



A Howlin' Good Time

River Park Off-leash News

August

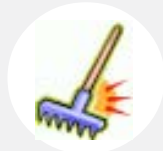


2010

UPCOMING STUFF

Park Maintenance Effort August 21 9 - 11 AM

Join us to help clean-up garbage cigarette butts and feces in River Park.



To Rake or Not To Rake August 21 9 - 11 AM

Stand by but be ready to rake gravel from the grass to the trail that runs north and south in the park. I have placed a call to 3-1-1 to see if Parks will relocate the gravel on their own or help us do the job. As of July 25, I haven't heard from them.

Just a few people raked gravel during our last clean-up. Unfortunately their efforts only put a dent in the damage done by The City sometime last November when the trail was graded so the garbage trucks could travel along the north/south trail to empty garbage bins.

Please feel free to share this newsletter with friends. If at any time you no longer wish to receive communication, just let me know.

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Off-leash Initiatives in the City

When the Cambrian Heights Community Association voted to remove a fence from the off-leash park, dog owners quickly gathered forces to lobby The City for its return. They were successful in influencing Alderman Bob Hawkesworth to present a Notice of Motion which passed unanimously.

Jo Anne from the Cambrian Heights dog advocacy group wrote:

"Ald. Hawkesworth's Notice of Motion passed unanimously just before 8:00 p.m. on July 5. Although there is still work to do and it is unlikely the fence in Cambrian Heights will be replaced in the near term, this is a big step forward for dog owners. Parks Department can no longer say they don't have a mandate to fence parks. Here is the motion that passed:

"Now therefore be it resolved that
1. Administration be directed to investigate opportunities to create fully fenced, off-leash dog areas as part of the Off-Leash Park Implementation Plan currently underway.

2. The report identify options, and review the budget feasibility, of implementing fully fenced off-leash dog areas.

3. As part of this review, Administration be

directed to consider the viability of leasing surplus City lands to a non-profit group to manage and provide programs and services for dogs and their owners.

4. Administration report to Council on this matter as part of its progress update to the SPC on Community and Protective Services no later than January 2011."

Another important point in this motion is that it refers to "dog areas" as opposed to "multi-use, off leash areas". I believe this is the first time we have received any acknowledgement from Council of the need for parks specifically dedicated to dogs.

It's rare for community activists to get something like this before Council, never mind getting it passed. We got organized, involved the media, received great advice from our colleagues in the south, and generated wide-spread support for our cause. Congratulations everyone!"

This has a great impact on off-leash parks throughout Calgary. Realizing there's strength in numbers, Friends of River Park will work with them toward a city-wide initiative. Stay tuned for more news and about how you can get involved.



Good Reasons to Stick to the Trails

During the recent River and Pathway Clean-up Brook, Steve and I worked along the River Park escarpment.

Brook and I went down the stairs toward Sandy Beach to clean up two clearings about 50 feet into the bushes just north of the stairs. These clearings are usually used by young people who like to party. We were surprised to find a sizeable homeless camp.

Although clean-up participants (and park users) are supposed to avoid contact with homeless people, Brook and I spent time cleaning up an incredible amount of rusty

cans, broken plates, bottles, garbage and human feces. We tried to clean up everything but there was just too much.

After I reported the homeless camp, police and bylaw officers responded. Although I didn't check, I assume the homeless camp is gone but they may have just moved to another spot in the park. Now that summer finally arrived, the kids will likely resume their reckless partying in that spot.

For your dog's safety, don't let them roam around in the bushes. There's still a lot of broken glass and rusty metal that can cut their paws.

A Fond Farewell to Kelpie – a Great Dog and River Park Ambassador

Forgive me for the length of this tribute, but Steve and I lost one of our dogs.

We made a very difficult and sudden decision to let **Kelpie** go on Saturday, July 24 at 1:50pm. She was just short of nine-years-old and she was our special family member for seven years.

We took her to our regular clinic and Dr. Wanda Vokeroth helped her cross the bridge. Steve, Sirra and I were with her as she slipped away peacefully. Steve and I held her, reassuring 'Skelpers' how much we loved and appreciated her.

