergies.

Pay particular attention to the head and face of the dog, as this is what most owners immediately notice as they greet their dog. Make sure to wipe down the bottom of the dog's paws as well—this is often a big odor-causer. These go-home exams should take less than 30 seconds and can also be used to examine the dog for any signs of cuts or scrapes, which should be pointed out to the owner and treated with antibiotic cream, if needed.

Other policies to implement in your daycare include brushing dogs in the afternoon and spot-cleaning messy dogs as you notice problems. During down time, your staff can be shown how to brush the dogs with a simple slicker brush, and they should spot clean any dog with visible staining or dirt with a high-quality waterless shampoo, such as Winner's Circle, and a clean towel. If a dog gets really filthy—beyond spot cleaning—consider a “discretion” bath. If you notice that a dog will qualify for a discretion bath early in the day—you see it roll in feces, for example—then get the dog bathed as quickly as possible. The dog can be bathed and then returned to daycare early in the day, keeping everyone else clean and avoiding a last-minute rush to bath the dog later.

Some facilities will want to charge owners for baths,



**When bathing a dog before daycare pickup, pay particular attention to the cleanliness of the head and face, as this is what most owners immediately notice as they greet their dogs.**

while others will not. If you do charge, you should be very clear on your pricing policy for discretion baths (and offer a significant discount) as owners can get irritated if they feel that you have bathed the dog just to make some extra money. A phone call to confirm permission for a bath is always a good idea. On the flip side, I have found that if you do give free discretion baths every once in a while, owners appreciate the extra effort and believe that you have gone above and beyond their expectations. This, really, is what keeping clients is all about, and in the long run will pay back in happy and satisfied clients. 🐾

*Jaime Van Wye currently works as a kennel consultant, developing new facilities and improving old ones with her company Kennelstart. She is also an author, writing on all aspects of dog management, and recently published the satirical book, How to Have an Ill-Behaved Dog distributed through Knock Knock. Jaime also owns and operates an agility and training center in Los Angeles, The Zoom Room. Jaime can be reached at [Jaime@kennelstart.com](mailto:Jaime@kennelstart.com), or online at [www.kennelstart.com](http://www.kennelstart.com).*

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# Understanding Fear in Dogs

## Part 2



By Jim Burwell

Dogs can express fear in a variety of ways. Because they have several options, a dog might show fear one way at one time and another way at a different time, depending on its mental state at the time, the intensity of the fear-inducing stimulus, the stimulus type, what has gone on just prior to the “last straw,” the cumulative effect of several apparently innocuous stimuli, and other more-or-less obvious contributory factors.

Most commonly, the dog adopts a submissive posture, head down, ears back, tail tucked tightly between its legs. Or the dog might lie down and roll over on its side, lifting the top hind leg.

The dog could show a high level of excitability, panting, salivating, dribbling urine, or it may whine or bark while showing a low level submissive posture. The fearful dog might take flight if he is able to by running away from the fear-inducing stimulus. If confined in some way, the dog might pace, circle or whirl in a “make believe” running away. The most dangerous expression of fear is aggression in which the dog might growl, raise its hackles, bare teeth and could even nip or

The best we can hope for is to mask the fear of some things so the dog is at least a satisfactory citizen. Because in inherited fearfulness the fear is usually global—that is, the dog fears everything—we can never hope to mask all of it. Some fear will always be there.

The most insidious aspect of genetically determined fear is that it might not appear full-blown until the dog is 4 or 5 years old. The dog might act close to normal, take training perfectly well (though usually not; in most cases the owner will notice a “soft temperament”), perform well in tests and in the field until suddenly the dog switches from apparently normal to very fearful. Presumably something, and it would need to be the absolute correct trigger for a particular dog’s fear, one day happens. From then on, the dog is clearly fearful of just about everything. The big problem is if the dog has already been bred and a whole new generation of fearful dogs is on the way or maybe already reproducing even another generation. Obviously, it would take a lot of detective work and good records for several generations to get on top of this scenario.

*“The cure for fearfulness will depend first on recognizing the underlying cause—genetic, early environment, associative learning or some combination of these.”*

in the extreme, launch an all-out attack with vicious biting, especially if escape is not an option. Any one or any combination of these signals indicates fear levels from slightly above to a whole lot above normal.

The cure for fearfulness will depend first on recognizing the underlying cause—genetic, early environment, associative learning or some combination of these.

Considering these causes one at a time, the first, genetically determined fear or the inherited predisposition for fear, is the most resistant to change and is therefore nearly impossible to completely cure.

Because the underlying cause is genetic, the fear will always be there. But it can be made to take a back seat. The first steps on the road back to a better than just so-so hunting dog is careful, gentle, obedience training starting right back with the basics. The training or in most cases retraining, should begin with walking at heel on leash, come, sit and whoa, working up to down/stays where the dog will sit or lie down and stay for up to 10 minutes with the owner out of sight. The dog must gain self-confidence and self-reliance. 🐾

**Jim Burwell**, Houston’s “Dog Whisperer,” has been training dogs for 25 years. He is founder of Jim Burwell’s Petiquette, an in-home dog training franchise. If you have a question or concern regarding dog training, contact him at (713) 728-0610; Email: jim@petiquittedog.com, training@petcareservices.org.





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## Saddle Thrombus



*By Susan Edwards*

There is a fairly common and serious result of heart disease in cats known as arterial thrombosis, saddle thrombus, or throwing a clot. This occurs when a blood clot breaks off in one of the diseased arteries of the heart and lodges in the artery at the base of the spine where it branches to deliver blood to the hind legs. Almost all cases are associated with one of the forms of cardiomyopathy. (Cardiomyopathy is a very serious disease in which the heart muscle becomes inflamed and doesn't work as well as it should. There may be multiple causes, including viral infections.)

Symptoms of a saddle thrombus are a sudden onset of paralysis in the hind limbs, profound pain, cold back feet and legs, and loss of sensation in the hind feet. There may also be incontinence, and the clot could affect the kidneys prior to its lodging at the base of the spine. Unfortunately, the prognosis is dire and treatment is most often euthanasia.

There is treatment for the clot itself, but the resulting paralysis can take months to resolve, if ever, and both the treatment and the rehabilitation are very expensive. Most veterinarians who have experience with saddle thrombus will tell the owner that while treatments are available, they require a specialist, need to be initiated very soon after symptoms appear, they are expensive, and the outcome is rarely satisfactory.

A 4-year-old cat recently in my care, with no previous diagnosis or obvious symptoms of heart disease, showed the sudden onset of saddle thrombus. He had eaten well and appeared fine during the early morning, but by late morning, his hindquarters were paralyzed, he was yowling in pain, flopping around in his cage trying to get comfortable, his hind feet were cold, and he had become incontinent. He was rushed to the veterinarian, who administered pain medication and cortisone to relieve any inflammation. The cat was euthanized that evening.



**Symptoms of a saddle thrombus are a sudden onset of paralysis in the hind limbs, profound pain, cold back feet and legs, and loss of sensation in the hind feet.**

As upsetting and heartbreaking as this was, the cat was very fortunate to be in an environment where his problem was detected almost immediately, and he didn't have to suffer in pain for an extended period of time. This was the first time in 13 years that I've experienced this problem. Hopefully, it will also be the last.

Heart disease is often difficult to detect in cats, so we, as pet caretakers, need to be aware of symptoms in order to alert the owner of a possible medical problem if they become apparent. Coughing, trouble breathing when relaxed, tiring quickly and panting when playing, and lethargy are all possible signs of problems relating to the heart as well as other medical disorders. Other symptoms include cyanosis or a blue tinge to the gums and cold extremities.

Prompt action by an owner can help a cat live a longer more-comfortable life. Unfortunately, saddle thrombus can't be detected early as it occurs suddenly and without warning, but if the cat has been diagnosed with cardiomyopathy, we need to be aware of this complication and pay special attention. 🐾

**For questions or concerns regarding boarding or care of cats, contact PCSA's Cat Boarding Section Chair:**

Susan Edwards, Cat's Nest Boarding and Day Care, Milpitas, CA  
Email: [CatBoarding@petcareservices.org](mailto:CatBoarding@petcareservices.org)  
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## Increase Profits: Convince Clients to Have Dogs Groomed More Often



By Grace Woodford

Most dogs and cats need regular grooming and most clients don't have their pets groomed often enough. One of the most difficult tasks we face is convincing our grooming clients to come back more often. It is better to keep your approach basic when dealing with clients that might not understand the intricacies of what it takes to groom the pet.

First, it is a good idea to educate the client a little bit. For example, often pets may look fluffy on the outside, but under the fluff a multitude of problems can be found. The coats with the most serious problems are found on animals who have trouble shedding their coats completely clear of the skin. In other words, the dead coat that loosens gets entangled or matted into the remaining live hair.

Explain to your clients that dogs have between seven and 32 hairs per hair follicle, with one "guard" hair that is coarse and grows more slowly. The other hairs in the follicle are soft "undercoat" hairs, and this is the problem. The guard hair grows slowly and stays in the follicle longer. The undercoat hairs are constantly falling out and new ones are growing in. This is what

avoid the skin and coat problems I have described above. The clients will appreciate your thoughtful comments that could help them avoid painful problems for the pet and costly vet bills for the client.

Both facility owners and clients should take time to understand the natural vegetation in their part of the country. Often there are many kinds of vegetation that have an exterior that keeps it attached to whatever it lands on. It is smooth if you rub your fingers over it one direction, but in the opposite direction you'll find it sticky. These ridges keep the "intruder" from falling out of the animal's coat once it enters. Essentially, this plant matter just keeps drilling into and through the coat until it reaches the skin. This is a problem, and if the client does not take steps to keep the pet's coat clear of this kind of plant, again the client could have more vet bills. Educate yourself about these kinds of vegetation so you can keep your clients informed. This gives you another opportunity to encourage the clients to bring their pets in more often for grooming.

