

# DEBWWIN REPORT



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## Sponsor's Note

In 1971, Canada became the first country in the world to adopt an official multiculturalism policy. The policy recognizes the diversity of race, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability as fundamental values of Canadian society.

Our multiculturalism policy is designed to preserve and enhance our multicultural heritage while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada.

Multiculturalism ensures that all Canadians can take pride in their ancestry and have a sense of belonging. Acceptance gives Canadians a feeling of security and self-confidence, making us more open to and accepting of, diverse cultures. The Canadian experience encourages racial and ethnic harmony and cross-cultural understanding.

Canadian Heritage works with Canadians to strengthen their shared sense of identity while respecting the diversity of the people. The Department's Multiculturalism Program is essential to this work.

The mandate of the Multiculturalism Program is "to strengthen Canada by fostering an inclusive society of people of all backgrounds, whose identities are respected and recognized as vital to an evolving Canadian identity."

Public education campaigns now include annual events such as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the anti-racism campaign *Racism: Stop It!*, Black History Month, the Mathieu Da Costa Challenge, Asian Heritage Month and Canadian Multiculturalism Day.



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Patrimoine  
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## Editor's Note

Young People's Press (YPP), of North Bay and Toronto, is coordinating a three-city anti-racism project.

Titled *Debwewin*, the eastern Ojibway word for "truth," or literally "to speak from the heart," the project involved questionnaires and interviews in its first phase in North Bay, Timmins and Sault Ste. Marie.

Unity and Diversity Sault Ste. Marie and Race Awareness Cultural Education (R.A.C.E.) in Timmins are providing local coordination in their respective cities. The Union of Ontario Indians provided cross-cultural training in each city and led a newspaper content assessment component of the phase one project. Students at Algoma University College, Canadore College and Northern College carried out that work.

The *Debwewin* reports, available online at [www.debwewin.ca](http://www.debwewin.ca), are based on in-depth questionnaires completed by 438 people in the three cities and 33 one-on-one recorded interviews.

The reports each had eight recommendations, which are now being implemented in the three cities. The recommendations centred on publicizing the results and further public education, encouraging the education sector to be more proactive in counteracting racism, seeking the support of municipal governments, providing cross-cultural education for the hospitality and service sectors, involving more organizations in anti-racism efforts and starting a speakers' bureau.

This newspaper section, published in *The Nugget* in North Bay, *The Sault Star*, and *Timmins Daily Press*, is a major component of the public education initiative. Most of the stories are based on the questionnaire results and interviews from phase one of the project.

The intent is to educate the dominant population about the reality of being an aboriginal person or visible minority in Northeastern Ontario. Many believe racism does not exist, because they haven't seen it or experienced it.

One article concerns racism among aboriginal people, something not normally discussed. Others provide specific cases of discrimination and racism, and talk about education as the solution to ignorance.

The articles are by Don Curry, unless otherwise noted. Illustrations, except for two, are by Laura Ouellette of YPP's North Bay office. The illustrations accompanying the *Fobs Hudai* and *I'm black and I rock* articles are by Derick Chow of YPP's Toronto office.

YPP is a national news service for youth, 14 to 24, and has been active in anti-racism education for many years. It has offices at 374 Fraser Street, North Bay, and in Toronto. More than 500 daily and community newspapers in Canada and the U.S. have printed YPP stories and several publish them on a weekly basis. YPP maintains a number of web sites, with its main one at [www.ypp.net](http://www.ypp.net)

YPP earned the 2001 Award of Distinction from the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, the 2001 Harmony Movement Award of Distinction and CultureLink's Diverse City Award in 2003.

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YPP is very grateful for the support of the Government of Canada's Multiculturalism Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage for this project.



# Debwewin Project addresses racism in three cities

Debwewin  
three-city anti-  
racism project  
reports were  
released in  
North Bay, Sault  
Ste. Marie and  
Timmins in the  
summer of  
2004 to mixed  
reviews.

By Don Curry

Those affected by racism were pleased with the Debwewin (Ojibwe word for *truth*) reports and the media attention they generated. They felt a public airing of the issues surrounding racism in Northeastern Ontario was overdue. Those in denial about racism questioned sample sizes for the questionnaire, the questions posed and the motivations of the project teams.

Since then a major Ipsos-Reid national poll verified the Debwewin results—racism is a problem across the country and North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie and Timmins are no different. The poll, released March 21 to coincide with the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, said roughly four million Canadians, one in six adults, have been victims of racism. The poll included the dominant population, which means that if visible minorities and aboriginals only were surveyed the situation would be worse.

The poll surveyed 1,001 randomly selected people and is considered accurate to within plus or minus 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. If the poll had eliminated the dominant race from its sample the results would have been much higher, as the Debwewin surveys showed.

So, let's get past the question of whether or not racism is an issue in our three cities. It is.

The Debwewin phase one project information was based on completed in-depth questionnaires from 438 people in the three cities, and 33 one-on-one recorded interviews.

In North Bay 45 per cent of all aboriginals surveyed said they were discriminated against because of their race in the past year. In Sault



Ste. Marie it was 70 per cent and in Timmins 60 per cent. Their stories and comments appear in these pages.

The Debwewin surveys found racism is most prevalent in the retail and education sectors of each city, but there are examples across the spectrum, including housing, transit, police, social and medical services and recreational settings.

The project was funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage and coordinated by Young People's Press (YPP) of North Bay and the Union of Ontario Indians. The Sault Ste. Marie organizing group was Unity and Diversity Sault Ste. Marie. In Timmins a new community group formed, now called R.A.C.E (Race Awareness Cultural Education.)

In North Bay Blue Sky Economic Growth Corporation hosted organizational meetings that included representatives from YPP, the Union of Ontario Indians, City of North Bay, North Bay & District Chamber of Commerce, OPP, North Bay Police Service, International Connections, Near North District School Board, Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board, Conseil Scolaire Catholique Franco-Nord, Conseil Scolaire Public du Nord-Est de l'Ontario, Canadore College, Nipissing University, and private citizens.

This newspaper supplement presents the stories of some of the 438 people who responded to the questionnaires or were among the more than 30 people interviewed.

The reports had eight recommendations, which are now being implemented in phase two of the Debwewin project. The

recommendations centred on publicizing the results and further public education, encouraging the education sector to be more proactive in counteracting racism, seeking the support of municipal governments, providing cross-cultural education for the hospitality and service sectors, involving more organizations in anti-racism efforts and starting a speakers' bureau.

Complete reports are available for downloading on the project web site at [www.debwewin.ca](http://www.debwewin.ca) The Sault Ste. Marie report is 64 pages, Timmins is 65 pages and North Bay 67.

The reports caught the attention of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, which urged the three cities to participate and help lead the Ontario and Canadian Coalitions of Cities Against Racism initiatives. The national project is promoted by UNESCO, which has a similar project running in Europe.

That initiative has a 10-point plan for participating municipalities across Canada, to make them more inclusive and reduce racial incidents. Discussions continue on how the three cities will be involved with this project.

YPP is very grateful for the support of the Government of Canada's Multicultural Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage for this project.

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# North Bay active since 1988

North Bay has been a leader in anti-racism education since 1988.

It began at Canadore College and Nipissing University in 1987 when professor Gary Gould of Nipissing, also dean of student services and college development at Canadore College, was discussing racial discrimination with his social welfare class.

Student Debra Geddes did some research and learned that the Government of Canada, through the Department of Canadian Heritage, was starting a national program to recognize the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The event is held March 21 each year in recognition of the Sharpsville Massacre in South Africa in 1960, when 70 people were killed and more than 100 wounded.

Gould put her in touch with Don Curry, Canadore's director of public affairs at the time, who developed a funding proposal for the Department of Canadian Heritage for the first anti-racism project in the city.

It took place in 1988, when more than 1,000 elementary and secondary school students were bused to the college and university campus to present skits, plays and songs they had prepared with their classmates and teachers on an anti-racism theme.

That was repeated the following year, when educators from Sault Ste. Marie attended the event and left feeling energized to start a similar program in their city.

At its peak the project expanded to Winnipeg and The Pas, Manitoba, Témiscaming, Quebec, Halifax and Dartmouth, Nova Scotia and Sault Ste. Marie. Gould and Curry traveled to those locations to present the education model to school boards and community colleges.

Those activities earned the college a national partnership award through the

Association of Canadian Community Colleges, presented in Winnipeg, and a national anti-racism award from the federal Canadian Heritage ministry, presented in Ottawa.

Susan Church was subsequently hired as a public affairs officer at Canadore, and she began helping to coordinate the event in the city.

The International Day program and all its components has continued to this day, despite Gould, Curry and Church all leaving the college in the early 1990s. They all remain involved as volunteers on the organizing committee, with Curry, Gould and Tara Gillies representing Young People's Press (YPP) and Church representing Blue Sky Economic Growth Corporation. Other organizing committee members are Joanne Bérard of the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board, Laura Kerr of Canadore College, Cynthia Roveda of Conseil scolaire catholique Franco-Nord, Marcel Morin of Conseil scolaire public du nord-est de l'Ontario, Jodie Nychuk of the Near North District School Board and Laurie McLaren of Nipissing University.

The present program includes in-school activities focused on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, an anti-racism poster contest sponsored by Tembec Inc., the Evening of Applause, Students Who Make a Difference, and the Nipissing District Human Rights Hall of Fame.

Cogeco televises the Evening of Applause each year and The Nugget produces a two-page section promoting the event, with photos of all the Students Who Make a Difference.

The group has a broader representation for initiatives outside the education sector.

Members are Dave Linkie, CAO, City of North Bay; Chief Paul Cook, North Bay Police Service; Staff Sgt. Irving Sloss, Ontario Provincial Police; Lindsay Furlong, MP Anthony Rota's office; Jason Corbett, MPP Monique Smith's office; Mumbi Kariuki, International Connections; Bill Elliott, president of North Bay & District Chamber of Commerce; interested citizens Isabel Mosseler, Melodie Contant and Mariela Karpecki. Curry continues to work with Unity & Diversity Sault Ste. Marie and a new group in Timmins, created for the Debwewin project, Race Awareness Cultural Education (R.A.C.E.) Unity and Diversity has a history stretching back to 1994.

YPP, located at 374 Fraser Street, continues its anti-racism leadership with Curry as its CEO. He serves on the board of directors with Church, Bérard, Kerr and Gould. The organization manages a number of web sites, including its Northern Ontario anti-racism project site at [www.debwewin.ca](http://www.debwewin.ca) and its main site at [www.ypp.net](http://www.ypp.net)

YPP helps young people write stories for publication on social issues that are important to them. More than 220 daily and weekly newspapers in Canada and 300 in the U.S. have printed YPP stories or columns and some publish them on a regular basis. The Toronto Star published approximately 500 YPP stories over a five-year period and the Halifax Chronicle-Herald published approximately 350. YPP has distribution agreements with the Toronto Star Syndicate in Canada and Scripps Howard News Service in the U.S.

YPP also publishes special newspaper tabloids on occasion, such as this one.

# Education is the key

**Education is the key to fight racism in Sault Ste. Marie, say two executive members of Unity and Diversity Sault Ste. Marie, who happen to be educators.**



Max Iland, past president and now treasurer, and secretary Susan Garrett say the education system has to play the lead role in making Sault Ste. Marie more accepting of diversity. Their organization was the driving force in Sault Ste. Marie in last year's survey on racism in the community.

"The solution is to educate people, but you don't change that overnight," says Iland. "People need to get to know one another better, to establish that fundamentally we're the same. People want the same things for themselves, for their families. We may come from a different culture, we may look different, and we may have an accent when we speak.

