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THE EDGEWATER SHORELINES

The Facts About Feral Cats

A 'Feral Cat' is, as defined by Webster's dictionary, "of or relating to a wild beast; not domesticated or cultivated". They are animals that form territorial colonies that grow very quickly when left unattended. Feral cats kill wildlife for food and can spread diseases to domestic animals and humans, due to lack of immunization (vaccinations). The results of one breeding pair of feral cats can be 400,000 offspring in just 7 years! Any person caring for a feral animal could be held accountable and fined according to City Ordinances, Section 5-2, Public Nuisance, and Section 5-14, Running At

Large. A person may take pity on a feral cat and feed it. Soon, other feral cats are attracted to the food source and the situation quickly multiplies. It is a mistaken notion that feral cats can be domesticated. The truth is that only the youngest of kittens are subject to re-socialization. The reality of life for a feral cat is starvation, disease and injury or death from predators. The most humane, and legal, way to deal with feral cats is to call the Edgewater Animal Control Office at (386) 424-2481. Edgewater's City Ordinances, Section 5-31, Current City License and Section 5-33, Tags Attached



Feeding one feral cat can quickly turn into feeding a colony of feral cats.

to Collar, requires all pet owners to have their animals immunized against rabies and display proof, in the form of a tag, attached to the animal's collar. Failure to comply can result in a citation and fine to the owner/caretaker. Also, have your domestic animals spayed or neutered to avoid unintended litters.

Why Dogs Bark (and ways to resolve barking)

Why do dogs bark?
Barking is one of the most common complaints of dog owners and their neighbors! But barking is natural. It can serve as a territorial warning signal to other dogs and pack members. Dogs may vocalize when separated from their pack or family members. Barking also occurs during times of indecision, anxiety, or frustration. Medical problems can also contribute to

vocalization, especially in the older dog.
How can dog barking problems be prevented?
Socialization and habituation — get puppies used to as many new people, animals, situations and noises as possible. This will minimize the amount or intensity of alarm barking. Barking should only be allowed to alert owners and then be controlled and stopped before the dog be-

comes agitated and out of control. Owner control, training and leadership are essential. Effective crate training techniques when your dog is first obtained, should decrease the dog's anxiety when it is left alone in its crate. Your dog should gradually be taught to spend longer periods of time away from you. If your dog has been barking when you

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Did you know:

- The results of one breeding pair of feral cats can be 400,000 offspring in just 7 years.
- Edgewater Animal Control can be contacted at 386-424-2481 or visit their page on the city's web site at www.cityofedgewater.org. Position the mouse over the heading 'Safety' and click on 'Animal Control' for up-to-the-minute information from Animal Control Officers.
- Sept. 19th is International Talk Like a Pirate Day.

Why Dogs Bark (and ways to resolve barking)

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leave for some time, he may be suffering from separation anxiety and you should consult your veterinarian for treatment options. Attention getting barking can be problematic and is often reinforced by owners giving in to their dog's demands. Allowing a barking dog indoors, or feeding, patting, praising, playing with, giving a toy, or even just going to a barking dog to try and quiet it down, are just a few examples of how an owner may unknowingly reinforce barking. Yelling at a dog that is barking due to anxiety or as a territorial response is only likely to increase the dog's barking and anxiety. Never reward barking with any type of attention, even occasionally.

How can I train my dog to be 'quiet'?

Training the dog to a 'quiet' command is an invaluable aid for controlling undesirable barking. You must find an effective means of quieting the dog, which should be preceded with a command such as 'quiet'. Just loudly telling your pet to 'be quiet', will probably not be understood, especially if silence does not follow the verbal command. In fact, yelling may just add to the noise and anxiety, thereby encouraging your dog to bark more.

A method to teach a "quiet" command is to wait until your dog is barking, say to a doorbell and while he is barking place a very tasty food treat by his nose. Most dogs will stop barking to sniff the treat. At the same time you must say the word you will use for quiet, such as 'silent', 'hush' etc. When the dog is quiet (as they will be because dogs cannot sniff and bark at the same time) you can praise him, say 'good, quiet' and give the treat. Again, as with all new tasks, numerous repetitions are necessary for lasting learning. Alternately, distraction can be used to disrupt the barking. One of the most effective means of interrupting barking and ensuring quiet is a remote leash and head halter. A pull on the leash disrupts the dog and closes the mouth, which should also coincide with a verbal command such as 'quiet' or 'hush'. Quiet behavior can then be reinforced first by releasing and then giving a reinforcer such as praise or food if the dog remains quiet. Soon the dog should associate the closed mouth and the word prompt with the absence of noise and begin to stop barking when given the verbal prompt alone.

What can I do to correct my dog's barking problem?

The treatment program must be based on the type of problem, your household, the immediacy of the situation, and the type and level of control that you require. A good behavioral history is important to determine cause, motivation and potential reinforcing stimuli for the barking behavior. Sometimes the home environment can be modified so that the dog is kept away from the stimuli (sounds and sights) that cause barking. Exposure might be minimized by confining the dog to a crate or a room away from doors and windows or covering windows so that the dog cannot look outside. Additionally, privacy fencing may be helpful for dogs outdoors. Dogs that bark when left alone outdoors may have to be kept indoors except when the owner is available to supervise. Trigger sounds such as doorbells or telephones that might have become conditioned stimuli for barking should be altered to change their sound. Until effective control and leadership is established, training programs are unlikely to be successful. Increasing interactive play periods and exercise, crate and confinement training, halter training and obedience classes may need to be implemented before bark control training can begin.

What anti-barking devices are there and are they effective?