Once these plants pierce the skin, they can become lodged in the coat and

*“Some clients try to remove mats in the coat by using scissors, which is extremely dangerous, and they should be told just how dangerous.”*

causes the "shedding" problems so many breeds have. Even short-coated dogs like Jack Russell Terriers and Labrador Retrievers shed off massive amounts of hair! Clients need to understand and we need to educate them about this issue. Once they understand, they are much more likely to bring their pets in more often for grooming. This translates into an increase in revenue for the grooming portion of your facility.

Second, pet owner need to understand that they have a responsibility to take care of the hygienic needs of their four legged family member and take precautions to

skin, and when that happens the pet's body-protective mechanisms take over. A small puncture wound is usually created, and the possibility of infection greatly increases. Most experienced groomers are used to seeing these problems walk in the door. The coat is fluffy on the outside, usually because the client attempts to brush the coat at home but doesn't realize they need to get *all* the dead coat out, down to the skin. Clients also don't realize they need a professional groomer to really remove the dead coat, dirt, dander, and plant vegetation from the pet's skin and coat. Clients have no idea that a thick felt

**For questions or concerns regarding grooming, contact PCSA's Grooming Section Chair:**

Grace Woodford, CKO  
Ph: (770) 253-7234  
Email: doghouseknnl@bellsouth.net or grooming@petcareservices.org

could be forming next to the dog or cat's skin. Again, clients appreciate a facility owner, groomer or manager explaining this to them and helping them understand that their pet needs to be groomed more than once a year.

Clients rarely want their pet to be shaved right down to the skin. This gives you another good opportunity to educate the client and drum up business. This kind of education translates into long-term clientele and long-term increases in revenue. Well-educated clients tend to be very loyal. Some clients try to remove mats in the coat by using scissors, which is extremely dangerous, and they should be told just how dangerous. If you think about it, normally there is about 1/4 to 1/8 clear coat right next to the skin, and this is the only place you can actually get a clipper to cut the coat off. The coat generally comes off in one big piece all entwined together, and you literally cannot pull it apart once it is off the animal. Imagine how it feels when it is attached to the skin! Clients that realize this will definitely want to avoid the procedure! One section will pull another part of the dog or cat, so as they move around, the hair attached to one part of the body is pulling on another part of the body. This creates pain, and sometimes the coat actually causes the skin to tear from the pulling pressure created. Clients are usually horrified when they learn the consequences of once-a-year grooming. They will appreciate you for telling them what could happen.

Many pet owners have no idea what is going on under all that hair. Obviously, the more serious problems are caused by anything sticking the pet in the skin. Multiple pustules may form that are caused by infections when the body tries to rid the skin of the intrusion—even resulting in maggots that are now feeding on the rotting flesh created by the unnoticed and untreated

infection. Dogs and cats that are groomed only once or twice a year often have these kinds of surprises under all that fur.

Although you can charge more if a pet has knots or “matts” in its coat, clients will spend more in long-term multiple grooming appointments and keep their pets healthier. Although a *good* and experienced groomer can remove these kinds of coats without cutting the skin, some other groomers are too pressed for time, frustrated at neglect of a pet, or just so inexperienced they can't tell when they are cutting hair as opposed to skin. This can cost your facility money if you have to pay the vet bill.

So educate your clients and teach them how to properly brush and comb their dogs or cats between groomings and not just brush out the top layer so it “looks” fluffy. Help them understand that live coat *must* be clear of all dead coat right down to the skin. When they do bring the pet in for grooming it will take your groomer less time to groom the pet, and they will actually be able to book more appointments. Clients will have cleaner, healthier pets and fewer vet bills. They will thank you in the long run and you will build a solid clientele that understands a little more about what it takes to groom, what constitutes quality grooming, and they will want to bring their pet in for grooming more often. Your clients will realize that they have found a very experienced groomer who truly cares about the health, safety and beauty of their pets! 🐾

*Grace Woodford is a CKO and ISCC Master Pet Stylist Meritus. She operates a highly successful boarding facility, grooming shop, and grooming school. You can get more information on grooming and grooming schools by visiting her Web site at [www.graywoodacademy.com](http://www.graywoodacademy.com).*

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# POLICIES FOR A SUCCESSFUL PET CARE FACILITY (PART 1)

Anticipating potential problems goes a long way toward running a smooth business.

BY SHANNON HEGGEM, CKO, CMG, NCMG

I knew “Laurie” was going to be a high-maintenance boarding client, just from our initial conversation. She indicated on the phone that one of her two dogs wasn’t in the best health; however, she really couldn’t tell me exactly what was wrong with the little guy.

At our face-to-face interview, Fluffy seemed to be healthy and alert. A call to Laurie’s vet confirmed that the dog was okay for boarding, and that he was not being treated for any ongoing ailments. On the departure day, however, that all changed when Laurie informed me that I needed a tutorial regarding all of Fluffy’s medications.

Laurie had brought a child’s suitcase, which overflowed with meticulously labeled prescription vials. She had a pill, potion, lotion, spray or salve for anything that could possibly ever afflict a canine. Except for the creamy pink stomach remedy, everything else had been dispensed by a local veterinarian for Fluffy.

I stood in awe as Laurie went over the detailed instructions (which were also printed neatly on new labels she had added to each vial): “If Fluffy coughs two to four times, give him a tablespoon of cough syrup. If he coughs again, give him these antibiotics twice daily for three days. If he...”



In my head, I had already made up mind: If Fluffy needed any medication for any type of malady, he would be transported to the vet, as per the kennel policy. Then, the vet would decide and dispense whatever was necessary, since I'm not daring enough to practice medicine without a medical license. Fluffy had already gotten a clean bill of health from the vet, and at this point I was starting to realize that Fluffy wasn't the one that needed the medications in the suitcase.

### **ANYTHING CAN AND WILL HAPPEN**

As caretakers of people's precious pets, we are often faced with challenging situations regarding the pets' health and well-being. My experience has confirmed that old saying about an ounce of prevention being worth a pound of cure. Of course anything can and will happen while pets are in our care, but I believe the outcome of these situations is highly dependent on three things: the clients we allow into our facilities, our timely reactions to unforeseen situations, and careful and conscientious customer service before, during, and after an incident has occurred.

### **ACCEPTANCE POLICIES**

It is vital for a pet care facility to have a clearly worded acceptance policy for potential clients. Simply put, an acceptance policy is a summation of the guidelines used to determine a pet's eligibility to be a guest at a facility. The policy should be clearly stated on the facility Web site and in all written materials as well.

My facility policy is straightforward: I will happily consider non-aggressive, housebroken dogs over the age of 9 months who are current on all vaccinations, for boarding. All male dogs must be neutered; females can be intact as long as they are not in season. (I am also careful to state that we cater to pets with special needs, such as geriatric pets, etc.)

No biters, no chronic cage-soilers, no puppies, no intact males. Might sound snobby, but I've found that this acceptance policy has drastically reduced occurrences of problematic situations.



**It is vital for a pet care facility to have a clearly worded acceptance policy for potential clients. Simply put, an acceptance policy is a summation of the guidelines used to determine a pet's eligibility to be a guest at a facility.**

For the record, I absolutely love puppies; however, they can be messy, noisy, and have underdeveloped immune systems. I always take the time to explain to puppy owners the risks of boarding at a young age, and make sure to let them know that I would love take care of their new baby after his 9-month birthday. I track these inquiries, and during the ten years since I implemented this policy, I have lost only one client due to the minimum age requirement. Through this policy, I've managed to reduce my potential liability, and have also strengthened client relations. It's a win-win situation.

### **PRESCREENING POTENTIAL CLIENTS**

I am convinced that the key to having a successful, profitable kennel is carefully screening the clients that we do business with, both two-legged and four-legged. If you are new to the pet care business, then you might still be at that stage where

you sometimes go against your best instincts, and accept a questionable client.

I think most pet professionals can say they've done that at one time or another. Let's face it: It's difficult to turn away business, especially in these uncertain economic times. But our instincts are there to protect us, and more often than not, those clients (or pets, for that matter) that send up red flags early in the process are the ones who end up causing the biggest problems.

I have embraced the concept of being a "membership" kennel, which means that all new clients must first go through an application process before they can make reservations. Upon approval, I then schedule a face-to-face interview with the owner and the pet. Because this process requires the client to be proactive, it has proven to be a great screening tool.

It starts with the client downloading the extensive application forms from my kennel Web site, and submitting them (along with a copy of the vaccination records from their vet) for review. This application contains very thorough and probing questions about health history, daily routines, allergies, and behavioral habits. This bundle of papers also includes the boarding agreement/liability release as well.

If the pet is accepted for membership, these forms provide a valuable hard copy of the pet's history for the client file. The forms also open up a dialogue with the client to discuss any special needs the pet might have. Because the questions on the form are specific, the client is less likely to leave something out that they didn't realize was important.



