

Letters to the editor

Questions validity of reported criticism

Dear Sir:

I feel compelled to voice my opinion regarding your Aug. 15 article on a rabies outbreak in the Musselman's Lake area. Being directly involved, as the incident in question took place in my neighbor's back yard and it was our cat that chased the skunk, I question the validity of the criticism (as reported) being directed at the Humane Society.

The occurrence started with the skunk being chased by our cat, viciously attacking our neighbor's dog. But the time, from when the skunk was beaten off until the time the police and Humane Society arrived, was no more than an hour. Your article implied there was a four-hour delay.

The German Shepherd in question was attacked the previous night (not necessarily by the same skunk. It could have been a stray dog or cat because nobody, to my knowledge, witnessed the incident).

The criticism of the events should be directed at the Humane Society, but should be centred on the following points:

- 1) The owner of the German Shepherd called the Humane Society on Saturday and did not receive a satisfactory response. In fact, he had to wait until a skunk attacked another dog that night to get his questions answered.
- 2) In retrospect, it was this call that could have avoided the later attack and following disappointment, had it been promptly replied to. The skunk has since proven to be rabid and it has been recommended that all the animals in question be put to sleep.

Is rabies not a serious enough disease to merit immediate attention? The Humane Society must have been aware that a boy in the area had already been attacked by a rabid animal and I would think this would have alerted them to react immediately to any future calls.

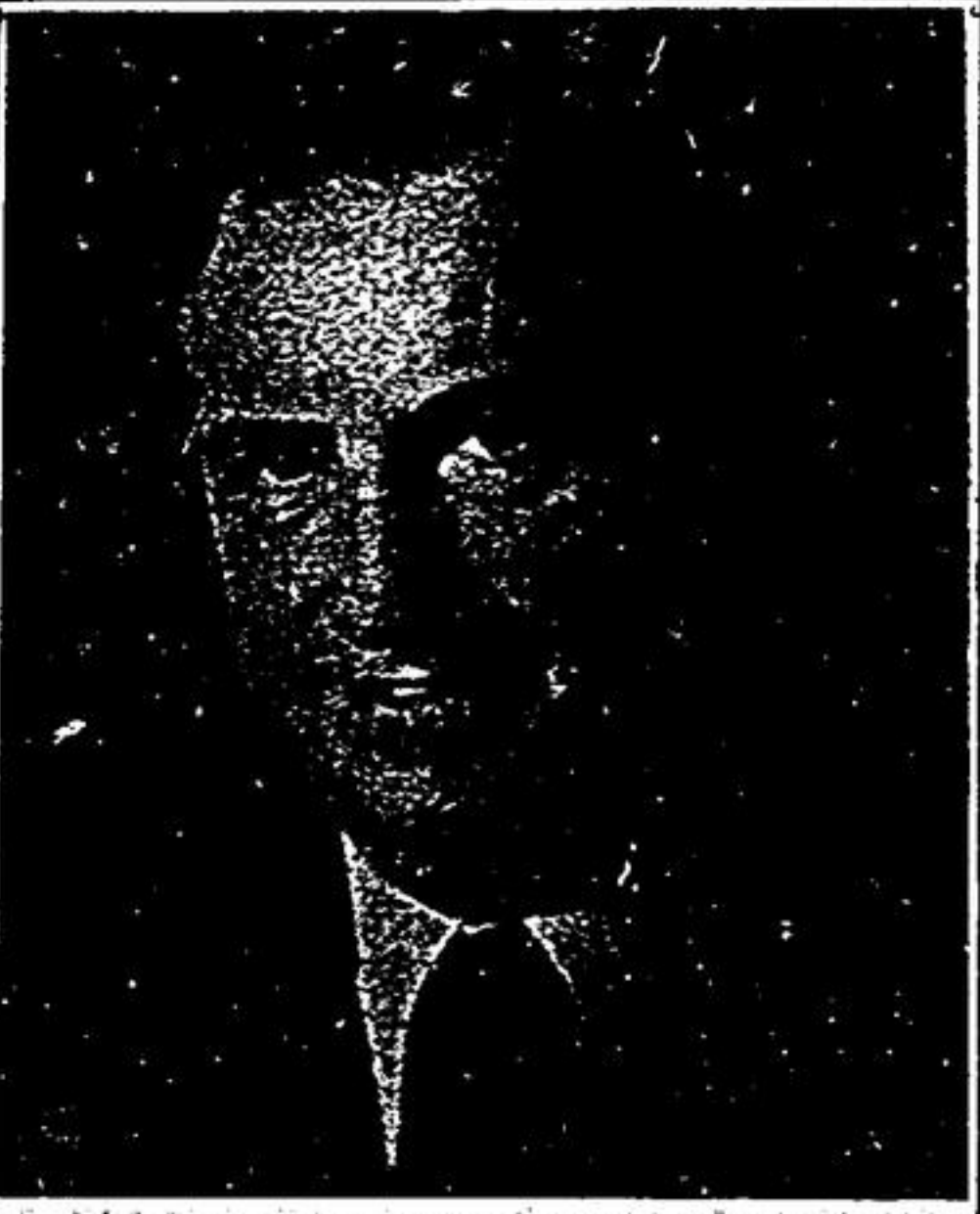
2) My personal interest is obviously with our pet cat that is one year old and has had the necessary shot required to counteract just such an occurrence. As the situation developed, it is not known whether the cat was attacked, or indeed whether it even got closer than 10 feet to the skunk.

It is still recommended that we have the animal put to sleep. What troubles me is not so much the disappointment of losing a pet, as the effectiveness of a rabies vaccination. A large number of pet owners have incurred the same expense and are now to assume that these shots are useless and that we have in fact paid for a protective vaccination that in reality is ineffective?

3) My third and final comment deals with the personal response I have received from calls (totaling six) placed to the Humane Society and health department. Twice I have been told that the supervisor is not available, but that he or she would return my call. I have heard nothing. Each of the other four calls were received by inexperienced individuals who provided pleasant conversation, but rendered no answers.

If we are to criticize someone it should be done accurately, especially in a front page article that every reader inevitably accepts as being the Gospel truth. Rabies is a serious disease. Cannot something be done through your newspaper to ensure that calls of this nature do not, in future, fall on deaf ears.

Editor's Note: The time lapse stated in the story is accurate. The Tribune did not criticize the Humane Society in that story, but quoted the mayor and residents. In the final analysis the reader is agreeing that the service provided by the Humane Society is not adequate.



WILLIAM G. NEWMAN

Apology for confusion hearing to be initiated

I have read a newspaper article from the Tribune under date of July 25, 1974 in which it was reported that you were unclear as to the intention of my Ministry regarding the application by York Sanitation to expand its present landfilling operations in your municipality.

I apologize for any confusion that may have resulted from our telephone conversation earlier. Let me clarify to you the present situation regarding this application.

We are in receipt of an application by the company, forwarded to our Regional offices on June 14, present landfilling area within the original 185-acre site. This is to permit a daily rate of 800 tons to be placed at the site and in view of the magnitude in the increase, a hearing under Section 31 of the Environmental Protection Act is required.

I am advised that the usual initial review has been substantially completed by staff and it is intended to proceed within the next week to instruct the Environmental Hearing Board to initiate the hearing as soon as possible. I can assure you that we will be reviewing the application carefully to ensure that the concerns you have expressed have been properly dealt with.

William G. Newman
Minister of the Environment

Editor's Note: This is a copy of a letter sent by Mr. Newman to Whitechurch-Stouffville Mayor Gordon Ratcliff.

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