



Champion COMMUNITY Page

Lucky Kosmo finds his loving family after a six month stay in Oakville

By KAREN SMITH

The Champion

A Laurier Avenue couple had lost hope of ever seeing their beloved cat Kosmo again until an early Christmas miracle came their way. Kosmo, who had been missing for six months, turned up miles away in Oakville and is now back at home.

"My husband slept in the living room for a week with the window open just in case he came home," said Denise Vandervoort, who owned the cat with her spouse John.

The black and white declawed house cat purchased from a pet store at six weeks of age — and dependent on people — beat the odds to survive traffic, extreme weather conditions and other animals, according to the Oakville Humane Society.

"We have 300 to 400 lost cat reports down here," said Paula Flemming of the animal shelter's adoption and lost and found department. "Most of them will never be found."

Two-year-old Kosmo, who normally stays indoors, was skin and bones when an Oakville family found the feline in their backyard near Glen Abbey Golf Course and later took it to the Oakville Humane Society to see if it could be identified.

"I received a call from the Oakville Humane Society with hopeful news," Ms Vandervoort said. "A cat had been brought in from the Glen Abbey area in Oakville for identification."

The cat was matched through a photograph of Kosmo that Ms Vandervoort had taken to the humane society immediately after he went missing.

"I was amazed they still had him on file," she said.

Kosmo had broken through a window screen of the Vandervoort's home overnight in early June and was nowhere to be found when the couple discovered the mishap and began searching the next morning.

The couple learned three days later from neighbours that Kosmo was seen that night chasing raccoons outside the home.

The Vandervoorts placed numerous classified advertisements in The Champion, distributed flyers in search of their pet and even offered a \$200 reward.

While numerous phone calls resulted from the ads, none led to the return of two-year-old Kosmo.

"Nobody wanted the money. It just goes to show you how caring people are," Ms Vandervoort said.

The couple eventually lost hope of ever finding their pet until the Oakville Humane Society contacted them on November 27.

The Vigna family of north Oakville had found Kosmo, starving and frightened, in the backyard of their home in August.

Wendy Vigna noticed the cat sleeping under her apple tree and soon realized it was a stray.

"It was a bag of bones and almost dead," she said.

She reported the finding to the Oakville Humane Society, but mistakenly identified the cat as a female.

Her children — Emily, 16, and Amy, 8 — built an outdoor shelter for the long-haired feline and kept him well fed. By September, the family had gained the cat's trust, were able to bring him inside and soon they had a new family pet.

However, last month Ms Vigna received a call from the humane society inquiring if she still had the cat and asked her to bring it in to see if it had any microchip identification.

She complied and during an examination at the shelter, she discovered that the cat was actually a neutered male.

The finding led to a new search and the feline was identified as Kosmo.

The excited Milton couple picked the cat up and within a few days it was back to his old habits at home, Mr. Vandervoort said.

Ms Vigna said her children were heartbroken to see Kosmo go. They had re-named him Buffy and had grown attached to him.

"This cat had a personality," she said.

Meanwhile, believing Kosmo was gone forever, the Vandervoorts adopted two more cats so they now have four.

"We're childless so these are our kids," Mr. Vandervoort said.

"Our heartfelt thanks go to the people of Milton and the Oakville Humane Society, and especially to Wendy for the return of Kosmo."

The cat probably ended up in Oakville through some other means than on its own volition, Ms Flemming said.

It could have hopped into a vehicle or hid in a car engine without being hurt, she said.

"It's not likely it got there on its own," she said, "but I guess it's possible that it did."

