

March 23rd 2006

The Editor
Voices
TODAY

Dear Sir,

I refer to the recent letters and comments in Today newspaper which were precipitated by the recent shocking case of animal cruelty towards a defenceless kitten. Various suggestions have been given by the writers to deter these abusers from continuing such violent acts which ultimately could translate into crimes against their fellow human beings. Stiffer sentencing for animal abusers, along with counselling, doing community service and caning for repeat offenders were some of the suggestions raised. The necessary acknowledgement by the relevant authorities, that animal abuse is a serious crime and should be viewed accordingly, was another issue raised. The SPCA has itself experienced cases whereby the police are not aware that animal cruelty is a crime and only after alerting them to the relevant section under the Animal & Birds Act, do they act.

There can be no denying that a person who goes out of his way to deliberately inflict torturous injury upon a defenceless animal without provocation, and who has apparently displayed a history of such abuse, needs a sufficient deterrent sentence and counselling by professionals to change his ways. Whether or not a 'hard core' animal abuser will change his ways or his mindset however, following these measures, remains to be seen. In relation to this, another opinion in the press had expressed that proper guidance must be given so that children will grow up to have empathy and compassion for all living beings. Herein, SPCA believes, lies the crux of the matter – it cannot be emphasized enough that the young in our society must be taught compassion from an early age, prevention being better than cure.

SPCA's priority through its school programme talks is to inculcate in children a caring and compassionate behavior towards animals. Along with the necessary nurturing from parents and teachers we hope to bring about a society which stands up for those who cannot speak up for themselves. The recent case of kitten abuse whereby residents banded together to catch the culprit, along with the significant number of letters in the media condemning the crime and lamenting the light penalty, gives the SPCA hope that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Deirdre Moss
Executive Officer