

# Open message to Beardmore's — keep the whistle blowing

Keep the tannery whistle blowing!  
That's the "open message" to Beardmore and Co. management this week, after half a week without the old, familiar sound.

Never before, when the Free Press asked for comments, have we had such prompt and numerous replies. Phone calls coming in and messages given on the streets prompted us to put out lists on Friday at both the plant office and stationery store for people to sign. In just two days (minus Sunday and Thanksgiving) there were nearly 50 names.

The last two blasts on Friday at 5 o'clock lasted a good 30 seconds each. Purpose: for the photographer to get a front page picture for the Free Press.

A few officials and family watched, stiffened by the intense noise of the nearby sound.

Some others, who'd heard that a giant blast was scheduled, gathered outside the tannery property. Although they, too, were "shook" by the racket, they recovered in time to clap and give a mini-cheer.

Phone calls came to Beardmore's after the article appeared in last week's Free Press. Some were directed, right to president Norm Braida's office.

Some of the employees joined the protest, too, with in-plant phone calls. Apparently quite a few were registered between the last two piercing whistle blasts at five minutes to five and five o'clock Friday.

Children for generations have been warned to come in when the first tannery whistle sounds, the protesters say. Then they're home in plenty of time for meals, and across the streets before the heavier traffic comes along.

Although the Beardmore decision was made by the directors partly on the assumption most people have watches nowadays, the children don't. And anyway, how about the people who set their watches by the tannery whistle?

Apparently the cost of letting off steam several times a day is negligible. It amounts to about \$20 worth of steam a year, one of the engineers estimated. The pressure is always in the system. Chief engineer at Beardmore's now is Guy Ross, with the other engineers Jim Smith, Colin Foster, Desmond Clendinning, Neil Miller and John Lewis. Ralph Nellis is engineer's helper.

Protest was surprisingly widespread.

A grandmother phoned to say how her three-year-old grandson depends on the whistle to let him know when his daddy is coming home from the tannery. "And I wanted to let you know how much we depend on it," she said.

An old-timer phoned to say "150 of us pensioners haven't anything to do all day but set our watches by the tannery whistle. We don't want it to stop!"

A travelling salesman, reading the Free Press: "It's these things that make a small town different from a city."

Long-time resident: "It's just like losing a life-long friend."

Several people recalled with nostalgia that their grandfathers sounded the whistle years ago.

A 79-year-old former employee, now confined to his room by illness, added his hopes that protest would bring the whistle back again.

A housewife who goes back to bed after her husband leaves for work admits she depends on the whistle to know when to get up for the second shift—the children off to school.

And there was a student protest—to put Acton right in line with other schools.

It was all sparked by Sharon Ellerby, a grade eight student at the M. Z. Bennett school, who felt strongly about the whistle. She asked permission to take a letter to all classrooms grade four and over, and during this project (which included coming back on her own time to staggered classes) she amassed 245 names.

Their letter read:

"Dear sir:

"I was very shocked when I was reading in the Acton Free Press about the tannery whistle being discontinued after Friday. It has been a great alarm clock for me to wake up in the mornings and to help make me decide which clock has the most accurate time. It has also been a great time reminder for many people in Acton."

"This whistle has been a very old community tradition and without traditions this would be a very dull world. I would be very pleased if you would let the whistle continue on Monday next week. There is a sheet containing the signatures of people who feel the same as I."

"Yours truly,  
"Sharon Ellerby"

Another idea that appealed to students at the schools, was peaceful picketing of Beardmore gates, or even president Norm Braida's home. Their eagerness to join the world's students in some sort of fight for justice was soon dampened, and the would-be picketers didn't get much adult co-operation.

Wednesday morning another petition arrived at the Free Press in the mail, signed with 41 names. It reads:

"We are working women of Acton and mothers of small children, public school pupils and high school students. Through the years the tannery whistle has been as much our "friend" as the kitchen clock. It was a warning for sleepy-heads; a "hurry-up" for slow pokes and a merry "get ready for home" to all at the end of a day of play or toil.

"Some traditions do grow out-dated but a good tradition like Acton's own "tannery whistle" can only improve with age.