"People are afraid of what they don't know. It makes them insecure and it is insecure people that will be racist. Once we get to know one another we find out that he may have an accent but he's no different than I am."

Iland notes there has been no influx of visible minorities in Sault Ste. Marie, "so the city hasn't revealed yet what it will do. But I think if we had a large influx there would be some negative reaction. The irony is that you would probably see this coming from people who at one time were themselves discriminated against. The persecuted become the persecutor. People feel very good when they are in that position because they are the strongest."

He says Sault Ste. Marie seems to have a problem retaining visible minority professionals and wonders if it's because they feel discriminated against and don't want to stay.

Garrett says she believes the future strength of Sault Ste. Marie will be its diversity and ability to attract people who bring different skills and perspectives, but the city has a way to go. She referred to a man from Ethiopia who came to the city and was looking for accommodation for his family.

She said he checked the newspaper for houses to rent and there was one he was interested in. He phoned the landlord, who invited him to come over right away and view the house. "Within 10 minutes, when he got there and was standing on the doorstep, the house had been rented. Of course he is black and the person meeting him decided he didn't want to rent to a black family."

She said the man was highly educated, a teacher who rose to be a principal, superintendent and then director of education. He was also mayor of his district.

"And he couldn't get a home. I felt the Sault was not taking advantage of what this fellow brings. We lost a wonderful family with lots of skills. The husband and wife were both very well educated."

Garrett says diversity in Sault Ste. Marie

is localized. "Obviously if you go to Garden River or Batchewana you realize we have a large native population, but if you go downtown or to the mall there are very few. They're under-represented in every sphere I can think of. I can't think of an aboriginal teacher in our system, yet there are lots of children. They're very under-represented in any professional area, and even in the retail sector.

"Economically, and that's all anyone wants to hear about nowadays, we have a huge population that's under-developed, who have something to offer Sault Ste. Marie and they haven't had a chance to do that. The time is right for us to collectively assess what is going on in the world and the native tradition has some valuable ways of being that we could tap in to."

While education is the route to follow to enact change, Garrett says it is also part of the problem. Her view was confirmed by the Debwewin survey that showed the retail sector and education system as the most problematic when it came to racial incidents.

"Racism is systemic," she says. "The institutions breed separation and racism, but once people get to know each other, once barriers are broken and it's not us versus them, it disappears."

She said she does not believe that racism has subsided in Sault Ste. Marie since she arrived some 11 years ago. She feels it's because of the economic situation. The Sault is losing people and jobs "and people are in survival mode."

On a positive note, she says things are beginning to happen. With Unity and Diversity spearheading the Debwewin survey last year and now following up on the project recommendations, the community is recognizing the problem. She says Unity and Diversity is one of a number of groups coming together to address the issue.

"I see a real hope. We have a rich diversity in our group.

"Having taught young children I think that's the place to get in. I don't want to overburden teachers who are already overburdened, saying, 'here's another curriculum,' but somehow to work with children would be one of my goals."

She said the significant contributions of First Nations' people in developing North American culture should be taught in the schools. For example, she referred to the writers of the U.S. Constitution using the Iroquois Confederacy as a model, native people helping early European settlers to survive the winters, and the contribution of native people in fighting for Canada in the two world wars and in Korea. She said the curriculum should include present day struggles to recognize treaty rights and the fight for such things as land claims, education and housing rights.

## Race Awareness Cultural Education (R.A.C.E.) Timmins committee

Some of the members of the Race Awareness Cultural Education (R.A.C.E.) committee in Timmins are seated from left: Kirk Fournier, Timmins Native Friendship Centre; Madeline Chokomolin, Timmins Debwewin project coordinator; Celine Sutherland, Ojibwa Cree and Cultural Centre; and Kathy Dionne, Timmins and Area Women's Crisis Centre. Standing from left are: Tara Lee Laroche, Timmins Police Service; Lyndsay Mullins-Keone, Mennonite Central Committee; Joanne Lacourcierre, Timmins and Area Women's Crisis Centre; Mary Boyden-Lachance, Northern College; Georgie Sabourin, Timmins and Area Women's Crisis Centre; Linda Job, District School Board Northeast; and Archbishop Caleb Lawrence, Anglican Diocese of Moosonee. Missing from photo are Yves Malette, Timmins City Councillor; Heather Bozzer, Golden Manor; Marjory Boyd, Timmins Multicultural Society; Anita Damini, Downtown Timmins Business Improvement Area; Keitha Robson, Timmins Chamber of Commerce.

# Life as a journey from racist background

Caleb Lawrence sees his life as a journey from a racist background.

The Archbishop of Moosonee, Anglican Church of Canada, is a member of Race Awareness Cultural Education (R.A.C.E.) in Timmins

He volunteered to join the committee when he saw an article about the Debwewin project in the newspaper. He came from a part of Canada, "though I didn't realize it at the time, that was incredibly racist. Any people other than our own people, our own community, had to be denigrated—by colour, by race, by language, by way of life. I grew up through that and I guess my whole life has been an education out of that racist background."

Archbishop Lawrence sees racism as an education opportunity. He says you don't have to condemn people, but say "Wait a minute. Are you really understanding the situation? This is a human being who is in a different life situation, whose values may be different, whose approach may be different. Are you being fair?"

When that approach doesn't work he calls the person on inappropriate comments or behaviour, telling the person that what he is doing is unacceptable and cannot be allowed to continue.

A Timmins area resident since 1979, he had 15 years' experience with Cree and Inuit people on the east coast of Hudson's Bay before that.

"Before high schools were built in northern communities we would get an influx of First Nations' people in September, coming to school, and some came from a community where we have a strong Anglican church. Some of them I may have baptized, or confirmed. They came to church here in September, in October and then dropped out. I

don't think it's overt, people saying they don't want them here, but they don't feel welcome."

He says there have been discussions about it at some of the churches but they have not had a great deal of success in overcoming the problem.

A member of a former aboriginal committee at a public school, he says the committee's purpose was to help affirm a healthy self-image in a school where aboriginal students are a minority. He said a second objective was to foster inter-racial understanding.

He said discrimination at the school takes the form of bullying and teasing "and it's not unknown amongst staff. One staff member in a school can do a lot of damage."

He said the schools had sponsored some excellent drama presentations, with the De-ba-jeh-mu-jig Theatre Group from Manitoulin Island standing out.

He has encountered racial incidents in Timmins. He received a call one night from a First Nation woman who said she was having problems getting a hotel room. She said she had the money, but they didn't want to give her the room "because I'm an Indian."

He made a phone call and she got her room.

Archbishop Lawrence related the story of a hotel in Timmins that posted a notice "that was defined as being quite racial." He heard of another hotel that had an under-the-table policy whereby native people were assigned the worst rooms.

"It's reality," he says. "Although sometimes it's hard to spot because it's rarely overt."

He says things have changed in the 26 years he has lived in the area. "I'd say, yes, things are incrementally changing, but not always upwards. Sometimes it plateaus and sometimes it slips back. I think it slips back sometimes reflecting some other factors, the economic situation, for example. If jobs are on

the line there may be resentment. People resent affirmative action more if there are not enough positions to go around."

He sees the school aboriginal committee and some of the work the church is doing as steps toward improvement. "It takes people awhile sometimes to understand that the attitudes they hold are not only prejudicial, they're unworthy of the values that we hold as a church."

Archbishop Lawrence says they try to have church events that include First Nation and non-First Nation people "and we go out of our way to be inclusive."

"I think the schools generally are doing a pretty good job. I appreciate other things that are going on that help to break down barriers. The Sisters in Spirit Campaign for example, Take Back The Night, the memorials of the Montreal massacre. Those kinds of things increase people's awareness that there are people in the community who are vulnerable and voiceless and they need to feel secure."

He says the results of the Debwewin survey have to be shared in a very forward way and people shouldn't be afraid of what the results show. "See it as something that is a critique of this community and measure it against what you want your community to be."

"Don't beat ourselves up over it. But let's say 'what are some things that we need to make official city policy? What are some things we need to work at? What are some things we'd like to see change systemically between now and 2007 and 2008? What do we need to address and who do we need to help us do that? What input do we need? What resources do we need?"

"It won't be just a change in this city—it will be a transforming thing. I think it will be a better community because of it and by no means will we lose the essence of what we are as a very proud northern community. I think we will be richer because of it."



# Racial Comments upsetting

**Chuck is comfortable with who he is but says racial comments are upsetting. A member of Moose Cree First Nation, he is 46 and lives in Timmins.**

He attended high school in North Bay and encountered culture shock after coming from a small town on James Bay. After completing Grade 9 his parents moved to Sudbury, so off he went, later moving to Timmins in 1995. He now has four children, ages seven to 20.

When he was younger he said racism was more overt than it is now. He relates a story of hitchhiking to Toronto and having police stop him, asking 'Where are you off to Pocahontas, or Cochese or something.' 'I didn't like that. Why would they say that? I wasn't bothering them.'

He says he still encounters name-calling, but most racism is more subtle. The guys yelling at him from their cars aren't so subtle though.

He says it happens once a week or every other week. He'll be walking on a sidewalk with his girlfriend and "people driving by or stopped at a light would bang the side of their car and say something. I get that a lot. I look, it's kids, it's middle-aged people. Never older people.

"It doesn't surprise me because I hear it so often. I feel upset. Sometimes I just ignore it and let it pass. It bothers my girlfriend a lot more than it bothers me. She gets really upset and she'll say something racist right back. I tell her not to do that because it

doesn't help to react. You're being just as bad as they are when you do that. Just ignore them."

He hopes that by ignoring it the ones yelling racist comments "will feel stupid and ask themselves who are the more mature people here?"

He says his boys are more assimilated than he is. When he is with them taking a walk they have strong personalities and are happy with who they are. But when they're with a larger group they are quiet. "They know that they're a little bit different and they're not a part of the group. They always seem to isolate themselves and back off when the white kids are playing ball or something. It's pretty common because I did that too when I was growing up."

He says Timmins has a large native population, (6.7 per cent of the population, or 2,880 people in the 2001 census) so retail establishments know that natives will walk through their doors. He says restaurants aren't bad, but taverns can be a problem.

"I went into one and a guy said 'There was a native guy here who looked just like you and he was pretty drunk. I'll give you one beer and after that you have to leave.' I asked him what he was talking about because I hadn't been in that tavern before. He said, 'no, he looked like you. One

beer and out or I'll call the cops.' I said 'forget the one beer. I'll go somewhere else.'"

He says he sometimes encounters problems when using a status card. "I've been told I shouldn't use it, that I should be Canadian. My first reaction is surprise, then I stutter a bit, then I clear my throat and tell them about history, about the treaties and why we do this. If that doesn't work I tell the manager."

Chuck says his children have encountered problems in school, receiving detentions for speaking Cree. "They were told Cree wasn't allowed in school. That happened twice. They phoned my girlfriend and told her it's French and English only in Canada. They said they were worried about the security of the other kids. If people are speaking Cree they might be planning something."

Chuck went to the school and explained that native languages are dying and he wants his kids to be proud to speak Cree. After some discussion he was told they may bring Cree and Ojibway language instructors into the classrooms.

He says he gets stopped a lot by police. "I'm poor and I walk a lot and the police stop me sometimes when I'm walking. They ask to see my ID and stuff. They've done that all my life. A lot of native people tell me they do

that to them too. When I was younger they used to make me empty my pockets and lean over the car. Now they just talk to me and ask me where I'm going and where I live. They radio it in to find out if I'm wanted. I ask white people and they say it never happens to them. I do a lot of walking just to stay in shape but I don't know why the police have to follow me around and look at me."