**Dogs must be evaluated for compatibility with other canines if an owner would like them in daycare activities, and your facility offers this service.**

### BEHAVIORAL SCREENING

Besides the obvious health-related questions, information about a pet's behavioral history can be vital in preventing a bad situation during boarding. Several years ago one of my guests became lethargic and sickly. A trip to the vet revealed a blocked colon—Shelby had swallowed a large rock which she was unable to pass. Luckily, the vet saved her life, and she was already out of surgery by the time I was finally able to reach her owner. When I told her of the incident, she exclaimed, "Oh, I forgot to tell you that Shelby likes to eat rocks!" This would have been helpful information to have known prior to her stay. However, I still can't figure out why the owner didn't mention it to me as she stood in the gravel-filled exercise yard with me the day she dropped her off to be boarded. This was a lesson for me to not make any assumptions. I ask detailed questions about the dogs' behavior patterns to avoid a similar incident.

Take the time to look over the forms that you use to gather information about new clients. Perhaps it is time for



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an overhaul. Be very specific; think of the forms that you fill out for the first visit to a new doctor. Make sure to include behavioral questions about reaction to stress, eating patterns, etc. And, at the end of the form, leave a large amount of space after this question: Is there anything else I should know about your pet? Sometimes the most valuable information shows up as a response to this question.

### PRE-BOARDING EXAM

All guests benefit from a thorough physical exam upon arrival for boarding, as well as a question-and-answer session to see if anything has recently changed. I think it is important to have one person assigned to this task that does it regularly. If Sarah the receptionist always does the intake exams, she is more likely to remember that Lumpy has a benign cyst on his left thigh.

### WHEN DISASTER STRIKES

No matter how stringent your acceptance policies are, no matter how conscientious your staff is, and no matter how careful you are, pets will get sick, injured, and die while in your care. It's the law of averages: the longer you are in the business and the more pets you take care of, the greater the likelihood of incidents. The key to handling these situations is timely discovery and prompt action.

The first step seems simple enough: Hire good people that can think on their feet. This is a much more difficult task in today's employee market than it has ever been. But facility staff members must be able to react quickly without panic, and consistently make good decisions under pressure. Also, I firmly believe that every single person that comes into any contact whatsoever with the boarded pets should complete the PCSA Certified Pet Care Technician (CPCT) program—and that goes for the janitor, too! The level of contact with the pets should be proportionate to the level of PCSA training courses completed by that particular employee. Knowledge is power, and in an emergency, these staff



**A clear acceptance policy and written policies and procedures are there to help the client as well as the business. It can be a valuable part of a lasting business relationship.**

members need to be well-equipped and ready. 🐾

*Part 2 of Policies for a Successful Pet Care Facility will appear in the September/October issue of the Pet Services Journal.*

*Shannon Heggem, CKO, CMG, NCMG is a dynamic and inspiring pet business expert and speaker who has motivated thousands to take action. She works as a consultant to pet professionals, helping the overwhelmed and overworked get focused, organized, and more productive in their pet care businesses. She helps clients by working on site or virtually! Subscribe to Shannon's free pet industry ezine "Word To Wag By" at [www.shannonheggem.com](http://www.shannonheggem.com)*

# EDUCATION DEPARTMENT CHANGES

BY MICHAEL SCHLIEMAN

## NEW TIME LIMIT FOR LEVEL I: CPCT AND LEVEL II: CAPCT COURSES

Beginning Monday, September 1, 2008, the PCSA Education Department will implement a four-month deadline from the date of enrollment for people to complete either the Level I: Certified Pet Care Technician or the Level II: Certified Advanced Pet Care Technician course. If a person does not complete the course and submit their exam within four months of enrollment, their registration in the course will be cancelled and they will have to re-enroll and pay the appropriate course fees.

We are finding it necessary to change the previous policy of no time limit for completing a course to help better manage the education program. To illustrate the problem, from 2004 to 2007, over 650 registrants for the Level I online exam have yet to complete the course. That does not include outstanding Level I hardcopy exams. We have education enrollments going back to the early 1990s and earlier that have not been completed.

Granted, some of these people are probably no longer working in the industry or at the pet care facility where they were employed when they enrolled. We realize there is a certain level of staff turnover in the industry, and a multitude of unforeseen circumstances that may prevent a person from completing the Level I and/or Level II course.

## TRANSFER OF NEW STAFF TO UNUSED PAID ENROLLMENTS

The Education Department will continue the policy of allowing facilities to transfer new staff into unused paid enrollments for people who are no longer with the facility or will not complete the course for which they are enrolled within four months. The four-month time frame for the new staff member will begin on the date of transfer and not the original enrollment date.

We foresee the possibility of a facility paying for a staff member who will not complete their course within the four-month period yet the facility does not have a staff person ready to be transferred into that enrollment. It will be the facility's responsibility to let us know of such cases and we will change the enrollment into an "open enrollment" (see below).

## OPEN ENROLLMENTS

Sometimes a facility pays for an enrollment but does not have a specific person to enroll in the course at that time. Generally, we enter an "open enrollment" in the facility's education file. When the facility has a person ready to take the course, we will then enter their name into that opening. Open enrollments will be kept open indefinitely and the four-month time limit



**PCSA Education/Accreditation Manager Michael Schlieman (left), Michaels's Weimaraner Rave, and Education Program Coordinator Cheryl Ledford are refining and improving department policies.**

will not start until the date a staff person is entered into that enrollment.

*This change applies only to the Level I: CPCT and Level II: CAPCT courses.*

## CKO CANDIDATES

CKO candidates, complete your certification at the annual Pet Care Services Association Convention and Expo, October 28-30, 2008, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It is not too late to make the commitment and complete the various preliminary requirements in preparation for both the written and oral exams.

All prerequisite supplemental information, including a request for evaluation, must be submitted and accepted by the PCSA Education Department at least 45 days prior to the convention.

If you plan to complete your CKO certification at this year's convention, please call Cheryl Ledford or email us at [education@petcareservices.org](mailto:education@petcareservices.org).

We look forward to hearing from you in hopes of you achieving this significant milestone in your career. 🐾

### Michael Schlieman

Accreditation/Education Manager  
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877.570.7788 ext 16  
[michael@petcareservices.org](mailto:michael@petcareservices.org)

### Cheryl Ledford

Education Program Coordinator  
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877.570.7788 ext 14  
[cheryl@petcareservices.org](mailto:cheryl@petcareservices.org)

# ANGELA ASHMORE

Membership Administrative Assistant BY PHIL SAMUELSON

Ever since Angela Ashmore joined the Pet Care Services Association's Membership Department things have been running smoother than ever.

Indeed, her supervisor, Membership Manager Cyndy Jones, calls Angela's efforts a "huge help." With Angela's assistance, Cyndy and the PCSA Membership Department are now able to tackle new projects and hone the department to better meet member needs.

"I love learning new things on the job, which happens a lot in the Membership Department at PCSA," Angela says. "Members call in and need to renew or have questions, and I'm always glad when I can help. I must say that PCSA's members are some of the nicest people I've had to work with over the phone."

Angela has a clear understanding of our association's goals and her role on the staff to attain these goals.

"PCSA brings together a group of people who provide a needed service," she says. "It's an opportunity for people in the same business to share their knowledge with one another. Many individuals who are just starting out in the pet services industry call me looking for guidance on many different aspects of

their business. We are able to help these people or connect them with people who can. I also believe that we provide a great advertisement for our members by posting them on our Web site. I get many calls from people looking for facilities to house their pets."

Of course, all work and no play would make Angela a dull girl, so she balances her life with time for fun, too. Originally hailing from Kansas, she moved to Colorado Springs when she was very young. And in Colorado Springs she remains. Like the rest of the PCSA staff she fell in love with the area and is very happy here.

Angela is happily married to her husband, Chris, and they have a 10-year-old son, CJ. The animal members of the household include Paprika, a 9-year-old female Beagle and Cocker Spaniel mix; Barron, a 4-year-old male Cocker Spaniel; and Bandit, a 2-year-old male Beagle and Cocker Spaniel mix.

Gardening and knitting are the hobbies Angela enjoys most during her free time. She has enjoyed both activities for a number of years.

"I'm no professional knitter," she says. "But I have made scarves and hats for just about everyone in my family. Knitting is something I do during the winter when I can't



get outside—it's something to keep me busy."

With warmer weather here, Angela has been busy tending her garden.

"I enjoy growing herbs and vegetables," she says. "I'm also trying to get a few fruit trees and plants going—cherry tree, peach tree and raspberries. I use the garden to do some canning and jelly making. There's nothing like homemade jelly on hot bread! I also enjoy growing lettuce and turnips. I always do hot peppers—jalapeños—and plant some pumpkins and corn with my son. It's great! My perfect day would definitely include working in the garden in the warm sun and barbecuing with my family." 🐕

*Phil Samuelson has worked as a communications professional in the pet industry for 20 years. He is currently the Publications Manager for PCSA in Colorado Springs.*

