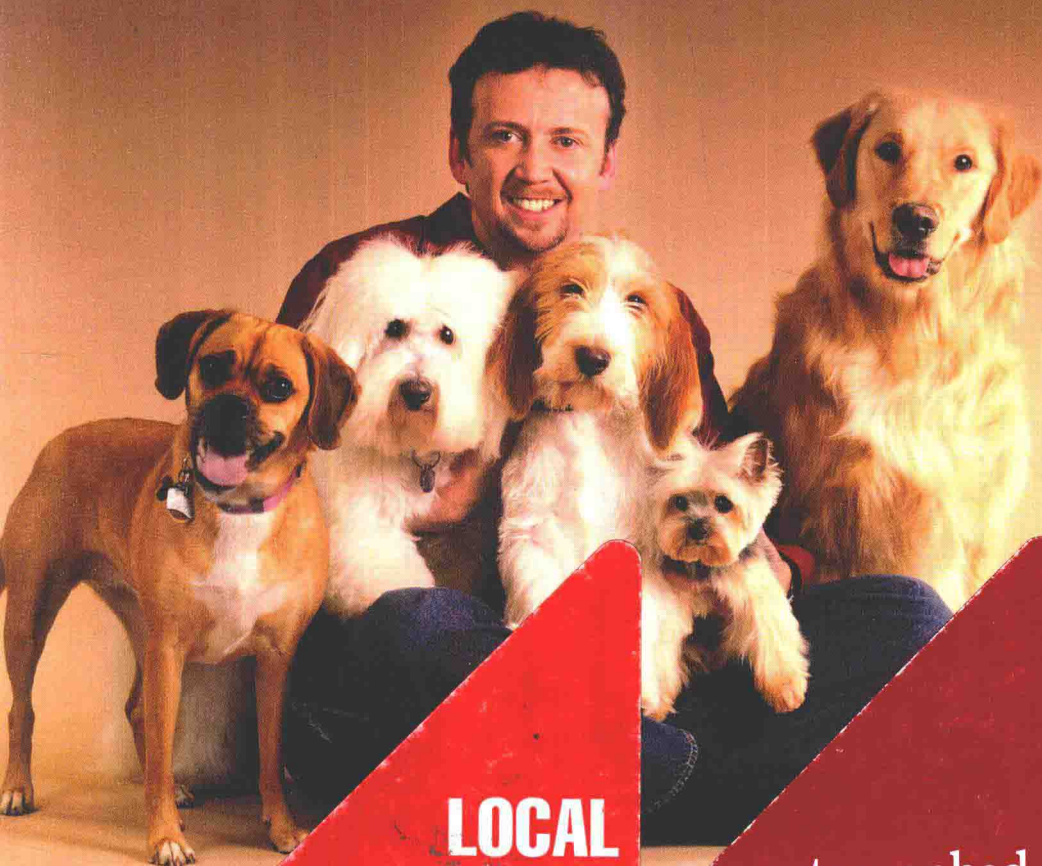


# HAPPY DOG

CARING FOR YOUR DOG'S BODY,  
MIND AND SPIRIT



**LOCAL  
AUTHOR**

autographed  
copy

**BILLY RAFFERTY**  
AND **JILL CAHR**

BILLY RAFFERTY AND JILL CAHR

# HAPPY DOG

Caring for Your Dog's Body,

Mind and Spirit

藏书章



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## PRAISE FOR *HAPPY DOG*

"Living in this great big, crazy world, there's nothing more calming, soothing and precious than the unconditional love of our puppies. But they need love and attention too. *Happy Dog: Caring For Your Dog's Body, Mind and Spirit* teaches you how to make your furry family members happy. Author Billy Rafferty is America's foremost dog whisperer, groomer and handler, and the only person to whom I trust my dogs."