Despite his difficulties Chuck likes living in Timmins and in some ways he says it is getting better. He says native people are getting more educated, becoming more outspoken and their English is better. He sees culture being taught at the Ojibway-Cree Cultural Centre "and even the mayor of Timmins coming in to check it out."

He says he is pleased when he sees people showing an interest in native culture. He says the Native Friendship Centre, the annual multiculturalism day and aboriginal day are helping to change attitudes.

"I like my community. I like Timmins. I'd like to see people get along better. We've come a long ways but we still have a long way to go."



# Not welcome in white neighbourhood



## Unity and Diversity Sault Ste. Marie

Unity and Diversity Sault Ste. Marie members met recently to discuss the Debwewin project. From left they are Cecilia Fernandez, Dr. Mehran Mogharrabi, Susan Garrett, Max Iland and Jennifer McIntyre.

**Nancy has lived in Sault Ste. Marie for the past 10 years. She went to high school in North Bay, college in Sudbury and is from Wikwemikong First Nation on Manitoulin Island, so she knows the north well.**

She notices being treated differently when she is around groups that are not all native people. She sees it in restaurants, when the table next to hers is getting better and friendlier service.

"I used to tip and now if I feel I haven't been treated well I don't tip," she says.

She bought a home in a white neighbourhood and "I don't find it good to live in a neighbourhood where your neighbours don't want to talk to you."

Nancy says she would like to be more proactive in dealing with racism.

"It would be good for me and good for my children. Where I get stuck is being able to find the words and knowing what to say. I'm not a person who likes to stir up things, or make people uncomfortable or point fingers."

She says she saw a television commercial about bullying "and that's how it was with me in identifying more around racism. I saw somebody else react to it and then I thought 'oh, okay that's not appropriate.' If you're never shown it you just learn to cope with it. We haven't had anything like that in the media or in the schools about racism.

"I remember an elder talking about sexual abuse and people not wanting to talk about it because it's such a difficult thing to talk about. She said you have to say it. You have to say it like it is and don't pretty it up. You can't deny it.

"I'm thinking the same thing about racism and maybe that's the way I've handled it before. Even when I'm talking about it now, you know what, it's bigger than I'm really admitting it is. It has affected me more than I wanted to admit. Now I can say I don't want to do this anymore."

Nancy wants to be strong for her children.

"I would like to have the energy and the strength for my kids so they can do something different and I think that's where it gets scary. Will there be the support out there to be able to do that?

"When they were small they were proud to be native. Someone would say to them 'you're an Indian,' and they would say 'yeah.'" Now, they don't even want to acknowledge it.

"We need to do a lot more work in the schools. We need to

work with the teachers and the other parents. They're the ones who are passing it down to their children."

Genny is a graduate of Sault College and now has a job as a professional in Sault Ste. Marie.

"My credibility and my qualifications are always questioned by Children's Aid. For awhile it was probation and parole too, but now it's just Children's Aid. They don't believe I have the papers or the education.

She says she encounters racial incidents occasionally, especially if she presents her status card. "They'll hum and haw, heave a big sigh, make a comment like 'there they go again, thinking they have all these rights.' I look at them and say 'we do have rights.' Before I would just ignore them."

She said one time she was looking at jewellery at a store in the mall and a clerk made a point to say she didn't think she could afford the particular ring she was looking at. The clerk didn't spend the time with her that she wanted, making her feel unimportant, "like I was a nobody."

"They're so uneducated about natives. It's ignorance. But it could be hatred too. But I think it's because they're not aware. They're not educated.

She recalls when one son was six-years-old a boy from across the street, a friend for some time, was visiting. "I heard the boy say to my son, 'You know what you are, you're just an Indian.' My son said, 'So?' I've taught my children that they are not Indians. That was a term from Columbus. I raised them as Anishinabe."

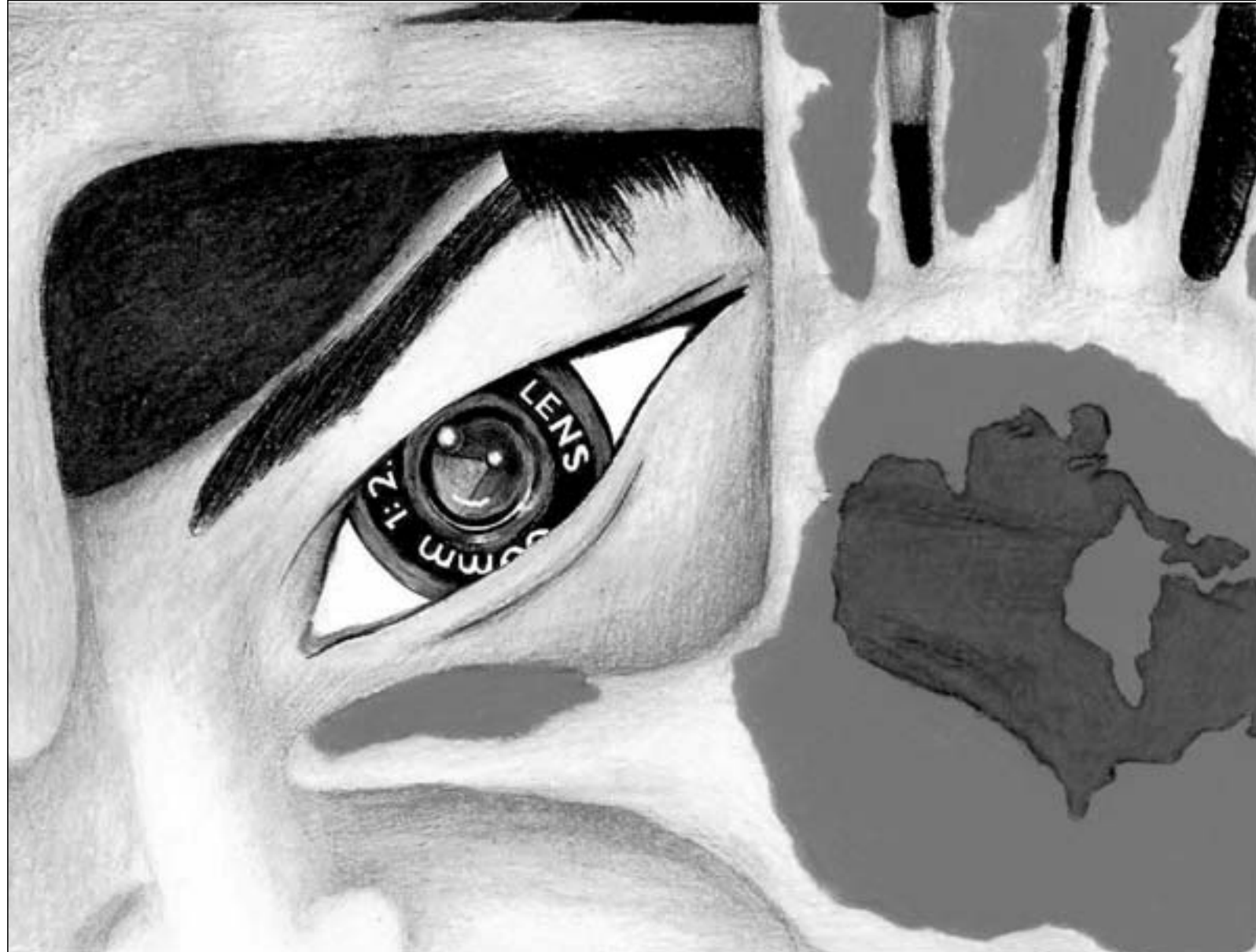
Genny sees things improving in some ways. "I've found in the past few years, as the native population started to grow, that cashiers aren't as impatient. They're asking for the status card even before you present it. It's almost like they're accepting it now.

"But I don't think things will get better. My grandfather was chief for many years and one thing he told me that I will never forget is that racism will always be there. We'd come home beat up, we'd come home with scratches, we'd come home angry.

"I get a lot of people coming to me and saying they're being discriminated against at Ontario Works, other agencies, the Salvation Army, John Howard Society and I believe it. They're just not being dealt with.

"I'm an adult now. I'm not being told I'm a no-good dirty Indian anymore. If I wasn't out there in the community, if I wasn't working, maybe it would be different. I get upset because I know how it makes a person feel. You don't have any self-confidence or self-esteem. You see young people walking with their heads down."





# Racial discrimination, race and racism

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Every person in Ontario has the right to be free from racial discrimination and harassment in the social areas of employment, services, goods, facilities, housing accommodation, contract and membership in trade and vocational associations.

There is no fixed definition of racial discrimination, says the Ontario Human Rights Commission. However, it has been described as any distinction, conduct or action, whether intentional or not, but based on a person's race, which has the effect of imposing burdens on an individual or group, not imposed upon others or which withholds or limits access to benefits available to other members of society. Race need only be a factor for racial discrimination to have occurred.

'Race' is a prohibited ground of discrimination in the Ontario Human Rights Code, but like racial discrimination, it is not specifically defined. The Commission has explained 'race' as socially

constructed differences among people based on characteristics such as accent or manner of speech, name, clothing, diet, beliefs and practices, leisure preferences, places of origin and so forth. The process of social construction of race is called racialization: "the process by which societies construct races as real, different and unequally in ways that matter to economic, political and social life."

Recognizing that race is a social construct, the Commission describes people as 'racialized person,' or 'racialized group' instead of the more outdated and inaccurate terms 'racial minority,' 'visible minority,' 'person of colour,' or 'non-white.'

Racism is a wider phenomenon than racial discrimination. While the Code seeks to combat racism through public education and the advancement of human rights, not every manifestation of racism can be dealt with through the current human rights complaint mechanism and

process. Nevertheless, racism plays a major role in fostering racial discrimination.

Racism is an ideology that either directly or indirectly asserts that one group is inherently superior to others. It can be openly displayed in racial jokes and slurs or hate crimes but it can be more deeply rooted in attitudes, values and stereotypical beliefs. In some cases, these are unconsciously held and have become deeply embedded in systems and institutions that have evolved over time. Racism operates at a number of levels—individual, systemic and societal.

Despite the fact that Canada has made much progress, unfortunately racism and racial discrimination remain a persistent reality in Canadian society. This fact must be acknowledged as a starting point to effectively address racism and racial discrimination, says the Commission.

# Why I wear the ridah

By Tasneem Yahya  
Young People's Press

You could only see her eyes.

The woman was covered from head to toe in a black *burkah*, a veil worn by some Muslim women. She'd just got on the bus I was taking to school last fall.

She carefully lifted the bottom of her *burkah* to avoid tripping on the stairs. The bus was almost full and the woman sat down next to a white man. I was seated a couple rows behind them.

He looked at her. Then he started to whisper to her. When the woman tried to avoid him, he suddenly spat out:

"Is Osama Bin Laden in there?" he peered into her veil. She didn't seem to understand him, but he kept on haranguing.

"How do I know you're not that \*\*\*\*ing terrorist?" he hissed aloud, trying to look at her face.

For a moment, everyone looked at the man, and then they looked away. There was a tense silence, only broken by the bus' rumbling engine.

The woman's eyes were now full of fear. A few stops later, the man got off. The woman moved to the back of the bus. There was a perceptible sigh of relief from everyone on board.

I felt sick to my stomach. I also felt ashamed that I hadn't said anything.

And now I often think back to that day – what if happened to me?