"Let's hear it again!"  
In Watson's restaurant, where there's always chat with the coffee, "everybody's complaining about it," says Tom Watson. He says he hasn't heard one person who was disinterested, or who approved of the whistle stopping.

Like true Londoners born under the sound of Bow bells, long-time Actonians defend the whistle that keeps their lives in time. We set our clocks by it, one said. We know we have to get up when the whistle blows, several explained.

On the other hand—one Mill St. merchant commented: "I couldn't care less."

And two men, asked about the change on the street Tuesday night) added:

"Keep the whistles for New Year's."  
"Modern plants don't have whistles."

## The Acton Free Press

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# Students here reject U. of G. paper talk

A 32-page colored supplement to "The Ontario," the University of Guelph's student newspaper, labelled "obscene" by university president W. C. Winegarder, barely disturbed the equanimity at Acton District High School.

The edition—filled with articles containing four-letter words and condemning high schools—was distributed at the Acton school with the full consent of high school authorities.

The University newspaper calls the modern Canadian high school "a brain laundry" and alleges teachers try to wash all potential creativity and individuality from student minds, creating robots who do what they are told.

Student reaction? A stifled yawn, pat on the back for Acton school and comments like "the paper was a well written piece of trash."

Principals at high schools in Preston, Kitchener, Waterloo, Guelph and Galt banned distribution of the supplement at their schools but Vice-principal Joe Bray of the Acton school felt students here could handle the matter themselves. Copies, including a five question questionnaire went to 284 students in senior grades.

The questionnaire, a wrinkle introduced here by Mr. Bray, gave students the opportunity to give their opinions in writing on the controversial newspaper.

"Ninety-five per cent were indifferent and didn't see fit to answer. Five per cent gave their opinion in writing," said Mr. Bray.

Unlike other larger centres where the newspaper was banned and became an instant sensation Acton students seemed to see the matter calmly and with a detached view. "They rejected it," said the

vice-principal, "because they found it irrational."

Among the comments sent in by students were:

"It was a waste of time and money."

"Take the other side of the post and interview students who like high school and cut out the foul language."

"I am proud to say that the situation as presented is not evident in our school."

"A well written piece of trash."

"I would like to hear if any results come of it and like to see the 'garbage' removed and mature outlooks of the two sides shown."

"Using such stupid language might turn these kids on" but it automatically turns me off."

"It is disgusting and should not be printed."

"I am glad to see our teachers are willing to allow us to read this material. It all helps to better our student-teacher relation."

"The supplement was quite good. I think conditions described are quite real."

"News and Views", the Acton school paper contained several articles condemning attitudes in The Ontario but some of the writers felt there were definitely some points open for debate.

The paper's editor, Bob Bonnette, summed up the administration's policy by writing, "The fact our high school allows us to distribute it takes a lot of bite out of it."

Principals of high schools which banned the issue, he goes on to say, defeated their own purpose.

"This makes the distributors and editorial staff of this paper virtual unsung heroes among high school students."

Students in some centres established a rapport with the ideas in the supplement and it has gone into a reprinting because of demands among university students across Ontario for copies.

Students here praised teachers for their courage in distributing copies. "I am proud to belong to a school that holds modern ideas," writes Bob Bonnette.

Jim Lee, in a letter to the school newspaper, said "Acton has the most enlightened attitude towards 'student power'."

Unlike other places where a strict attitude towards student dress or hair is taken, Acton high school has no set rules. Teachers here feel it is up to the students themselves to set the standards and they haven't been proved wrong.

Vice-principal Bray maintains that students really want something outside their academic program. They are vitally interested in community concerns like closing of the C.N.R. Station.

"Students are eager to discuss the issues," Mr. Bray continued.

Mr. Bray felt The Ontario served one useful purpose. It got students discussing the issues.

"They like the feeling of co-operation between adults and themselves," he observed.

"No drinks on the house

Nursing a patient thirst, six customers stood in the Brewers Retail store one afternoon last week. With their slips made out all ready to buy their brew, they stood . . . and waited . . . and waited.

Nobody appeared on the far side of the counter to fill their orders.

Finally one of them walked up the street to the liquor store to ask just what was wrong down at their neighboring merchant's.