—Art Smith, celebrity chef and bestselling author

"It's a quirk of human nature that most of us assume we are born knowing everything about dogs. We aren't. Just ask a dog. That is why we all need a copy of this clearly written, vastly informative book about our best friend. Filled with myth-busting information and lots of practical how-tos on taking care of a dog, this book should come with every new puppy. Do your dog a favor and get this book!"

—Amy Sutherland, author of *What Shamu Taught Me About Life, Love, and Marriage* and *Kicked, Bitten, and Scratched*

"Keep this book handy as your go-to reference guide for all things dog."

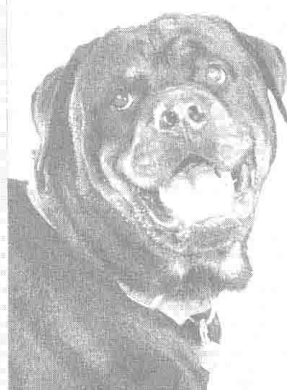
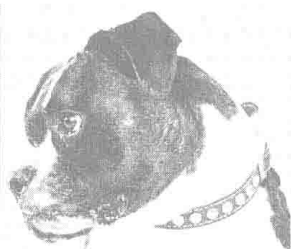
—Marie Belew Wheatley, CEO and president, American Humane Association

"Finally, a book that captures the essence of owning a dog in a style that will make learning fun. A must for every dog owner who wants to give his or her pet the care they deserve!"

—Dr. Sheldon Rubin, director emeritus, Blum Animal Hospital, and author of *Selecting and Caring for Your Dog*

"Who doesn't want a happy dog? Follow the tips here, and your dog will be one satisfied canine. *Happy Dog* gets up close and personal in a way few books do, with helpful, practical advice on care, training, grooming, and travel. Your pup will appreciate everything you learn!"

—Steve Dale, syndicated columnist and host of *Steve Dale's Pet World*



*Illustrated by Justin Graham*

*Photographs by Michael Vistia*

BILLY

*For my mom and dad, Bridget and Thomas Rafferty,  
my brothers and sister, my beloved Portie, Gabriel Rafferty,  
and all of my wonderful four-legged companions  
who have shared my life and inspired me.*

\* \* \* \* \*

JILL

*For my husband, Darren, and my son, Ian,  
and all the dogs that have shared my life  
and made me happy—  
especially Shadow, Zelda, Inky, Farina and Filbert, my forever dog.*

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“The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be  
judged by the way its animals are treated.”

—MAHATMA GANDHI

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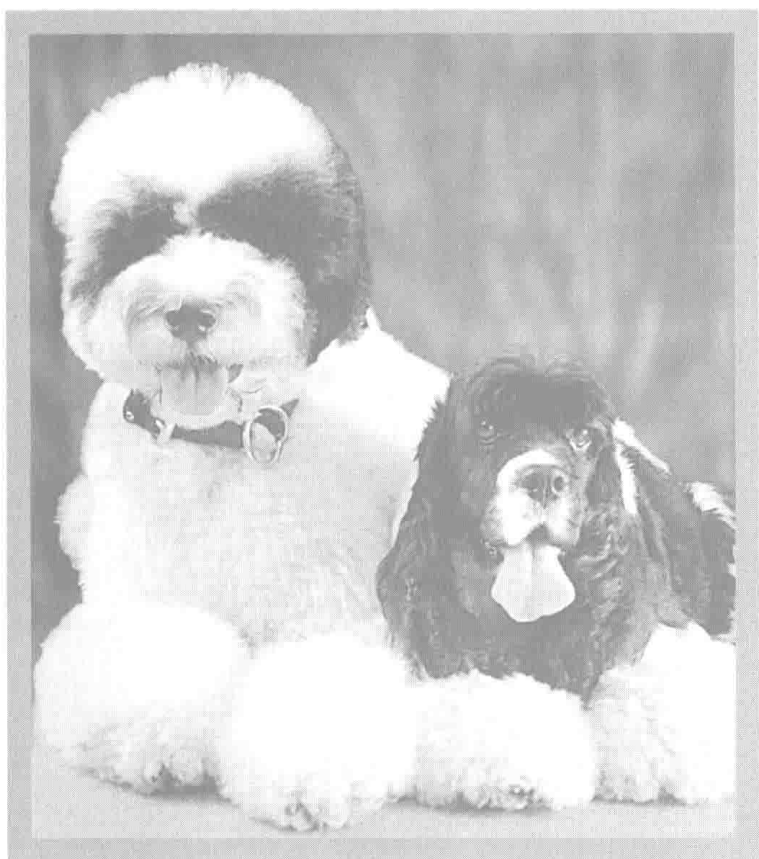
“Heaven goes by favor; if it went by merit,  
you would stay out and your dog would go in.”