You see, recently I started wearing the *ridah*. I'm part of the sect of Shia Muslims called Dawoodi Bohras, and after attending a sermon by our spiritual head Dr. Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin Saheb (T.U.S.), I decided to don our traditional dress on a full-time basis

A *ridah* consists of a long skirt and a top, to be worn by women over everyday clothes. The *ridah's* top covers a woman's head – with an opening for her face – and then cascades down her shoulders, stopping just below her waist.

I had gone to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates in February to observe a 10-day annual event called Ashura (the martyrdom of the Prophet Mohammed's grandson – Imam Hussein) with my religious leader.

During the trip, I began to feel comfortable wearing my *ridah*, not only to mosque but also shopping, visiting relatives and going to the beach.

I feel more relaxed when wearing a *ridah*. Even on hot days, it's not clingy. It is also a convenient solution for bad hair days.

During my trip to Dubai, I decided I'd begin wearing the *ridah* everywhere – not just on trips to UAE, Pakistan or India.

In Islam, women are required to wear a veil. To me, the veil signifies the reverence of women, and protection from the intrusive gazes of men.

Contrary to popular misconceptions, the *ridah* or veil is liberating. It forces people to focus on the person, rather than the clothes they are wearing.

Designer jeans and tube tops don't have to be what defines a person. Success shouldn't be determined by how much skin is revealed, but by intelligence and personality. The *ridah* helps emphasize these attributes by covering a woman's body.

The *ridah* is also very beautiful.

It comes in many colours from pretty pastels to rich shades of indigo, emerald and crimson. The materials used vary from simple cottons to rich satins and chikan (embroidered cloth).

Usually *ridahs* are adorned with lace, embroidery and flowery appliqués. Pre-designed *ridah* material is readily available in Pakistani and Indian street markets, however you still have to get them stitched by a tailor.

I look forward to trips to Pakistan where I can purchase my own material and accessories to fit my own taste. I pick vividly printed cloth and intricately crocheted laces that are unusual.

I figured wearing a *ridah* to school would alienate me from my friends. Instead, all my friends from various backgrounds – Irish, Italian, British, Guyanese, Pakistani – all encouraged me to wear it.

One of my friends asked questions about why I chose to wear it. She asked me where it came from, and whether it was mandatory for women to be veiled.

I explained to her it was my choice to wear it. It is a true reflection of my faith.

The *ridah* is an expression of faith similar to crosses for Christians and yarmulkes for Jewish men. For me, the *ridah* is a way to tell others I'm a practising Muslim. I follow Islam and everything it teaches me – how I am supposed to live my life and how to be a better person.

My friend then inquired about the images of women wearing *burkahs* on television.

"Aren't veiled women a product of fundamentalist Islamic regimes run by men?"

I was shocked she was so misinformed. But I couldn't blame her either.

In fact, the only images I've seen of veiled women on television were from CNN's coverage of the "War on Terrorism." I saw women who were starving, uneducated and oppressed. Everything I'm not.

It's hard to explain sometimes. And sometimes I wonder why I should even have to explain. But after September 11, I have no choice but to defend my beliefs.

Muslims have largely been portrayed as Middle Eastern, evil, turban-wearing, irrational, terrorist militants.

That is not who I am. And that is not who



the majority of the millions of Muslims that inhabit the world are either.

We are students, professionals, teachers, volunteers, philanthropists and law-abiding citizens. We are compassionate believers of world peace and goodwill.

Former prime minister Pierre Trudeau believed in giving immigrants, like my parents, a chance for a better life. He made the term 'multicultural society' a reality by opening Canadian immigration in the 1970s. With that, he embraced the colour of their skin, their culture and their religion as well.

In his eulogy to his father, Justin Trudeau said, "Because mere tolerance is not enough: We must have true and deep respect for every human being, regardless of his beliefs, his origins and his values. That is what my father demanded of his sons and that is what he demanded of our country."

I hope Canada hasn't forgotten those words. It's important that Canadians celebrate the choice of people of all faiths to

practise their religion.

I hope Canada doesn't go the French way, stripping French students of the basic human right to practise one's own religion. In the coming year, headscarves, yarmulkes and crosses will be banned in French schools.

Muslims have protested the ban on streets around the world. I realize I'm lucky. I don't have to march with a picket sign. Instead, I can wear my *ridah* with pride.

I'd be lying if I said I still wasn't scared about how people will treat me in university, in the workplace, or even on public transportation. I know people will judge me based on my dress. I know I will have to endure stares – even if they are simply inquisitive.

But I refuse to be humiliated like the woman who was wearing a *burkah* on the bus. I refuse to stay silenced and move to the back. I refuse to fear ignorance.

# Fobs hudai - NOT

By Aletheia Chiang  
Young People's Press

"Fobs hudai," says my brother.

What is he saying? Who is Fobs Hudai? Reluctantly, I succumb to my growing curiosity. "What?"

He laughs. "Fobs hudai. You know," he continues matter-of-factly, "fobs should die."

I don't even wait for an explanation, he's already at it.

"OK look, the last letter of fobs is an s and the first letter of should is an s. The last letter of should is d, and the first letter of die is d. Put them all together. You know, fobs should die. As in, 'fobs hood I'. Get it?"

The term 'fob' is short for the expression 'fresh off the boat,' meaning to be an immigrant.

In recent years, some people have used "fob," along with words like "chink," to refer to people of Asian descent who fit the stereotype of an Asian immigrant, even if they are not one.

I look up from my feet, and study my brother's skin – it is the same pale colour as my own. His eyes are brown, just like mine. The sun catches brown bits of his near-black hair. It hits me, kind of as an afterthought: He is Chinese just like me.

I know racism goes on between different races, but here, I am introduced to a whole new genre of racism – self-discrimination, intolerance of one's own race.

My brother is the only person I know who discriminates against his own race. But maybe there are others like him, who roll down car windows and yell, "You're a chink!" to arbitrary Asian people on the streets.

Maybe there are people like him, who say "I bet you that's a chink" at the sight of a speeding car.

Maybe there are people like him, who walk into a Kumon Centre (an extracurricular learning space focusing on teaching students math and English) and say, "Ew, this place is infested with fobs."

This does not sit well with me. And knowing there could potentially be more people like my brother raises an important question: Are today's multicultural youth forgetting their true origin, and choosing instead to insult it?

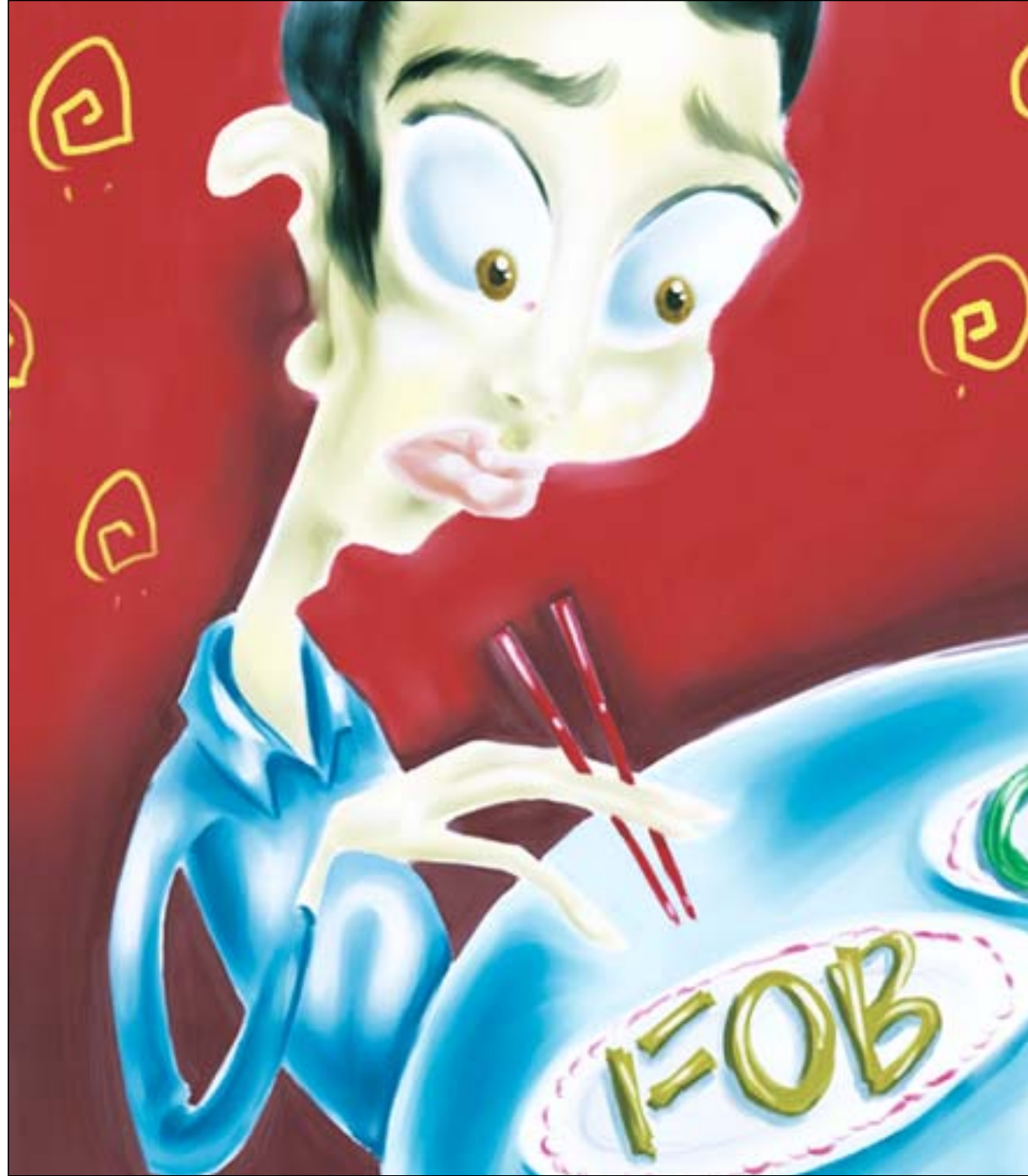
My brother loves Canadian culture. Hockey is his passion. He plays hockey during all four seasons – ice hockey, floor hockey, in-line hockey, you name it. Last winter we built a huge rink in our backyard so he could play every day after school.

My brother enjoys being a "hardcore Canuck" and there is nothing wrong with that. However, my parents have been so lenient in letting him explore Canadian culture, he hasn't really developed appreciation toward what it means to be Chinese.

My parents encourage me to become a doctor. But I'm sure that's a dream many parents have for their children. Yes, I score high on math tests because my parents are strict on discipline. But I recognize this as a very good value that comes in handy for many other things as well.

I asked my brother to define what would make one a "typical chink."

"Small eyes, good at math, exclusively Chinese friends, can't speak English, no social skills, plays piano or violin, can't drive properly,



screaming in restaurants..." his list seemed unending.

The core of his racism isn't the dislike of who he is. It's the dislike of what other people perceive him as.

He thinks when people look at him, they see a Chinese boy who probably plays the violin and takes extracurricular math. He worries about being classified as a "fob," not because of the things he does or the way he dresses, but simply because he is Chinese.

But he does the same thing. When he saw the 93.8 average on my report card, he said, "Stop being so chink."

In another instance, I asked a friend what courses she was taking in her final year of high school.

"Oh, I'm taking the Asian six-pack," she said.

"What?" I asked.

"You know, like three maths and three sciences."

I laughed, but inwardly I thought about how stereotypical the joke was.