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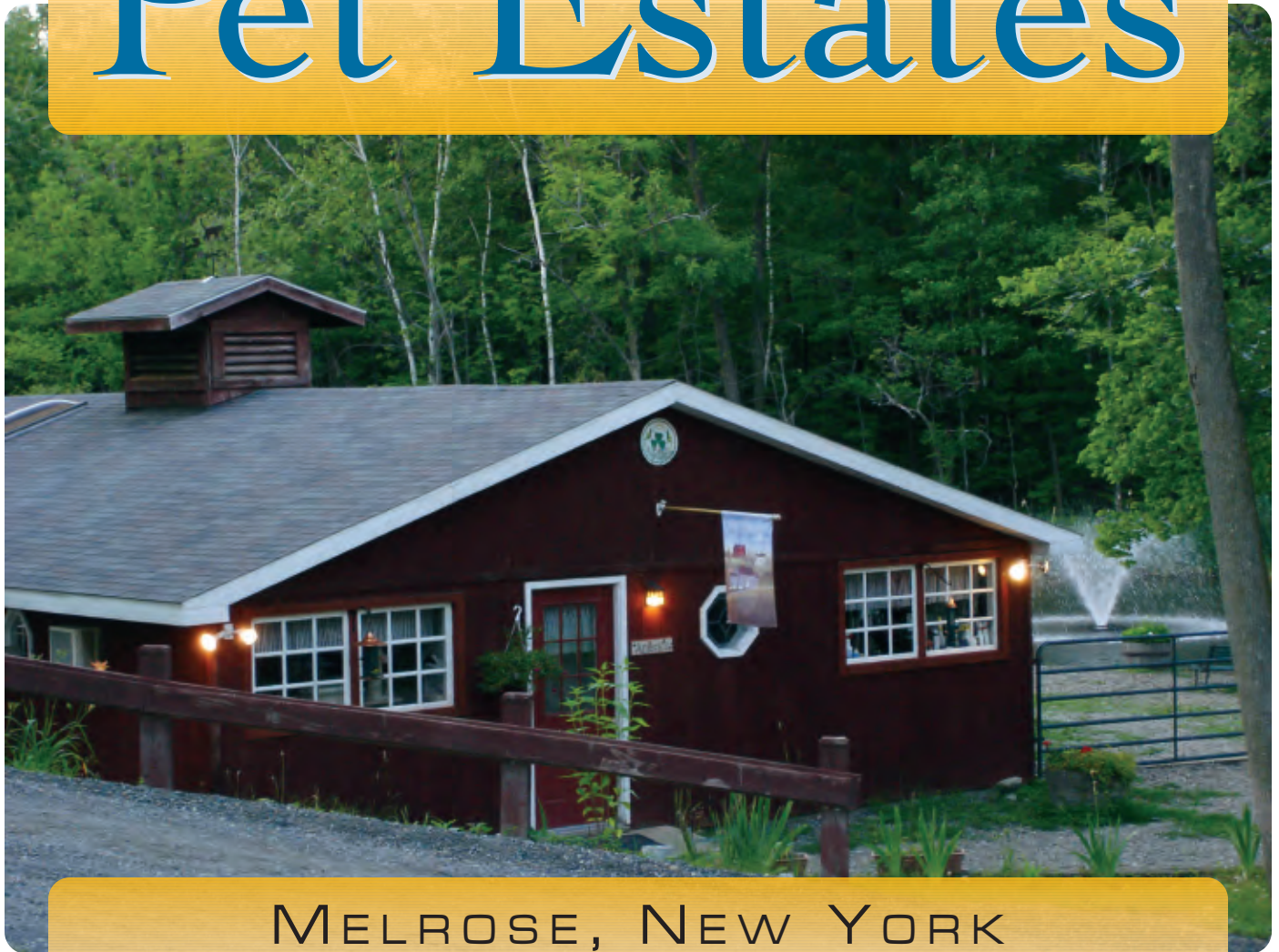
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# Pet Estates



## MELROSE, NEW YORK

By Roxanne Hawn

**M**ary Lynn and Don Gagnon, a former nurse and a retired police officer, first opened Merry Lynn Kennels in 1991. The couple ran a typical, higher-volume kennel at their location in the hills of Rensselaer County, about 20 minutes from downtown Albany. In the beginning, they could host 75 dogs and 15 cats per day. “Our operation system was based, and succeeded, on volume,” Mary Lynn says. But, the Gagnons learned that volume wasn’t for them.

So, in 1994, they switched gears and tried something revolutionary. Instead of typical kennel or even suite-style

boarding, they developed a village of small houses, condos and townhouses that provide cage-free boarding in a home-like environment. They re-branded the facility as Pet Estates and focused on quality, not quantity. They paid conversion expenses from regular cash-flow. At the time, it cost about \$40,000-\$50,000.

“There are a ton of reasons,” Mary Lynn says of the switch. “With volume, no matter how hard you work, I don’t think you can give the care you want to give, and the overhead is much greater. The way we have it set up, especially in the off-season, one person can basically run it.

And, the nice thing is that the pets are enjoying the outdoors all day. Each one of our setups, each one of our designs, has a play yard attached, so pets are outdoors a lot, and we have a pond that's incorporated into the design of the village, which allows us to help the real high-energy dogs to burn off energy because we let them play and swim in the water."

The Gagnons explain that cleaning is much faster and easier because pets rarely make messes indoors. And, they add, the stress level for animals and people is much lower because each pet has its own space rather than keeping 70 or 100 animals under one roof. It's very quiet in the village, so even nervous or fearful pets can relax.

In a volume-based kennel, Mary Lynn says, "If you have one or two people who don't show, which is very common, you have a problem. The pets can't get the attention you would want."

"The work involved is a lot less," Don adds. "But, the revenue is around the same."

Plus, Mary Lynn adds that even modern suites with beds and TVs feel "hospital-like" and not like home. Through their own hands-on experience, not theory, the Gagnons want to show the industry that lower volume and homey kennels are not only viable but desirable. They also point to the lower start-up costs as a selling point to those interested in joining the industry. Rather than \$1 million to launch a modern, high-volume kennel, they say someone can get started with a village for around \$100,000.

## THE FACILITY

The village features private and semi-private accommodations. "Private" means they have full run of their own little building, including the lounge and/or play yard. "Semi-private" means they have their own



**Pet Estates differs from most traditional boarding facilities by utilizing small, separate buildings to house its guests in a more home-like manner. The switch from kennels to condos has been a very positive experience for owners Mary Lynn and Don Gagnon.**

# PET ESTATES

## VITAL STATISTICS

### SERVICES:

Dog boarding, cat boarding, training, grooming, day care, swimming, design consultation, estates, email photos/video, pond play parties

### NUMBER OF DOG ENCLOSURES:

16 suites, 2 condos, 1 bunkhouse, 2 townhouses, approximately 10 Mason kennels

### NUMBER OF CAT ENCLOSURES:

10+ suites, condos and townhouse (interchangeable for cats)

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:

2 full time, 2 part time

### HOURS OF OPERATION:

9 a.m.-Noon, 5-6 p.m.

### INTAKE REQUIREMENTS:

Boarding agreement and other paperwork signed

Rabies and distemper mandatory (titers accepted)

Kennel cough vaccine recommended but not required

Flea and tick check done at intake

### FEEDING & OTHER COMFORTS:

Clients bring food from home and are welcome to bring any beds, toys and such.

### SYSTEMS:

Appointment books are maintained based on reservations made by phone or computer.

Daily checklists note cleaning and pet care requirements for each pet.

Medication sheets outline needs of each pet.

Hand-held radios and other supplies carried in pouches worn at the waist.

### WEB SITE:

[www.petestates.com](http://www.petestates.com)



**Fall 2008**  
**Pittsburgh, PA**



# Pet Care Services

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A s s o c i a t i o n

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**Oct. 28 - 30, 2008 • Hilton Pittsburgh**

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**Track 3: Facility Management** - Expand your business by adding retail sales, specialty pet services or even renovating and/or expanding your existing facility.



# Fall 2008 Convention & Expo

Oct. 28 - 30, 2008 • Hilton Pittsburgh

## *Pittsburgh Information*

Pittsburgh is a city of neighborhoods. This claim is made by many cities that celebrate their traditional enclaves, but Pittsburghers seem more attached to their places than most folks in other places. It is common for natives to define their home not by the city boundaries, but by neighborhood boundaries.

While many still perceive Pittsburgh as an industrial town, others claim it as a renewed and refreshed hip urban enclave. A beautiful city with a stunning skyline, lots of walkable neighborhoods, river trails, and a lively downtown. Cultural and even independent artistic venues are abundant, from the Pittsburgh Symphony to the Mattress Factory art Museum, the Andy Warhol Museum, and the Garfield Glass Works.

Pittsburgh's Southside bustles with street activity, the North Shore is a new city rising on the Allegheny, and the city boasts of a thriving downtown Cultural District.

## *Hotel Information*

The Hilton Pittsburgh hotel is one of the city's largest, most recognized hotels, ideally located in downtown Pittsburgh. Pennsylvania Hilton hotel is also near the Convention Center and across the river from Heinz Field and PNC Park. At the gateway to the Cultural District, the Hilton Pittsburgh hotel is the hub of activities for sporting events, The Arts Festival, The Regatta, Fourth of July Fireworks, Light Up Night, Galas, Meetings, and Conventions.

## *Hotel Accommodations*

For reservations, please contact the Hilton Pittsburgh hotel in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, at (412) 391-4600 or visit PCSA's Web site and click on the Pet Services Convention and Expo logo on the homepage. The group room rate is \$129 a night. PCSA's group room block expires September 15, 2008. Please identify yourself with the PCSA Fall Convention and Expo to get the group room rate.



To register online, go to:  
**[www.petcareservices.org](http://www.petcareservices.org)**

Or for more information, call  
**(800) 570.7788 x17**



**Pet Estates owner Mary Lynn Gagnon reclines in one of the townhouses with canine companion Fiona.**

rooms, but they alternate access to the lounge and play yards. Only animals from the same family co-mingle. That includes dogs and cats being together, just as they would be at home.

Right now, the village has eight buildings:

- The largest is 1,400 square feet and houses the reception area, grooming shop, a five-unit suite with private lounge, a one-bedroom townhouse and a two-bedroom townhouse (both private).
- Building 2 is 240 square feet and consists of four suite units with a shared lounge.
- Building 3 is 288 square feet and consists of a four-unit suite with lounge.
- Building 4 is a 116-square-foot condo complete with a front porch and covered play yard.
- Building 5 is another condo.
- Building 6 is 288 square feet and consists of eight Mason kennels and two large fiberglass cages. This building is used for hold-over guests who are waiting to use other buildings. This allows for some guest overlap if a pet arrives before its reserved spot is vacated by the prior guest.
- Building 7 is a bunkhouse, which is 288 square feet, with one private condo and three suite units with a shared lounge.
- Building 8 is 336 square feet currently used for storage.