—MARK TWAIN

# Contents



1. Please Allow Me to Introduce Myself	I
2. Getting to Know Your Pooch	II
3. Why and When to Care for Your Dog	29
4. Building Fido's Staff	49
5. Nutrition: Food for Thought	65
6. Keeping Fido Safe and Sound at Home	89
7. Always Be Prepared for Emergencies	115
8. Go, Fido, Go! Traveling With and Without Your Furry Pal	127
9. Fun With Fido	153
10. Annoying Allergies and Pernicious Parasites	181
11. Planning Your Dog-Care Routine	203
12. Helpful Hints for Home Dog-Care Success	215
13. Setting Up Your Home Grooming Station	229
14. The Inspection Connection	255
15. Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap . . . at Home	269
16. Every Dog Must Have His Day . . . in the Bath	313
17. Dirt Emergencies	333
18. Yes, Virginia, Every Dog Needs to Visit a Professional Groomer	347
19. Home Dog-Care Safety and Basic First Aid	359
 Resources and Additional Reading	 373
Photograph Credits	381
Index	382



1.

Please Allow Me to  
Introduce Myself





So who am I, and why should you listen to me, a nice guy from the burbs south of Chicago? Let's just say that I know a few things about dogs. OK, maybe more than a few. But before we get into the details, perhaps you should know a bit about your guide and how my background has shaped my opinions. As you'll see, you and your dog are in good hands, indeed.

Some people are born knowing that they want to be doctors or lawyers when they grow up. Well, fate revealed my professional destiny when I was a young child too. At the ripe old age of eight, I was incited by a mysterious drive to steal into my sister's room to cut her dolls' hair. She never actually caught me red-handed, but that hardly stopped her from going ballistic when she discovered my handiwork. While my sister did not approve of me bobbing Chatty Cathy's hair, the experience was transcendent. Right then and there, as I was holding Chatty Cathy, something clicked inside me. I knew that I yearned to do something creative and artistic—I wanted to *style*.

But something else was inside me as well—a love for animals. Animals provided a safe refuge from my childhood, which was tumultuous, to say the least. I was a sensitive child in an emotionally complex environment. Unlike many people I encountered, animals always responded positively to me. They loved and understood me even though I was different from other kids. Animals, and dogs in particular, brought happiness into my otherwise gloomy childhood. I longed to return the favor and bring joy into their lives. Later on, when I discovered that I had a flair for the creative, I realized that I could pamper animals and make them look and feel fabulous using my artistic talents. Deep in my heart, I understood that animals were my true love, and I knew that I wanted to be surrounded by them, help them and work with them.

While I was growing up, our family always had a dog. Unfortunately for me, the budding groomer, not one of our family dogs had a long coat. So I abandoned Chatty Cathy and got busy with my sister's stuffed animals. I

trimmed and primped every teddy bear and stuffed animal I could get my hands on. No one was safe, not even Snoopy! At one point he had a lop-sided Lion Cut, a bald tail and a pink bow on his left ear. Woodstock was mortified.

