

# Every cat has a story at animal aid shelter

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Staff Reporter

The older occupants live downstairs and the younger residents reside on the upper floor.

On the main floor lives landlady Joan Jessop, founder of Animal Aid and Adoption (AAA) and keeper of the dozens of cats that are tenants at her Thornhill rescue shelter.

AAA is moving into its 16th year, and the emphasis is still on adoption. Never is a cat sentenced to death, Jessop said.

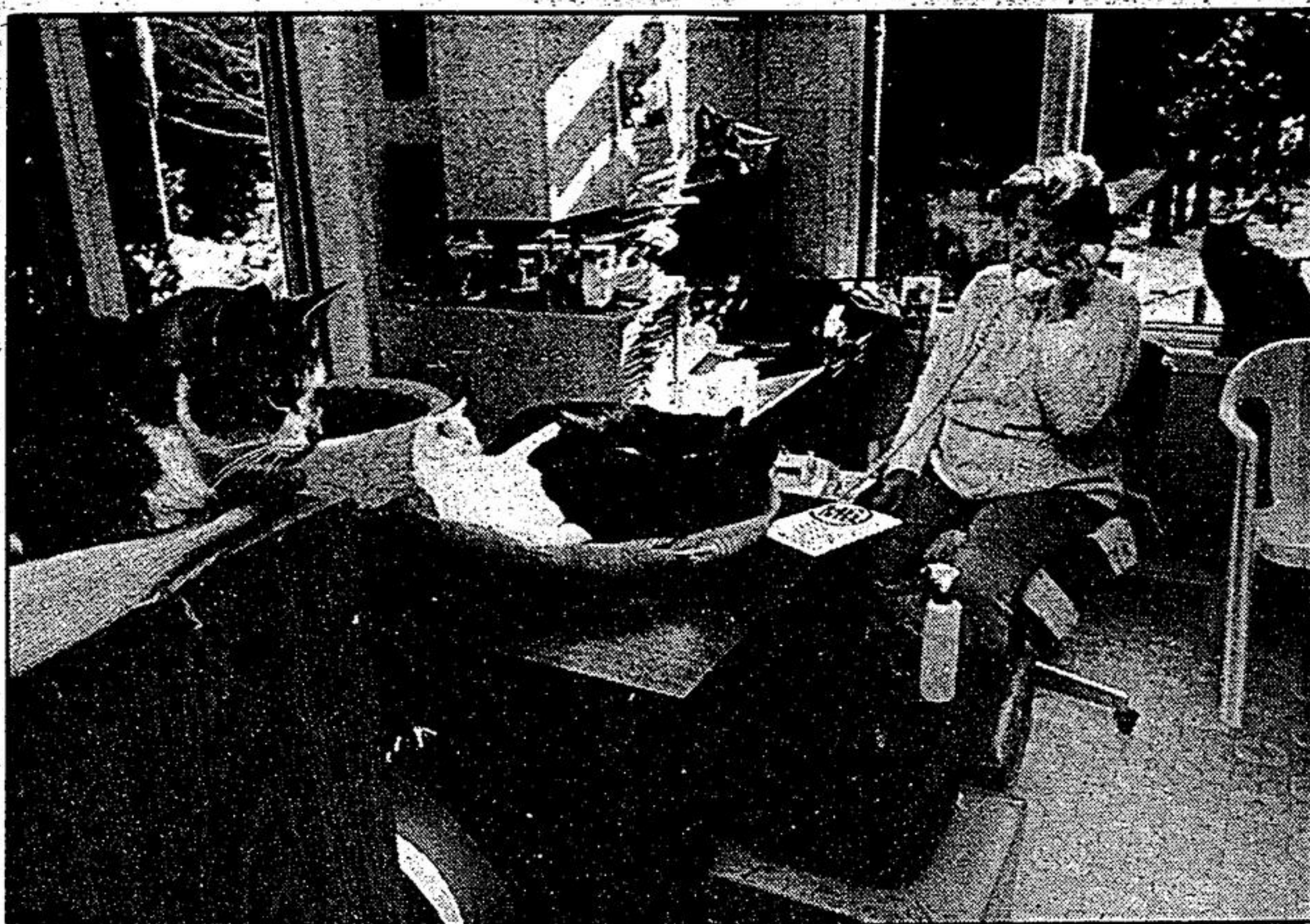
"There are ones that are rescued, tossed out and dropped off," Jessop said sitting in the kitchen of her home among eight or nine of the oldest felines who will probably never leave their current address.

All tenants have a story, and the volunteer care givers are more than willing to tell every one.

Pauline Vignola leads a tour through the maze of rooms, each containing contented cats and kittens, some still people-shy and caged, others preening on a windowsill in the winter sunshine and still others sleeping soundly in boxes and on beds.

There's a pure white cat with ragged ears snoozing in a basket. She was discovered half-frozen in a snowbank. An assertive tabby winds its way around table legs, mooching a treat. He has a sinus condition and part of his nose is missing.

