

# Intrepid snowmobiler: Sudbury Trail Plan

by Craig Nicholson

Until recently, Sudbury was just that place in the near north where the mines are. As little as five years ago I remember southern snowmobilers commenting "there must be good snow around Sudbury," but no one had ever been there, or even seemed to know if there were any trails

Then Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) Director Don Lumely organized the Sudbury Trail Plan Association (STP) and suddenly snowmobiling became a \$20 million a year local economic boon.

Not that Sudbury hasn't always had active snowmobilers. There were always a handful of clubs around the region. But it wasn't until they united four years ago to form the STP, pooling resources, expertise and trails, that they had a hot product to market.

Now there are over 1,400 km of trails around Sudbury, inter-connected and easily accessible from the STP Ring Trail that circumscribes the town. It's an ideal locale for a

snowmobiling vacation and for other clubs to witness what snowmobiling could become in their own local area.

The STP system is an exciting and interesting mix of wilderness logging roads, rural trails and urban routes. Most are groomed wide with good forward visibility for safe cruising. The trails furthest from town are generally better since they bear less traffic, but even near-town trails were as good as they could be under heavy use. The groomers had even smoothed out the ground in several spots rendered snowless by a recent rally.

One feature of the STP system that amazed us is the size of some of the area lakes. Wanapitae and Chiniguchi seem to go on forever and, due to the terrain restrictions, many STP trails do cross these and other lakes.

All lake crossings were marked with "tree lines" of cut evergreen boughs and I felt very safe riding past hundreds of ice fishing huts with 4X4's parked outside.

The only negative com-

ments were that the direction signs and trail numbers were poor where trails intersected on the lakes. Visitors could easily become disoriented in white-outs or during night riding.

Another concern was the availability of gas. Many local riders carry extra cans with them, which is indicative there can be problems. Our experience was that if those unfamiliar with the trails were unlucky enough to combine certain trails together, they could conceivably run short.

Several of the gas stops marked on the map are only open on week-ends, and so can't be counted on mid-week. On the other hand, several resorts that are not marked gas stops do have gas for their customers and will help out in an emergency.

The solution is to fill up every time gas is available. And before you depart ask about where gas can be found. At worst, you can always buy gas from a local snowmobiler's extra can—or, better yet, carry one yourself.

And we did meet many friendly people on the trails. At no time during our weekday rides did we ever feel abandoned in the wilderness. There were enough other riders out—families, husbands and wives, groomers—who were always prepared to stop and chat, to offer advice and directions, and to lend a hand if needed.

The STP is an ambitious, well-conceived and generally well-executed trail system with excellent support and service facilities and access, making it a model for other regions to follow. As with any other big project, it takes time, money and incredible effort to maintain and develop, but the \$20 million a year payoff to the local economy cannot be ignored.

The problems, which STP members continue to address again this year, have to do with completing the conversion from the individual clubs' old trails and markings to a complete, uniform and consistent STP system.

But these are minor irritants for travelling snowmobilers who want miles of good trails and beautiful scenery.

