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# REAL LIFE

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## THIS WEEK IN REAL LIFE

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Noted: Why women are waiting to become moms

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### COMING SUNDAY

Homemade ricotta adds an authentic Italian touch

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## VITALS



Courtesy, J.R. Watkins

### Watkins undergoes rebirth

**NEW PRODUCT** • For many Canadians, the name J. R. Watkins is synonymous with home sales of practical stuff like toilet bowl cleaner and green liniment.

These days, however, the company also offers J.R. Watkins Apothecary, a line of personal-care products based on natural ingredients.

Our favourites include the Peppermint Rejuvenating Foot Cream, the Lavender Hand and Cuticle Salve and the Pure Lemon Body Oil, which all smell good enough to eat (but don't!).

Also worth trying: the Vanilla Hand and Body Lotion, which is richly scented and quite creamy. Look for the products at select Shopper's Drug Marts, Zellers and London Drugs in Calgary.

The sampler kit costs \$22.99 and includes eight generous vials and tins, all with classic packaging and cool retro-inspired labels.

For more information, check out watkinsonline.com.

As for the household cleaning products and Menthol Camphor? The company hasn't stopped making their time-tested favourites. Look for more Watkins products in stores across Canada by early 2008, or ask your favourite local Watkins dealer for more information.

— Shelley Boettcher, Calgary Herald

### Pick-me-up for pooped pups

**NEW TREND** • Dogged by demands of the day? Hounded by the hubbub of urban life? Head to Japan's latest fad: a canine oxygen bar that is breathing new life into the meaning of pet posh.

The Air Press, a chain of more than 20 oxygen bars across Japan, has opened its first oxygen bar exclusively for dogs in Tokyo, offering that extra pick-me-up for pups.

The dogs are placed in a cylinder and oxygen is pumped in.

"If you do not live in a city, you can let your dogs run around a huge place like in the highlands, freely," said Tsuyoshi Hirano, the owner of the dog oxygen bar, OWND.

"But in the Tokyo area, home space is very limited while dog walks are only occasional. So it will be very difficult for dogs to stay in good condition without this extra health support."

A 30-minute oxygen treatment costs \$18 and dog owners say their pets love it.

"My dog may not be tired but is usually kind of lethargic. After he comes here, though, he is enthused and barking with vigour," said Umekichi Sakon, whose pet is an oxygen regular.

Dogs now outnumber children aged 10 and under in Japan — there were 13.1 million dogs in 2006 — making the country a prime market for anything canine. Owners hold dog parties in dog cafes, dress their pets in silk and cashmere, take them to hot springs and spas offering massages and aromatherapy.

— Reuters

## PETS



Ted Rhodes, Calgary Herald  
**Sherri Olsen and her Labrador-poodle-retriever cross, Bear, hang out. The Calgary entrepreneur, life coach and dog trainer has written a new book for pet owners called Cooldog: A Guide to Safe Off-Leash Fun, seen above.**

SHELLEY BOETTCHER  
 CALGARY HERALD

Anyone with a dog in the city has probably had a bad experience at an off-leash area.

Perhaps another dog gets aggressive with your pet. Perhaps the animal jumps on you or scares your kids.

Maybe another dog owner accuses you of being too lax (or too tough) with your dog.

They may be right, but even if they aren't, you get the picture. Some days are great. Some days are not.

Yet despite the occasional run-in, off-leash areas are a great way for fellow dog-lovers to congregate, and for their pets to get much-needed exercise and social interaction, says Sherri Olsen, a Calgary entrepreneur, life coach and dog trainer.

"I have such a desire for dogs to have fun and play safely," she says.

"It brings them joy and as a result, it brings me joy."

Hoping to spread that joy to others, she's written her new book, *Cooldog: A Guide to Safe Off-Leash Fun* (Crossroads Coaching, 2007, \$22.95). It's for sale at Pages, McNally Robinson and Chapters, or buy it online at cooldog.ca.

The idea behind the book came about three years ago when, in preparation for getting her first dog since childhood, Olsen took dog training classes.

Then, after Bear — a large Labrador-poodle ("Labradoodle")-retriever cross — entered her life, she began going to the city's myriad off-leash areas.

That's when she realized that

# Cooldog CALGARY

Local author writes book about keeping dogs — and owners — happy at off-leash areas

not all dogs are well-trained, and not all dog owners know what they're doing.

"Dogs just live to love and be friendly and meet people," she says.

"And we deny them that because of our lack of training them. I see that all the time and it just breaks my heart."

She decided to do something about it. The Cooldog idea — "Controlled behaviour, off leash, out havin' fun and lovin' my owner" — was born.

After three years of recording her anecdotes and training techniques — one paragraph a day, every day — she had written a small but detailed book on how to create a safe and fun life for our four-legged best friends.

"It's a place to start," she says. "It's a doable, fun, useful system."

The book focuses primarily on public behaviour, especially off-leash areas, and centres around six main commands — three for safety (come, leave it and hold up) and three for fun (off, drop it and slow), she says.

"People think if they train their dogs, their dog isn't going to love them," she says.

"But dogs thrive on boundaries, structure and leadership."

After reading the book, dog owners should be able to implement those commands immediately — even if their dog is no longer a puppy.

Yes, you can teach an old dog new tricks, says Olsen.

"The foundation program is about establishing leadership over your dog," she says. "That process can be at any age."

Don't believe it will work? Try it before you dismiss it, Olsen says, who has seen outstanding results in older animals.

Getting a new dog? Or trying to retrain an older pet? Here are a handful of Olsen's tips for training your dog:

■ If you're getting a new puppy, don't talk to it for the first week.

■ If you want a responsive dog, stop talking," she says. "You establish a bond and communicate with body language, which is how dogs com-

municate... They pay attention to us more."

■ Talk to your dog like you'd want someone to talk to you. Olsen says she often hears people yelling aggressively at their dog as they try to get the animal's attention at an off-leash area.

"I address my dog like I want someone to address me, with a happy tone," she says.

After all, she says, no one — dog or person — wants to come running if they think they're in trouble.

■ Be consistent. Always. If you aren't consistent, your dog won't know what's expected of it.

"If it's naughty behaviour that you don't want, why not implement the practice of patience and consistency?"

■ Say a command once. Only once.

"They hear you," Olsen says with a laugh. "Saying the command once means you'll have a responsive dog."

"If you keep saying it, they'll just think they can do it on their own time."

Eventually, Olsen would like

**SPOTLIGHT**  
 Sherri Olsen will talk about and sign copies of her new book, *Cooldog: A Guide to Safe Off-Leash Fun*, outside of Pages Books on Kensington (1135 Kensington Rd. N.W.) on Sept. 28 at 7:30 p.m. A 30-minute walk through the neighbourhood will follow; dogs are also invited. For more information, go to cooldog.ca or call the bookstore at 283-6655.

**ALSO SEE**  
 ■ An eco-guide to pet waste C13

dog owners who have implemented her training to hook up across Canada via her book's website, cooldog.ca.

For instance, she hopes that one day, dog owners on vacation in other cities will be able to find other dog owners who believe in the Cooldog system, and meet at off-leash areas for dog play dates.

Even within Calgary, she hopes fellow dog lovers will be able to recognize each other by Cooldog stickers on their cars, and Cooldog tags on dog collars.

And if they have to leave their pets with sitters, they'll be able to hook up with people who follow the same set of Cooldog commands, so their dog doesn't have to be retrained when they return home.

Most of all, they'll have rewarding and positive experiences with their pets — and so will others, she says.

"It's about peace and love, man," she says with a laugh.

"My goal is fun and safety off-leash for all dogs."

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