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A DOGGY DOG WORLD

PORTICO PETS SPEAK OUT
TAKE A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE
10 THINGS I'VE LEARNED AS A VET
+ BLUE RIBBON KENNELS' OWNER
JOHN KABBES TAMES THE UNTAMABLE



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leigh barrier

The Dog Wash

BY MAYBELLE G. CAGLE
PHOTO BY DAPHNE NABORS



LEIGH BARRIER'S LOVE for animals helped determine her life's work. "It takes a lot of love and patience. We're taking care of lives. It's very stressful," says Barrier, who began grooming animals at age 17.

Seventeen years ago, she opened The Dog Wash, a popular north Jackson business. It caters mainly to dogs, but Barrier also accepts cats for grooming and boarding, and even the occasional ferret.

Since opening, she's moved several times to accommodate her growing clientele. Now, The Dog Wash is at 5410 I-55 North in a building occupying about an acre with plenty of space for the animals. They offer pet supplies, treats, furnishings, boarding, bathing, grooming, playgroups, and day camp.

Barrier doesn't have an office, because, she says, "I'd rather put the money on the dogs." Her latest plans are to add a hydrotherapy lap pool. "If I find something my dogs will enjoy, then I think the other dogs will enjoy it, too," says the owner of two German Shepherds.

Before she opened The Dog Wash, Barrier was working for several vets and sold specialty dog food. "A friend and the vet talked me into opening The Dog Wash," she says.

She credits the staff and hard work with her success. "At this time, I employ two receptionists, one primary groomer, two primary bathers and dryers, two primary dog management people in the boarding and daycare area and a few people in apprentice positions. I work where I need to be the most," says Barrier.

Notations about animals are listed on cages, like length of stay and medical problems. Barrier believes it's important to "take your time with animals and make them feel secure."

Barrier says there are benefits to using The Dog Wash. "I see it as neutral ground for the dog and its owner. That alone makes a big difference. If a dog hates water, I just start by turning on

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very low pressure without a spray nozzle. Slow is the key," she points out.

She doesn't offer self-serve washtubs but might in the future. Some owners prefer to bring their own cleaning supplies. "We adhere to the customer's request," says Barrier.

This philosophy is one of the reasons that prospective pet clients should book early around holidays and popular vacation times. ◉

Find out how to pamper your pet by calling 601.991.1700, and watch for the upcoming website at www.thedogwashinc.com.