

1 DOGGY PADDLE
Take the family dog to one of Chicago's dog beaches.

2 DOG AND PONY SHOW
There is still time to catch "The Cat In The Hat" at the Broadway Playhouse. Tickets are \$15-\$22. 175 E. Chestnut St., Chicago, (312) 977-1700.

Dog days of summer

Who let the kids out? →



BY DONNA BOZZO

As summer stretches on, the dog days of summer don't have to be a dog for your family. Here are 10 things to do before back-to-school has us all, well, dog tired!

3 ONE BIG DOG!
According to the 2013 Guinness World Records, this BIG HOT DOG is the largest commercially available hot dog. And it's been featured on The History Channel's "Modern Marvels: Supersized Foods." It weighs 7 pounds, measures 16 inches long and 4 inches in diameter, is made of 100 percent beef and pork and feeds about 40 people. Order one up for the family. Or be the Big Dog in the neighborhood and invite some families over for one last impromptu cookout. bighotdog.com



Donna Bozzo is a frequent contributor, freelance writer and the mom of three girls living in Kenilworth.

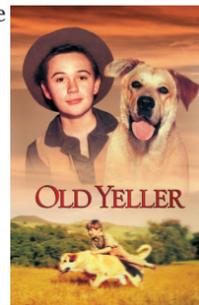
4 HOWL AT THE MOON

Howl at the full moon on Aug. 20. Grab a blanket and the kids and bring along binoculars, clipboards, black construction paper, white crayons, or even better, glow-in-the-dark markers, and let the kids sketch the night sky. Or let them make their own moon with paper plates, markers and wiggly eyes. Don't forget to pack the MoonPies. Awooooooo!



5 DOG-EARRED

Just because most summer reading clubs end the first week of August doesn't mean your family has to ditch reading. Plan a family book club! Pick up a few copies of a childhood favorite, *Old Yeller*. At



book discussion night, play the old movie and make sure to wolf down some almond bark, mini-dogs and homemade puppy chow.



6 DIGGETY DOG

Take the family on a fossil dig! Many say Mazonia-Braidwood State Fish and Wildlife Conservation Area is the world's greatest fossil-collecting site. Hammer and split rocks and discover perfectly preserved leaf or animal imprints. If you're really lucky, you may find a specimen of the elusive Tully Monster, the Illinois State Fossil, which you can only find around Mazon Creek. To keep your fossil finds well-preserved, place the rocks in a freezer overnight and then drop them into boiling water. Mazonia-Braidwood State Fish and Wildlife Conservation Area is an hour south of Chicago in Grundy County, three miles southeast of Braidwood on Illinois Route 53 and Huston Road.

10 DOG EAT DOG

Dine with your dog! There are almost 250 restaurants in Chicago that welcome dogs at their outdoor tables. Check out bringfido.com to find one near you.



7 YO! YO! WALK THE DOG

Invented in the 1920s, the yo-yo is one of the oldest and simplest forms of play. And Walk The Dog is its most famous tricks. Who says you can't teach an old dog (or young dog) new tricks? Brush up on your yo-yo-ing at the Cat & Mouse Store. Check out YoYo University 4-6 p.m. Fridays or 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Saturdays. No need to RSVP. Just drop by and walk the dog! 2212 W. Armitage Ave., Chicago, (773) 384-4454.



8 RAINING CATS AND DOGS

Catch the classic "Singin' In The Rain" at Movies In The Park on Sept. 3 at Berger Park Cultural Center, 6205 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago, (773) 761-0376.

9 YOU DIRTY DOG!

Before they have to look cool for school, give the kids one more chance to get dirty. Let them make mud pies in the backyard. Check out The Little Tikes Makin' Mudpies play set available on Amazon.com. After a day of fake baking, treat them to the real thing! Angel Food Bakery sells mud pies, flourless chocolate cupcakes, for \$3.50 each. Angel Food Bakery, 1636 Montrose, Chicago.