

Says Paula Sosnowski

Katimavik was 'beautiful' experience

By Olga Darcovich
Katimavik. In Inuit it means meeting place. Katimavik is a program which aims to provide a service to Canadian commu-

nities while giving Canadian youth a chance to get to know their country, to learn to live simply, to experiment with alternate technology for conserving resources and to

communicate in both French and English. An adventure and a total life experience, the brochure calls it. But Paula Sosnowski, who recently completed 10 months

with Katimavik, has a single word for it: "Beautiful." Ms. Sosnowski, the 19-year-old daughter of Jack and Evelyn Sosnowski of Milton Heights, has a whole list of benefits she derived from the program, not the least of which are the friendships she made along the way. "I have a friend everywhere in Canada."

"I learned the value of work and what I could do; to be self-sufficient and to motivate myself; to be conscious of my environment and new ways of conserving energy; to be conscious of a good diet and how to cook, including making bread.

"Katimavik gives you the strength to be an individual and not be influenced by peer pressure. It shows you another way.

"It teaches you about yourself and to feel good doing what you want to do without feeling self-conscious about it all the time."

In short, she's bubbling over with enthusiasm about Katimavik, a program of the federal government, and would recommend it to anyone.

Fellow Katimavik alumnus Stephen Kerry, 22, who visited with the Sosnowskis on his way home to Vancouver, says having to live communally with a group of people with different ideas — "not people you've chosen to live with" — deepened his understanding of human relationships. The program also added to his knowledge of technological alternatives, such as the harnessing of solar energy.

Ms. Sosnowski and Mr. Kerry were among the first 100 Canadians to join the program launched last August. Ms. Sosnowski saw an ad for Katimavik in a magazine, liked how it sounded, and applied. Both her parents were in favor of the program.

After going through the selection process, which included interviews, psychological testing and a simulated group experience, she was accepted into the program.

Mr. Kerry, who was getting restless at university, saw Katimavik as an opportunity to learn about himself. The program fit in with a life style he already was developing for himself. Energy conservation and nutrition were important to him.

He also wanted to learn French. During previous travels, including a sojourn in Africa, he grew to appreciate

the need to know the language.

After a three week training period in Alberta, Katimavik participants spread out in groups of 30, including three leaders and a project co-ordinator, to spend three months in each of three different communities. The orientation session at Yamnuska, a Y camp near Calgary, pitched them immediately into fending for themselves. Arriving in the rain, they had to build their own sleeping quarters, starting with the scraping of trees for their tent poles.

The group Ms. Sosnowski and Mr. Kerry were assigned to worked on projects in Saskatchewan, Halifax and the Gatineau.

Katimavik youth were requested by community sponsors to help with local projects, but in many cases it was up to participants to discover what needed to be done. "You use your talent and you make the project," says Ms. Sosnowski.

In Wilcox, about 25 miles from Regina, she and teammates created a play school so country preschoolers could have a place to meet other children. In Halifax, they offered their services to the Children's Aid Society.

While in Wilcox, too, Ms. Sosnowski asked to work on a farm and got a chance to try her hand at combining "I had a fantastic farming experience and I acquired a real respect for farmers," she comments.

But the main reason for being in Wilcox was to help out at Notre Dame College, a school for boys. They worked in the kitchen, assisting with the cooking, and helped students form a mealtime committee to organize meals and increase the efficiency and smoothness of the kitchen operation. They also organized a coffee house for students.

In Halifax they were assigned to help restore the citadel. As well, some of the group worked as relief staff in a group home for girls. This experience was an eye opener for Ms. Sosnowski and one which gave her a great deal of satisfaction. "The problems they (residents of the home) have, I'd never seen. I couldn't believe it."

She spent a lot of her time with the girls in the home. Asked what she believes her contribution has been, she replies: "I feel I've taught them a bit about values, about morals, and about trust. And I taught them to

like themselves more."

At Camp Gatineau, located just north of Ottawa in the province of Quebec, the group lived in a camp for the mentally handicapped and helped with the camp's programs.

