

Preston Lake rescuers shrug off praise

By Annegret Lamure

PRESTON LAKE — Residents of Preston Lake consider saving people from drowning a normal part of their lives and hardly worth mentioning, according to Donald Felix, one of the locals there.

"I'll bet half the people living here have pulled somebody out of the lake at one time or another," he said modestly, when The Tribune interviewed him after his third rescue in as many years.

"It was nothing, really," he said, "I was at the beach with the family when we heard these two guys hollering in the middle of the lake. Their aluminum canoe had tipped over and they couldn't swim. No life preservers either. So my brother-in-law, (Gormley resident Bruce Ireland) and I launched the sailboat and went out after them."

Here Mr. Felix paused, as if no more need be said, but with a bit of prodding he provided a few more details.

Donald Felix owns a very fast, very tippy one man sailboat, which they proceeded to launch and

sail to the stricken men. "By the time we got there, a guy from the opposite side of the lake had paddled over in his red canoe and was circling them. He couldn't get any closer because the guys had panicked and would have tipped him.

They were clutching so wildly at their canoe that it was spinning over and over. Then the big guy hanging on the end went down. He must have weighed at least 240-260 pounds, and was fully clothed. I guess he got tired. I went overboard

after him and brought him back up. Then I heard this splash."

Mr. Felix grins engagingly at this point and continues, "I turn around and my sailboat had turned over. The preservers, the oars, hats everything was in the

water with Bruce. Luckily, the man in the red canoe had a ski vest and we put that on the big guy. Then we hung one guy off each side of the canoe and the fellow dragged them to shore. Bruce and I followed close behind in the

righted sailboat to make sure nobody fell off. After they got to shore alright, we went back and picked up the paddles, life preservers and hat. It was impossible to empty the water from the aluminum canoe, so we finally dragged it along behind the sailboat the way it was, full of water."

It must have been a rather tricky business, two big men sailing a tippy one-man cockleshell safely to shore while towing a heavy, totally unmaneuverable canoe the interviewer suggested, but Mr. Felix only shrugged.

"What really got my brother-in-law upset," he said, "was that their lives weren't even worth six bucks to those guys." He explained that Bruce had lost his sunglasses while helping with the rescue, and the men were most reluctant to compensate him for them, although one of their wives finally did.

"They were sitting on the beach and saw the whole thing. It never occurred to them to obtain help. Oh, were you drowning?" one of them said in surprise afterwards, "I thought you were only fooling around out there."

Last year's rescue was somewhat similar. Again it involved two inexperienced non-swimmers out on the lake without lifejackets.

"There were two girls, maybe fourteen, fifteen, out in a rubber dinghy. It had these little plastic oars and I guess they lost one. It was really very windy and they couldn't control the dinghy with one oar, so one of the girls had gone overboard after it. But she couldn't get back to the dinghy because the wind blew it further and further away. When we heard them holler, I

sailed over with a friend and jumped in with a life preserver."

Mr. Felix shrugged. "Then we helped the girl back into the dinghy and away they went."

It was in 1974, just after he had acquired his sailboat, that Donald Felix made his first rescue. "I was just trying out the boat one evening when this guy tipped his canoe. He couldn't swim so I took off my preserver and threw it to him. He hung on and I towed him in."

Mr. Felix couldn't see anything remarkable about his rescues. "Anybody would have done the same," he said, and mentioned a neighbour to prove his point.

"Yeah, I pulled out his guy once," said Ross Gibson, "as a matter of fact my son was with me that day. We were out sailing when we saw an overturned rubber dinghy. The guy was trying to climb back in."

"No, I don't need any help," he said the first time we passed him, but we came back again a few minutes later to check. Lucky we did. He was just about ready to sink, and sure didn't object that time. Oh, he was drunk as a lord. We had passed him earlier on and all you could see sticking out were two feet and a head with a bottle of beer. There's far too much drinking and boating," remarked Mr. Gibson.

Did any of the people rescued thank them, The Tribune wanted to know. Mr. Gibson was just as non-plussed as Mr. Felix had been when that question was raised.

"Oh, there's lots have pulled people out of the lake," he said nonchalantly, and pointed back to Don Felix's house.

"I believe Don there pulled out a couple."



Preston Lake resident Donald Felix recently rescued two Richmond Hill men from drowning. It was the third time in as many years that he saved people from the lake. To



the right is Bruce Ireland, a Gormley resident, who assisted him in the latest rescue.

Holiday accident

Two killed near Ballantrae

BALLANTRAE — The holiday weekend had a grim beginning locally when two men were killed and three more injured on Highway 48 south of Ballantrae.

The accident occurred July 1 about 6:10 p.m. and involved a single vehicle. A Ford pickup, driven by James McKibbin of Toronto, was southbound on High-

way 48. It passed another southbound vehicle, then went out of control.

The truck skidded off the west shoulder of the highway and rolled several times. Four hitchhikers riding in the vehicle were thrown out, and two were killed.

