

OPINION

Stouffville
Sun-Tribune

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Editorial

Scratching heads over cat crisis

It is sad to see, after all the years of public education on the importance of spaying or neutering pets, the number of unwanted cats and dogs ending up in animal shelters in York Region.

At the Kennel Inn on Yonge Street in Aurora, it is raining cats and cats. Little furballs with names such as Smokey, Bo, Copper and Dizzy are awaiting adoption, as are many more of their fellow felines. At the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals shelter, some 300 cats were waiting for a home early last month.

"It's at a crisis level," said Kristin Williams, spokesperson for the Ontario SPCA, whose provincial office is steps from the society's York Region shelter on Woodbine Avenue near Vivian Road. "People know about spaying and neutering, but it's not translating."

Game show host Bob Barker used to end the *Price is Right* with the words, "Help control the pet population, have your pets spayed or neutered". But Bob's no longer on the air and maybe not that many of us were really listening.

How could we be if we are seeing this explosion in the number of cats without a home?

What is sad is that these shelters have a finite amount of resources and space, which means that eventually unwanted pets must be euthanized if there is no way to find a home.

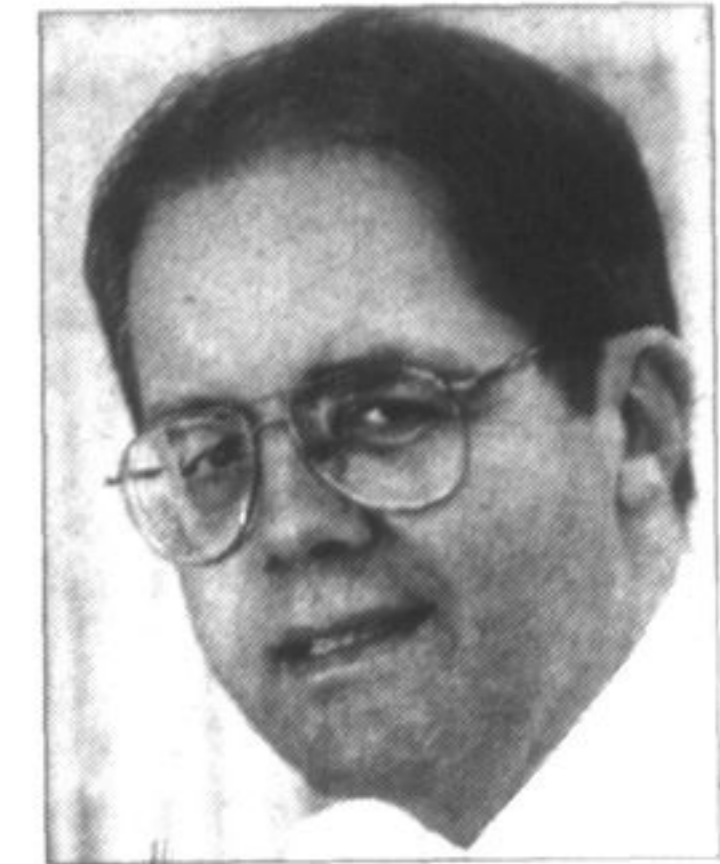
We cannot all adopt a pet, but certainly those of us who are pet owners can adopt a new attitude when it comes to cats. Many of us seem to think cats should be able to roam free. This just leads to unwanted kittens being born in the spring, cats with no identification ending up at shelters and even worse, cats been killed by cars or other animals. Whether through incentives or bylaws, it may be time to force cat owners to spay and neuter their animals, properly microchip and collar them, and keep them close to home — or better yet, in their homes.

If left to their own devices, cats will keep breeding, by the thousands.

As for those wanting to adopt a pet, some people are turned off by the roughly \$125 charge to adopt a cat, or up to \$200 for a dog, by local shelters.

Keep in mind, these pets have been fed and sheltered, spayed or neutered, have been given their first shots and have been dewormed — all things you would have to pay for if you got a kitten from a neighbour whose unfixed cat had given birth.

If you can't adopt, consider a donation or giving time to a shelter to help them keep these pets alive until they find a home.



Off The Top

with *Jim Mason*

Ever play tourist right in your own back yard?

Ever been to the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum? Gone horseback riding in your home town?

Ridden the York-Durham Heritage Railway to Uxbridge?

Even with soaring fuel prices, you and your neighbours will spend thousands this year to see the world.

Go ahead and gawk at the Eiffel Tower or Big Ben. Wander past the ruins of ancient Rome, the Holy Land or Ground Zero. There's nothing wrong with that.

The number of folks able to travel, and even work, far abroad continues to grow.

Heck, as a child of the 1960s, I can recall when it was a big deal for someone to be flying across the continent. Dressed in their Sunday best, they were shown off at the airport by every living relative from a 20-kilometre span.

Now, folks wear ultra casual clothing as they board big jets as if they were getting on a GO bus.

But, in all of this desire to conquer more and more of this planet, we miss many gems in our own little world.

Maybe \$1.30 litres of unleaded will make us think smaller.

We can hit a few buckets of golf balls and grab an ice cream at one of the premier mini golf facilities in the GTA, Timber Creek Golf.

Or embrace your community's heritage at the aforementioned museum in Vidor. Ever been to the Woodbine Avenue hamlet?

More? There's fishing from shore at Burd's Family Fishing.

Bruce's Mill Conservation Area is home to a driving range of its own, plus the Community Safety Village, 11 km of walking trails and more than 50 species of birds.

You can do your own mini vintners tour and visit Willow Springs Winery on Bethesda Road and Applewood Farm and Winery on McCowan Road.

Want more area ideas? Go to york-tourism.com

And get out there.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.

Letters to the Editor

Business groups can follow lead set by downtown furniture store

This comment is long overdue, but I was expecting either the downtown Stouffville Business Improvement Area or the Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce would recognize this improvement.

I am referring to the excellent upgrade Stouffville Fine Furniture at 6327 Main St. did to improve the appearance of the downtown core.

Not only has the storefront been improved immensely, but the entrance is accessible for people with disabilities; a cause I will always advocate.

I think, if the aforementioned business organizations are sincere about revitalizing the downtown core, it is time for them to stop wringing their hands.

Instead of waiting for the town to do something, they should both take a page out of Stouffville Fine Furniture's book and get started.

WILF MORLEY
STOUFFVILLE

It's a dangerous world out there, in and out of fireworks factories

Re: Fireworks in Stouffville safe, regulated, child-friendly, letter to the editor by Mario Vella, July 12.

Mr. Vella should be applauded for striving to make ethical purchases.

HAVE YOUR SAY, WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

► What do you think of these issues or others?
E-mail letters to the editor to jmason@yrmg.com

Children and fireworks is a combination that needs great care. Fireworks are fun, but they are not toys.

As for "automated factories" .. let us not live in a fantasy safety world about people who make and use explosives.

Just Google "fireworks plant explodes".

But, interestingly enough, it might be safer to work in an explosives factory in China than to be a coal miner in Cape Breton.

In China, you have a chance; but Canadian government health studies show the mine will always get you.

Be careful out there; living is dangerous to your health.

RON BOYD
STOUFFVILLE

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