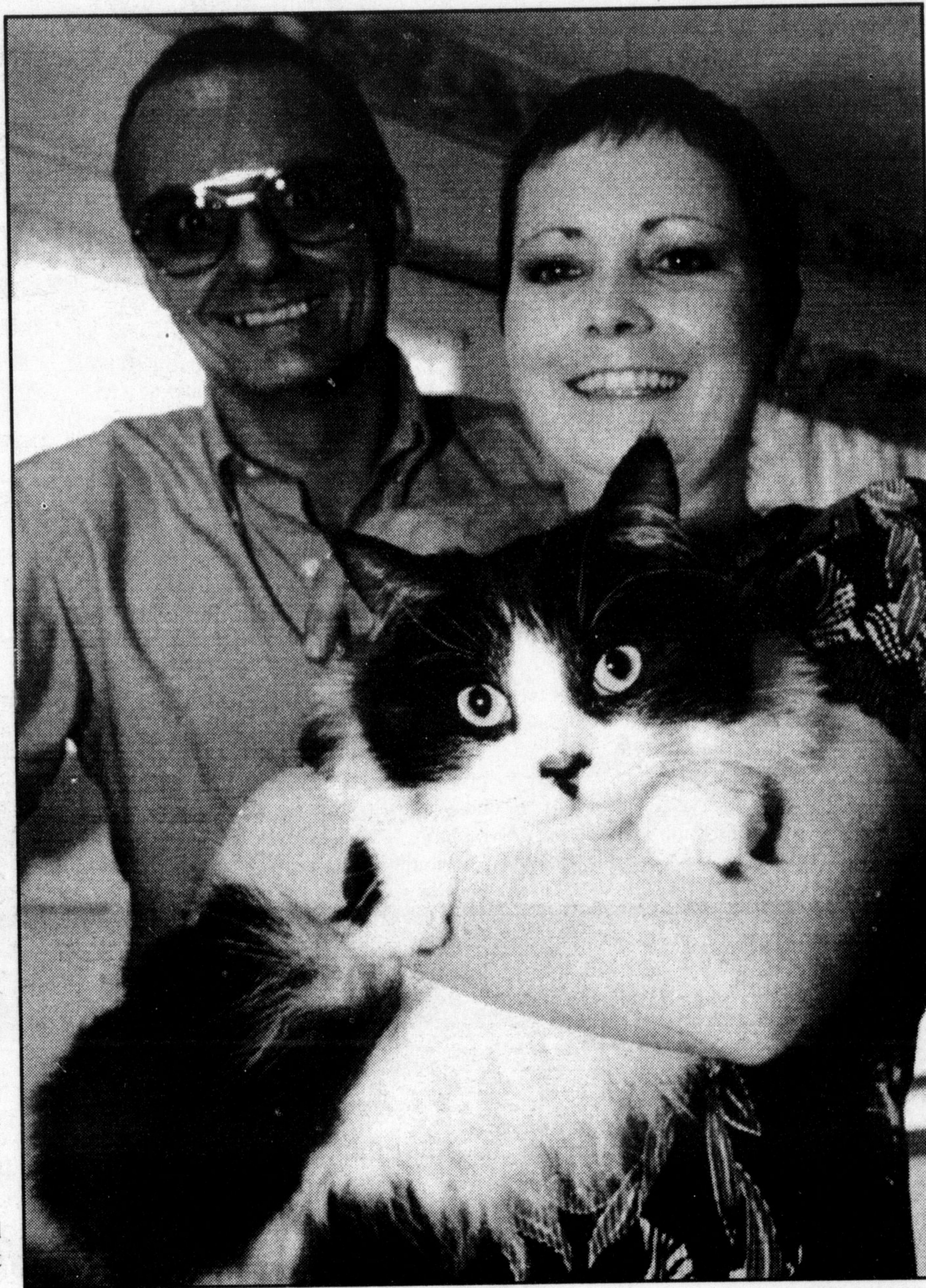


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Kosmo the cat made his way from Milton to Oakville earlier this year. He was recently returned to owners John and Denise Vandervoort six months after getting lost.

Donations help abused kids

Donations to the Children's Aid Foundation of Halton help hundreds of abused, neglected and abandoned youngsters.

To help illustrate the urgent need for donations the Halton Children's Aid Society offers a pair of cases culled from the files of the more than 400 children it helps every year.

The first involves David, who was sexually abused by his stepfather for two years before the Children's Aid Society (CAS) intervened

when he was nine. David's mother was angry that his testimony sent his stepfather to jail.

David is 16 now and living independently under CAS supervision. His stepfather is out of jail and his mother has made it clear she does not want to see her son.

As a result, David will spend the holidays in his sparsely furnished basement apartment, trying to maintain his school work. (He's a

• see HELP on page 17

FLYERS?

We've delivered a ton. Let us deliver your message for as little as

3.5¢/copy



The Canadian Champion

Call
KAREN
at

878-2341