

# Intrepid snowmobiler: trail grooming prone to many natural problems

by Craig Nicholson

Probably the most frequent snowmobiling complaint is: "Don't they ever groom this trail?" We've all suffered washboard trails that shake our bones better than Jerry Lee Lewis. Snowmobilers tend to assume that the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs' (OFSC) trail permit buys a warranty of smooth sledding. And while it's true that the number one winter priority of local clubs is trail grooming, that only guarantees their best efforts and best results given numerous mitigating circumstances beyond their control.

Not the least of which is snow. And without plenty of that great white, it's impossible to maintain trail quality. Yet even differences in snow composition have a huge impact on trail grooming. A foot of dry, light powder is full of insulating air and can remain unsubstantial for long periods—long enough to be scattered by sled traffic whether it has been groomed or not. "Packing" snow contains heavy moisture content which freezes and holds much faster, but too much wet snow can foil even the largest grooming machines. So that large snow fall does not necessarily, or immediately, translate into the groom highway of our dreams.

this is absent due to melting, poor snow conditions or inadequate grooming, or has been destroyed by rain or excess traffic or continual abuse of the trail before it can set, then the trail will never be good enough to withstand normal wear and tear. And there will be nothing but bitching all winter long.

Terrain also plays a critical role. Some clubs are fortunate enough to have forest access roads, old hunting trails, or abandoned railway lines. Others have comparatively flat or rolling landscapes with little undergrowth and/or have access to bulldozer equipment in the off-season. These clubs will generally have well-groomed, double width trails easily accessed by the larger grooming machines.

But other clubs are located in hilly, rocky, rugged terrain, criss-crossed by swamp and creek. The resulting trails are tight, narrow, and twisty, with frequent dips and steep inclines. Aside from these natural obstacles and the fact that snow has more difficulty penetrating dense tree coverage (especially evergreens), the trails are also not accessible to the best grooming equipment. So clubs in this kind of terrain always bear the brunt of grooming complaints for factors beyond their control.

Improper sledding techniques aggravate the process of trail deterioration. High speeds throw machines into the corners, digging up the base and spraying it out to the side. Rapid accelerations create mounds called moguls which deepen and lengthen into washboarding—like consecutive speed bumps and Jerry Lee is back again. Constant grooming can temporarily alleviate, but never eliminate these problems.

Even the best trails can be  
**continued on page 8**

## Stanley cup

continued from page 1

growth and development of the amateur hockey in Canada and the U.S., the International hockey scene and the All-Star games, including the stick used by Herbie Lewis in the first ever All-Star game held in 1934.

The NHL Legends on Ice Tour was first held in 1991 and travelled through

**continued on page 9**

# Birchwood recycles tin cans



Leon Theriault, left, Dietary Supervisor at Birchwood Terrace, and Cook Lara Chessman display the cans they have collected for recycling.

The idea to save the cans was the brainstorm of 3rd cook Helen Amos. They have been collecting the cans for the past couple of months and plan to drop them off at the Tourist Information Centre when the Environmental Awareness Group to Encourage Recycling (EAGER) holds its monthly metal can collection day.

# Gardens gearing up as outside gets warmer

Serendipity Gardens Manager Cathy Gerow (right) and staff are gearing up for warmer weather. By mid-April, the restaurant will be open seven days a week.



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A B C D A B C D A  
**IT'S A BOY !!**  
 Denise & Joseph Kenney are pleased to announce the birth of their first child,  
**JORDAN JOSEPH**  
 born on March 21, 1992 weighing 7 lbs.  
 Proud first time grandparents are Paulette & Murray Gordon and Dorothy & Joey Kenney, all of Terrace Bay.  
 We would like to thank Dr. Wilkes, the nurses and the entire staff.