Though the pair are ecstatic about their Katimavik experience, they acknowledge the program had its share of problems.

The Halifax project was the most stressful. The expectations of the sponsors didn't always mesh with Katimavik's aims. Mr. Kerry says, explaining that the sponsors had a conventional attitude toward the work whereas Katimavik emphasized volunteerism, interest and freedom to work on their own.

Moreover, half the original crew had dropped out by that time and remaining participants had to rebuild the team with newcomers.

There were periods of discouragement when the choice was to give up or to get in and fight. Ms. Sosnowski says: "Those who dropped out lacked the motivation to stick with the program, she comments. Some didn't anticipate the amount of hard work involved, some didn't know they had to learn another language, and others simply discovered the program was not for them."

Several of those who left had jobs to return to. A number had participated previously in Canada World Youth, a program focusing on fostering understanding of third world nations, and were disappointed Katimavik, with its stress on community work and volunteering, was not the same thing, she explains. Mr. Kerry puts some of the

blame on recruitment and selection procedures. "They wanted to have it for everybody. But only a certain kind of individual can meld into group work. The selection process has to be strengthened."

However, some problems were inevitable in the first year of the program, he comments, particularly since there had been a rush to get Katimavik off the ground in 1977.

At the end of their experience there was a 46-mile canoe trip in the Gatineau. Then Mr. Kerry and Ms. Sosnowski bicycled to Milton from Ottawa. The 400-mile trip took seven days. They stuck to the back roads, as long as they were paved. Fortunately — for they slept outdoors — it rained only one night.

After a visit in Milton, Mr. Kerry planned to bike home to B. C.

Asked what she was going to do next, Ms. Sosnowski replies: "I want to do a lot. I'd like to get involved with solar energy. If there's a project somewhere in Canada, I want to be there."

She'd like to visit the Saskatchewan farmers again, do a bicycle tour of Prince Edward Island, get involved in activities with girls from the group home, and take a French immersion course at Jonquiere, Quebec.

But first she's going to visit Katimavik friends in Sherbrooke and help them build a barn.