Dead is Edward Peters, 25, and Nelson Young, 23, both of Toronto. The driver and another passenger, Wayne Robinson of Toronto, were reported in satisfactory condition at Scarborough Centenary Hospital. The fifth man, James Bacon, of Brechin, was treated for a broken

collar bone and released. Stouffville Dr. E. Uzans attended. No inquest is planned.

Witnesses reported that traffic from the cottage country was delayed for several hours. The last traces of the accident were not cleared up until midnight.

On July 5, after consultation with the crown attorney's office, investigating officers of the Ontario Provincial Police brought charges against McKibbin. He is to appear in court July 12 on charges of criminal negligence causing death and careless driving.

Residents fear new ammonia disaster

CLAREMONT — Pickering council has decided to expedite any decision made by the Ministry of the Environment regarding the huge ammonia storage tanks located in Claremont.

Council voted Monday night to support the more than 200 worried area residents who had petitioned council to have the tanks removed following the latest incident when an ammonia spill forced evacuation of homes in the hamlet.

This was the latest of four incidents involving ammonia leaks in the past four years, according to Brian Preddy organizer of the petition.

The mishap occurred when a CP Rail train pulled away with its ammonia unloading lines still connected, causing release of clouds of choking hydrous ammonia. Many gardens were destroyed and damage would have been much worse if a rain had not fallen, settling the dangerous fumes.

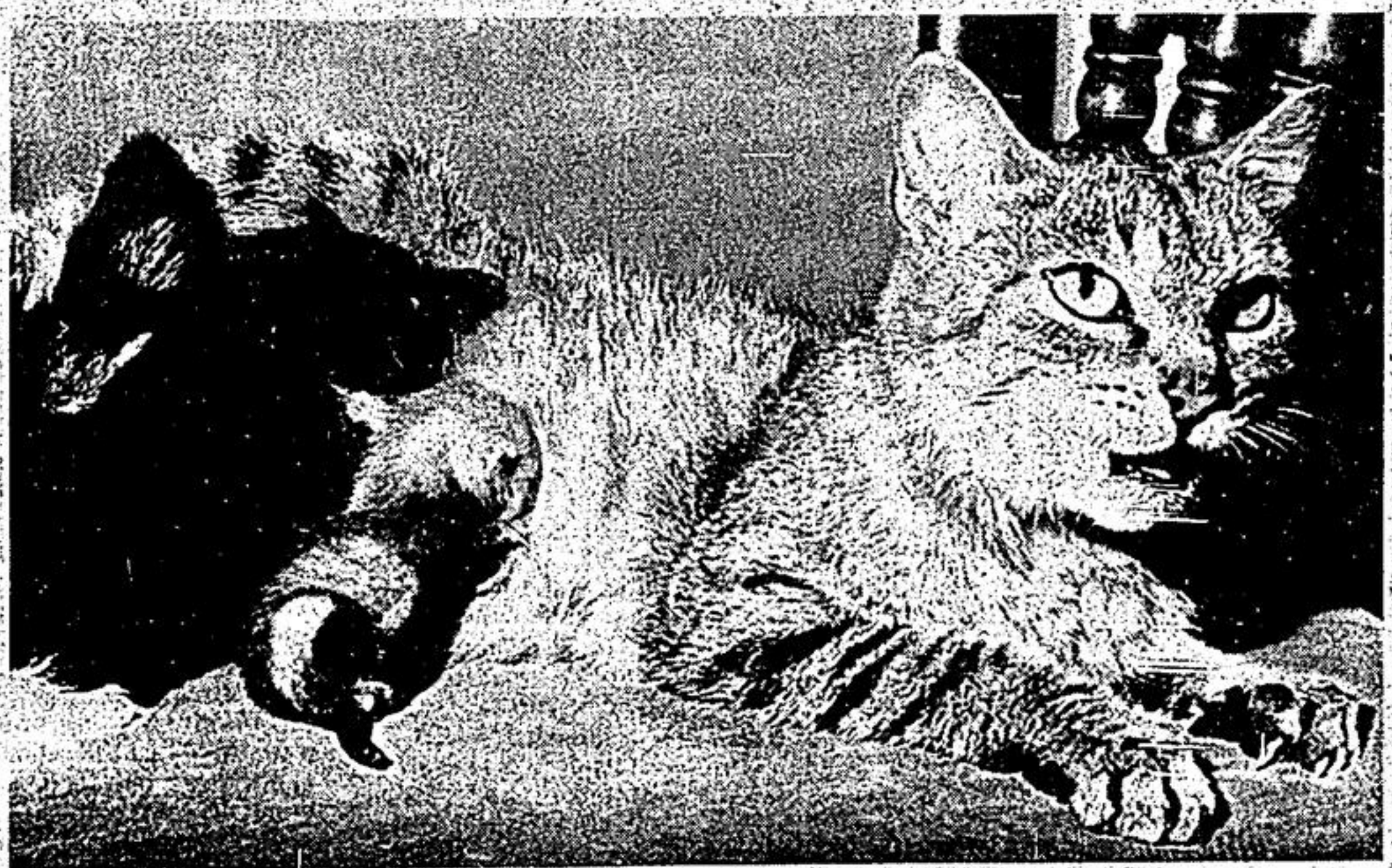
Residents fear even bigger disasters if a train should jump the tracks and strike one of the 15,000 gallon tanks or if a major leakage should occur.

