

# Epidemic of missing cats in Acton

By: *Matthew Reid*

During June, July and August many cats around Acton disappeared and bewildered owners are at a loss to find them. No official count of exactly how many cats are missing but lost cat flyers litter telephone poles and public bulletin boards all across town, as frantic cat owners search for the lost members of their fami-

lies. Everyone seems to be searching, but coming up short.

There are several theories on where all the cats have gone, from being run over, to being killed by coyotes or raccoons, even abductions by so called Cat Cults.

Dr. Hess, of Acton Veterinarian Clinic, says the most probable culprit is coyotes. He recalls a rumor in the

late 1980s when there was a cult that was abducting cats; this was at a time when many cats went missing around town.

"It was a rumour, but a lot of people were very serious that there was a cult going around," says Dr. Hess.

He says there are three main reasons why cats go missing. The most common one is that outdoor cats that

roam, are often picked up by other people, mistaken for strays, and brought to animal shelters sometimes in other towns and cities away from the animal's home.

Second is that cats are not taken care of properly and are either killed by cars or diseases such as rabies. And thirdly, outdoor cats often fall victim to coyotes. It's common knowledge that the forests and fields sur-

rounding Acton are home to the small German Shepherd sized pack hunters.

According to Dr. Hess, the best defence for your cat is to make certain the animal is micro-chipped, and the chip reflects your current address.

"Keep them inside after dusk," Hess suggests. "Keeping your cat indoors doubles its life expectancy."

Acton resident Diane Morrows has lost both of her cats in a two-month span in spite of the fact they were micro-chipped and tattooed. Her two Tabbies, Ford and Beamer, went missing sometime between July and August. They were both indoor cats occasionally let outside into a fenced back yard.

Morrows thought someone had found her furry friend when the telephone rang. It was a woman from Georgetown that had found a

cat on her lawn that matched the description. Sadly, it was not hers.

"It really got my hopes up," says Morrows. "She matched the description and everything."

Rod Williams lost his cat, Bella about eight weeks ago. Bella was an outdoor cat that did wander, but always came back for feeding.

"It never failed," explains Williams, "But I fed her one morning, and I haven't seen her since."

According to Williams, at least seven other cats have gone missing on his street alone.

If you have any information on missing cats, or have had strange cats wander onto your property, take them to a nearby shelter or veterinary clinic so they can be taken care of properly and returned to their homes and anxious owners.



SAD SCENE: Missing cat flyers consume most of the bulletin board at the Acton Veterinary Clinic. The missing pets have affected families all around Acton. — *Matthew Reid photo*

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