

# Business

## The cat's meow

### Veterinarian caters strictly to felines

By JUDY THOMAS  
Times Correspondent

Sorry, Fido, you're barking up the wrong tree.

This place is just for cats, as its name, Just 4 Cats, says.

Cats are becoming the pet of choice, according to Lee Duchinski, co-owner and architect of the newly opened Just 4 Cats.

And Just 4 Cats, the only feline exclusive in Delaware County, has made cats the patient of choice. Located at 238 Rutledge Ave. in Folsom in a neighborhood highly populated with cats, the clinic has received more than 400 patients since it opened its doors in November.

Andrea H. Lerner, co-owner and veterinarian, said several clients, including her volunteer receptionist, Trina Lilly, have followed her from practice to practice, looked her up in the phone book and sought out her services.

A graduate of University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, Lerner said she has been practicing veterinary medicine for nearly 12 years. Lerner and Duchinski, partners in life and business, have been planning to open their own cat hospital and clinic for almost eight of those years, Lerner said.

They said they made numerous sacrifices to ensure the business would become a reality. She said they purchased their first home through the HUD program in order to save money for the site that would become their hospital and home.

Duchinski said they purchased dental cleaning equipment in lieu of a bedroom set.

"Dental hygienists envy it," he said, it "cleans ultrasonically."

They said they received a blood pressure monitor as a wedding present.

"We're just cat crazy," he said.

The couple own three cats themselves. One in particular, Truffle, accompanied

Lerner through vet school and in "shopping for the right man."

Lerner said they really did their "homework" and prepared for the zoning hearing by investigating concerns of neighbors of other feline veterinary hospitals.

She said all neighbors approached signed their petition. Duchinski said this encouraged zoning board members to approve the zoning for the hospital.

"The neighbors with cats were thrilled," Lerner said.

Up until three weeks ago, Lerner said they had done no formal advertising aside from a Yellow Pages advertisement and a sign in front of the office. Most of their business has been generated by word of mouth, she said.

"I recommend her to everybody I know that has cats," client Colleen Bastian said. "These guys have been fabulous."

A first-time cat owner, Bastian said Lerner has been extremely helpful and informative. Paul Blubaugh agreed, saying she gave him "all the options," without pushing for one in particular. He said he felt "educated" after his visit to the office.

Bastian said Lerner introduced her and her cat to chicken-flavored toothpaste and instructed her on brushing her cat's teeth. He "loves it," she said. "It's crazy. I never thought I'd be brushing my cat's teeth," she said.

Lerner emphasizes the importance of preventative care, including nutrition, "appropriate vaccination" according to lifestyle and obesity management.

"We see a lot of Garfields," she said.

Bastian said her cat is overweight, and Lerner made her aware of the risk of diabetes and worked with her to establish a diet regimen.

She said they are always available to answer questions and express concern when her cat is sick.

"That's unheard of," she said. "I've gotten more attention from her than I've got-

**JUST FOR CATS**  
Veterinary Hospital  
Andrea H. Lerner, V.M.D.  
**610-580-CATS**  
Of:  
Feline Health Care American Association of Feline Practitioners

Times staff photo by ROBERT J. GURECKI  
Andrea Lerner and her husband Lee Duchinski specialize in the treatment of cats.

ten from my personal physician."

"We want to be small enough to care," Lerner said. Client Paul Blubaugh said she followed up with a phone call and letter after his cat was spayed.

"It was the cleanest job I've seen," he said.

Lerner said follow-up calls are routine after a medical procedure.

A supporter of Alley Cat Allies, a national feral cat network, Lerner welcomes stray and house cats alike. Client Darlene Fanty was so impressed with her treatment of strays that she now brings all of her cats to Just 4 Cats.

"You would have thought they were \$1,000 cats," she said, judging by the treatment.

She said Lerner has opened up early to accommodate her work schedule and the strays.

"She really believes in what I'm trying to do," she said.

While working with one of Fanty's

strays, she said Lerner noticed a tumor on its breast. Fanty said Lerner made a judgment call while the cat was under anesthesia and removed the tumor at no extra charge. She said Lerner told her she was concerned about the "welfare of the cat going under twice."

Fanty said Lerner really cares about the cats, and "screens" potential cat owners for her. Duchinski said they serve as a "matchmaker."

In keeping with her treatment of other patients, Fanty said Lerner follows up with new owners to see how the cats are adjusting to their new homes. Fanty said Lerner provides her with this feedback.

Duchinski said they "take a Polaroid of every cat with his or her family." A "family portrait," he said jokingly.

Fanty said photos help prospective owners find a cat of a specific color. Lerner said keeping a photo of her patients serves a dual purpose in the event that they are lost.

## The name game: Introducing Verizon Wireless

By BRUCE MEYERSON  
Of The Associated Press

**NEW YORK** — Verizon Wireless. The name doesn't exactly roll off the tongue, but it's nothing that millions of dollars and the voice of actor James Earl Jones can't fix.

Still, while a few months of persistent advertising can make anything sound familiar, it's hard to imagine that the decision makers at Bell Atlantic and Vodafone AirTouch shouted "Eureka! That's it!" at the idea that their newly merged wireless business should be called Verizon.

The chance to pick a new name, espe-

cially for a new national brand, is a rare opportunity, a chance to start with a fresh slate rather than a mouthful such as Morgan Stanley Dean Witter. Once made, the decision is costly to reverse, so the companies spent a lot of time and money before choosing Verizon from among the 8,500 names they considered.

Many companies, of course, like to invent a word when picking a name. That's how AT&T's communications equipment division became Lucent Technologies, and how a struggling old retailer named Woolworth became a struggling new retailer named Venator Group.

Usually, an invented name is designed to communicate an idea. In this case,

Verizon was derived from two words: veritas, which means truth, and horizon.

It's not so clear, however, that such an intricate message won't be lost on the intended audience — especially since it's easy to mispronounce Verizon, which is meant to rhyme with "horizon," but looks as if it might be spoken like a combination of "Verrazano" and "Barbizon."

"Naming in today's crowded marketplace has become an absolute nightmare. Thousands and thousands of names have been taken, and there are fewer and fewer words are available," said Robert Kahn, executive director of FutureBrand, a brand consulting firm in New York.

"So what you find more and more

often are made-up names or hybrid solutions that can be hard to explain, difficult to pronounce and require a fairly hefty media budget to add meaning," he said, noting that Lucent spent about \$150 million on marketing during its first two years. "Verizon is yet another example of this unfortunate phenomenon."

To begin with, Bell Atlantic and Vodafone might have chosen to go with one of the established brand names at their disposal, eliminating the need to forge a new identity in every part of the country.

It's clear why they didn't want to adopt the name "Bell Atlantic Mobile," a strong brand, but with obvious geographic limitations.