Plans are underway to add a Lake House on one of the 6.8-acre property's three ponds. The Lake House will contain two private two-bedroom units.

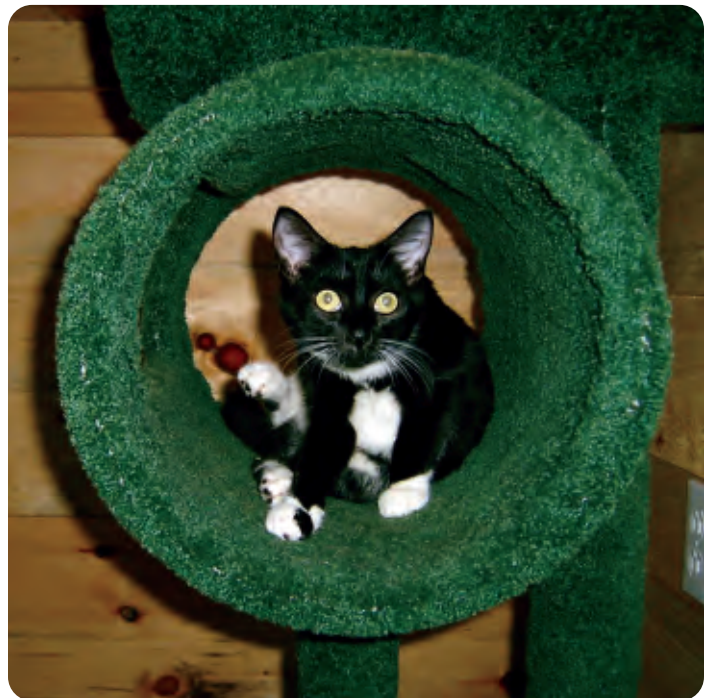
All buildings consist of wood framing. Interior walls are

novelty wood siding, with the lower portions covered in polyboard. Ceilings are tongue-and-groove pine with exposed beams. Flooring is either ceramic tile or commercial-grade vinyl flooring. Interior designs feature Early American or Colonial furniture and accents, which can be removed temporarily for pets that might chew it up. "Most people will tell us if they think their pet might destroy the furniture," Mary Lynn says. "So, we can pull it out and use the beds they bring from home. Honestly, people arrive with luggage for all their dog's stuff."

There are sofas, chairs, TVs, microwaves, refrigerators, shelving, window seats, heated beds, ramps for cats and other amenities that complete the home-like feel. Each unit is different enough to provide a variety that appeals to different people and that is just right for different pets—from youngsters to seniors.

Natural light comes from ample windows and skylights. Each building has its own heater and air conditioner. Since unused units don't require heating or AC, it's one way to save on overhead costs.

The buildings and yards are spaced about 25 to 35 feet apart, and the Gagnons use creative landscaping that allows



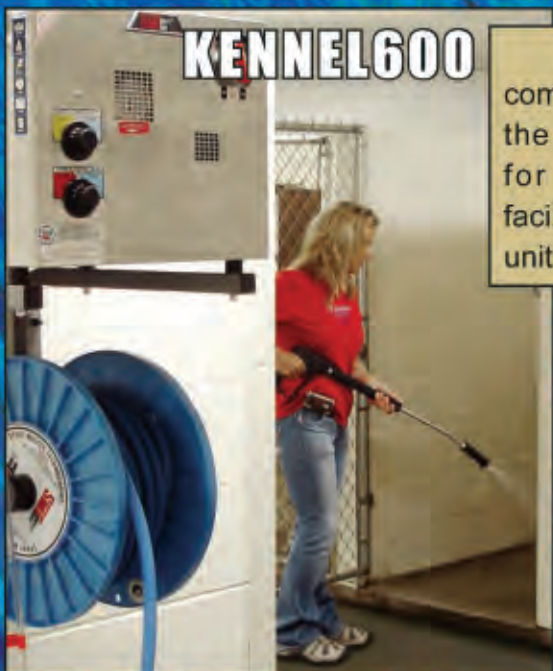
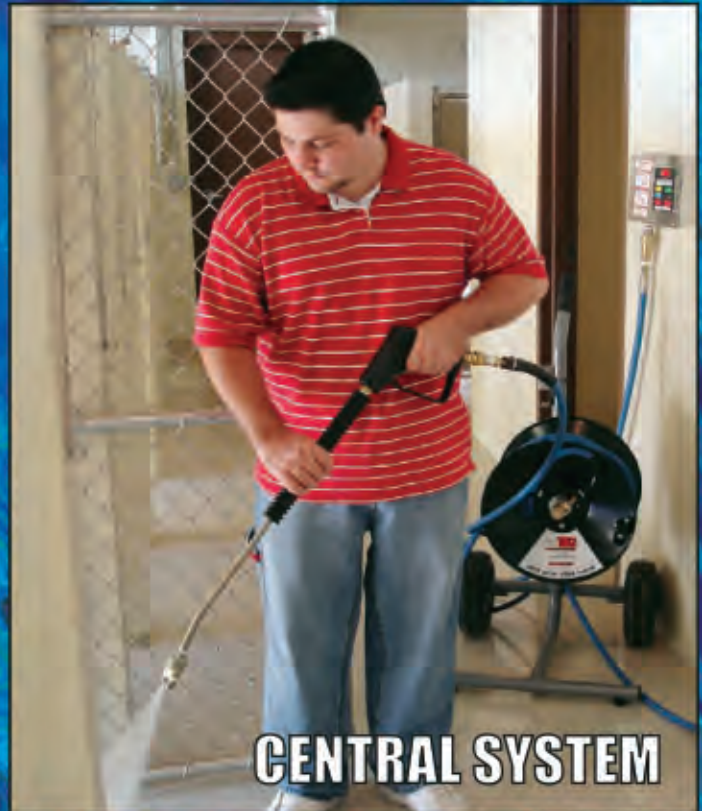
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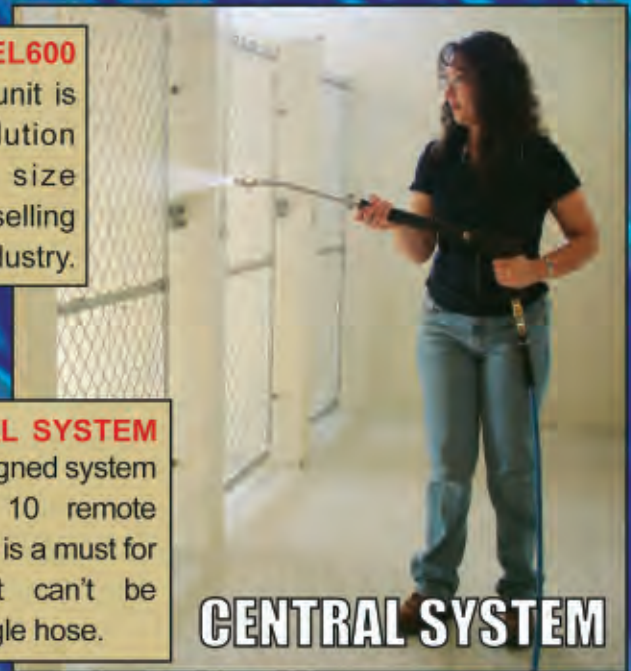
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**MARKETING  
RESOURCE CENTER**

# the marketing Brief

The Marketing Resource Center provides unique insight and proven expertise that will assist PCSA members in creating awareness, driving traffic, and generating growth for their business.

## What If?

Developing a Crisis Communication Plan is Absolutely Necessary

*A viral outbreak...*

*A devastating fire...*

*Or, the death of a pet at your facility...*

Although none of us want to think of these unpleasant possibilities, any number of unforeseen incidents can occur during the daily operation of a pet care facility. However, how you respond to these crises can dramatically impact the reputation and health of your facility.

Many businesses—regardless of size—tend not to plan for crises. However, crisis communication plans should be part of every marketing and public relations plan. The damage from poorly responding to a serious issue in a pet care facility could be irreversible to a business and its reputation.

While it is impossible to plan for all incidents, it is important to think

*“Always plan ahead. It wasn’t raining when Noah built the ark.”*

*- Richard C. Cushing*

out critical steps to follow should a crisis happen. Consider all possible negative scenarios and how your facility will respond to each of these scenarios. Write out each step and response that needs to take place. This will allow your staff members and you to respond calmly and decisively. When developing a crisis management plan, communication is crucial. Consider who will communicate with your employees, customers, media, enforcement officials, and other key constituents; what messages and details will be communicated; and, what methods of communication will be used.

It is the responsibility of the pet care facility owner and/or operator to ensure that each employee is trained on how to address crisis situations. Pet Care Service Association has received calls from the media indicating that some facilities have refused communication after a crisis has taken place in their facility. However, the first rule in crisis management is to not ignore the situation. It is not going to go away. It has to be addressed.