Owner-Activated Products: These products are most useful for getting the pet's attention (disruption) during quiet command training. Ultrasonic devices, audible devices, water sprayers or a shake can (an empty peanut or soda can with a few coins or pebbles sealed inside) are often successful. Without concurrent retraining techniques and an owner with good control, many dogs will soon begin to ignore the devices. However, if the device is used to interrupt the barking and the quiet behavior is then reinforced, the pet may become less anxious and less likely to bark in the presence of the stimulus, or at the very least will quiet much faster on command.

Bark-Activated Products: When barking occurs in the owner's absence, bark activated products (in conjunction with environmental modification and retraining) are often the most practical means of deterring inappropriate barking. Bark-activated products may also be a better choice than owner-activated devices, since they ensure immediate and accurate timing. Off-collar devices are useful for training the dog to cease barking in selected areas, such as near doorways or windows (or for dogs that bark in their crate or pen). Some emit an audible alarm while others spray a stream of water each time the dog barks.

Bark-activated collars are useful when barking does not occur in a predictable location. Audible and ultrasonic training collars are occasionally effective but they are neither sufficiently unpleasant nor consistent enough to be a reliable deterrent. Another spray collar emits citronella each time the dog barks and is sufficiently unpleasant to deter most dogs. Although these may be effective in the owner's absence, they have their most lasting effects when the owner is present to supervise and retrain. As soon as the barking ceases, the owner should direct the dog into an enjoyable pastime (e.g. play, tummy rub, favorite treat) as long as the dog remains quiet. . Soon the dog may associate the stimulus (people coming to the door, people coming to the yard) with something positive. Most importantly, bark collars only work when they are on the dog. Most dogs will learn to distinguish when the collar is on and when it is off. When they are not wearing the collar, most dogs will bark.

Is debarking surgery effective?

Surgical debarking is a drastic and often permanent method of eliminating barking. Varying degrees of vocalization may return as the surgical site heals and scars. Devocalization may need to be considered when owners are confronted with the option of immediately resolving a barking problem or having to give up their pet. However, all attempts at behavior modification should be continued to try and address the underlying motivation for barking and perhaps effect a permanent solution.



Some dogs have learned that one very effective way of getting attention is to bark.

City Hall
104 N. Riverside Dr.
Edgewater, FL 32132

Phone: 386-424-2400
Fax: 386-424-2409

Nuisance Animal Ordinance

Edgewater City Ordinances 5-2; Public Nuisance Animal: Any animal that unreasonably annoys persons, endangers the life or health of persons or other animals, or substantially interferes with the right of persons to enjoyment of life or property.
5-2 (4) An animal that habitually and excessively howls, barks, growls or makes other noises so as to unduly disturb or disrupt the public peace, order and tranquility. The owner of such animal could receive a citation with a fine ranging from \$80-\$150 and/or a court appearance.

Looking For A Few Good Men-Senior's Softball

Are you interested in having a good time and getting some exercise? The Senior Men's Softball League needs men 60 years and older to play each Monday, Wednesday and Friday, between 8:15 am and 11:00 am, at Whistle Stop Park. The fee is only \$35 a year and includes a shirt and hat. Think you're too old and infirmed? The league boasts WWII veterans and even an amputee! Cheerleaders are encouraged and always welcome. A great time is had by all. For more information call Robert Raak at 386-690-3753 or Mimi Raak at 386-689-5476.

Angel Food Stretches Families Budgets

Families in Southeast Volusia struggling to stretch their food budgets can get a boost from Angel Food, a ministry of the WORD Center (World Outreach Distribution Center). Located at 2102 S. Ridgewood Ave., Suite #25, Angel Food is distributed once a month. The menu varies from month to month, but a typical selection, for just \$30, includes beef, poultry, frozen vegetables, eggs and staples like instant potatoes, rice, beans and canned fruit. The August menu included over 16 pounds of food with a retail value in excess of \$60. Those who purchase the monthly menu may also choose to purchase additional specialty selections like an assorted grill box (beef and poultry), stuffed chicken breast combo box or a fresh fruit and vegetable box. Angel Food is a non-profit organization. Pastor Vicki Keepes-Smith notes the Center makes no money from the food distribution, all the work is done by volunteers and food stamps are accepted (EBT). For monthly order deadlines, distribution dates and current menus, visit the website at www.angelfoodministries.com or contact Mrs. Keepes-Smith at (386) 423-5355.

'Florida' September Art Exhibit

'Florida' is an exhibit that depicts an artist's view of the state and is the creation of members of the Artists' Workshop. It is on display at the Art Exhibit Room in the Edgewater Historical Museum, 1108 S. Ridgewood Ave, throughout the month of September. Local award winning artists Christophe Cardot, Judy Gilmer, Carol Chrissis, Carolyn Land, Lola Lawrence, Shirley Pittman and Regina Wise are joined by area artists Susan Olsen, Irene Moody, Twila Carra, Carol Richardson and Joan Hartwig showcasing their talents in watercolor, acrylic, pastel, mixed-media and photography. Susan Olsen, Coordinator of Community Exhibits for the Artists' Workshop, said she is very excited about the level and

variety of talent that is represented in this exhibit.

Located at 115 Canal St., NSB, the Artists' Workshop has a gallery downstairs and a large studio upstairs. Although officially closed for the summer, members still hold monthly meetings on the first Wednesday of each month with an art demonstration included. Meetings are open to the public. Mrs. Olsen said membership numbers around 300 and new members are welcomed. Additional information can be obtained by calling the Workshop at (386) 424-9254.

The Edgewater Historical Museum and Art Exhibit Room are located inside the Leisure Services Office, 1108 S. Ridgewood Ave., with hours of operation 8 am-4:30 pm Mon-Fri.

Susan Olsen, Coordinator of Community Exhibits for the Artists' Workshop, said she is very excited about the level and variety of talent that is represented in the September exhibit in Edgewater at 1108 S. Ridgewood Ave.