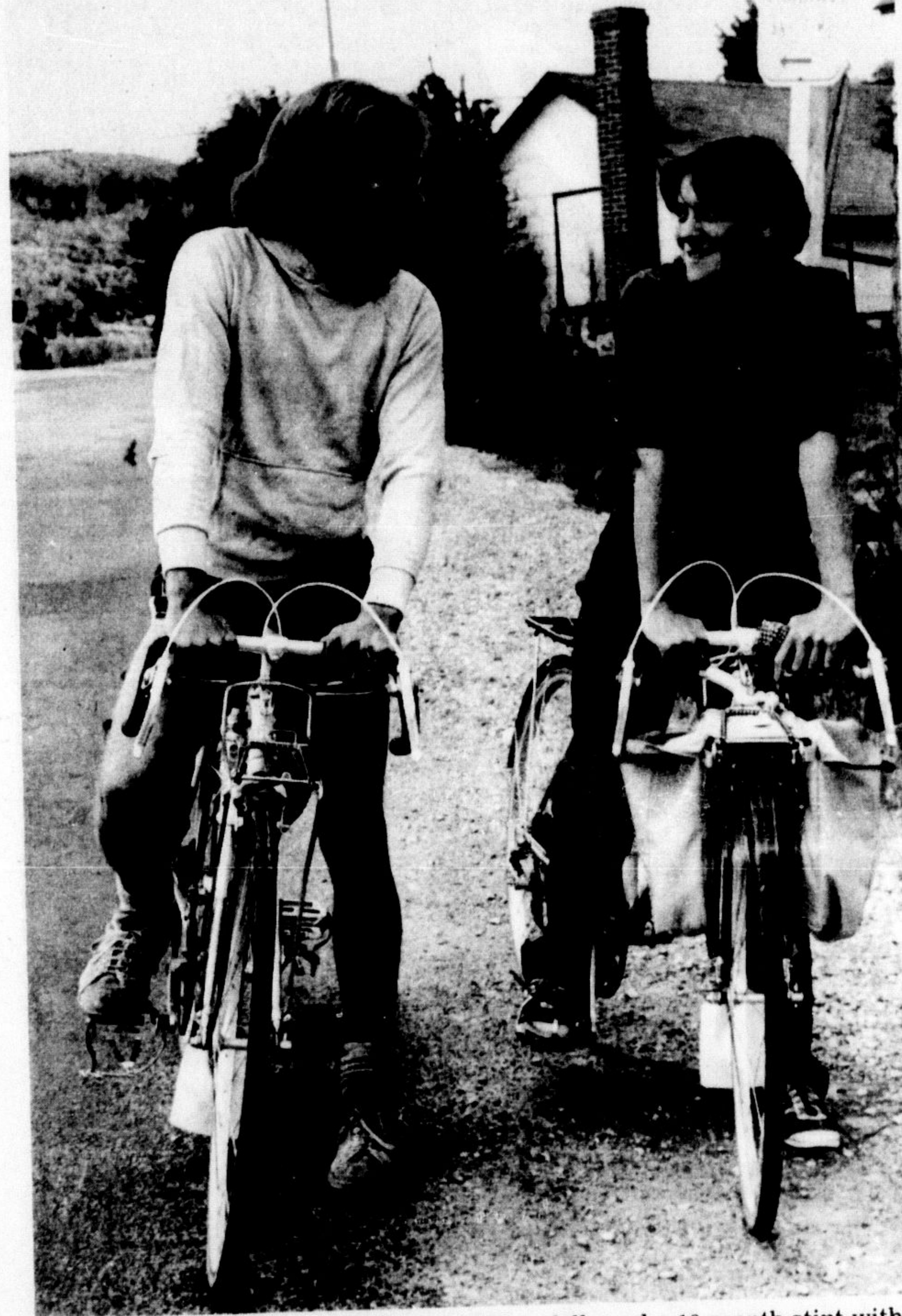
Katimavik grew out of a

proposal by defence minister Barney Danson. It is operated by OPCAN, a corporation of the federal government.

The program is restricted to Canadian young men and women from 17 to 22. Group leaders must be between 23 and 30 years of age and project co-ordinators are chosen from people between

25 to 30. Efforts are made to get representation of all ethnic groups, geographic areas, rural and country residents, and different economic groups in Canada.

Participants in Katimavik get \$1,000 if they complete the program, in addition to "wages" of a dollar a day.



A BICYCLE TRIP from Ottawa to Milton followed a 10-month stint with Katimavik for Stephen Kerry of Vancouver and Paula Sosnowski of Milton Heights. Katimavik is a program which brings together young people from all parts of Canada for a working and learning experience.

Threshing demonstrated

During the month of August, the staff at Spruce Lane Farm in Bronte Creek Provincial Park will be harvesting some of this year's crops. Cereal grains are being cut and bound into sheaves by a

horse drawn binder. These sheaves are then stacked (stooked) together to form stooks which can be seen in the fields of Spruce Lane Farm. The stooks then dry out and are drawn to the barn by horse drawn wagon where

they are put through the threshing machine. This machine separates the grain from the straw and blows the straw into the straw mow to be used for bedding for the animals. The grain is blown into the grainery where it is stored until used for animal feed.

Threshing will be in the afternoons from 1:00 - 3:00. The demonstration will be an ongoing activity, weather permitting, at Spruce Lane Farm barn.

For a daily report on this operation, contact the Visitor Centre at 827-6911 or 335-0023.

\$1,200 damage


A two-car accident on Trafalgar Rd. near Britannia Rd. resulted in \$1,200 damage, but no injuries to either driver.

Richard Hofer, 52, of Six Delerian Cr., in Erin was northbound on Trafalgar Rd. when his car was in a collision with a second vehicle driven by 16-year-old Jennifer Sopinka, of Guelph Line, Campbellville, shortly after noon on Friday, Aug. 4.

Regional Police, the Hofer vehicle had slowed for a vehicle making a left turn into a laneway.

Miss Sopinka was unable to stop in time and collided with the Hofer vehicle. Damage was estimated at \$600 for each of the two cars.