The following are a few steps to take when developing a crisis communication plan:

- Anticipate a crisis by strategically thinking about what might happen and how the situation can be effectively managed. Document communication protocols for all conceivable crises.
- Identify and prioritize key audiences (such as staff, customers, investors, vendors, etc.). Consider and document what type of information should be communicated to each audience type.
- Have on file, in an easily accessible place, key company information such as employee contact information, profiles for business owners and management staff, as well as information about the company's services. In the same file, have phone numbers for other stakeholders such as for other company locations, key vendors, customers, media, and others who may need to be contacted during the crisis. Have a printed version of this data as well as a file that can be maintained on the Web and accessed remotely. Keep this data updated on a regular basis.
- Practice your crisis plan for each possible scenario with your staff at least once a year and review the plan with each staff member on a regular basis. It is recommended that the crisis management plan be reviewed monthly.
- Communicate with a unified voice. This is best done by having a designated spokesperson who is trained with key message statements for each potential scenario.
- Communicate early and often and be open, honest, and direct with all stakeholders. Be proactive and not reactive. Determine communication methods that will be used in advance (i.e., whether via press conference, phone, Web site, etc.).
- Keep the message simple and straightforward so that all can clearly understand it. Be able to succinctly define the nature of the issue.

- Regardless of the situation, remain calm and do not panic.

According to Gartner Inc., a leading information technology research and advisory company, only 25 to 35 percent of all small businesses have a crisis management plan in place.

Gartner's research also indicates that two out of five businesses that are impacted by a crisis go out of business within five years of the occurrence. However, with careful planning, proper training, and communicating efficiently and with confidence, businesses—even your pet care facility—can survive a crisis with its reputation intact.



**For more information about developing a crisis communication plan or for questions related to other marketing and public relations topics, contact The Marketing Resource Center today at (303) 337-4441, or via email at [marketing@petcareservices.org](mailto:marketing@petcareservices.org).**

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## MEMBER PROFILE



**Cats have access to fresh air and an outdoor view during their stay.**

pets to enjoy porches or play yards with some privacy. If a couple of dogs get too vocal with one another, the Gagnons simply alternate their access to play yards so the village stays quiet for everyone else.

“We give tours in the summer, when we’re running full, and we’ll show people around, and it’s quiet,” Don says. “It’s not your typical kennel where you might have 70 dogs under one roof with a hurricane of noise that’s constant all day long. It’s just so much better for the pets.”

Play yards typically measure 18 by 35 feet and feature pea gravel on top of larger stone which is on top of drainage tiles that direct water away from the fresh-water ponds. Wood-frame fences with attached screening give a warmer appearance than chain link.

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**Only pets from the same family are allowed to co-mingle. This happy pair occupies one of the townhouses.**

more like housecleaning than industrial facility cleaning. With bleach, Odor Ban, Clorox 2 spray cleaner, Fantastic, Windex and Glade furniture polish, the Gagnons or their staff clean up each occupied unit each day. They store cleaning supplies, including mops and buckets, in each building for quick access.

Since no high-power washers are used, pets can stay in the units while they're being cleaned, which adds individual attention to their already posh and hands-on care. "It's such a stress reliever," Mary Lynn says. "As you do each one, they become your buddy."

#### THE FEE SCHEDULE

The Gagnons believe their village design allows for lower volume, less overhead and less stress with the same amount of revenue as a high-volume kennel. This is accomplished by premium rates for the various units. A typical kennel near Pet Estates charges \$15-\$18 a night. But, their suites start at \$35. Condos go for \$45 and townhouses for \$55. The Lake House units will be around \$65 per day. And, that per day point is important. Pet Estates charges by the day, not the night, so Friday to Friday stay would be billed for eight days, not seven. The billing day begins at opening, at 9 a.m., each day. By then, the pets have been serviced, starting at 6 a.m., so even if guest pick their pets up right at 9 a.m., they are charged for that day. By the same token, those that arrive just before 6 p.m. closing are not charged more. But, Pet Estates hours are strictly enforced, even though the Gagnons live onsite.

Clients are also charged based on the time they reserve, so if a 10-day vacation goes awry and the people come back



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after just five days, they still pay for 10 since others were likely turned away to protect that reservation.

The first pet from a family is full price, then additional pets are \$25. Cats and dogs cost the same, so there's no difference in the level of care or accommodations based on species. If you have two dogs staying in a condo, that's \$70 a day. One-on-one play time and attention come standard, but guests who want play times in the pond and huge attached play yard pay extra (\$12 for 30 minutes, \$20 for 60 minutes). So, if a two-dog family also books a half hour of daily pond time, that's another \$24 per day. Some prefer to have their pets bathed after swimming, so those fees get added as well.

"Most people who are spending \$55 to \$80 a day on their pets will buy into the extras, which helps subsidize our lower volume," Don explains.

At check-in clients agree that if their pet messes itself or gets really dirty during play that a bath will automatically be done at the owner's expense. "The worst thing you can do is send home a smelly dog," Don says.

For an additional fee, the Gagnons also will shoot photos and video and email them to clients on vacation.

#### OTHER DIFFERENCES

Pet Estates allows clients to tip the staff. Sometimes it's only



**The pond and fountain are a big attraction at Pet Estates. One of the services provided is playing and swimming time.**

a dollar, but occasionally staff receives tips of \$50 or more.

Despite industry trends toward pack play times, the Gagnons don't co-mingle dogs unless they know them really well and know that these two or three dogs get along. Mary Lynn knows that most places with group play times get clients to sign waivers, but she says, "Do you really think

An advertisement for Horst Custom Animal Enclosures. The left side features a close-up of a brown dog's face looking out of the window of a teal classic car. The right side has a yellow background with text and a white pet crate. The headline reads "Home Sweet Home away from Home." Below it, the text says: "We never forget that our animal enclosures are their home away from home. That's why we create exactly the kind of animal enclosures you want: with great design, superior sanitation, high quality materials, endless choices and excellent customer service. Call today and see for yourself!" At the bottom right, it says "Putting animals first. 800.221.4724 www.horstcompany.com A Modular Concepts Corporation" and features the Horst logo, which is a white silhouette of a dog on a dark green background with the word "Horst" in white and "Custom Animal Enclosures" in smaller white text below it.

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that's going to matter if someone comes back, and we have to say, "We're sorry but your dog got chewed up"? I can't do that."

In fact, the lack of interaction is a selling point for some clients with "difficult" pets who would be turned away from other facilities. Even fear-aggressive dogs do well at Pet Estates because they don't need to be leashed up or handled regularly. All families are encouraged to bring their supplies into the units and hang out with their pets before taking off. Pet Estates staff comes along so that pets can see their owners interact with them and see that everything is alright. "You can be sitting there visiting with the owner, and the pet will come over to you on its own," Don says. "It creates a trust factor."

Even really skittish pets do well. "In the extreme cases, some pets don't want any human contact at all," Don says. "And, we don't need to corner them to clean or anything. You can herd them around inside and out, without forcing any contact. That's maybe one out of 300. We've never refused any dog. We can handle high-stress dogs."

"What's funny is that after they've been here a couple times, 99 percent of the time they're fine," Mary Lynn adds.











Thanks to pond play times and the high level of personal attention, Don laughs that some dogs don't want to go home. "I love it when the owner comes back to pick the pet up, and the pet is like 'What are you doing here?' That's when I know we've done our job," he says.

Because Pet Estates is unique, most marketing is done through veterinarians and word of mouth. When the first converted condo opened, the facility also got quite a bit of media attention. For the first year, the Gagnons also ran a television commercial, but these days it's not necessary. People who are interested request tours. And, Mary Lynn says, "Seeing is selling."

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Even though larger, new kennels have spouted up nearby, it hasn't affected business or revenue levels at Pet Estates.

Don also credits the pond as a great amenity, calling it a tremendous "money maker." In addition to use by boarders, local clients often book the pond for private play time and doggie parties all summer long.

The Gagnons also provide home design consulting for people who want to make their homes more workable for them and their pets. They'll even build condos and townhouses onsite for people who want one at home. It's a workable option for families who love their pets but struggle with allergies or asthma in the household, like the Gagnon's did with their now-grown children. They turned their tool shed into a separate living room with couches and a TV so that they could hang out with their own dogs without compromising their kids' health.

### UP NEXT

Pet Estates is up for sale. Not because the Gagnons don't love it. They do. They're just ready to expand their consulting work to help others build similar home-like boarding villages across the country. One part of their business plan included setting up estates for pets whose owners die (about 15 so far), and they simply need more places like theirs that they can recommend for long-term care. They believe others can make a good living with just three buildings.

*Roxanne Hawn is a freelance writer in Golden, Colorado, specializing in animal-related and lifestyle topics. She's a regular contributor to the American Animal Hospital Association's TRENDS magazine and to PCSA's Pet Services Journal.*

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## Operate Your Business with Consistency



By Patricia Finn, JD, Professor of Law, ISCC Master Pet Stylist Meritus, Kennel Operator, Certifier, International Judge

If you have a pet-related legal question for Patricia Finn, please send it to her via her Web site: <http://www.petcarelaw.com>.

Most of us work very hard to develop a way of doing business that satisfies us personally but also meet the needs of our clients. After all, everyone wants to be happy at work and watch their business increase. It is wonderful to see those smiling faces and wagging tails enter your doorway every morning. One of the many facets that should be a primary consideration in your approach to business is consistency. Besides keeping your employees happy, contributing to a smooth working facility, and generally making your life easier because of the predictability, there are many added legal benefits as well.

Consistency in business practices can be a great defense if you or your business gets pulled into court. You will be able to prove you run a consistently safe business. If you have a legal issue, the consistence in your business approach will act as a safeguard, of which you are probably not aware. Of course a high quality approach to doing business coupled with an awareness of negligence is absolutely necessary, but in a legal pinch consistent business practices will help you or your attorney convince a judge or jury of your lack of culpability.

