



A Howlin' G o o d Time

OFF-LEASH NEWS

OCTOBER 2015



**ALES for TAILS
FUNDRAISER at
The Blind Monk
(918 12 Ave SW)
Saturday, Oct 17
6 - 11pm**

It's a pub night! Enjoy live music by Calgary singer/songwriter Andrew Mann, a silent auction and drink specials! All event proceeds go to [Four Feet Companion Foundation](#).



SAVE THE DATE
**Next River Park
Clean-up**
Saturday, Nov 14
10:30am - noon
Weather dependent so
details/updates TBA.

UNSUBSCRIBE OPTION

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

Candice

✉ riverparkoffleash@gmail.com
 🌐 riverparkdogs.com
 🐦 [@riverparkdogs](https://twitter.com/riverparkdogs)
 📌 [riverparkdogs](https://www.facebook.com/riverparkdogs)

Charitable Intentions

[Four Feet Companion Foundation](#) is a volunteer-run, registered charity (# 83688 0641 RR0001) that was established in September 2012. They provide financial and volunteer support to registered local animal charities to enable important animal welfare work in Alberta such as: rescue, caring for abandoned/injured animals, promotion of responsible pet guardianship, spay/neuter initiatives, finding permanent homes, emergencies and education.

From the Four Feet website:

Our mission is to support animal charities. Our vision is to end animal suffering. Our goal is that one day we won't have to.

Organizations such as the following have been awarded grants: MEOW Foundation, Alberta Animal Rescue Crew Society, Rescue and Sanctuary for Threatened Animals, and Bear Valley Horse Rescue. By the way, charities interested in applying can find more information [here](#).

Four Feet is holding a fundraiser on October 17 (find more info on their [Facebook page](#)).



River Park Fountain

Irrigation crews have started to shut down water systems in community parks. This includes the fountain in River Park so the countdown is on.



Last year, once the water was turned off, I covered the fountain with plastic to protect the paint from urine and the elements. I will do so again this year.

So don't be surprised if there's no water the next time your dog stops by. Please note: Each year the fountain is operational from approximately the May long weekend until the Thanksgiving holiday.

No Grab Bags at River Park

Back-up poop bag use has been staggeringly high at River Park this year. Going through more than 9000 bags each month is outrageous! Obviously some park users are taking the donated supply for granted. Word of mouth efforts to reduce use have failed so we have chosen to take drastic measures.

Before winter sets in and park use dwindles, we're launching an educational campaign for two to four weeks in October. We will create awareness through the following means:

- Education (posters throughout the park)
- Targeted messages pasted over the openings of each bag dispenser
- Bag dispensers **will NOT be filled** for the period mentioned above

Can you lend your support? If asked, please tell freeloaders why there are no bags. Thanks for your help! Please note: This education and awareness effort will be repeated next spring.

For Goodness Sake... Please Lighten Up

It's time to bring a flashlight and dress our dogs in their illuminated collars to help keep the dogs within sight and enable us to find their droppings.



Small, affordable flashlights can be found everywhere. Choose one that fits on your keys, use the flashlight built into your phone or download a free app on your phone.

Choices for dog collars vary from bobbles to full surround styles. Find the one that works best with the length of your dog's fur. Inexpensive alternatives such as a bike light or head lamp also work like a charm.

Please light up the park with your preferred method for collars and flashlights to increase visibility this fall and winter. It's all about keeping the park (and our shoes) clean, plus it's one of the best ways to keep our dogs safe.

What to Consider When Hiring Pet Care Services

Looking for a responsible and reputable person or organization to look after your furry family members on a short- or long-term basis? Maybe it's while you're at work or on vacation. Yikes! That's also a good reminder to book now for the Christmas holiday season. Don't know where to start?

Check out the separate attachment sent out with this edition of the off-leash newsletter. It's a list of dog-related services I've collected over many years. Please note the companies on this list are recommendations from fellow park users.

When searching, here's a list of considerations:

1. Are they (and their employees) bonded and insured?
2. Get a written service contract detailing services, policies and fees.
3. Are they a member of an association? Some associations only require yearly dues to be paid while others insist on insurance, training etc.
4. Determine level of experience and training.
5. Do they have First Aid/CPR training?
6. What's their understanding of pet behavior?
7. Do they record your pet's medications, dietary restrictions, routines, fears, likes/dislikes, etc.?
8. Can they administer medications?
9. Do they have an association with a veterinarian who can provide emergency services?
10. Do they provide a record of your pet's activities, behaviour, exercise etc?

11. How many pets are in their care at one time (at home, during neighbourhood/off-leash walks etc.).
12. Can you contact them easily and at any time?
13. Test their ability to follow instructions.
14. Ensure your instructions are concise and easy to understand.
15. Request a meet/greet/interview opportunity to ask questions and observe their ability to interact with your pet.
16. Create check-in points to ensure their care is in place when you leave and also to ensure you have arrived home safely to your pet.
17. Discuss back-up plans for emergencies (yours and theirs).
18. Get a few references from friends, veterinarians or other pet services.

Keep some of these things in mind during your search. Make and tailor your own list when you're about to interview a pet care provider. Best wishes for finding a suitable and qualified pet care service that meets your needs.



Ensuring Pets Have a Howling Good Time on Halloween

October 31 is full of fun, games and excitement for most people but keep in mind, not all of our furry family members appreciate the craziness that happens during Halloween. Here are some things to keep in mind to give them a paw up:

Decorations

- Pet-proof indoor and outdoor items
- Jack o lanterns/candles and tails don't mix well

Costume Tips

- Make sure it's comfy
- Don't limit their movement or senses
- Watch for choking hazards
- Choose a bright color and make sure ID tags are worn if they're outside



Mental and Physical Health

- Watch for any signs of stress or anxiety when trying to dress your pet in costume (try a collar light or bandana as a happy, festive alternative)
- Ensure your pet doesn't bolt out the door
- Try to reduce noise and have a quiet spot for them to hang out while visitors come to your door
- Avoid a bite incident — watch to ensure your pet doesn't get spooked by people in costumes

Treats

- Keep people treats in a secure location
- Remember chocolate is a no-no and lots of candies and gum contain xylitol (all are extremely toxic for dogs)
- Candy wrappers are a choking hazard and can cause a painful and/or costly obstruction

Please give some thought as to how to make your furry one's experience positive on this festive occasion.

Wishing a happy, healthy and safe Halloween to all!

Paws for Thought

This month, here are some interesting and helpful finds to share with everyone.

A look inside a [dog rehabilitation centre](#) from [ASPCA](#)



An article about [Pet Loss Support](#) from [Vets to Go](#)



Safe and effective [leash handling](#) from [Dr Sophia Yin](#)



Caring for Your Pet In Sickness and Health

This section features some great online info to help keep all of our furry family members healthy and happy.

[Why chocolate makes dogs sick and a chocolate toxicity meter](#) from [PetMD](#)



The importance of [teaching eye contact](#) with your dog from [Veterinarypartner.com](#)



An article about [tail-chasing](#) from the [Canadian Veterinary Medical Association](#)