Milton's Kinsmen and Knights of Columbus are again sponsoring the annual campaign for the Arthritis Society this fall.



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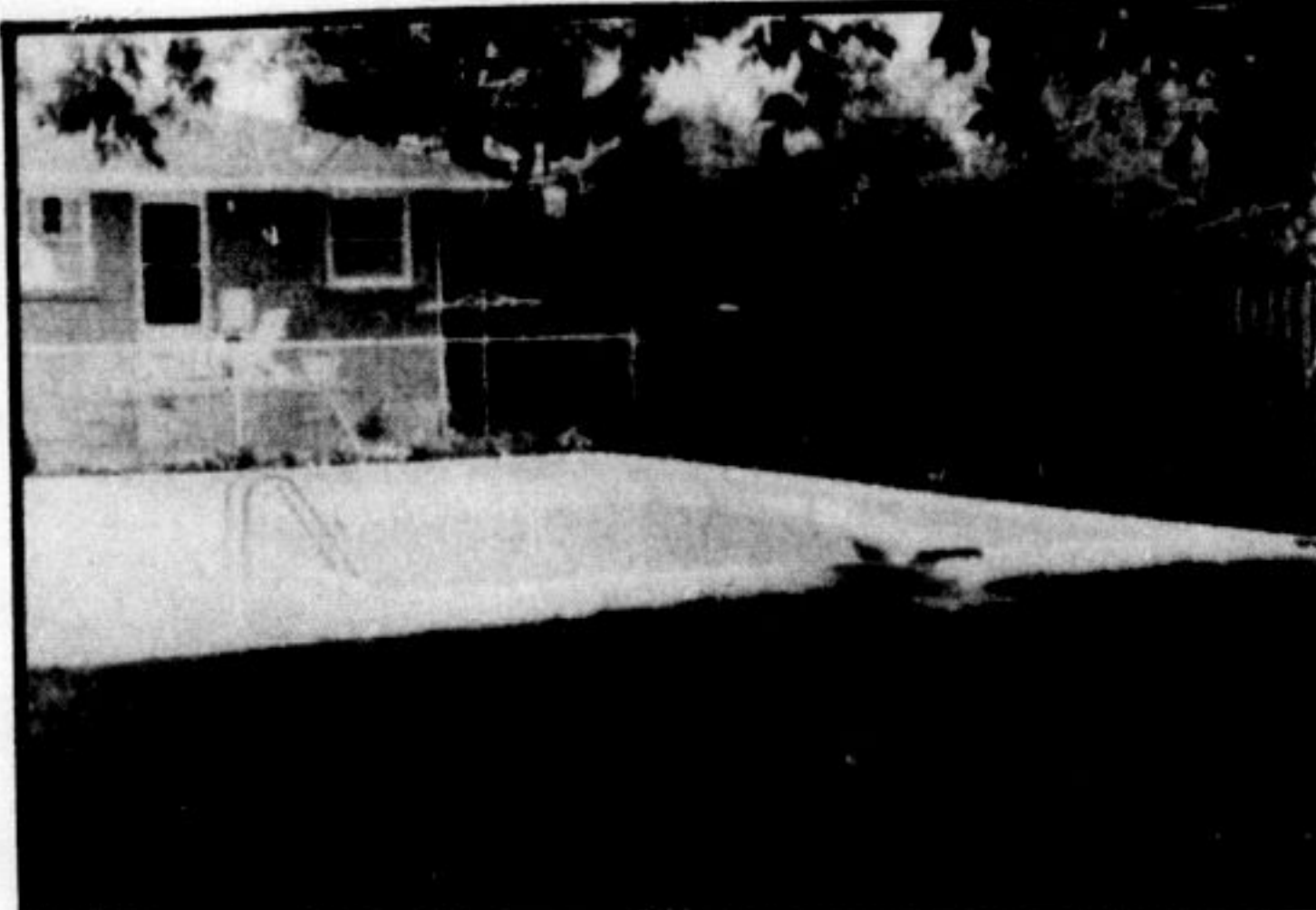
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