

Canines enjoy looking good too

By Barry Gerding - Kelowna Capital News

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When it comes to grooming, dogs have feelings just like people when it comes to having a bad haircut day, suggests a dog grooming specialist.

Maggie Belekis, who operates a dog grooming business in New York City, says even a simple gesture such as giving your dog's coat a thorough brushing can make a difference to your pet's self esteem.

But many dog owners either don't do it or get frustrated in trying to immobilize their dogs to work on them.

And if they get irrational and upset about their dog's haircut, the canine will feed on that anxiety as well.

"I did a Maltese (on Monday) and when I was finished, that dog walked away prancing with his head held high," said Belekis.

"In the same way we feel great after a shower and a shave, so does your dog."

She was in Kelowna this week at the invitation of local dog trainer Wayne Dorman to exchange knowledge with him about grooming issues.

"We met at a dog training conference in Denver a while back. (Wayne) had some interesting questions to ask me and an energy and inquisitiveness in talking generally about dogs," Belekis said.

"So I thought it would be great to get together and share our experiences and what we've learned about training and caring for dogs."

Belekis is based out of Greenwich Village in the heart of New York City, where she also lives.

She has many high profile celebrity and fashion world clients, but she also donates her time to work with abandoned dogs in need of a home.

She says dogs, in either an urban or rural environment, get dirty if they spend any time outside, and they bring that dirt into the home.

"If a dog sleeps on your bed or climbs on your furniture, if he's not well kept, all that stuff he drags with him into the house ends up there."

She says too often pet owners wait until their dogs are on a bad place, and it becomes more difficult to both deal with the pet and overcome such issues such as skin infections and hair matts in one treatment.

She says the best time to brush a dog is after a walk or exercise regiment, where the dog has settled down and will likely be more cooperative.

Belekis said high maintenance dogs, such as a poodle, should be professionally groomed once a month, while other breeds such as a Rotweiler or Mastiff, should be done every two months.

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