

Paw's Corner

Dog's bad breath is warning sign

By SAM MAZZOTTA

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My 7-year-old miniature poodle, "Frankie," recently developed bad breath, and I mean, really bad. I purchased a finger brush and liver-flavored toothpaste at the pet store, and I'm brushing his teeth once a week, but haven't noticed any change. What else can I do? — Clare L., Pittsburgh

DEAR CLARE: Straight to the veterinarian, Clare! While the bad breath may come from a benign source, it is more often an indicator that something is wrong, particularly with a dog's teeth.

The American Kennel Club featured several articles on pet dental health in its February issue and also mentioned this scary figure: by age 3, 80 percent of dogs in the U.S. show

signs of oral disease. Oral disease includes plaque, tartar and inflamed gums. Fractured or abscessed teeth cause discomfort and, like inflamed gums, can allow bacteria to enter the bloodstream and affect vital organs like the heart and liver.

Frankie's annual veterinary exam includes an inspection of his teeth. However, anytime such a dramatic change in breath occurs, he should be

taken back to the vet for another look. Also, if a dog paws at his face or mouth, looks distressed or changes his or her eating habits, the vet should be consulted.

The veterinarian can determine the source of the bad breath and treat it. Treatment could be antibiotics (for infection), extraction of a damaged tooth, or both. Your vet will probably recommend that you

keep up the brushing, which will maintain Frankie's oral health. Also, several dental-health treats and toys are available to provide additional prevention of gum disease and plaque or tartar buildup.

Send your tips, questions

and comments to Paws Corner, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or e-mail them to pawscorner@hotmail.com.

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To Your Good Health

Desk job can promote varicose veins

By PAUL G. DONOHUE, M.D.

DEAR DR. DONOHUE: I am in my 20s and have a desk job. I find it difficult to sit without crossing my legs. In one year, I have gotten noticeable varicose veins. I exercise 30 minutes every day. I take birth control pills. Does the risk of blood clots go up with the appearance of these veins? How can I stop their progression? — C.E.

ANSWER: Varicose veins can encourage clot formation, but clots in varicose veins that can be seen are not usually dangerous clots. Clots in the veins deep in the legs are the ones that present a serious threat. Pieces of those clots can break off and be swept into the lungs, where they cause big trouble.

Stop crossing your legs, even if you find it difficult. Crossed legs hinder the return of blood to the heart and dilate leg veins. For the same reason, don't wear anything that constricts the thighs or the waist. Do wear elastic support stockings. While at your desk, get

into the habit of contracting your leg muscles every 15 minutes, five to 10 times. That keeps blood moving in the leg veins. If you can get up and walk around, that's even better.

Birth control pills do promote clots.

The varicose vein report describes this problem in great detail. Readers can order a copy by writing to: Dr. Donohue — No. 108W, Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475. Enclose a check or money order (no cash) for \$4.75 U.S./\$6.75 Canada with the recipient's printed name and address. Please allow four weeks for delivery.

DEAR DR. DONOHUE: As a kid, I perfected belching to a fine art. As an adult, I find myself doing so involuntarily. It mortifies me. How can it be controlled? Maybe I'm being punished for my childhood antics. — R.R.

ANSWER: Swallowed air is responsible for most belching. You might protest that you

don't swallow air when you eat. You do. Everyone does. Some swallow more than others, and all are unaware of what they're doing.

Slow your eating. If you eat rapidly, you are bound to gulp air. The swallowed air distends your stomach, and a belch is the only way to obtain relief.

Keep your lips together when you swallow. If you can't manage to do so, keep your teeth as close together as you possibly can while swallowing food and drink.

Don't chew gum. Don't drink carbonated beverages. Don't smoke.

DEAR DR. DONOHUE: Is cigar smoking less dangerous than cigarette smoking? My husband has switched from cigarettes to cigars. A good idea? — L.B.

ANSWER: Cigar smoking is a bit less dangerous than cigarette smoking, but not so much that it constitutes a health bonanza. If cigar smokers don't inhale, they protect their lungs.

Former cigarette smokers, however, are used to inhaling, and often inhale cigar smoke. Cigar smokers absorb nicotine through the linings of the mouth. Nicotine constricts arteries — not a healthy effect. They put themselves at a high risk for cancers of the mouth, tongue and larynx (voice box).

Dr. Donohue regrets that he is unable to answer individual letters, but he will incorporate them in his column whenever possible. Readers may write him or request an order form of available health newsletters at P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475.

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It's a Woman World

Prepare your teen for college in Fall

By BARBARA BARONTINI

Checking the mail might seem like an ordinary task, but if you're the parent of a high-school senior, anxiety probably accompanies your walk to the mailbox this time of year.

As high-school seniors across the country await college-admissions decisions, there are several steps they can take now to make the transition in the fall much easier, according to Beverly Low, dean of first-year students at Colgate University.

First, students can begin preparing for the heavier workload that accompanies college life. Encourage your child to read a book that isn't required for a current course but that complements topics discussed in class. Early preparation for the rigors of college academics

will pay off next year.

Also, help teens keep track of their appointments, including academic deadlines, extracurricular activities and social engagements. These time-management skills will come in handy when your child balances several courses in the fall.

The last semester of high school is the ideal time to stop scheduling appointments for your teen. Encourage teens to manage their obligations now, and they won't be overwhelmed with these new responsibilities when they enter college.

Since most college students adhere to a budget, encourage high-school seniors to begin keeping track of their finances, if they haven't already, by determining weekly allowances for both spending money and expenses.

Finally, allow teens to plan a trip without you. Even if it's just a local trip, this day-long excursion without the family can help your teen prepare for the independence of college life.