At age ten, I spotted a small home-grooming kit in a mail-order catalog. I begged and begged my mom to buy it for me. This was a *gen-u-ine* kit, not a toy, and it was expensive—thirty dollars way back in the 1970s. While everyone else was disdainful of my grooming aspirations, my mom always encouraged me. Of course, she bought me the kit, and again, I went to town on the teddy bears.

As the years passed, I continued to follow my grooming dreams. I saved up every cent of my allowance to purchase any grooming book that I could find. The only books available back then were of the “how to groom your Poodle with fancy and ridiculous haircuts” variety. These books were absolutely awful but, *sigh*, they were a start.

After I had *fabulously* coiffed all the teddy bears and other stuffed animals in my house (my sister *still* hasn’t forgiven me), I began crafting my own. I bought furry fabric and attached it to a ceramic Poodle my mom had given me. I’d put that ceramic dog up on a table and pretend I was a groomer. Other kids spent their money on candy at the corner store, while I spent every dime I had on ersatz fur at Minnesota Fabrics.

When I wasn’t “grooming” stuffed animals, I was walking neighborhood dogs for free. I just loved dogs and I couldn’t get enough of them. The more time I spent with dogs, the happier and more accepted I felt, and I wanted to make these generous pooches happy too.

One of my favorite dogs was a Poodle named Tiger. I used to visit Tiger and his owner frequently. One day, I told Tiger’s owner that I was a licensed dog groomer and she actually believed me. Clearly, the fact that I was not quite eleven years old, stood less than four feet tall and arrived on a bicycle with a sparkly banana seat and purple streamers had no bearing on her reality. Thus, I booked my first appointment as a “professional” groomer. The pressure was on and I knew that all my study and practice was about to be put to the ultimate test.

Poor Tiger! His haircut gave the term “plucked chicken” a new canine meaning. I only knew what I had read in my grooming books and Tiger looked nothing like the dogs in those books. At the end of the session, Tiger had

bald patches and I had a bloody finger. The neighbor paid five dollars, but she never called me again. In fact, I retired from grooming for a year.

Still, throughout my teenage years, my love for dogs grew as they continued to bring me unconditional love, and unlike my peers, they accepted me for who I was. Let's just say that in my working-class suburb, there were not many kids, especially boy kids, who had dreams of becoming a professional dog groomer! While the neighborhood kids played baseball or hockey, I was curled up with *How to Groom a Hungarian Puli*.

After high school, I worked full-time at a kennel that raised show dogs. The owner was wonderful and she taught me how to *actually* groom. At first, I just watched her groom for hours and hours. Finally, she let me pick up my first pair of professional scissors. From the start, I felt like I had been doing it for years. All the reading and the practice with the teddy bears and that faux-fur-sheathed ceramic Poodle had paid off at long last. The exceptionally low wages notwithstanding, I was overjoyed because I was finally doing what I loved and my career took off faster than a figure skater on Crisco!

---

## Why I Don't Groom Cats and Neither Should You

It's nothing personal—I love cats and grew up with Totsie, a beautiful feline who slept in my bed—but as any cat lover knows, cats suffer no fools, especially fools wielding grooming tools. I learned this lesson early in my grooming career.

One morning a woman brought in Sunny, her stunning Flame Point Himalayan. As she set Sunny's kennel on my grooming table, she touted his relaxed and easygoing temperament. "Sunny doesn't bite. He's gentle as a lamb!" I peeked my head into the kennel and chirped, "Hi, Sunny!" Sunny responded with a deep, guttural growl. As if she'd heard a quaint meow, the owner continued, "Sunny is so sweet! He always loves being groomed, so he won't bite."

Having grown up with cats, I knew that Sunny's growl was not a friendly overture but a declaration of war. Moreover, experience had taught me that cats do not cooperate unless they believe that grooming is *their* idea and clearly it hadn't crossed *Sunny's* mind.