What was wrong was that the store was closed! It was Wednesday afternoon, and the store had been locked up at noon as usual.

Apparently constant rattling in a stiff wind had dislodged the lock and the door blew open.

And in came the customers, one by one.

Police were called to investigate this strange case of open house at the government dairy. An inventory was made, and nothing was missing . . . except six slips.

P.S. The lock's been changed.

### Cool it — says arena manager

Warm, sunny weather has delighted most people over the past week but for arena manager Harold Townsley and his staff it has been a constant source of annoyance.

The ice-making machinery at the community centre was turned on last week. All efforts to get a good base of ice on the floor have been futile.

During the evenings the temperature has dipped to 28 degrees but the floor must plummet down to 20 degrees before ice can be made. The warm sunshine through the day raises the temperature again to 32 degrees — destroying any vestige of ice which accumulated through the night.

While most people hope the beautiful October weather will stay, Mr. Townsley and his assistants are praying for a cold, shivery blast.

First practice of the Acton Tanners scheduled for Tuesday night had to be postponed.

### Truck burns at township dump

Firefighters were called to the Esquesing dump on the fourth line Saturday afternoon to douse a fire which destroyed a pick-up truck owned by M. Bentley, R. R. 1, Norval.

The driver backed up to the edge of the dump intending to throw a load of refuse out when the truck caught fire. Acton firefighters responded quickly but the truck was a blackened hulk by the time they arrived.

**Bullet shatters Tyler Ave. window**

An alarmed Tyler Ave. family reported to police Saturday that a bullet had smashed their plate glass bay window in their living room. Investigation revealed the missile that shot into the bay window probably came from a pellet gun, perhaps fired in the bush area behind the new homes in Lakeview subdivision.

Richard Jackson explained to police the bullet must have passed over the heads of children who play outside there.

### Pedestrian killed near here Sunday

Believed to have walked across Highway 7 in front of an approaching car, James Wilfred Price, 62, was killed near his home at R.R. 2, Acton, early Sunday evening.

Well known in this area, Mr. Price lived with his father at their home between the fifth and sixth concessions along Highway 7.

### Stolen car

Saturday morning a '61 white Chev was reported stolen from Main St. S. The local O.P.P. detachment said Tuesday the car had still not been located.

### Hearing to air objections proposed closing of station

Briefs from a committee named by council, another from Halton M. P. Rud Whiting and possibly one from high school students will be presented to W. J. Rupert, District Inspector of the Railway Transportation Commission, at a hearing in the council chambers Thursday afternoon.

Mr. Rupert has been directed to review the application of the C.N.R. to remove the agent and close the Acton station and advise the Commission as to the extent of the loss and inconvenience to the public that

may result from the railway's proposal.

All those who oppose the action of the C.N.R. are urged to attend the hearing and present their views to the Inspector.

Council has opposed the closing of the station and Chamber of Commerce president Paul Nielsen has been busy over the past few months collecting data to present at a hearing.

The C.N.R. proposes to run the freight and express business from a master agency at Guelph, leaving Acton with no facilities for boarding trains.

