

SIDEWALK SURVEY

BY EMILY WEAVER
THE HERALD

Do you think Cleveland County should have a county-wide leash law?



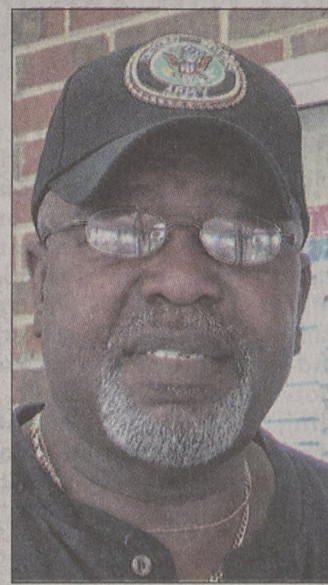
Claude Suber, Woodbridge

"I'm not sure, because I have a dog. I think it's kind of crazy that we need one, but yea I think we should have one."



J.L. Crank, Kings Mountain

"I don't own a dog because I don't like to see a dog tied up. I think it's wrong. Dogs should be able to run free and not be forever tied to a tree."



Robert Hillman, Kings Mountain

"Yes I think we should. People get bit by dogs running around all the time. It's better to keep that under control."



Tim Johnson, Kings Mountain

"No, I don't think we need it, at least not out in the country. I can understand us needing it in the city limits."



Shana Adams, Kings Mountain

"Yes I think we should have a county-wide leash law. If for no other reason than safety. When you have children stray animals can be a danger."

ANIMALS

From 1A

and sometimes a few hundred animals contained in the Animal Shelter. They will all be euthanized within 5 business days after their capture, unless they are returned to their owners. According to Elethia Robinson, a vet at the Moss Lake Animal Hospital, owners must show proof of an up-to-date rabies vaccination before the shelter will release a pet.

If the animals have a good temperament and are brought in by their owners, who can prove that they have been taken care of and are vaccinated, then the animals will be sent to a veterinarian for a wellness check-up, another rabies booster and spaying or neutering. After getting the all clear from the vet, the animals will be returned to the Animal Shelter for possible adoption at a cost of \$83.

Other animals that are picked up without any identification, whose owners cannot be verified and who are not claimed, no matter how well mannered and obedient they are, will be euthanized. They will be lead in mass quantities into a gas chamber and the door will be closed. Carbon Monoxide will fill the room, but it doesn't gently put them to sleep or cause them to drift into peaceful la-la land. "With that gas, they fight, they go crazy before they die and they're fighting each other. Smaller dogs it takes less time, bigger dogs it takes longer. So some dogs are in there dead, while the other ones are dying," Robinson said.

"Kittens and puppies, they bring up here for us to euthanize (by a lethal injection) because their lungs are so little it would take so long for them to breathe the gas that would put them to sleep," she said.

The vets office she works at in Shelby started doing their part to save animals through Second Chance Rescue, which began in March 2006. They only have three kennels so they cannot hold many dogs or animals at one time. But when they have room, workers will take an unwanted animal from an owner, give them vaccines, a physical, a heart worms check and spay or neuter them in hopes of finding

them a good home in the community.

"We get plenty of calls for dogs needing homes, it's just trying to find them homes is hard," Robinson said. They have adopted out five dogs so far.

Animal Control will only adopt out animals that are brought in with proof of current rabies shots. Puppies and kittens, that are brought into the shelter, less than four months old (the age animals have to be to receive their first rabies vaccination) will automatically be "put to sleep," Robinson said.

According to ncpulichealth.com, under the rabies control link, in the year 2004, Cleveland County Animal Control impounded 7,957 animals and euthanized 7,140. Lockridge said that gas euthanizations cost the county \$1.53 per animal, whereas lethal injections cost the county \$7 per animal. Out of 10 surrounding and nearby counties (Burke, Catawba, Henderson, Mecklenburg, Rutherford, McDowell, Lincoln, Iredell, Buncombe, and Gaston) Cleveland County had the third largest number of cats and dogs euthanized in 2004. Gaston County euthanized 7,947 cats and dogs. Mecklenburg euthanized 12,579 cats and dogs. But for the county's size, being closest in land mass to Burke, Catawba and McDowell counties, the amount of animals impounded and euthanized in Cleveland County compared to the three listed above, was number one. Out of the last week in July and first week in August alone, 245 animals were "put to sleep."

"We're studying the possibility of a county-wide leash law right now and looking at other counties that have one, and the measures and costs to present that possibility to the board of commissioners at a later time," Stallings said. But she is not sure whether or not a county-wide leash law would help with the county impound population.

Lockridge said the bottom line is, "People need to be responsible pet owners. Either spay or neuter your pets or keep them pinned up away from other animals when they are in heat."

The last reported case of rabies in this county was on May 10 for a rabid skunk.

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