Knowing this, I asked the woman to stay and hold Sunny while I groomed



him. She dutifully held him as I started gently brushing. Almost instantly, Sunny turned around and swatted the woman's left hand, drawing blood. She seemed unfazed. I continued to brush Sunny and almost immediately he became agitated again. He began to swing his tail ominously back and forth, which I took as a sign of imminent danger. Sunny's owner, however, interpreted the tail wagging as a sign of his fondness for grooming. The fragile détente between Sunny and my brush held for a few minutes until I found a mat. At that point, Sunny reared back, grabbed the woman's hand with both front paws and chomped down like jaws. Within thirty seconds her hand had doubled in size. I threw down my brush and ran for peroxide. While Sunny's owner examined her swelling mitt, he cleverly turned around and bit her other hand. At that point, I declared the grooming session officially over and I retired from cat grooming on the spot.

The moral of this story: if your cat needs grooming, take him to a professional who specializes in cats—and works in a salon that's not filled with barking dogs.

Grooming is not *just* about “styling” a dog. Rather, it involves a variety of activities that are crucial to canine health and happiness. If done incorrectly or carelessly, these activities can cause serious physical and emotional injury. For that reason, I began to study the science of grooming and animal cosmetology. Just for the record, this is no easy task.

An outrageous number of states have no licensing or training requirements for groomers. I find this shocking and I think most pet owners would too. With this in mind, I've devoted countless hours and many years to expanding my knowledge and honing my skills, including attending numerous symposia, studying complex material and passing difficult tests on a wide variety of formidable topics (skin and coat, first aid, CPR, animal behavior and anatomy, advanced scissoring techniques, geometry and canine design and topical conditioning). I learned to make a dog appear perfect despite (and in some cases because of) his natural imperfections. For example, by using complex geometric principles, I can take a short, stubby dog and trim him so that he appears taller and slimmer. (Don't you wish I could do this for people too?)

All the hard work paid off and in 1996 I became a Certified Master

Groomer. Several years later, I earned a prestigious and rare DermaTech Specialist Certification from the esteemed International Society of Canine Cosmetologists. That same year, I earned the World Wide Pet Supply Association's Certification for Companion Animal Hygienist.

In 1997, I started competing at grooming competitions. I made a name for myself by transforming household pets into show-dog divas. Since this is *my* book, I *will* toot my own horn: I've won so many grooming awards and accolades that I've run out of display space. I do, however, appreciate each one!

I loved competing, but in the back of my mind, I was disturbed by some of the work presented. Frankly, some of the groomers were so awful that I was embarrassed for everyone, especially the dogs. I knew that I wanted to help transform grooming into a respected profession. To that end, I started judging grooming competitions in 2003, and two years later I officially retired from competition to pursue judging. The United Showmanagers Alliance has since designated me a sanctioned grooming-show judge. Now I frequently judge at prestigious grooming competitions across the country.

I firmly believe in sharing my knowledge and experience. I regularly lecture and speak all over the country at grooming conventions. And I'm thrilled to write this book so that I can share what I know with the countless dog owners out there and help dogs lead healthier, happier and more beautiful lives.

Owning my own salon had always been a significant aspect of my grooming dreams, and eventually I did it—I opened Doggy Dooz Pet Styling Salon in 2001. Doggy Dooz is an awful lot of work, but I truly love it. I now have a waiting list several hundred dogs long. Realizing my dream took me on a roller-coaster path and some days I'm busier than a three-legged man at a butt-kicking contest. Because I'm pursuing my dream, however, I smile every morning when I walk into my own salon. Truly, who wouldn't be happy surrounded by furry faces and waggy tails all day!

The most important thing to realize from my history is that I'm a dyed-in-the-wool dog person. Currently, I share my home with Zeke, a rambunctious Portuguese Water Dog, and Arthur, a sweet, friendly black-and-white Cocker Spaniel. These dogs are *my family*, and yes, they're impeccably groomed at all times!

I've been a professional groomer for over two decades; I've worked with