These days, young minorities have been split up into two camps. The ones who become "white-washed" decide to take on North American culture while forgetting their own.

The second group remains true to their heritage and deals with being labeled a "fob".

And those who want to be both Canadian and Chinese don't fit anywhere because everybody wants to label them as either/or. That's the injustice of it.

There should be nothing wrong with a Chinese person becoming a soccer player or an artist. I do enjoy playing the piano, but I've also been pounding away on a Tama drum set for three years now.

I'm different from my brother because I am confident in who I am, and I don't let the colour of my skin alter the way I feel. I don't let stereotypes put a downer on me.

Wiping away people's preconceived notions about me, judging simply by my race, can feel pretty sweet. Sometimes it's taking a part of who you are culturally, and blending that in with your surroundings, that makes you a well-adapted Canadian.

Both of my parents came to Canada from Taiwan with the same hopes and dreams that propelled countless other immigrants to come here – to build a better life for themselves as well as for the next generation. I don't intend to spoil their dreams. I am proud of my ethnicity and I respect my Chinese heritage.

Over the years, I have learned to embrace the positive cultural values and qualities often associated with Asian people.

But as for the stereotypes – they shudai!



# Quotes from the Debwewin Study

*"Discrimination against native people in North Bay is widespread. In finding an apartment, going shopping, eating out, playing sports."*

Native female questionnaire respondent.

*"There is ignorance over the history of the treaties and our culture. Being centred out as the only native in the classroom and being asked ridiculous questions with the students laughing. Being followed around and frisked by security in shopping malls. Not being allowed or being evicted from restaurants or taverns for no apparent reason. All of this has happened to me in Northern Ontario."*

Native male questionnaire respondent in Timmins.

*"A lot of people think I don't pay taxes. I pay lots of tax. I work for a non-native organization so I pay taxes. I live in town so I pay property taxes. Native people pay quite a bit of taxes. People look down on native people because they think we have privileges, but they're not really privileges."*

Native female interview participant in North Bay.

*"Racism is widespread here. Not too much for those individuals who are fair-haired and light-skinned, but for the ones who are dark-skinned. They are the ones who suffer."*

Native female questionnaire respondent in Sault Ste. Marie.

*"The way others look at me I feel like I am an outcast. Strangers have a surprised look. I don't feel welcome. I feel like all eyes are fixed on me. Sometimes others don't understand me when I talk."*

Black female questionnaire respondent in Timmins.

*"There is a lack of backbone at the top in regard to systemic discrimination. There is not enough promotion or equality."*

White female questionnaire respondent in North Bay.

*"I believe racism is a problem in Sault Ste. Marie because it is everywhere. From hearing racial comments to getting treated differently in stores or social services places, it is always around us. I see it as a problem that should be addressed and should not be tolerated."*

Native female questionnaire respondent.

*"Systemic racism is serious in the Timmins area. It is quite obvious by the very large number of natives incarcerated at Monteith and youth facilities in Cochrane. Just visit the Children's Aid Society building in Timmins and see how many natives have been taken by this institution when there are probably better alternatives. Wake up Canada!"*

Native male questionnaire respondent.

*"I don't think what I'm discussing with you is racism. I don't believe I'm a racist. There is racism, with the Ku Klux Klan for example. I've never seen a racial incident and I've lived here all my life. I hear people make fun of natives, and of black people, and of Chinese people. I suppose that's a form of racism. Native people get treated differently in North Bay because they're special. They have special status. Everyone has special status except we, the white, middle class, working taxpayer. There's more and more hatred. I can see it. When you sit down and have a beer, that's when you hear most of this stuff. If you want to find out just go and sit in the hotel for awhile and talk to people. It comes up time after time. Especially if you talk about hunting or fishing."*

White male interview participant in North Bay.

*"Words can hurt more than physical wounds. Words will stay with you for the rest of your life."*

Native male questionnaire respondent in Sault Ste. Marie.

*"I applied for work and went for an interview. When he noticed I was coloured he felt by hiring me he would lose his customers."*

Black female questionnaire respondent in Timmins.

*"Racism is there in North Bay, even for the aboriginal people. With landlords, if they know you are native, black, Pakistani or whatever, they tell you they have nothing available. It's a community problem, and there's lots of institutional racism."*

White female interview participant.

*"I think racism is a pretty big problem in Sault Ste. Marie. You don't see too much interaction. There are hardly any ethnic people working throughout the city that are visible minorities. Native people are still set aside. There is no emphasis on cultural interaction to clear up the problem."*

Native female questionnaire respondent.

*"I wanted to rent an apartment. The landlady stated the apartment had already been rented and denied telling me a few minutes prior on the telephone that the apartment was available."*

Métis female questionnaire respondent in Timmins.

*"Native people tend to discriminate against each other. For example, status, non-status, Métis, off or on reserve tend to label each other."*

Native female questionnaire respondent in North Bay.

*"The Sault has two faces and hides one very well."*

Native male questionnaire respondent.

*"I strongly feel that racism is a problem in Sault Ste. Marie. All you have to do is look at all the businesses. One does not see minorities working there."*

Native female questionnaire respondent.

*"It happens once a week or every two weeks. I'd be walking with my girlfriend and people driving by or stopped at a light would bang the side of their car and say something. I get that a lot. It doesn't surprise me because I hear it so often."*

Native male interview participant in Timmins.

*"North Bay is not doing enough for me to notice any diversity, except at the college and university."*

Native male questionnaire respondent.

*"There is big-time discrimination toward French-speaking people. A lot of people don't forget (the city's English-only bylaw.) A lot of harm was done by city council. We always have to fight to be heard and to be seen. Three-quarters of the time it's a losing battle. We have to let people know we're here. We're always ignored or forgotten."*

White female interview participant in Sault Ste. Marie.

*"Some guys were making Indian noises when I got off the bus."*

Native female questionnaire respondent in Timmins.

*"Discrimination against aboriginals is widespread. There is a visible barrier of uncertainty and a lack of knowledge exists between such people and whites."*

White male questionnaire respondent in North Bay.



*"Racism is very extensive in Sault Ste. Marie. My work has brought me in contact with a lot of organizations that clearly treated my clients differently depending on their race and ethnicity, and gender too!"*

White female questionnaire respondent.

*"I married a white male who understands the barriers I am faced with on a daily basis."*

Black female questionnaire respondent in Timmins.

*"The justice system, the educational system, and all levels of government and commercial business are normally dominated by white males. Racism and sexism are big problems."*

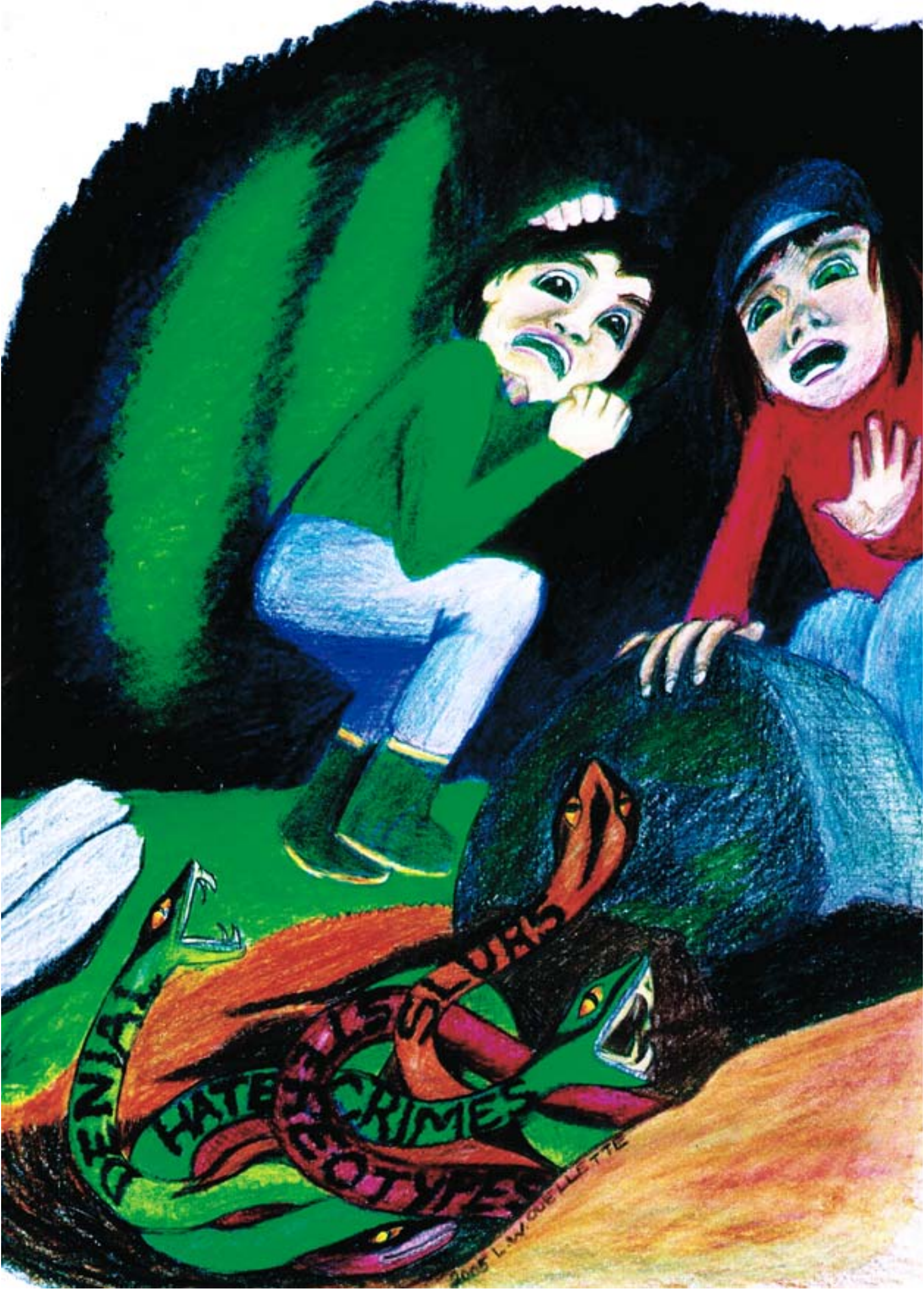
White female questionnaire respondent in North Bay.

*"I have observed actions and heard comments from professionals and non-professionals. I believe for visible minorities, specifically First Nations' peoples, racism is a daily experience in stores."*

White female questionnaire respondent in Sault Ste. Marie.

*"I work with aboriginals and I strongly feel that there is a large amount of discrimination against them."*

Black female questionnaire respondent in Timmins.





# I'm black and I rock, so what?



By Jerome Johnson  
Young People's Press

Growing up, I listened largely to reggae and hip-hop. I had no choice. I lived in Jamaica from the age of nine to 16 and that's all you'd hear – on the radio, in taxis and from open windows walking down the street.

At first, I liked the reggae rhythms of my parent's homeland. But after a while I found it repetitive, monotonous, vulgar and irritating. Don't get me wrong. I'm not dissing it outright. It's just how I felt.

So when I returned to Canada a year ago, it was a surprise to turn on the radio. I was blown away by the rejuvenating sounds of rock – classic, alternative, hardcore, ethereal, emo, death-metal, rap-metal, grunge, punk, even Christian. A whole new world of music opened before me. And I couldn't get enough of it.

But as a black teen who prefers hard rock and heavy metal to rap and reggae, I often feel like an outcast.