Although a few of you had seen her recently and may not have noticed anything, she really wasn't herself and her health had declined rapidly.

At the beginning of June we noticed some drastic health changes – weight loss, frequent urination, diarrhea and lethargy and she wasn't happy. One of the vets at our clinic was considering Cushings Disease, kidney failure, diabetes or diabetes insipidus. The strongest suspicion was diabetes insipidus so we started giving her some drops to treat it. She had an adverse reaction to the drops and so we stopped them right away. I asked if it could possibly be cancer and was reassured that none of the June blood tests showed any indications. I called the clinic so many times they were probably sick of me.

We had also noticed Kelpie was having trouble walking at times, so we booked her for a chiro appointment on July 22. That didn't seem to help either.

Thoughts of cancer kept haunting me but because she had never been sick a day in her life, we held hope that we would figure out what it was and she would just get better.

Later that night, Steve noticed her stomach was distended and insisted we take her back before the weekend to avoid a trip to emergency. Then another alarming development occurred. She really wasn't interested in her food.

On July 23 we saw Dr. Laura Romano. After more blood work, x-rays and an ultrasound, Laura and two other vets from our clinic, plus an oncologist from CARE emergency centre confirmed she had hemangiosarcoma, which is cancer of the blood vessel cells. She had a large tumour on her liver and spleen that was causing severe internal bleeding. We were told her life expectancy could be two months if she had surgery to remove the spleen and part of her liver; without surgery, she had maybe two weeks. Either way, the condition was irreversible.

Although not considered painful, she had trouble breathing because internal bleeding meant she wasn't getting enough oxygen. That night was rough for her – lots of panting, wheezing and whining. We carefully weighed the odds and decided it was best to let her go the next day.

Kelpie was a fabulous little dog with so much personality. You never know what you're going to get when you adopt a stray. We were told that I'd never be able to train the alpha out of Kelpie but when we first got her, I put her on

umbilical leash and made her wait while Sirra did everything first. Kelpie figured it out in less than two weeks.

Kelpie was more than smart. I used to run with her and Sirra and within a week of adopting Kelpie, she knew our running route, where we crossed the streets and where home was.

Kelpie had a way of making friends with people of all ages. Within minutes of meeting familiar or new friends, she'd have them wrapped around her back dewclaw. Fun and games were everything to her. Kelpie adored play-fighting with Steve and her sister, and she loved her abundant supply of toys (her babies). She was very gentle and affectionate too. Kelpie loved to be showered with kisses and adored belly rubs. Our "little girl" was more than generous with her kisses too.

I must also mention her contribution to our off-leash work, how she sniffed out hidden poop for dog owners in the park (which was always met with surprise and appreciation) and how she quietly 'worked' the table at many park events.

Kelpie taught us a lot about dog ownership and dog behaviour. She showed us that anything was possible. We loved that little dog with every ounce of our souls.

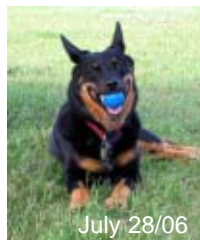
We would like to thank so many of you for play time, many pats and for loving Kelpie. Also in advance, we thank you for your support as we deal with our loss. We are in the beginning stages of adjusting, but it's going to take a long, long time.



Jan 2/05



Spring/05



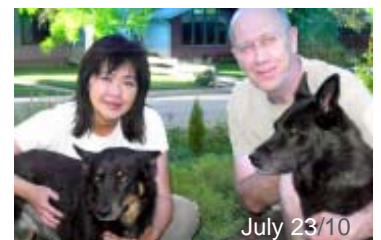
July 28/06



Nov 10/07



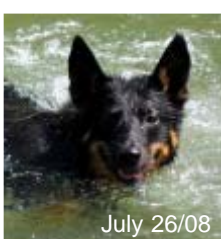
Apr 22/07



July 23/10



Apr 22/07



July 26/08



July/08



Oct 13/09



Feb 14/10



July 24/10