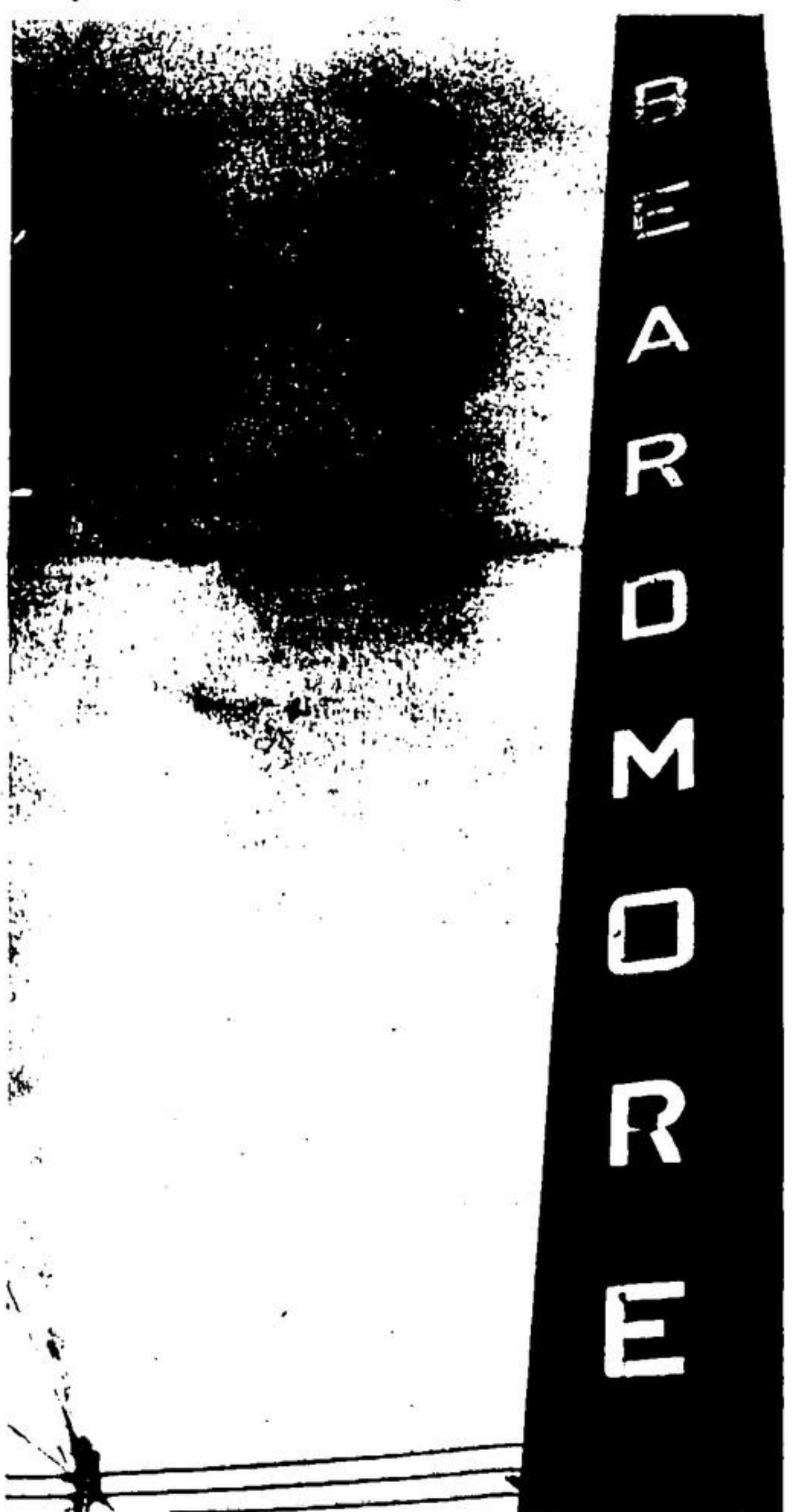
### High school students oppose closing station

A resounding 92 per cent of 405 high school students polled Wednesday morning said the C.N.R. station in Acton should not be closed. Eight per cent of the students who answered the poll said it should be closed.

Will the closing of the station be harmful to the town? Again 92 per cent—368 students—said yes! Eight per cent said no.

Do your parents favor closing the station? Of 377 answers, 153 (42%) said their parents did not favor closing the station. Five, or (.25%) said their parents favored the idea. Fifty-seven per cent or 239 students didn't know how their parents felt.

Comments on the questionnaire said closing the station would make Acton a ghost town, discourage new people and industries from locating here, make the town go backwards as well as making crossings more dangerous because trains would not even have to slow down.



FINAL TOOT!



RALPH NELLIS pulls the final blast of the Beardmore whistle, prompted by Frank Simioni who makes sure the last blow is right on the dot of five o'clock, Friday afternoon.

Beardmore president Norm Braida, left, is an interested observer. The company has been petitioned to resume the century-old tradition by hundreds of Actonians. (Staff Photo)



AUTUMN'S VIVID COLORS and the warm, sunny Thanksgiving weekend attracted thousands to the Forks of the Credit Sunday including The Free Press camera. Turn inside for photo feature.

(Staff Photo)