

**NORTHWEST**news



PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS

Debby Potts and Lauren McCall offer workshops throughout the country

## GETTING IN TOUCH

**Massage technique improves animal health and behavior**

by Tom Stevenson

Most people have heard stories about how an integrated health program assists humans, but rarely do they hear of one designed and carried out specifically for animals.

Portland lesbians Lauren McCall and Debby Potts are out to change all of that with their new venture, The Integrated Animal, which opened in March 2000. It is obvious through the name that the business caters to animals, but exactly how it helps the four-legged variety is unique.

McCall and Potts specialize in Tellington Touch, a technique created by Linda Tellington-Jones, who adapted her work with horses to apply to any species. TTouch, as it more commonly is known, resembles a therapy massage but is much more.

According to McCall and Potts, it is based on a series of gentle, circular hand and finger movements on the skin's surface. Although it might look like a massage technique, it works on a cellular level to release fear and tension and activate the body's regenerative potential and cellular intelligence. This promotes optimal behavior and health and takes animals beyond instinct so they can learn and think in a new way.

Are you confused yet? Don't be. The technique can be used to help animals suffering from a wide variety of ailments, ranging from stiffness caused by old age to actual aggression problems. According to the business owners, it "will mutually enhance your relationship with animals, improve your animal's health and encourage a better response to training."

Potts cited one of her earliest cases as an example of how TTouch can work. It involved one of her own cats, a Siamese cross named Chapin who suddenly began attacking one of her other pets.

"I decided to try TTouch, knowing that it couldn't do any harm and I had nothing to lose

since I was coming to the place of having to find a home for one or the other of them if we couldn't sort this out," Potts explained. "Chapin is a very affectionate cat who loves to be petted. It was interesting for me to notice when I started working with him that he had sensitive areas in his body I hadn't been aware of before. I knew that these tension patterns can be related to behavioral problems and began doing TTouch to change the way he felt. I did three short sessions with him, and his aggressive behavior completely changed."

In fact, he and the cat he was attacking, Sabrina, ended up sharing a sofa until she died a year and a half later.

McCall and Potts work with people and their animals on a wide variety of health and behavior issues. They do not offer their services in lieu of a visit to the veterinarian but often as a compliment to traditional animal care. "We are getting more and more referrals from the veterinary community who like TTouch as a support to whatever health care they might be prescribing for their clients," McCall said.

How did the women ever get into the field? For Potts, an event with one of her horses led her to a workshop offered by the founder of TTouch.

McCall was enticed to attend a workshop by a friend in Berkeley, Calif. She attended one five-day training and "knew that I had found my path."

After serving as executive director of the TTouch program, McCall still wanted to work with people and their animals. She and Potts were having lunch and a "where do I go from here" conversation, and Potts suggested they pool their talents. Potts had been teaching TTouch practitioners around the world for more than 15 years.

"She wanted a way to be more active in the Portland area when she was in town and have a way to keep a business going when she wasn't," McCall said. "I wanted to do TTouch professionally and could offer the benefits of a 19-year career in international marketing. It was all decided over a glass of hard cider and a side of fries."

That little bit of humor goes a long way, both for animals and humans, and Potts and McCall use a great deal of it in their workshops. The two have given more than 26 of them for all types of animals since opening their business and have 15 more planned throughout the country this year.

They also received national recognition recently when they were selected to do three days of staff training at Best Friends in Utah, a much-heralded organization that works with animals. The invitation was a "huge event" for the two. ☐

For more information about THE INTEGRATED ANIMAL call 503-704-7499, fax 503-293-7298, e-mail [ttdebby@aol.com](mailto:ttdebby@aol.com) or visit [www.integratedanimal.com](http://www.integratedanimal.com). Upcoming workshops include "TTouch for You and Your Dog" June 30 and July 1 and "TTouch for You and Your Cat" July 9 and 16. Call 503-538-4241 or e-mail [mitsi@dslonly.net](mailto:mitsi@dslonly.net) to register.

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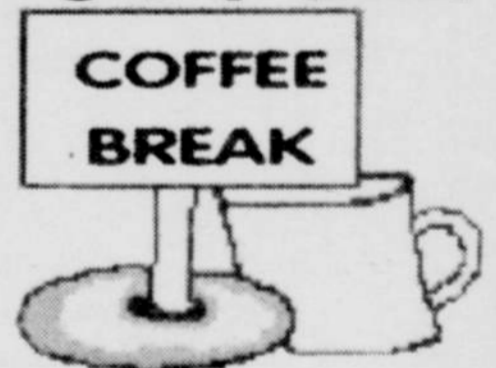


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