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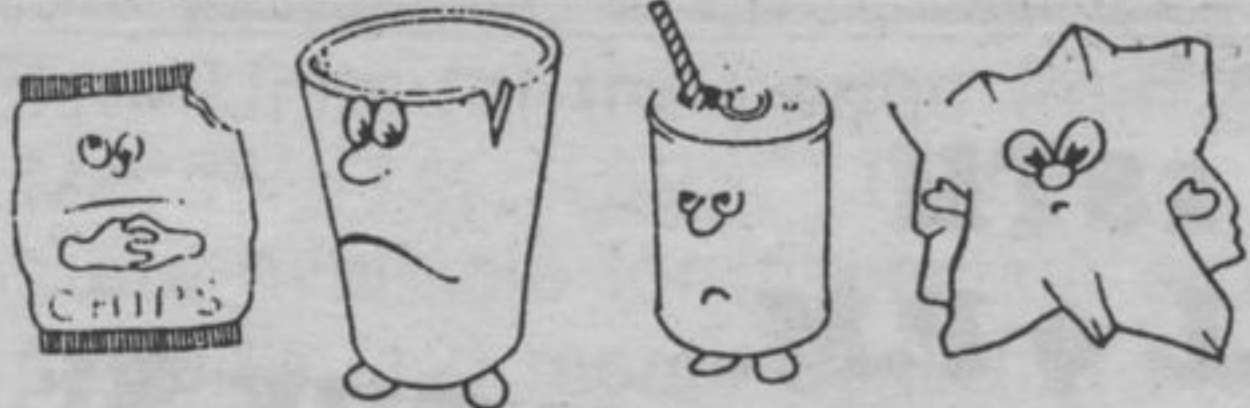
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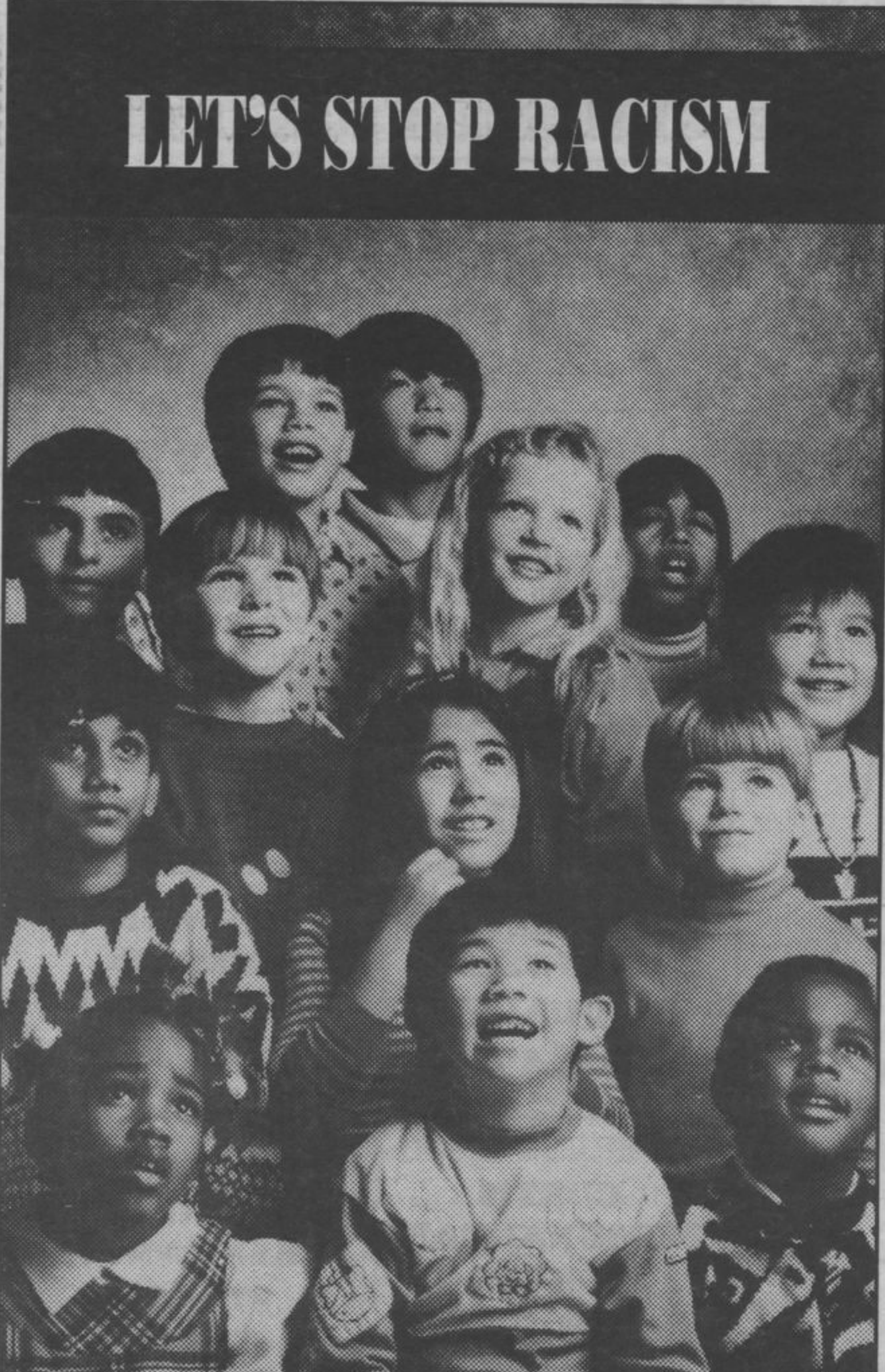
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## LET'S STOP RACISM

**"People may be different on the outside, but they are no different on the inside."**

— Jasmine Buntain, Age 11

Our children are called the future. They come into our world full of innocence and hope until they are taught to distrust and, sometimes, even to hate. Racists are made, not born.

Parents can teach their children to understand the value of compassion, respect and understanding of others. Or, they can sow the seeds of intolerance, bigotry and cruelty – the things that divide a society and keep us apart.

Racism exists in many forms and can be found everywhere in Canada. March 21 is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. And it is Canada's Anti-Racism Day, a time for us all to join the fight against inequality.

Let's work together with our families and friends to break down the barriers that divide us. Let's set an example for our children and help create a world free of prejudice and discrimination.

Let's bring back the hope of a better tomorrow and make it real because ...

If you don't stop **Racism**, who will?

IN MEMORY OF  
**SHIRLEY PAYETTE**

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