All the other black youth I know are into hip-hop. When they talk about their favourite rap artists and about who they saw on BET (Black Entertainment Television), my mind goes blank, like a high school jock listening to a science geek talk about spontaneous combustion.

And it's not just my peers I feel alienated from. My dad, a hardcore reggae fan, thinks I'm neglecting my heritage by listening to rock.

He says rock music is satanic, stupid madness. He says I must be a lost soul trying to escape a dull life. He says a black teen who likes

rock won't be accepted either by other black youth or by white kids who like heavy metal.

But why does this have to be the case? And what's so odd about a black youth listening to rock?

Many white kids listen to rap. Some even become successful hip-hop artists themselves, like Eminem, or crossover urban artists like Justin Timberlake. In fact, hip-hop has become mainstream.

And I'm certainly not the only black rock renegade, am I? Jimi Hendrix, Lenny Kravitz, Fefe Dobson, as well as black members of hard rock bands P.O.D., Sugar Ray, Incubus and Sevendust all must have seen something worthwhile in this genre too.

Maybe, like me, they found the diverse rhythms, powerful sounds of electric guitar and subject matter of the lyrics appealing.

I don't remember exactly which song first attracted me to the genre. It could have been When I'm Gone by Three Doors Down, You Remind Me by Nickelback, Coldplay's Clocks or Smells Like Teen Spirit by Nirvana – all catchy songs that showed me there's more to good music than just a good beat.

Good music should enlighten those who hear it, or at the very least give them something new to think about.

When I first heard Nirvana's Smells Like Teen Spirit I thought the chorus "Here we are now/ Entertain us/ A mulatto/ An albino" contained an underlying message of racial unity, something that didn't seem to exist beyond the tourist resorts and beaches in Jamaica. Whether or not this was in fact Kurt Cobain's intent, hearing these

lines made me feel liberated.

I find the music and lyrics of bands like Linkin Park, Godsmack, Disturbed and Evanescence to be therapeutic. Instead of getting mad when things don't go my way, or when I'm constantly being told what to do, I turn on this music and tensions dissolve.

For example, one of my favourite songs at the moment is Numb by Linkin Park. It describes what it's like to feel that everyone expects you to be perfect or cohere with what parents and peers want of you: "I don't know what you're expecting of me/ put under the pressure of walking in your shoes/...every step that I take is another mistake to you..."

Now, I'm no sell-out. I realize that rap and hip-hop have been of some benefit to my race by giving black stars exposure and representation in the mainstream.

But on the downside, a lot of hip-hop is not very uplifting. As anyone who listens to it knows, hip-hop contains much profane-laced talk of violence, homophobia, drugs, degradation of women and get-rich-quick schemes.

So I don't get it when my dad insists I should listen to the same music as other black youth, and that ignoring my musical heritage will be my downfall.

In the end, my choice of music is just that – my choice. It's not like I've decided to have a skin change operation. I'm still black. I just happen to like rock music. And what's the harm in that?

Luckily for me, I am accepted by many other teen rock fans who hail from varied ethnic backgrounds. Most importantly, I accept myself as I am, a rocker and proud of it.





# Suddenly, I'm coming to Canada

Many people leave their countries because they want to improve their jobs, or they want to look for a better way of life. Well, that was not my case.

Many people leave their countries because they want to improve their jobs, or they want to look for a better way of life. Well, that was not my case.

My coming to Canada story begins in Mexico City. I was a young middle class guy working part-time in one of the city's most important companies and I was also studying for my University degree. I wanted to be a filmmaker or a war journalist. I hadn't decided yet, but I knew I wanted to leave a legacy.

I had a good life and a wonderful girlfriend. Today is the greatest day of my life! I thought the day I met her. I did not realize she would change my life forever. We started to spend all of our time together. She is a courageous beautiful woman with olive-green eyes, long golden-brown hair, and a great attitude towards life.

Unfortunately, this is not a bedtime story where the couple lives happily ever after. Her family was strict and did not allow her to date. They did not accept people of other religions. They told her she couldn't see me.

I couldn't believe what was happening. We were in the first years of the twenty-first century. Racism and prejudice in my country? It didn't seem possible. I always thought society in Mexico was open-minded, at least in these kinds of issues. I knew about racism against black people in North America, but I never thought it would happen to me. Prejudice towards religions! Come on! My girlfriend and I were just teenagers who wanted to be together!

My girlfriend, Aidin\* and I decided to maintain our relationship in secret. But a bigger problem was already heading toward us.

A friend of her family began to follow her. Javier\* stalked her steps. He used his family connection to be close to her; he drove her to school and picked her up from work. Javier\* said he was protecting her against me. But later, I figured out those were not his only intentions towards Aidin\*.

When I had free time I drove to her school to see her. Once Javier\* saw us and started yelling. He said I would pay if I didn't stop seeing her. Aidin\* went to her car, scared, to avoid more problems.

After that incident Javier\* started to bother me regularly. Sometimes he messed with my car. I had uncountable encounters with him. He told me that he was part of a powerful cult. He said if he saw me close to Aidin\* again, he would kill me.

I felt trapped. On one side, I had my girlfriend and the huge love that I felt for her. I didn't want to lose her. On the other side a crazy guy, member of a cult, was threatening me with death.

I chose love (and I still do), but our relationship wasn't the same. We had to be careful. Javier\* often caught us. He struck me physically and

mentally, with threats. I became afraid.

One night, Javier\* appeared at a gathering at my friend's house. Aidin's\* mother was with him. She grabbed Aidin\* and pulled her roughly to her car. When I tried to help Aidin\*, Javier\* hit me across my face with a gun, in spite of the people looking at us. He shot at me. I was hit. My friend's leg was also hit. Javier\* yelled that if anyone dared mess with him he was not afraid to kill.

Fortunately the bullet passed under my skin without touching my skull. It took time for me to recover. I went to the police. Instead of getting help, I came to know that some of the policemen were part of the cult. This cult is a reality in Mexico and bigger than I thought.

I began to think about leaving my country to make a life without the constant and terrible feeling of being harassed.

Once Aidin\* and I ran away to another state in Mexico, but Javier\* found us and beat me up.

I moved again. This time he didn't find me, but he knew how to reach me at school and at work. He was always there. He was never alone. He often hit me. I made a lot of complaints at the police office, but no one would bother him.

I was scared for us. We decided that the solution was to immigrate to another country. A person close to us told us about Canada. I started to look for the best way to leave the country. I sold my car to have money to travel and pay my debts. I found a school in Canada which was not so expensive; I bought two courses, one for Aidin\* and one for me. I did this through a travel agency and did not have any problems with immigration.

To get Aidin\* out, we faked a break up just before Aidin\* had to travel to meet her family. I bought a ticket for her to Canada instead. Her family thought that she was on her way to Guadalajara but she was really on her way to Toronto with her best friend who offered to help us, traveling with her until I could reach her later.

I had to stay behind to make it appear real. I almost never left the house where I was living. After a month or so I snuck to the airport and took a plane to meet with my loving one.

In Canada we have started a new life as immigrants trying our best for our relationship and for the country, which has helped us a lot. I still can't believe I am here and will not take my freedom for granted.

We have great expectations. We decided to get married, even though we are sad our family and close friends are not around. Probably by the time you read this, my girlfriend and I are now husband and wife.

\*All names in this story have been changed.

# Natives discriminate too

The Debwewin 2004 three-city survey on racism showed aboriginal people face the brunt of racism from the dominant white majority, but follow-up interviews indicate there is also a problem among aboriginals themselves. The interviews also confirmed that appearances play a role in racism.

Aboriginals in Northern Ontario are not a homogeneous community. Some live on-reserve, some live off. Some are Ojibway, some are Cree, some are something else. Some have status as an aboriginal, some do not. Some are Métis.

Some are dark-skinned and some are not.

Alice was born and raised in Garden River First Nation just outside Sault Ste. Marie. She attended high school in North Bay and lived in Batchewana First Nation, also just outside Sault Ste. Marie.

She has three children and seven grandchildren living in the area, plus five sisters. She is now a student at Algoma University.

"There is an awful lot of discrimination within the First Nation community," she said in a Debwewin project interview. "My own people will tell me I'm not native, even though I was born and raised native. It's probably because of my looks."

She believes many natives model behaviour they see elsewhere.

"What they have been taught and what has happened to them is discrimination, so when they get a little bit more power they model the behaviour that they've seen. I think they have to become more aware as a community as to what's happening. There's so much that has to be done. It has to be done in small steps."

Frank is from Garden River First Nation and is learning the Ojibway traditional ways. Also an Algoma University student, he says "to tell you the truth, the worst ones are our own people. There are those that are traditional and there are those who follow the Christian way, and they're the ones who are harder on their own people."

"That's probably what hurts the most. They've got that same mentality, like we have to save you from yourself. People should get to know our culture. Go to the ceremonies. Learn. Accept the fact that man is different, or that culture is different. It's our leaders that don't say anything."

Linda, another Algoma student, says "I find that the most prejudice is on the reserve, against their own."

Priscilla was raised on Nipissing First Nation between North Bay and Sturgeon Falls and now lives in Sturgeon Falls.

Her husband, although he's Mi'kmaq, is fair with blond hair. When he goes to Garden Village on Nipissing First Nation he says people give him a look that he interprets as 'What's he doing here?'

"He is a native person and raised on a First Nation but he says he goes there and people treat him like he's not. You have to look at it from both sides. We're just as guilty," Priscilla says.

Many aboriginals interviewed said darkness of skin colour is a major factor. Merv, an aboriginal from Timmins who is retired, says "I'm not discriminated against because I don't look native. I would hear things at work. The work environment was good but near the end it got to the point where it wasn't good. With all the downsizing I guess people worried and were under stress. I felt there was a lot of discrimination and comments being made."

Linda, the Algoma student, says she too doesn't get discriminated against because she doesn't look native. "But I have lots of cousins, so

I've seen it.

She says many times people have told jokes and when they find out she is part native they say 'oh, I hope I haven't offended you.' She says she tells them they should always watch what they say because they never know where people come from.

Carol, who lives on Batchewana First Nation, Rankin Reserve, says "I am dark so people would see that I am an Indian. I am discriminated against because of people stereotyping Indians. Based on what I've heard and experienced people say Indians are inferior. Indians are stupid. They don't want to work. They are drunk. They have so many problems."

Genny, a Sault College graduate now working as a professional in Sault Ste. Marie, says "because of my skin colour, because of the way I talk, I was made fun of as a kid coming from a reserve. Today, it's not so much on me, but for my grandchildren."

Kathleen is retired after working 22 years with the federal government in Sault Ste. Marie. She says she never lets her guard down.

"I'm definitely discriminated against. I mean, look at me. I look Anishinabe...dark hair, brown eyes. It's not often what a person will say but the way you're treated."

"I know that I stand out as an Anishinabe. You're on guard because you never know how you're going to be treated. You have to use up a lot of energy for this."

"I dress properly. I dress nice. I have an income because I worked for the federal government but can you imagine if I had a shabby jacket or torn jeans or holes in my boots, or messy hair and no makeup? I'd be treated differently. I feel like a second-class citizen."

Maggie has lived in Sault Ste. Marie all her life. Her mother is from Wikwemikong on Manitoulin Island but Maggie doesn't look native.

"I hear a lot of things," she says. "In grade school and as a teenager you hear the jokes and whatnot. You see the way other people get treated. I go to the store with my sister, who is a lot browner than I am and you get the looks. People wouldn't expect that we're sisters."

"It hurts me inside. Sometimes I just walk away, probably because I just don't want to deal with it."

