

Family Honors Father's Legacy and Continues Storm Defender Business
Patented Cape Reduces Thunderstorm Anxiety in Animals without Drugs

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FAIRFIELD, OH – Fairfield resident, **Tom Critzer**, was desperate to help his dog, Cody overcome his storm phobia. Cody's reaction to thunderstorms would begin before there were outward signs of a storm or heat lightning. If he was inside the house, Cody would pant, pace, continually bark and claw at wallpaper in fear. Once while outside during a storm and panicked, he ripped through the canvas on a camper.

Tom, a retired computer science teacher with degrees in psychology and electrical engineering, began to research. He came across a theory in the book *Dogs Behaving Badly* that said that the static charge before and during thunderstorms was the trigger that upset dogs. With this in mind, he developed a cape with a special metallic lining that discharges dog's fur and shields him from static charge buildup.

Dogs naturally try to escape the static charge by moving toward items that are electrically grounded. Many thunderstorm-phobic dogs seek shelter in the basement, around the toilet, shower, tub or near pipes. They also may try to hide or get underneath something. Favorite spots are often the bathtub (if made of porcelain coated cast iron) or the car.

When properly used, the Storm Defender cape will reduce the dog's anxiety. The dog gets relief, and after a few storms begins to learn that the secondary triggers like rain, wind, thunder, barometric pressure and smells are no longer to be feared. With the cape on, the dog feels as though he has found a safe place.

Tom's patented invention, the Storm Defender cape, has helped hundreds of dogs. To date, over 1000 Storm Defender capes have been sold with an over 95% success and customer satisfaction rate.

"It showed a lot of creativity on his part," adds **Karen Critzer**. "He really wanted to avoid using drugs with Cody and this cape allowed him to do that. It provides a great service to dogs and their families."

Since Tom's untimely death in February, 2005, his three children, **Andrew, Steven** and **Susan** have continued the family business along with their mother Karen.

"People kept asking if we were going to keep the business," says Karen. "We found orders on the kitchen table after Tom died. Things fell into place and there was still a demand for the product, so we decided to keep the business running."

Andrew, the oldest son, is an instrumental music teacher; Steven will graduate in May from Miami University with a degree in Engineering Management and Susan, the youngest, is a Systems Analyst major at Miami University. Although Storm Defender is not their only work, it is very important to them.

The family meets about every six weeks to discuss the business. In the first year after their father's death, they sold more capes than he had the year before. This year they have decided to invest money in a newly designed website, www.StormDefender.com, and are putting energy into marketing and advertising the product. They are hoping to build on their father's success and continue to grow the business.

“For years we kind of laughed. The idea of inventing a cape for dogs seemed weirder than usual,” explains Karen. “But the idea had a lot of merit and it's successful and has benefited many, many dogs. So I guess Tom had the last laugh.”

In fact, a recent success story was recently received from a woman in Mississippi. She had said before using the cape, her dog would jump through windows during thunderstorms. But after using the cape, the dog's anxiety during storms decreased significantly – promoting this satisfied customer to say that the cape was worth twice the price.

Steven had lived with his father and had a lot first hand experience in designing, creating and using the cape. All three children have a great respect for their father's invention and a strong entrepreneurial spirit. Susan plans to come home from college this summer and focus on marketing and building the Storm Defender business.

“I hope that this does keep going for my kids,” says Karen. “It's a great thing to do together as a family and a great way to honor Tom's creativity and love for animals.”

For more information visit www.StormDefender.com.