So what does it mean to be “culpable?” In a nutshell, it means “you did it.” You are responsible and you are the one that has to pay for any damages caused by your own actions or the acts of your employees. This concept includes another legal theory called *Respondeat Superior*. This is a Latin term and a legal doctrine which holds that employers are responsible for the acts and omissions of their employees and agents, when done within the scope of the employees’ duties.

Now that we are a little more aware of the legal consequences of these types of actions, let’s look at how this all fits into the idea of adhering to high-quality, consistent business practices. To start, develop written procedures for everything and distribute the appropriate guidelines to

employees or persons working for you in that related area. Take care with the language and meaning of the words you write, because some legal authority down the road might analyze them. However, don’t be afraid and let that fear of making a mistake in the writing keep you from actually putting this into practice!

The most important thing is to be clear and concise in the way you write. Don’t try to be fancy or sound legal. Good old-fashioned clear and simple language is the best choice. Actually, in law schools all over the country this approach to legal writing is being taught to law students. The old-fashioned legalese with words like “hereto” and “thereby” and long-winded collections of complex sentences and arcane descriptions and definitions are no longer preferred in legal writing. It is very important that your procedures are easily understood by everyone, employees, clients, judges, and juries. It is equally important that you show you consistently follow business procedures and practices that are safe for the pets, your clients, employees, and even yourself!

This may seem like a daunting task, but sit down at the computer or in front of your favorite notebook pad, put the title of the job at the top of the page and simply start to make an outline of procedures that people should follow when

“*The most important thing is to be clear and concise in the way you write. Don’t try to be fancy or sound legal. Good old-fashioned clear and simple language is the best choice.*”

doing that task in the workplace. You'll find it isn't that hard to write down what you want them to do. Once you have an outline for every job in your business the outlines can be turned to terrific posters that you display in key spots. The outlines and posters have an added benefit because they are the beginnings of an employee handbook. The topic of employee handbooks will be the subject of future columns, but believe me, they are very important.

People have a natural aversion to "rules," so enforce the procedures and call them safety procedures and not "rules." You have taken the time to make the outlines and turn them into bulleted lists you can post in prominent places in your business so everyone knows the procedures, now be consistent and enforce them. This is extremely important because in a legal pinch the judge or jury or even a mediator (person selected by the court to help you settle a legal issue before trial) will analyze the way you run your business to determine whether you are negligent or operate a safe workplace, and what happened was simply an unavoidable accident. Just the term safety procedure will put the right idea into the minds of people deciding whether you acted safely or negligently.

If you are ordered to mediation or get a court date, make sure to take your outlines and workplace posters, procedure manuals, and employee instructions with you. They will help you prove that you put a lot of care and thought into developing safe business practices. You can demonstrate that you educated your work staff and you enforce the procedures without exception. Never let employees slide on safety or workplace procedures. I know this is difficult, but if you enforce the procedures stringently from the day you post them, and explain to the employ-



ees that posting and enforcing the rules will increase safety in the workplace and be a benefit to everyone in case of a lawsuit, they should understand. If you're not consistent in the enforcement of the procedures, you will lose a valuable defense in any type of legal action whether with a client or an employee. 🐾

*Patricia (Trish) Finn is a 35-year plus veteran of the pet care industry. After operating a full service pet care facility (that included boarding, grooming, home care and mobile pet grooming) for over twenty years, she graduated from Texas Tech School of Law with a Juris Doctorate degree. Trish is well known nationally and internationally in animal law. She is considered an expert witness & trial consultant in animal law cases and is dedicating herself to the education of the members of the pet care industry. She still owns and operated a pet styling salon in Santa Fe, NM, and has a Web site devoted to the legal aspects of the pet care industry [www.petcarelaw.com](http://www.petcarelaw.com).*

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For up-to-date information on PCSA events, visit the Events Calendar at [www.petcareservices.org](http://www.petcareservices.org).

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## INDUSTRY NEWS

### PCSA Hosts Hospitality Suite/Reception at HH Backer Show

The Pet Care Services Association recently hosted a hospitality suite and reception at the Spring HH Backer Show held in Baltimore, Maryland. HH Backer holds two trade shows per year and is one of the largest and best known event companies in the pet industry.



The hospitality suite was used as a base of operations for PCSA to accomplish its main objective, to increase PCSA's image and brand awareness to the pet industry at-large. While at the show, association representatives were able to visit nearly 100 of the best known vendors in the pet industry educating them on who PCSA is and detailing its mission. Likewise, the reception attracted over 50 pet care professionals from the retail, products and pet care sectors of the industry and was well received among those attending.

Joseph Lyman, PCSA's chief executive officer, believes the association needs to reach out to the pet industry even more in the future to build a strong brand and reinforce the fact that PCSA is an important part of the pet industry. He says, "PCSA needs to be pro-active in raising its image to educate the pet industry on who our members are and the importance our sector in the industry has." He is currently reviewing other promotional opportunities, including pet industry and consumer events, to promote the quality pet care PCSA members offer to its customers. "It is our goal to make PCSA's name one with the idea of quality pet care," says Lyman.

### Pet Loss Business Development Conference

Matthews Cremation and the National Funeral Director's Association (NFDA) are proud to announce the first ever Pet Loss Business Development Conference—Opportunity Unleashed. This one-day educational program in six major cities (San Francisco, Phoenix, Austin, Columbus, Orlando, and Boston) will take place on different dates during July and August and brings together a unique blend of professionals within the pet death care industry. Presented at the conference will be a series of business development strategies

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## Resource Guide



# Pet Care Services

A s s o c i a t i o n

**Your Source for All Pet Care Services**

The Resource Guide is a permanent feature in the PSJ and is designed to be a convenient reference to all programs and benefits offered by the Association.



## GENERAL INFORMATION

A complete listing of PCSA staff departments and contact information is available on page 3. For general questions or to request an information packet call toll free 877-570-7788, ext. 10 or email [info@petcareservices.org](mailto:info@petcareservices.org).



## MEMBERSHIP

Established in 1977 as the non-profit trade association for the boarding kennel and professional pet care industry, PCSA has approximately 3,100 members nationwide and in several countries around the world. For membership applications or changes to your membership information, contact the PCSA Membership Department via email at [membership@petcareservices.org](mailto:membership@petcareservices.org) or by phone: 877-570-7788, ext. 24. Information and applications are also available online at [www.petcareservices.org](http://www.petcareservices.org).

### Online Membership Directory

PCSA maintains an online membership directory, in the form of the Pet Service Locator, of all its active, auxiliary and associate (vendor) members. Search functions allow for listings by city, state, and service. To update your listing, contact the PCSA Membership Department via email at [membership@petcareservices.org](mailto:membership@petcareservices.org) or by phone at (877) 570-7788, ext. 24.

### Member Incentive Recognition

When an existing PCSA member refers a new member to the association, the referring member qualifies for a \$100 credit toward any of the following:

- PCSA Membership Renewal
- Enrollment in the Education Program
- Annual Convention Registration
- Enrollment in the VFA Program
- Regional Meeting Registration

**For additional information call 877-570-7788, ext. 24 or email [membership@petcareservices.org](mailto:membership@petcareservices.org).**

### PCSA Logo Recognition & Protection

The PCSA trademark logo is recognized by the public as an association of pet care professionals committed to providing the best pet care possible. PCSA members have exclusive use of the PCSA logo in advertising and public communication, but misuse of the logo can adversely affect the public's trust in member facilities. It is important that all members support the limitation of its use to members only. Questions or concerns about the use of the PCSA logo can be referred to the Membership Department via email at [angela@petcareservices.org](mailto:angela@petcareservices.org) or by calling 877-570-7788, ext. 24.

## MEETINGS

The Annual PCSA Convention and Trade Show, usually held in October, offers members educational seminars, open forums, presentations by industry leaders, and a Trade Show representing over 50 of the industry's top suppliers.

Spring Regional Meetings for PCSA's eleven geographic regions nationwide provide networking and educational opportunities similar to the national Convention on a smaller scale and allow the opportunity to focus on topics of regional interest.

For information on meetings call John Cooke toll free 877-570-7788, ext. 11 or visit the "Events" page of our Web site, [www.petcareservices.org](http://www.petcareservices.org). Online registration is available for most events.

## WEB SITE

PCSA's Web site, [www.pcsa.com](http://www.pcsa.com), receives more than 300,000 hits each month—many of these visitors are pet owners looking for somewhere to board their pets. The "Find a Service Provider" locator features a listing of all members, sorted by city and state for pet owners who are looking for a boarding facility in their area. The site provides public access information such as:

- Tips for pet owners on how to select a boarding kennel
  - Information about PCSA, such as our Code of Ethics, the Bill of Rights for Pets in Boarding or Daycare Facilities, and our education and accreditation programs.
  - Online Trade Show provides extensive list of pet services vendors and supplies
- For PCSA members, the Web site provides exclusive access to information that helps members better manage their businesses and succeed in the kennel industry, including:
- A Bulletin Board that allows members to share their expertise or post questions and chat with other members in real time
  - Classified Ad Listings where members and other online visitors can view and place employment or real estate advertisements
  - The Pet Services Journal Online which has archived articles from past issues of the bi-monthly magazine
  - The E-Newsletter, the monthly exchange of questions and answers for members
  - The Boarderline Online makes the PCSA bi-monthly newsletter available electronically
  - Download Center where members can download and print out copies of informational pamphlets, a sample boarding contract, the PCSA logos, as well as Industry Statistics
  - A Volunteer List of kennel owners/operators who make themselves available to answer questions on topics ranging from Animal Care to Zoning

### How do I get into the Members Only portion of the Web site?

To access the information exclusive to members, visit [www.petcareservices.org](http://www.petcareservices.org) and click on the "Member Login" button in the red circle. You will then be asked to enter your Member ID and Zip Code. (For international customers, your "zip code" will be a postal code from your address or some other number assigned by PCSA. If you do not have this number, please contact PCSA for this information.) Your ID number is located above your name on the address label from the mailing envelope that your Pet Services Journal arrives in. If you cannot locate your Member ID number, please call membership services at 877-570-7788, ext. 22, or email [membership@petcareservices.org](mailto:membership@petcareservices.org).