The first year of college is an exciting, sometimes overwhelming experience. By encouraging your high-school senior to prepare for the new responsibilities that come with college life, your teen will have a successful first semester. And you'll sleep a little easier as well.

Write to Barbara Barontini in care of King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or send an e-mail to letters.kfws@hearstsc.com.

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Moments in Time The History Channel

• On March 8, 1893, Emmet Dalton, the only survivor of the Dalton Gang's attempt to rob

two Kansas banks, begins serving a life sentence. After 14 years in prison, Emmet won parole and

returned to society a reformed man. He married and began a successful career as a real estate agent.

• On March 7, 1923, the New Republic publishes Robert Frost's poem "Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening." The poem begins with the famous line "Whose woods these are, I think I know." Although Frost never graduated from a university, he had collected 44 honorary degrees before he died in 1963.

• On March 10, 1938, for the first time since it began in 1927, the names of Academy Award winners are kept secret until their announcement at the awards ceremony.

Mountain Movie Review

300

(R)

Based on the epic graphic novel by Frank Miller, 300 is a ferocious retelling of the ancient Battle of Thermopylae in which King Leonidas (Gerard Butler) and 300 Spartans fought to the death against Xerxes and his massive Persian army. Facing insurmountable odds, their valor and sacrifice inspire all of Greece to unite against their Persian enemy, drawing a line in the sand for democracy. The film brings Miller's (Sin City) acclaimed graphic novel to life by combining live action with virtual backgrounds that capture his distinct vision of this ancient historic tale.

Wild Hogs

(Rated PG-13)

Tim Allen, John Travolta, Martin Lawrence and William H. Macy hit the road in this rollicking comedy-adventure about a group of middle-aged friends who decide to rev up their routine suburban lives with a free-wheeling motorcycle trip. Taking a long dreamed-of breather from their stressful jobs and family responsibilities, they can't wait to feel the freedom of the open road. When this mismatched foursome, who have grown far more used to the couch than the saddle, set out for this once-in-a-lifetime experience - they encounter a world that holds far more than they ever bargained for. The trip begins to challenge their wits and their luck, especially during a chance run-in with the Del Fuegos, a real-life biker gang who are less than amused with their novice approach. As they go looking for adventure, they soon find that they've embarked on a journey they will never forget.

Ghost Rider

(PG-13)

In order to save his dying

father, young stunt cyclist Johnny Blaze sells his soul to Mephistopheles and sadly parts from the pure-hearted Roxanne Simpson, the love of his life. Years later, Johnny's path crosses again with Roxanne, now a go-getting reporter, and also with Mephistopheles, who offers to release Johnny's soul if Johnny becomes the fabled, fiery Ghost Rider, a supernatural agent of vengeance and justice. Mephistopheles charges Johnny with defeating the despicable Blackheart, Mephistopheles's nemesis and son, who plans to displace his father and create a new hell even more terrible than the old one.

Zodiac

(R)

The true story behind the murders that many crime scholars believe to be the most perplexing series of unsolved crimes in modern history comes to the screen in chilling detail as Fight Club and Seven director David Fincher steps behind the camera to tell the mysterious tale of the infamous Zodiac killer. A relentless serial killer is stalking the streets of the San Francisco Bay Area, leaving citizens locked into a constant state of panic and baffled authorities scrambling for clues. Though the killer sadistically mocks the detectives by leaving a series of perplexing ciphers and menacing letters at the crime scenes, the investigation quickly flatlines when none of the evidence yields any solid leads. As four detectives remain steadfast in their devotion to bringing the elusive killer to justice, they soon find that the madman has control not only over their careers, but their very lives as well. Jake Gyllenhaal, Mark Ruffalo, and Robert Downey, Jr.

Astronaut Farmer

(PG)

Dismissed from NASA's space program, former astro-

naut-in-training Charles Farmer (Billy Bob Thornton) pursues his lifelong dream by building his own rocket in the Polish Brothers' family film "The Astronaut Farmer." On the eve of his launch, he must battle foreclosure on his ranch, a small-town community of disbelievers, the FAA, and FBI agents who want to shut him down in the name of Homeland Security - but remains determined to reach his goal and instill in his children the courage to pursue their own dreams, no matter the odds.

Bridge to Terabithia

(PG)

Based on the popular Newbery Award-winning novel, 'Bridge to Terabithia' is a fantasy/adventure story of friendship, family and the power of imagination from the producers of 'The Chronicles Of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe.' Jess Aarons (Josh Hutcherson) is an outsider at school and even in his own family. Jess has trained all summer to become the fastest kid in his middle school class but his goal is unexpectedly thwarted by the new girl in school, Leslie Burke (Annasophia Robb) who competes in the "boys only" race and wins.

Despite their awkward introduction, the two outsiders quickly become best friends. Leslie loves to tell stories of fantasy and magic. Jess loves to draw, but until he met Leslie it was something he kept to himself. Leslie opens a new world of imagination for Jess. Together they create the secret kingdom of Terabithia, a magical place only accessible by swinging on an old rope over a stream in the woods near their homes. There, the friends rule the kingdom, fight the Dark Master and his creatures and plot against the school bullies. Thanks to his friendship with Leslie, Jess is changed for good.

Curves of Blairsville

Owner, Jackie Townley

**New Location: 144 Blue Ridge Street
Opening March 5**

New Hours: Open ALL Day (No Lunch-Time Closing)

New Manager Lynda Shook, Hiawassee, Ga., Four Years Experience

Trained and Friendly Staff: Lucy, Mary Ann, Paula, Char, Pam and Betty

New members who join Curves from March 1-10 and bring in a bag of groceries, there will be no service fee.

Must join on our 12 month C.D. program.

This is a great time for all you and your friends to join.

All groceries will be donated to local food bank.

Call for an appointment 706-835-3033