

# Ban train whistles Colborne resident urges

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In elaborating, Mrs. Ross commented on a growing body of evidence which confirms that chronic exposure to noise pollution, such as rail traffic noise, poses a variety of health hazards that can potentially affect generations of people.

In March 2007, the Southern Medical Journal listed hearing loss, sleep disruption, social handicaps, reduced productivity, impaired teaching and learning, absenteeism, increased drug use, increased accidents, impaired ability to enjoy one's property and leisure time and increased frequency of antisocial behavior as results of chronic noise exposure.

Mrs. Ross had a binder of research papers which also listed immune suppression, cardiovascular disease, including increased risk of heart attack, stroke and other related complications, cultivation of learned helplessness, increased accidents due to fatigue, and increased aggression as side effects of exposure to excessive noise.

Mrs. Ross expressed her concern environmental noise may also mask many other acoustical signals important for daily life, such as door bells, telephone signals, alarm clocks, fire alarms and other warning signals.

Aside from the health issues, Mrs. Scott is concerned about quality of life.

"Noise pollution from train whistles compromises our reasonable right to enjoy our property," she told council.

"We must live with windows closed to decrease noise (which is against World Health Organization guidelines which state, 'at nighttime outdoors, sound pressure levels should not exceed 45 dB LAeq, so that people may sleep with bedroom windows open').

"The inability to live with open windows increases energy consumption and costs due to increased use of air conditioning; it also decreases our ability to enjoy fresh air, and the natural environment outdoors. (a prime reason we chose a smaller community setting)", stated the unhappy presenter.

Mrs. Ross stated she would not have bought in Colborne because of the noise and would not recommend anyone buy a home in the Colborne Creek subdivision due to the noise issues.

She suggested there are numerous factors working against growth in the community. "New residents need motivation to reside here, especially considering the soaring price of fuel discouraging

commuting from small communities like Colborne, impulsive noise and vibration from local quarry blasting and high property taxes despite very limited availability of local goods and services, leisure, education and career opportunities," she said.

Mrs. Ross spoke briefly to the issue of public safety, noting both railways which run through Colborne have public awareness and safety education programs designed for schools at no cost.

"The impact of crossing and trespasser accidents is obviously devastating for those affected — but the number of people whose health and safety are being affected right now should not be ignored," asserted Mrs. Ross

Before the meeting, Cramahe Township had provided Mrs. Ross with two reports from Public Works Director Barry Thrasher given in 2006.

Both reports recommended maintaining the status quo.

In the first report, presented on Apr. 18, 2006 outlined public safety and liability concerns and the procedures to follow to have the whistles stopped.

After contacting the railway, the township must notify the public of its intentions, complete a joint safety study with the rail company and pass a resolution.

Of significant concern to Mr. Thrasher in 2006 was the increased liability faced by the township. The road authority (in this case, the township) is "frequently found primarily responsible for property damage claims and bodily injury," states the April 2006 report.

Even if a bylaw were to be enacted, train engineers may ignore it at their discretion.

Mr. Thrasher could not support the removal of train whistles. It was his opinion then that the benefit of stopping "nuisance whistling" did not outweigh the costs and increased risks.

Mr. Thrasher's June 2006 report explained it is an "all or nothing" approach to train whistles: a municipality must decide if it wants them all the time or not at all.

# One land owner cancels sludge spreading post protest meet

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pharmaceuticals believed to be contained in municipally-treated Cobourg sludge being spread on Trent Hills land.

There is not enough testing being done and the tests do not check for many of the potentially dangerous chemicals and viruses that could be present in the material being used as a fertilizer on farms, Ms. Deavitt said.

Dennis Zezula of Warkworth agreed, suggesting there is "a plethora of bad stuff" in sludge. He worried the waste is filtering



"It's fantastic news," said Sandra Rosario, who lives adjacent to the property where tanker trucks of municipal sewage sludge for spreading were scheduled to arrive within the next few days. "Now, it's not going to happen." A meeting last Thursday night, July 24, also resulted in general agreement to send a large delegation to visit Cobourg council to tell its members that Trent Hills residents don't want their sludge.

By Bob Owen lowen@xplornet.com

A Campbellford-area landowner's decision not to spread sludge on his land elated a group of Trent Hills residents on Friday morning, July 25. "I spoke with the owner... and congratulated him," Wendy Deavitt of Warkworth said. "I commended him for his good farming practices, environmental consciousness and neighbourly actions."

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