Maggie thinks there is more public awareness now. "I remember seeing a sticker saying 'Let's stop racism.'"



# Data collection permitted

The Ontario Human Rights Code permits the collection and analysis of data based on race and other grounds, provided that the data is collected for purposes consistent with the Code, such as to monitor discrimination, identify and remove systemic barriers, address historical disadvantage and promote substantive equality.

In the context of racial discrimination, data collection and analysis can be a necessary or even an essential tool for assessing whether rights under the Code are being or may be infringed and for taking corrective action, the Ontario Human Rights Commission says.

The Commission says data collection and analysis should be undertaken where an organization has or ought to have reason to believe that discrimination, systemic barriers or the perpetuation of historical disadvantage may potentially exist. This must be

assessed on an objective and subjective basis. The organization's actual knowledge of a problem will be considered, as will whether from the point of view of a reasonable third party, the organization would have been aware of the problem.

Some situations that may warrant data collection and analysis might include the following, the Commission says: Persistent allegations or complaints of discrimination or systemic barriers A widespread public perception of discrimination or systemic barriers Data or research studies demonstrating discrimination or systemic barriers

**The Ontario Human Rights Code permits the collection and analysis of data based on race and other grounds, provided that the data is collected for purposes consistent with the Code, such as to monitor discrimination, identify and remove systemic barriers, address historical disadvantage and promote substantive equality.**

Observed inequality in the distribution or treatment of racialized persons within an organization Evidence from other organizations or

jurisdictions that a similar policy, program or practice has had a disproportionate effect on racialized persons.

The Commission says data collection should be conducted in good faith with the goal of producing good quality, accurate and meaningful data, rather than achieving a particular outcome. Acceptable data

collection techniques and proper research and design methodologies should be used.

The Commission says it will often

be appropriate for an organization to seek out the expertise of someone familiar with good data collection and analysis techniques. In other situations, it may be possible to rely on existing resources such as employment equity tools. Staff collecting data should be given appropriate training. The Commission recognizes that how data collection is done depends on the context, including the issue that needs to be monitored, and the nature and size of the organization.

It notes that an organization that chooses not to collect data in situations where data collection is warranted may not be able to make a credible defence that it did not discriminate.

For further information visit the Commission's web site at [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca)

## Multiculturalism Day reaffirms equality

Canada was the first country in the world, in 1971, to have an official policy on multiculturalism.

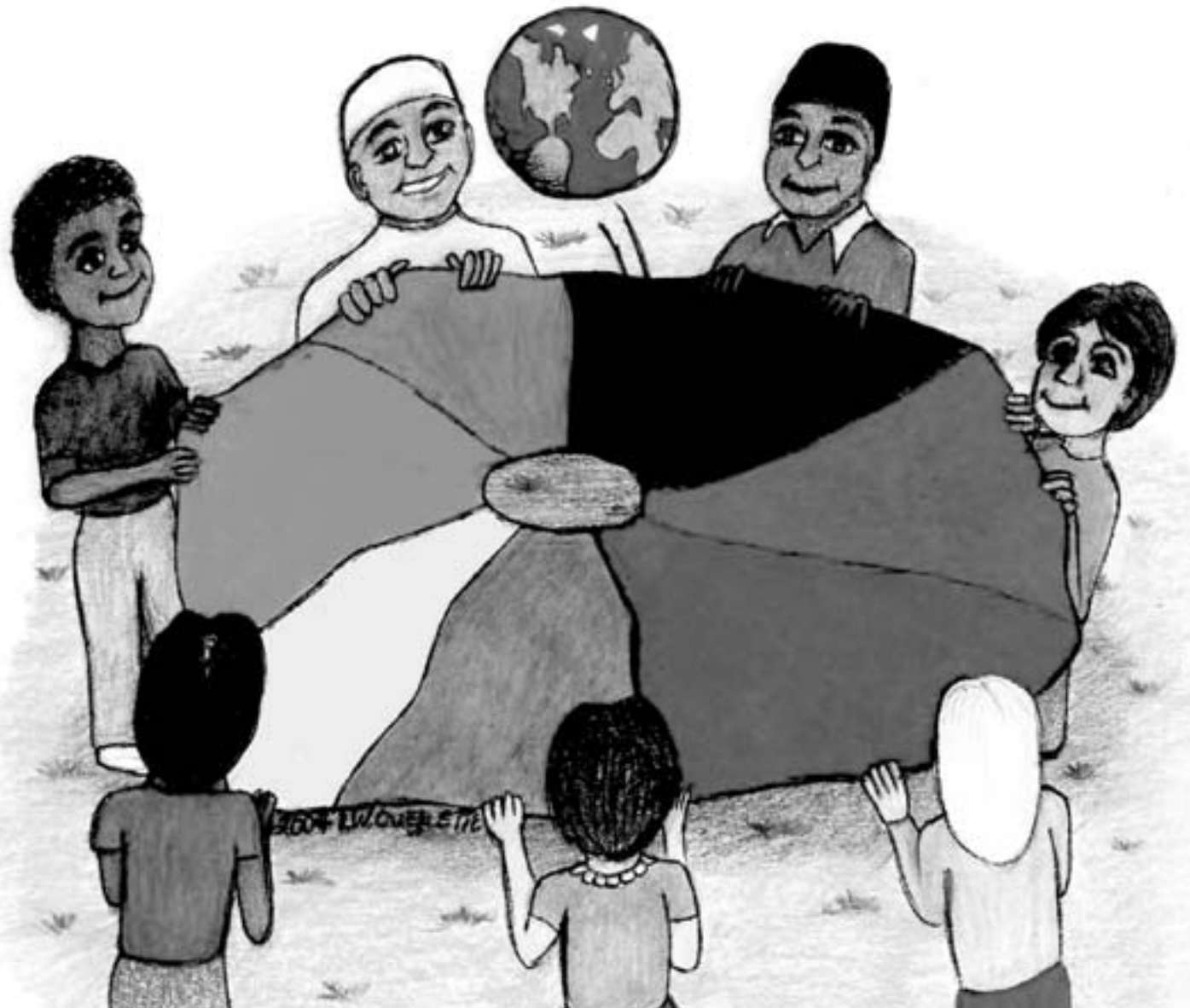
Canadian Multiculturalism Day is now celebrated June 27 each year. Raymond Chan, Minister of State (Multiculturalism), says "Canadian Multiculturalism Day is a time for Canadians to celebrate our ethno-racial and ethno-cultural diversity and to learn more about the contributions that all communities have made to building our country."

He says the day should also reaffirm Canada's commitment to democracy, equality and mutual respect, noting that 2005 marks the 20<sup>th</sup>

anniversary of section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms—the section that guarantees equality and freedom from discrimination based on race, ethnic or national origin, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability.

"Canada is known around the world as a society that embraces fairness, equality, and respect for diversity as its fundamental values," Chan said in a news release.

For more information on Canadian Multiculturalism Day visit the Department of Canadian Heritage web site at [www.pch.gc.ca/special/canada/](http://www.pch.gc.ca/special/canada/)







# Upset over 'special' status

Peter is an angry white male.

Still working at 67, he says he can't quit work because he can't afford to. "I have to go to work every day to support somebody sitting at home watching television."

He had a lot to say on the Debwewin questionnaire last year and in a follow-up interview in North Bay.

"I don't feel Canadians basically are racist," he says. "I think they're just cheesed off with special status being given to special groups. Everyone should be a Canadian, period, with the same rights, the same language, the same opportunities. Government promotes racism. Our system promotes racism."

He says he's a "second-class citizen, yet I'm the one who pays most of the taxes. We're going to be called racist because we have something against the Indian, but we don't. It's the status they're given. They're better than us, or they're special."

"I can't go and catch any fish because they've taken all the fish out of the lake with gill nets. They've killed them all. They throw fish in the dump (referring to a story in the North Bay Nugget where fish were found in a dump) instead of giving them to poor people. They let them rot on the ground because they have that right. They can catch spawning fish and we can't. We're the ones that get penalized, yet we're not Canadians, they are."

The fish rotting at the dump appeared to be an isolated incident. When natives agreed to share the land with the European settlers they retained fishing treaty rights as well as others.

Peter is just as upset over the federal government's bilingualism initiatives.

"People out west are really upset because out there nobody speaks French yet they are forced to be bilingual because the government made that a law. (In fact there are few bilingual people in the west and there is no such law.) There should be one language, like they have in the United States. If you don't like it, leave."

Peter doesn't think he sounds racist. He equates racism with the Ku Klux Klan.

"I've never seen a racial incident and I've lived here all my life. I hear people make fun of the natives, and of black people, and of Chinese people. I suppose that's a form of racism."

"Native people get treated differently in North Bay because they're special. They have special status. Everyone has special status except we, the white, middle class, working taxpayer. The only reason governments give this special treatment to everybody is to buy votes."

Peter says everyone should be Canadian.

"There's more and more hatred. I can see it. When you sit and have a beer, that's when you hear most of this stuff. If you want to find out just go sit in the hotel for awhile and talk to people. It comes up time after time. Especially if you talk about hunting or fishing."

# New human rights policy for Ontario

"It is time organizations and institutions acknowledge the reality of racism and be prepared to act against subtle and sometimes subconscious prejudices and stereotypes that too often result in discrimination," says Keith Norton, Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

He announced the release of the Commission's Policy and Guidelines on Racism and Racial Discrimination June 28 in Toronto.

"While Ontario has done much to provide protection against racism and racial discrimination, the fact remains that too many Ontarians continue to experience it," Norton said in a news release. Each year 30 to 40 per cent of complaints filed with the Commission cite race and related grounds.

