

# TALES FROM THE BARK SIDE

Fall 2007

The official Au Purr LLC newsletter

## Potty Mouth Bites!

Ever seen that commercial where the dog drinks from the toilet and then greets the family as they come home, licking the happy human faces? Well, let's face it. Dogs do that kind of thing. And so do cats, and ferrets, and all our furry friends.

Ick.

Ever had your best four-legged friend fall asleep on your pillow, breathing in your face? It most likely didn't smell like Tic Tacs.

Apart from being icky (and I use this term in the most technical manner), bad oral hygiene can be painful and even dangerous. Plaque is a coating of bacteria, and can be easily removed with brushings and cleanings. If left untended, plaque is hardened and thickened by the calcium in saliva and turns into tartar. Tartar then works up under the gum line, causing decay in the tissues and bone, loosening the teeth. Gums become inflamed and sore, sores may open, nerves may be irritated or exposed. THIS IS VERY PAINFUL, as one might expect.

Not only does the infection harm the tooth and surrounding areas, but can lead to internal organ damage! The heart, liver, and kidneys can be weakened by infection that begins right there in the mouth. So if your animal is older or already has heart, liver, or kidney issues, it is all the more important to take good care of the teeth and gums.

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## Potty Mouth Continued

It is truly not difficult to brush your four-legged's teeth. Around our house, we do it as part of a weekly "spa day" - ears get checked, teeth brushed, coats checked for matting, nails trimmed, etc. Everyone gets used to the routine, and it gives you a good chance to notice the small changes that might require further monitoring.

There are special toothbrushes available at any pet store, and most of them will do a fine job on your dog. I prefer the ones that "wrap" around the surface of the tooth, with several surfaces of brushes. Cats and ferrets, however, aren't so easy. The best fit for these smaller mouths is a regular infant toothbrush.

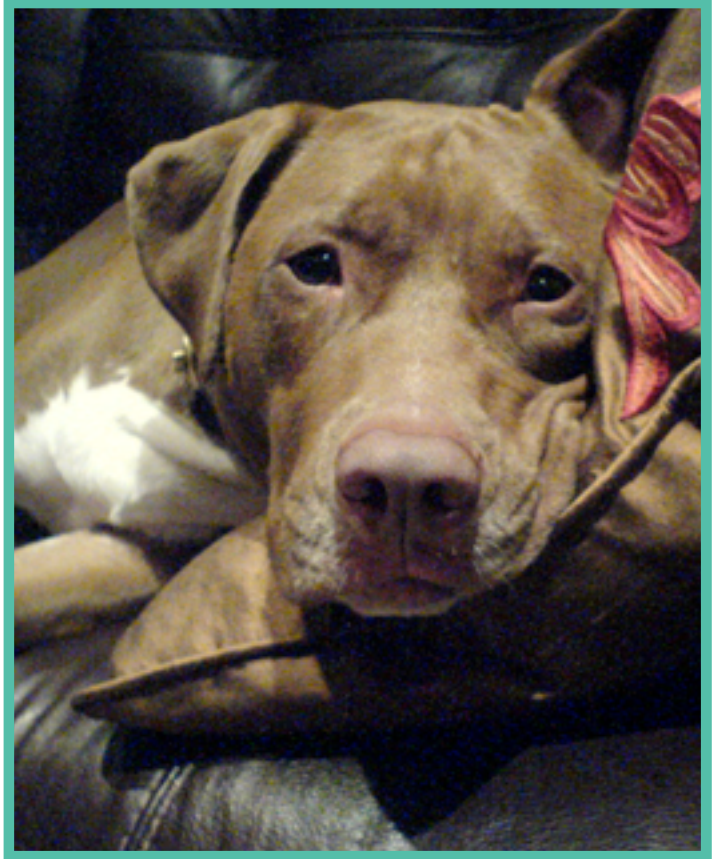
Bone or liver-flavored toothpastes are a big hit, and baking soda works just fine. **DO NOT USE HUMAN TOOTHPASTE!** We know not to swallow it, but your beastie will invariably swallow some and get an upset tummy.

Regular brushing will also reduce the need for veterinary dental cleanings, which can be quite costly and also require anaesthesia. For older animals, this can be a significant risk, the need for which can be greatly reduced with proper home dental care.

Always agree to the pre-dental screening the vet will provide prior to cleanings. This will provide a better picture of the possible risks to organs perhaps already damaged by infection.

Scout may still eat nasty things in the yard, and Chester may still drink from the toilet, but at least you can avoid the pain and expense of periodontal disease, and we all know, periodontal disease

**BITES!**



Karma resting on her silk pillow, all as it should be...

### **A Double-Wide grin for the Double-Wide Grill!**

On Carson Street near the Birmingham Bridge, the recently opened Double Wide Grill not only welcomes your pooch, but provides a bowl of water!

Veggies take note: there are black bean burgers and veggie wings, too.

Let's show our support for such nice folks. Get out there and enjoy the people-watching, the food, and the welcoming atmosphere.

## Does Pet Insurance Really Help?

We'd like to know about your experiences with pet insurance. Have you thought about it? Looked into it? If you have it, has it done what you needed? Was it cost effective, considering the premiums and the services you've used?

There is a vast array of policies out there, some of which get quite good reviews and some of which seem like sheer folly. We would like to share personal stories with our clients, and let folks know what works and what doesn't.

Please let us know what you found, so we can help others to provide the most effective protection to their furry friends.

Thanks!

## Animal Rescue League Needs Foster Homes

The ARL on Hamilton Avenue is in a constant state of siege...there are cats in the adoption area, cats in the sick room, cats in THE GARAGE! Moms with litters, older cats, cats of all colors, personalities, and descriptions...and no room.

If you have a spare room, and a tiny bit of time, your help would be so very much appreciated.

Please call Carol Whaley at 412 661 6452, and tell her Au Purr sent you.

## Hartz product warning

If you use Hartz flea care products, please check out the following website:

[www.hartzvictims.org](http://www.hartzvictims.org)

There have been very serious effects from the use of these formulas, and we would hate to see any of our clients go through this.

Please check with your vet before choosing any over-the-counter medication for your animal...our companions are more fragile than they look.



Kimmy, one of Nina's recent ARL fosters, has found a new loving home...congrats to her new human, Kari!



Thelma tries to nap while the annoying human futzes with some clicky thing...

AU PURR LLC

Nina Yost

412 337 1006

[nina@aupurr.net](mailto:nina@aupurr.net)

[www.aupurr.net](http://www.aupurr.net)



## Ho Ho Ho...

I know, I know, bah humbug. But before you know it, you'll be wrapping gifts and stuffing tofurkeys.

We have limited overnight slots available at any given time, and one is already booked for Christmas. I'm just warning you...

And, if Labor Day was any indicator, the regular visit slots will fill up very quickly as well. I can't bear to say no to our clients, but I can and will say no to new folks.

So, all you "existing" clients...let us know as early as possible when you will need us this November and December, so we are sure to leave plenty of time for the care of each animal.

Also, if you are going to be off from work but home and won't need us to do our regular visits, let us know that too...

We have so loved spending time with your animals this year, and look forward to the nice cool fall and winter weather, perfect for walks and snowball fights. I admit it, I love it when a dog loses a snowball in his own mouth. We even have one client, a big Bernese Mountain Dog, who makes snow angels!!!!

Thanks for keeping us in your lives, and the lives of your best friends.