Mrs. Cat lives upstairs. Her former owner was an alcoholic who kicked her



PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Joan Jessop of the Animal Aid and Adoption cat shelter in Thornhill takes a phone call while a number of the cats who live at the home lounge in the winter sun. The shelter takes in abandoned or lost cats and tries to find new homes for them.

around. A black and white kitten, alone in a crib now that his two siblings were adopted, would be blind if not for an operation to remove ulcers from his eyes.

A big gray cat that appeared on the television show Seeing Things sits regally in a doorway. Two wild-eyed ginger-

colored kittens are in the process of being socialized so they too can go to new homes.

Vignola lives in King City and works in Toronto, but makes the visits to AAA a priority.

"I wish I could quit my job and do this full time," she said nuzzling one of the

many felines she grooms and monitors for illness every Saturday.

No cats entering the shelter leave without being neutered or spayed. If a kitten is adopted when too young to be fixed, Jessop follows up with the family and arranges for a visit to the vet.

"We're very fussy about adoptions," she said.

All adopted cats are given a trial period with their new owners and can be returned to the shelter instead of being dumped on the street. Interviews, both over the phone and in person, are conducted to weed out unacceptable cat owners. If parents want to adopt a cat "for the kids," that's not good enough for Jessop. The entire family, mom and dad included, must want the cat wholeheartedly.

Some cats that live in the wild are given the best care possible through the feral cat project where volunteers set up feeding stations and insulated cardboard shelters behind plazas and apartment building where packs of cats are known to live.

The AAA accepts donations that are strictly for this cause.

Volunteers, especially in the Markham/Thornhill area, are always needed to set up feral feeding programs, assist at the shelter or sew and knit crafts to sell.

The shelter is a registered charity that depends on donations. If you would like to donate, volunteer or adopt, call Jessop at 889-6089.

## Markham Hydro boosts rates for 1993

The Markham Hydro Electric Commission has approved an average 6.5 per cent rate increase as part of its 1993 budget which will take effect on Jan. 1, 1993.

The 1993 budget includes an 8.0 per cent increase in the wholesale cost of power from Ontario Hydro. The cost of power represents 83.6 per cent of Markham Hydro's operating budget.

The remaining 16.4 per cent is used to cover the cost of capital works, operation and maintenance of the distribution system and administration. By reducing its combined 1993 operating and capital budget by 7.8 per cent and continued strict financial controls, the utility has been able to absorb 1.5 per cent of this increase.

This is the 11th consecutive year that the commission has been able to absorb a portion of the

Ontario Hydro increase. Over the last three years the utility has absorbed a total of 3.9 per cent of Ontario Hydro's increase.

A typical increase for a residential customer will be \$5.15 per month based on a monthly consumption of 1000kWh.

As in previous years, any consumption used prior to Jan. 1, 1993 will be pro rated using the 1992 rate schedule.

Markham Hydro is aware of its customers' concerns over the increasing costs of electricity. The commission has become very active in providing and supporting energy management information and programs to help our customers save energy, and will continue to do so.

If you have any questions regarding the 1993 rates contact Ed Benvenuto, Consumer Services Manager, at 477-3810.

## Region hires traffic consultants to study coordination of signals

A study by traffic engineering consultants may point the way to smoother, more efficient traffic movement throughout York Region.

In adopting a report of its Transportation and Environmental Services Committee, Regional Council authorized the investigation into how best to coordinate the 225 regional, 100 provincial and 50 local traffic control signals now operating in the region.

Although signals along major roadways are now synchronized in groups, there is no overall co-ordination.

Since the region itself expects to add more than 100 traffic signals in the next 10 years and since the technology exists for total co-ordination, council feels the timing is right for the study.

Delcan Corporation won the six-month study assignment, worth up to \$85,000.

## Police nab robbery suspects

After robbing a Scarborough convenience shop, two suspects were nabbed breaking into a Markham variety store.

Burglars set off the alarm at Markham Convenience Store at 4 a.m. Wednesday. York Regional Police nabbed one suspect still inside the Wooten Way N. variety store as he walked outside. A second man in a car was arrested

as he tried to drive away.

More than 400 cartons of cigarettes valued at \$15,000 were discovered in the back of the getaway car, and police traced them to a Markham Rd. variety store in Scarborough. Nothing was reported missing from the Markham break-in.

Two Metro Toronto men, aged 25 and 26, are charged.



PHOTO/ALAN SHACKLETON

## Minor injuries in McCowan crash

Ambulance attendants help the driver of a Dodge Charger after an accident Tuesday afternoon at McCowan Road and Hwy 7. A Chevrolet Corsica, eastbound on Hwy 7, was turning left onto McCowan when it collided with the

westbound Dodge on an amber light. Injuries in the accident were minor. The driver of the Corsica was charged by the OPP with failing to allow for reasonable opportunity to avoid collision on an amber light.

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