## COMMUNICATIONS

### Pet Services Journal & Boarderline E-Newsletter

PCSA publishes a bi-monthly magazine, Pet Services Journal, which goes to members only. PSJ offers articles of interest to boarding kennel operators and professional pet care providers, industry news, notices of important meetings and events, member profiles, interviews, roundtables dealing with industry issues, industry statistics, surveys and information about new products and services of value to members. In alternate months, PCSA publishes the Boarderline E-Newsletter, which features news from the association's eleven regions. For editorial inquiries call 877-570-7788, ext. 25, or email phil@petcareservices.org. For advertising inquiries call 877-570-7788, ext. 21 or email: psjadsales@petcareservices.org.

### Meetings and Annual Convention

PCSA offers advertising opportunities in the Annual Convention Exhibit Program. Sponsorship opportunities are available at the Annual Convention and Regional meetings. For rates, ad specifications and deadlines, call 877-570-7788, ext. 11 or email john@petcareservices.org. PCSA members receive a 10% discount on display advertising.

### E-Newsletter

The PCSA E-Newsletter is a monthly forum that allows members the opportunity to communicate with each other—pose questions, share solutions, and offer ideas. The E-Newsletter format typically presents member responses to questions posed by members in the previous edition, followed by new questions from members, and finally highlights of any new PCSA information to pass on to the membership. If you are an PCSA member and have provided us with an email address, you are on the E-Newsletter mailing list. If you have not provided your email address, just call 877-570-7788, ext. 25 or send an email to enewsletter@petcareservices.org.



## PROGRAMS

### Ethics Program

Based on the PCSA Code of Ethics, this unique and highly-respected Ethics Program enables PCSA members to work toward better self-regulation and demonstrate to the public their commitment to quality pet care and ethical business dealings. The PCSA Code of Ethics and its companion, Bill of Rights for Boarded Pets, is available online at www.petcareservices.org. For questions regarding the Ethics Program call 877-570-7788, ext. 18 or email ethics@petcareservices.org.



### Voluntary Facilities Accreditation (VFA) Program

The VFA program has been developed as a vehicle for professionalizing the boarding kennel industry by providing over 200 objective standards of excellence in 17 separate areas of kennel operation. Participating kennels can, by bringing their facilities into conformance with these standards, achieve accredited status designation from the association. PCSA accredited kennels are designated with the VFA ribbon. For additional information or to enroll call 877-570-7788, ext. 16, email vfa@petcareservices.org or visit www.petcareservices.org.

### Staff Education Program

The three levels of the PCSA Educational Program include: Level I-Certified Pet Care Technician; Level II-Advanced Certified Pet Care Technician; and Level III-Certified Kennel Operator. PCSA recommends the Certified Pet Care Technician Program for all kennel staff. Many kennel operators require completion of this program by all of their personnel. This course contains the basic information about animal care that is required by anyone who cares for pets. The second step in the three-level PCSA education program is the Certified Advanced Pet Care Technician Program, which offers more advanced training in pet care and an introduction to kennel management. Completion of both the CPCT and CAPCT Programs is required for personnel who wish to apply for certification in the third level of the PCSA program,

the Certified Kennel Operator (CKO) Program. The Level I and Level II certification tests may be taken online. Level I certification testing is also available in Spanish. For additional information or to enroll call 877-570-7788, ext. 14, email education@petcareservices.org or visit www.petcareservices.org.



## SECTIONS

PCSA has several special "Sections" to provide a resource center for PCSA members in which to find and share information. Information specific to these Sections is available in the Pet Services Journal, online at www.petcareservices.org, and in the form of seminars presented at national conventions. For additional information contact the Section chairperson listed below.

**Grooming Section:** Grace Woodford, CKO, 22 Jefferson Place, Newnan, Georgia 30263  
Email: doghouseknl@bellsouth.net or grooming@petcareservices.org

**Training Section:** Jim Burwell  
Houston, TX  
Email: jim@petiquettedog.com or training@petcareservices.org

**Daycare Section:** Heather Staas  
50 Russo Circle, Agawam, MA, 01001  
Email: k9capers413@aol.com

**Cat Boarding Section:** Susan Edwards  
The Cat's Nest Boarding & Daycare  
1436 S. Main St., Milpitas, CA 95035  
Email: catsnest@earthlink.net or catboarding@petcareservices.org

**Dog Boarding Section:** Liz Wilmot, CKO, 9214 Boyds Turn Road, Owings, MD 20736  
Email: countrysidekennels@verizon.net or dogboarding@petcareservices.org



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

### Public Education

PCSA conducts ongoing public education about the industry by means of print advertising, news releases, brochures, seminars and consultation with feature writers for various national publications. The association promotes the PCSA Bill of Rights for Boarded Pets, which spells out for pet owners the obligations of member boarding kennels to their clients and the animals in their care.

### Educational Literature

"Let's Talk About..." Brochure Series masters are provided to PCSA members for duplication and distribution to clients on a wide range of topics related to boarding pets. For a complete list, check out the "Downloads" section under the "General Store" heading at www.petcareservices.org.

The booklet "How to Select a Boarding Facility" is a great tool to educate pet owners on quality boarding services and a great way to promote yourself as an PCSA member. Clip & Copy Articles in each issue of the Pet Services Journal include a wide variety of topics of interest to pet owners and are designed to be cut out of the magazine and passed out to clients. A collection of 19 of the past Clip & Copy articles along with the How to Select a Boarding Facility booklet and all of the Let's Talk About... brochures is available in the Pet Owner's Packet. For more information or to order these materials call 877-570-7788, ext. 10, email orders@petcareservices.org, or visit www.petcareservices.org.

### Partnership with Canine Companions for Independence (CCI)

PCSA is proud to partner with a group that has successfully blended a great love of dogs with a focused mission to help others – Canine

Companions for Independence. CCI is an organization that enhances the lives of people with disabilities by providing highly trained assistances dogs and ongoing support to ensure quality partnerships. PCSA participates in fund raising efforts for CCI and many PCSA members have volunteered to provide quality boarding options to CCI puppy raisers. PCSA coordinates and sponsors an annual coloring contest for members to participate in to benefit CCI. If you would like to get involved in the CCI partnership, or would like more information, send an email to membership@petcareservices.org or call 877-570-7788, ext. 22.

#### Emergency Relief Fund

The PCSA Emergency Relief Fund provides a way for members and concerned individuals to make contributions to help pets, pet care professionals and pet rescue organizations. The fund is administered by a panel comprised of the PCSA president and the directors of the affected regions. The fund is incorporated as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt entity and contributions are tax-deductible. Donations may be made online at www.petcareservices.org or by calling ABKA toll free 877-570-7788, ext. 10.



### PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

#### Books and Videos

PCSA publishes several books for industry members... Building, Buying and Operating a Boarding Kennel helps prospective industry members understand more about the pet-care industry and is the authoritative source for design assistance for construction and remodeling of modern pet-care facilities. PCSA also offers a variety of specialized books and booklets dealing with specific industry issues, such as: The Law and the Boarding Kennel Operator, Dealing With Aggressive Dogs, Public Relations Guide for Boarding Kennel Operators, Sample Kennel Procedures Manual, Taking Lawful Employment Actions and more. Video titles include: How to Operate a Doggie Daycare, Pre-Entry Evaluations for Dogs and more. For information or to order call 877-570-7788, ext. 10, email orders@petcareservices.org, or visit www.petcareservices.org.

#### Convention Audio/Video Tapes

Seminars held at past PCSA national conventions are available on audio, video or DVD. For a complete listing of seminar titles call 877-570-7788, ext. 10, email orders@petcareservices.org, or visit www.petcareservices.org.

#### Industry Research

PCSA publishes bi-annual industry statistics that come from data supplied by a survey of PCSA members. This report lists average income and expense percentages for small, medium and large kennels, in all service areas. These figures can assist kennel operators in evaluating their own kennel figures, or can assist in developing proposals for financing. The association also collects information from pet owners for indications of industry trends and consumer demands.

#### Insurance

A number of insurance programs are available that offer several dramatic money-saving advantages to boarding kennels and grooming shops, some available at attractive rates to PCSA members. Plans cover property, pets, general and professional liability and health. Some offer discounts to members who are certified or whose kennels are accredited. For information, call toll-free 877-570-7788, ext. 10, look up "Insurance" on the "Industry Supplier" page of the PCSA Web site (www.petcareservices.org), or email membership@petcareservices.org.

#### Credit Card Processing

PCSA has partnered with the world's largest credit card processor to offer members a low cost, state of the art processing program. Merchant Services, a First Data Company, has developed a members only program that offers the lowest possible rates and award winning service. You can call toll free (800-432-7192) for answers to any credit card processing question. You may also fax your current processing statement to 904-491-5016 to receive a complimentary analysis to make certain you are not paying too much.

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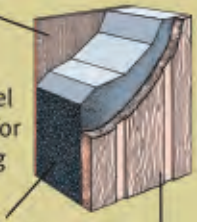
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