A big leak would cause destruction of crops and endanger human lives.

Pickering council is going to examine its zoning by-laws closely to see if there are grounds for the removal of the storage tanks.

The land is presently zoned agricultural, but council may be able to force removal on the grounds that the tanks are dangerous or obnoxious.

There is quite a bit of housing near the area of the storage containers.



This mother cat looks somewhat less than pleased, to say the least, and who could blame her. She has been saddled with two litters of

kittens as well as a baby ferret. The kitten and the ferret seem more concerned with getting a meal than with each other.



The meal completed, the two turn to some serious fooling around. The kitten appears to

be giving the ferret a friendly embrace.

Story and photos by John Montgomery

The Herrell family cat is a patient and long-suffering animal.

The poor creature has been called upon to nurture its own kittens, a litter of abandoned kittens and a deserted ferret.

Anita and Marie Herrell, daughters of Rosemarie Herrell, 2nd line Uxbridge, brought all this extra work on their cat's head through their habit of collecting pets.

The litter of kittens was actually abandoned by one of the foster-mother's own off-spring. The Herrells discovered the litter stashed in a piece of farm machinery in their barn.

One of the kittens had fallen into some water and the resultant racket tipped off the family.

This extra chore was supplemented again by the arrival of the baby ferret.

The Herrells owned two adult ferrets, which they kept for pets. The female gave birth and then the pair made a successful break for freedom, leaving the young one behind.

The young ferret is now a month old and seems to be thriving well on feline milk although it finds the kittens occasionally play a little rough.



Fun is fun but obviously the ferret has had enough of the kitten's rambunctiousness. The play looks a little rough at times but the ferret emerged unscathed from the experience.



Pictured here are Ross Gibson and his son Bert. They saved a man who had fallen out of his rubber dinghy and was about to drown in Preston Lake.

Lawyer challenges legality of land freeze

PICKERING — A Toronto lawyer is seeking to wipe out the four-year-old land freeze in the area surrounding the North Pickering project and the defunct airport.

David Estrin is acting on behalf of Ronald and Elaine Massey, who own property in the frozen area near the York Durham townline. Two provincial ministries — Housing and the Attorney-General — have been served with notices that a judicial review is being sought.

Estrin termed the application for review "urgent" and has requested that it come

before the Supreme Court of Ontario July 14.

The Masseys purchased their land in 1971 and upgraded it by the construction of a road and culverts, as well as landscaping. When the freeze was suddenly imposed in March, 1972, they were unable to build

and have been forced to rent a house.

Estrin claims that the freeze has meant a drop of \$20,000 in the price for which Mr. & Mrs. Massey could sell their land. If his argument is accepted by the Court, the land freeze might ultimately be voided.



Steve Middleton tees off at Sleepy Hollow golf course in the opening rounds of the Ontario Junior Qualifying tournament. Four local youths became eligible for the Junior Open.

Tight games in league play

STOUFFVILLE — In the pee-wee boys division of the house league, Merv Degeer's Whomsley Real Estate defeated Goodwood by a narrow margin. The final score was 10-8.

Tim Henniger and Wayne Lock belted in home runs. Cliff Lee and Kevin Grosse were the winning pitcher-catcher team.

Merv Degeer's Whomsley Real Estate dumped B & J's Variety 8-4. Cliff Lee hit the only homer of the game. Kevin Grosse counted for 3 runs.

Oddfellow's and Rebekahs played to a 5-5 tie with Merv Degeer's Whomsley Real Estate. Home runs came off the bats of Cliff Lee and Tim Henniger.

Eastview Sales and Service clouted Merv Degeer's Whomsley Real Estate 5-2.

Eric Whomsley Real Estate skinned by Ed Sidsworth Haulage, 14-13. Eddie Harper in left field, Mark Belisle in right, and Steve Hoover on second

base, played an outstanding game. Eric Whomsley Real Estate came from behind to whallop Hutchinson Bulldozing 18-10.

Peewee girls Goodwood swamped Lloyd Britton Auto Sales, 22-12. Maria Schembri belted two home runs and Tammy Verich, Debbie Ronchen and Sherri Coppin each hit one.

Lloyd Britton Auto Sales bounced back to thump the Stouffville IGA 18-8. Joanne Dart hit the only homer of the game.

Stouffville IGA was victorious over the Ladies Auxiliary 16-14. Sandra Hinks and Gloria Mintz both scored home runs. Bernice Armet and Lisa Henderson counted for three runs each.

Service clouted Merv Degeer's Whomsley Real Estate 5-2. Sharon Dykstra and Sandy Hinks were the winning pitcher-catcher combo. Ellen Bingham and Karen Emby managed to tally up four runs each for the Ladies Auxiliary team.