

PROFILES

with Jennifer Barr



Visitors to Beardmore have been known to turn around at the gates thinking they'd made a mistake and been misdirected to a park instead of one of the most picturesque tanneries in the country.

Gardens, rockeries, trees, a wildlife lake and mini-game park make the Beardmore grounds one of the most beautiful spots in Acton—thanks to gardener of 20 years, Erwin Fidler.

For 40 years before Mr. Fidler was in charge, the grounds were the territory of Bruce Pargeter. A plaque to his memory stands near the front gate citing him as a "worthy member of the men of trees." It was he who planted the huge maples gracing the gardens.

However, the rockeries, fountain, streams, lake and flower beds are the children of Erwin Fidler, designer and creator.

Polish farmer to English gardener

Erwin Fidler came to Canada from England (his homeland is Poland) in 1967. After the Second World War, he had found himself in England and stayed to become a farmer and market gardener for 13 years. After emigrating to Canada it didn't take long before he was hired as Beardmore's gardener.

President Peter Dunham is enthusiastic in his praise of Mr. Fidler's work. He shows an old 'before' aerial photo of the plant. A factory dump graces the spot where now a large lake houses wild-life.

Trees there were aplenty but only grassy slopes where now there are flowers and fountains.

The area surrounding the main office building grows grass profusely because of abundant springs. Mr. Dunham cites the reason the tannery was built on the original site as the abundance of fresh natural water and wood.

Unfortunately, these springs are hazardous to the trees, many of which have died waterlogged, despite tile draining. New ones have been planted but the gardener shakes his head in sorrow as he recalls those that didn't survive.

However, a charming stream banked with rough paving stone leading from a waterfall in the rocky to a fish pond and lighted fountain helps make the most of the water problem.

The fish pond is actually the site of a quicksand of watery earth and Mr. Fidler tells of the difficulty workmen had with construction.

The colorful European rockery is situated on a bank where formerly little would grow. It forms a beautiful background to an unusual view from offices.

"Erwin laid every stone of that rockery by hand" comments the president and it certainly does look well-loved.

Peacocks and ducks

Biggest attraction in the Beardmore gardens are the peacocks, all five of them (no, I'm wrong—there's a new baby bringing the total to six). Peacock population is rather lopsided consisting of four males, and a very tired female—even the chick seems to be male.

The peacocks were introduced about eight years ago on former president Norm Braida's suggestion. They share the fenced lake area with ducks, geese, and pigeons.

It was discovered that the plant dump previously occupying the site of the lake, was actually filling in the reservoir where Actonians obtained water years ago when Acton was still a village. Mr. Dunham is delighted the lake was dug out to return the area to its original look.

An overgrown island reached from shore by a bridge provides shelter for nesting ducks and Canada geese. A windmill, gift of a creative employee, adds charm.

The gardens are not all decorative, however. An immaculate vegetable garden blends with shrubs and asparagus fern providing color, foliage, and good eating. Greenhouses ensure plants have an early protected start in the spring.

Filter beds become sanctuary

Peter Dunham is delighted with the "good environment" the gardens provide for employees and he appreciates the beauty transposed on the mess of the old plant. Not only is the lake a welcome face of a former dump but the wooded bank and flower beds surrounding the main building are built on a pile of gravel left over from the days of coal-fired furnaces.

Birds are attracted by the hundreds, nesting, singing, chattering during board meetings. Mr. Dunham chuckles about a nest of young Blue Jays interrupting meetings.

He's also proud of the bird sanctuaries filter beds south of the plant off Highway 25 are becoming. He has sighted mourning doves, finches, blackbirds and all the usual common birds plus a kingfisher and a pair of blue herons.

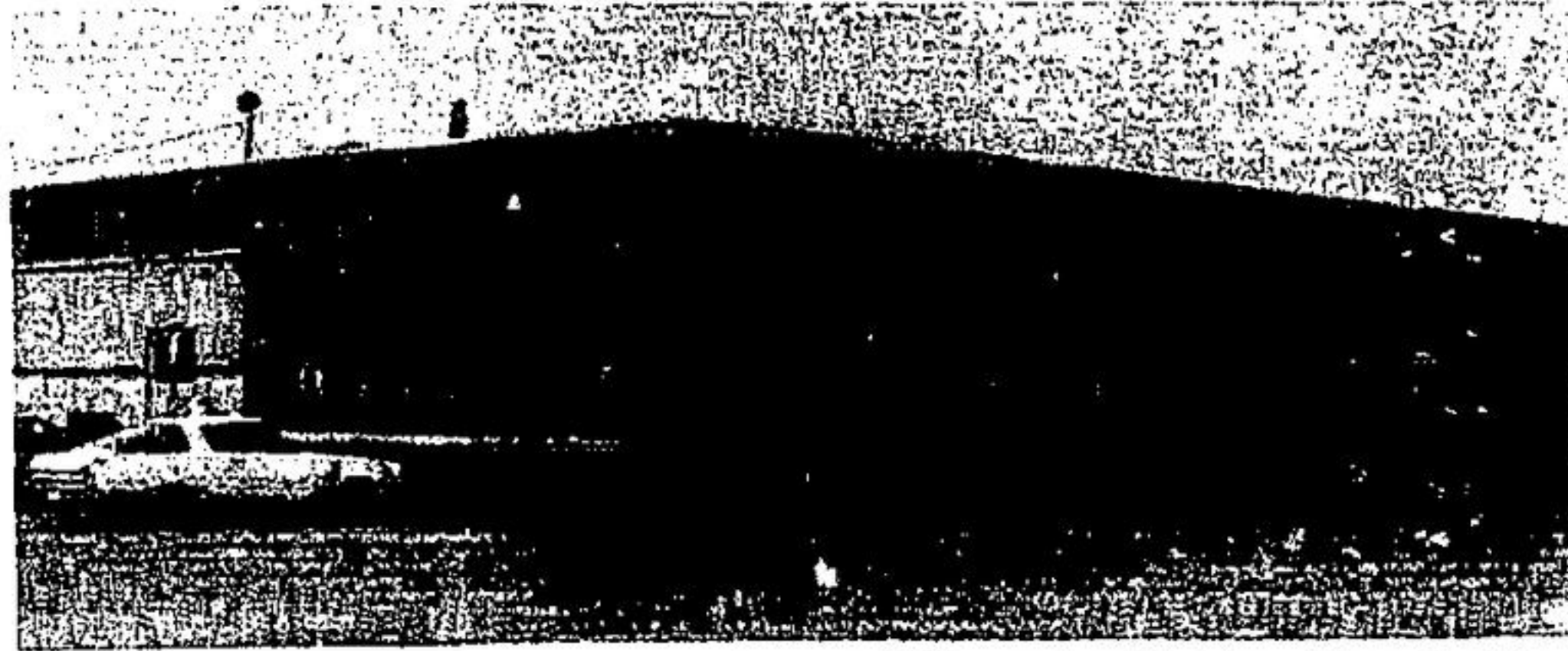
"If all those birds survive, it can't be too bad a situation," he comments referring to frequent public complaint about the smell of the filter beds.

