

# A Howlin' Good Time

## OFF-LEASH NEWS



SPRING 2022

**River Park Clean-Up**  
**Saturday, June 11**  
**9:00 - 11:30am**

Give some TLC to River Park and pitch in to scoop poop and garbage while you enjoy a walk with your dog. Just show up with a pail and shovel or gloves and bags. Please note: Due to the pandemic, we will not have a sign-in table. Thanks in advance for your help!



### UNSUBSCRIBE OPTION

If for any reason you no longer wish to receive communication, just let me know.

Candice



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## In Support of Older Adults and Their Animals

Whether you're an older adult or there's one in your circle, it's easy to appreciate the incredible emotional and health benefits that animals provide for us. But there are also some challenges of owning a pet as we age. Many older adults face barriers to finding affordable pet-friendly accommodation, while some overlook self-care in order to provide necessities for their pets. Others give up pet ownership when they can't make things work.

**Ann M Toohey, PhD**, is the Manager of the Brenda Strafford Centre on Aging at the University of Calgary and an adjunct assistant professor at the Department of Health Sciences at the Cumming School of Medicine. She has done extensive research in the area of supporting health and wellbeing of aging older adults as related to the benefit of relationships with companion animals.

In a recent feature on **CBC Alberta At Noon**, Judy Aldous interviews Toohey and invites callers to share their experiences with benefits and barriers to pet ownership. Toohey noted no-pet rules are easing in some cases and she brings attention to some great resources for seniors.

**Pet Assist Calgary** (delivered by **Calgary Seniors Resource Society**) supports aging in place for

older adults living in disadvantaged situations such as lower income or social isolation.

**Silvera for Seniors** is piloting innovative pet-friendly assisted living scenarios (i.e. cat room for visiting and socializing).

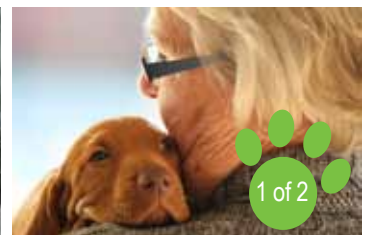
**ElderDog Canada** is a national non-profit that supports seniors with dogs (foster care, walking, nail clipping, medication, vet transport, etc.).

**Robotic Pets** (battery-run, interactive lap-sized cats and dogs) are being offered in a **Canmore senior's program**.

**Paws for Seniors** (in the US) offers an older cat or dog fostering program where they retain ownership while covering food, litter and vet costs.

Listen to the full **Pets and Seniors interview** on **CBC Alberta At Noon**. You can also read great insights in an article, **Better Aging With Pets** featured in **UCalgary Arch Magazine**.

Many thanks to Ann Toohey for her work bringing attention to this important subject, and for her efforts to better the lives of older adults and their companion animals.



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## Rainbow Bridge

Some sad news to share about a member of the River Park off-leash community. Following is a loving message received from Sheelagh M:



*I wanted to let all Oakley's friends in River Park know that he passed to the other side this week. Our 11 1/2 year old handsome, loving guy can now be found chasing his ball 24/7.*

*We are so honoured to have been his family for so long and miss him terribly.  
~ Sheelagh*

Best wishes on your next journey Oakley. Enjoy playing ball with fur friends in all of the best dog parks over the Rainbow Bridge.



## Coyotes and Keeping Your Dog Safe

Suzanne S recently connected to say her son's dog was attacked by a coyote in the grassy area next to the Emily Folensbee Center and Safety City (on 50 Ave, across from River Park). The dog is recovering from a small bite wound and is otherwise fine.

This is likely the result of an encounter with a mother coyote during denning season which occurs annually March through May. A mother considers an off-leash dog to be a threat and will protect her babies with all her might. This is normal behaviour.

With people and dogs in mind, we can learn



Each year, **Volunteer Canada** leads National Volunteer Week to acknowledge and celebrate the impact of volunteerism in our communities and across our country. This year's celebration occurred April 24 – 30, 2022 with the theme: "Volunteering Is Empathy In Action."

A great big thank you to everyone who contributes their time, talent and treasure to make River Park a happy place for people and dogs. So many of you lead by example. Whether it's welcoming new park users, picking up garbage or another's dog waste, being respectful, sharing space, volunteering for park clean-ups, and other ways, every contribution makes a positive impact.

Also a special note of thanks to our core leadership members, and a warm welcome to Shaun F and Sonja J, who recently joined the team's efforts to help out.

Huge appreciation for everyone's contributions throughout the year!

about coyote behaviour, as well as how to co-exist and stay safe. Following are some helpful links.

### University of Calgary

<https://ucalgary.ca/news/co-existing-coyotes-during-denning-season>

### City of Calgary

<https://www.calgary.ca/csps/abs/frequently-asked-questions/coyote.html?redirect=/coyotes>

### Government of Alberta

<https://www.alberta.ca/coyotes.aspx>

Please be informed and stay safe!



## Normal Behaviour

Have you ever noticed when dogs squat and then furiously scratch the ground causing grass, dirt or snow to spread everywhere?

Ground-scratching is normal behaviour. Your dog does it to convey scent dispersal, social communication/visual messaging, and he or she might even be trying to intimidate other dogs. Surprisingly on occasion, dogs scratch to leave only their scent without eliminating anything. And for some dogs, they simply enjoy doing it.

Typically when fellow dog people witness the behaviour, we assume the dog has deposited a load. Most often, we're alarmed and highly disappointed if an owner watches their dog scratch and then just walks away! Although our intentions are good, let's always make sure the dog actually left feces behind before calling out to the dog's owner.

You can check out more information about this common canine behaviour through the links below.

### From Pet MD

<https://www.petmd.com/dog/behavior/dog-behavior-why-do-dogs-kick-their-feet-after-pooing>

### From Psychology Today

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/animal-emotions/201903/ground-scratching-dogs-scent-sight-and-ecstasy>

Thanks for taking interest in this subject and keeping an eye on each other with the best intentions to provide a pleasant experience and maintain a clean park for all users.