Erwin Fidler, Beardmore gardener, quiet and soft-spoken, is an artist in his own right. A man who just loves seeing beautiful things grow.

Mr. Dunham is justifiably proud of Beardmore gardens saying, "it provides the best dividends for a small investment."



'Marooned' on the island, Erwin Fidler, Beardmore gardener, sets the windmill spinning.



Doors of Disston (Canada) Limited, Acton will be closing September 23, putting 125 people out of work. Lines produced in Acton will be made at Disston's Montreal plant.

Board chairman won't see Campbell in church

Board of Education chairman Bill Herd won't be whistling—"et me to the church on time"—to explain his actions to Milton minister Ken Campbell, Sunday.

He told trustees he won't be on the platform of Milton's Emmanuel Baptist Church, in spite of Campbell's invitation asking Herd to explain why the minister should mind something other than the chairman's business.

"I wouldn't reserve any time on a Sunday night to see that happen," Herd said Thursday at Burlington.

The chairman was telling trustees how he will answer two letters from Campbell, one of which reported sparked Herd to say: "Rev. Campbell should mind his own bloody business."

In the second letter Campbell, whose concerns found much vocal sympathy from Oakville trustee Elsie Hilson, asks why the concerns which prompted the first letter "are NOT my blessed business as a father and a business resident for 21 years" in Halton.

Trustee Hilson told Herd in the meeting that Campbell is right. "It's true what he said. It is his business. It's everybody's business." She also wanted Herd to apologize to Campbell. The Milton minister, who heads Halton Renaissance, stated the

"only honorable course for you (Herd) to take is to resign at once from your position" if the chairman failed to make the statement he is reported to have made in public to Campbell's face.

The minister's first letter concerns reactions to suspensions to four Oakville-Trafalgar High School students because they published 200 copies of a paper depicting the school's teachers in various acts of sexual perversion. The paper was out in late June. It was titled Rag-LaF-Art (Trafalgar spelled backwards).

According to Campbell "the growing anarchy in our public schools" can be blamed on the leaders of the province's teacher federations, not the students or their parents.

Specifically the blame rests with the federations who hired Dr. Laurier LaPierre to articulate "their apparent totalitarian, anti-parent philosophy."

Campbell directs the way to putting Halton back on course. When the school board insists on the "responsible administration of the public school system"... "tens of thousands of parents

alienated by civil servant arrogance, will have their confidence in and enthusiasm for the public school system restored." The letter is four pages in length.

Once focus of Campbell's remedies, though he only identifies the man by title, is Board of Education Director Em Lavender. The director, at board meetings, sits beside chairman Herd. Campbell calls for the director of education to "no longer sit in the place of power at Board meetings,—at the chairman's right hand, brooding over the trustees like a hen over her chicks,—"

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Board's double standard showing - Renaissance

The wrong people are being punished for distributing a pornographic newspaper at Oakville-Trafalgar High School, according to the Renaissance Committee.

Rev. Ken Campbell, founder of the organization said in a recent press release, that the Board of Education was showing a double standard by suspending students for distributing pornographic materials, while forcing them to read similar material in their English classes.

He blamed the situation on the "anti-parent, self-serving civil servants" of the Board for the double standard.

Campbell's statements were prompted by an incident at Oakville-Trafalgar High School where several students collaborated on a publication called "Rag-LaF-Art." It contained several illustrations of school staff performing bodily functions and engaging in various forms of sexual activity.

School principal Nell Turnbull suspended four students for their part in the effort. The suspensions will be served at the beginning of the next school year.

"The students should be reinstated and the administrators who've ridiculed parents offended by the same sort of stuff in the recommended books and sex educational films in Halton schools should be suspended at once," Campbell declared.

Campbell added that he was puzzled by the silence of the Canadian authors who have formed the Freedom of Expression Committee over this "censorship."

"These are the libertarians who have ridiculed the Huron Board of Education for banning a Governor-General award-winning book containing a vividly detailed description of oral sex... which a majority of parents find offensive and/or inappropriate in the public

schools." Campbell blamed the publication not on the students, but on the "leaders of the Ontario teachers federations who endorse the totalitarian anti-parent philosophy allegedly articulated by Dr. Laurier LaPierre to the effect that the school is not the extension of the

home but rather the home is extension of the school."

"It seems that the administration which purports to serve parents only gets upset when it's their staff which is offended by such salacious material."

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