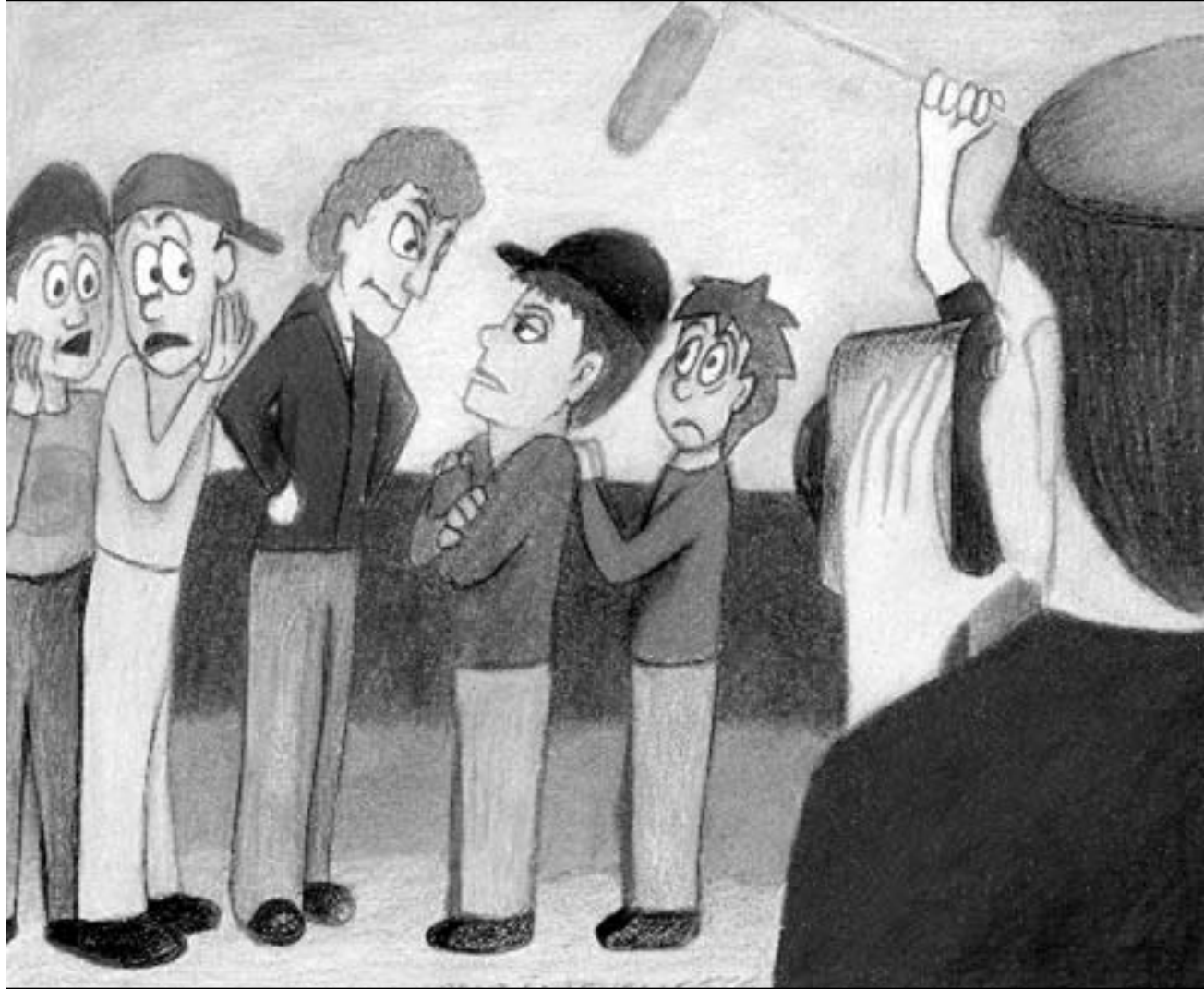
Building on its examination into the effects of racial profiling, the Commission's policy focuses particularly on systemic discrimination. The Commission found it is one of the more complex ways in which racial discrimination occurs. Systemic discrimination refers to patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that are part of the social or administrative structures of an organization, which create or perpetuate a position of relative disadvantage for racialized persons.

"Organizations have a positive obligation to ensure they are not engaging in, condoning or allowing systemic racial discrimination

and harassment to occur," Norton said. Obligations in this regard range from collecting numerical data in appropriate circumstances, accounting for historical disadvantage, reviewing policies, practices and decision-making processes for adverse impact on aboriginal and racialized communities to having in place and enforcing anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies and education programs, and more.

The policy provides guidance to the public concerning its rights and responsibilities under the Code. It describes a number of considerations the Commission will use to examine whether discrimination has occurred and stresses the importance of building an organizational culture of prevention and respect for human rights. It enables the Commission to take a consistent approach to mediating, investigating, analyzing and litigating cases citing race and related grounds, as well as pursue public interest remedies aimed at correcting systemic discrimination and historical disadvantage in settlements and in decisions before the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.

A copy of the Policy and Guidelines on Racism and Racial Discrimination is available on the Commission's web site at [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca)



## Racism national video competition

Since 1966 March 21 has been recognized by the United Nations as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Canada was one of the first countries to support the UN declaration and, in 1989, the Department of Canadian Heritage launched its annual March 21 Campaign. North Bay began its annual campaign that year, with funding from Canadian Heritage.

The March 21 campaign was initiated in response to the need to heighten awareness of the harmful effects of racism on a national scale and to demonstrate clearly the commitment and leadership of the federal government to foster respect, equality and diversity. For more than 10 years the March 21 Campaign has mobilized youth across Canada to rise up and take a stand against racism.

Through their participation in the campaign, Canadian youth have spoken loudly and eloquently, saying there is no place for racism in their lives.

Every year, to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, numerous activities aiming to raise public awareness about racism take place across

Canada. The Racism, Stop It National Video Competition is one of the means by which the federal government leads the fight against racism and mobilizes thousands of youth across Canada to rise up and take a stand against racism.

The national competition is a major component of the March 21 campaign. Across the country, youth rise to the challenge. It is their project, they create the scenario, write the script, shoot and edit a one-minute video story that expresses their feelings about racism.

Information and entry forms on the competition are sent to schools across Canada. The entry deadlines are in January each year.

Canadian Heritage says youth are the heart and soul of the annual March 21 Campaign. They have the energy, commitment and creativity to advance the struggle against racism. They are the voice of the present and the future. They are among the most exposed to racism in their schools and on the streets. In villages, towns and cities across Canada, the March 21 Campaign engages youth to transcend the boundaries of race, ethnicity and religion and to embrace diversity.

# Systemic discrimination

Racial discrimination can result from individual behaviour as well as because of the unintended and often unconscious consequences of a discriminatory system. This is known as systemic discrimination, says the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Systemic discrimination can be described as patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that are part of the structures of an organization, and which create or perpetuate disadvantage for racialized persons.

The Commission is very concerned about systemic discrimination. Assessing and tackling systemic discrimination can be complex. Nevertheless, the Commission expects organizations to be aware that their 'normal way of doing things' may be having a negative impact on racialized persons.

The Commission sets out three considerations that will help it and organizations identify and address systemic discrimination:

**Numerical data:** Numerical data may show that racialized persons are not being equally treated by or within an organization. In some instances, numerical data will suggest that there may be systemic discrimination because too few racialized people are represented, for example in positions of leadership. In other situations, it may show that too many racialized people are represented, for example, in police stops. Numerical data alone isn't likely to be proof of systemic discrimination. However, it serves as an indicator or 'red flag' that there is a problem. An organization may be able to challenge the data or show there is a non-discriminatory explanation for the numbers.

**Policies, practices and decision-making processes:** Formal and informal policies, practices and decision-making processes can result in barriers for and exclusion of racialized persons. The use of informal or highly discretionary approaches is particularly problematic as there is room for subjective considerations, differing standards and biases to come

into play. It is also important not to design policies, practices and decision-making processes in a way that does not account for individual differences or that uses the dominant culture as the norm. **Organizational culture:** Organizations can have their own internal cultures which, if not inclusive, can marginalize or alienate racialized persons. For example, an organization that values a particular communication style based on how people from the dominant culture tend to communicate may undervalue a different, but equally effective, communication style used by a racialized person. Similarly, social relationships and networks that are an important part of success may sometimes exclude racialized persons.

Organizations must ensure that they are not unconsciously engaging in systemic discrimination, the Commission says. This takes vigilance and willingness to monitor and review numerical data, policies, practices and decision-making processes and organizational culture. It is not acceptable from a human rights perspective for an organization to choose to remain unaware of systemic discrimination or to fail to act when a problem comes to its attention.

Because the challenge in establishing a link between an individual's experience and a discriminatory system, if evidence of systemic discrimination is found to exist the Commission will require the organization to produce information to show that the discriminatory system did not contribute to the individual's experience.

For further information on the Commission's Policy and Guidelines on Racism and Racial Discrimination visit its web site at [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca)

## ***Get Involved***

### **NORTH BAY**

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### **TIMMINS**

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### **SAULT STE. MARIE**

Unity and Diversity  
Sault Ste. Marie  
Susan Garrett  
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# Racial harassment & poisoned environments

All Ontarians have the right to be free from harassment in the workplace or in housing accommodation because of, among other things, race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship and creed.

While the Ontario Human Rights Code doesn't explicitly prohibit harassment in the areas of services, goods and facilities, contracts or membership in trade and vocational associations, the Ontario Human Rights Commission will treat racial harassment in such situations as a form of discrimination and therefore a breach of the Code.

Harassment is defined as "engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome." This Commission definition considers what the person knew about how his or her behaviour would be received, as well as how a reasonable third party, taking into account the perspective of the person who was

the target, would view the behaviour.

The following types of behaviours will typically be considered racial harassment:

Racial epithets, slurs or jokes

Being subjected to racial name-calling or nicknames.

Racial jokes, cartoons or graffiti, including when circulated by e-mail;

Ridiculing comments related to race-related characteristics; and

Being subjected to references to racist organizations, such as having 'KKK' painted on a locker

Racial harassment sometimes intersects with other forms of harassment such as harassment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation and disability.

It is not necessary for someone to object to behaviour for it to be contrary to the Ontario Human Rights Code. As well, the fact that someone may even have gone along with, or

participated in, racial comments or conduct does not provide a defence.

In addition to racial harassment, the creation of a poisoned environment is a form of discrimination and is contrary to the Code. Unlike harassment, which requires repeated behaviour, a poisoned environment can be created by a single incident, if serious or substantiated enough.

A poisoned environment can be created by the comments or conduct of any person, regardless of his or her position within the organization. Therefore, a co-worker, a supervisor, a co-tenant or a teacher can all engage in actions that poison the environment.

It is the responsibility of every employer, landlord and service provider to take steps to ensure that its environment is free from harassment or inappropriate race-related comments or conduct, even if no one objects.



## Our Illustrator

The illustrations in this special supplement to the North Bay Nugget, Sault Star and Timmins Daily Press are almost all by Laura Ouellette.

Born and raised in Sault Ste. Marie, Mrs. Ouellette began drawing seriously at the age of nine and continued throughout her teen and university years, drawing portraits for friends while earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in French and Italian.

A freelance writer, artist and photographer, Mrs. Ouellette wrote and illustrated published articles while pursuing a commercial art diploma at George Brown College in Toronto in 1988.

A graduate of Canadore College's Print Journalism program in 1993, Mrs. Ouellette has worked as a reporter for several Ontario newspapers and written for publications including The North Bay Nugget, The Canadian Shield, The Brockville Recorder and Times, The Orangeville Banner, The Almaguin-Nipissing Travel Association, Punch! Magazine and Young People's Press.

Mrs. Ouellette currently lives in North Bay with her family.



# Organizational responsibility regarding racism



**E**mployers, unions, educational facilities, service providers and other organizations covered by the Ontario Human Rights Code are responsible for ensuring that their environments are free from racial discrimination and harassment. This means not just responding when issues of discrimination or harassment arise, but also taking proactive measures to monitor for and prevent their occurrence.

In addition to acts of discrimination and harassment by individuals, organizations have an obligation to be aware of whether their practices, policies and programs are having an adverse impact or are resulting in systemic discrimination for racialized persons or groups. In some cases, this may include collecting and analyzing data regarding race and related grounds.

It is not acceptable from a human rights perspective to choose to remain unaware of the potential existences of

discrimination or harassment, to ignore or to fail to act to address human rights matters, whether or not a complaint has been raised. An organization can violate the Code by directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally engaging in discrimination or harassment. This includes condoning or authorizing discriminatory or harassing behaviours by failing to appropriately address them.

Liability under the Code can result in serious repercussions. In addition to monetary damages, an organization found responsible for discrimination and harassment can be required to change practices that have resulted in discrimination, to

engage in monitoring, to implement comprehensive anti-discrimination and harassment policies and to engage in widespread training of staff and management.

To fulfill the duty to foster environments that are respectful of human rights the Commission recommends a solid organizational anti-racism program consisting of the following four elements:

***Employers, unions, educational facilities, service providers and other organizations covered by the Ontario Human Rights Code are responsible for ensuring that their environments are free from racial discrimination and harassment.***

A comprehensive anti-racism vision statement and policy: such a policy and vision statement sends a clear message about an organization's commitment to equity and diversity. It also sets out what actions are prohibited and provides a

procedure for dealing with issues that may arise.

Proactive, ongoing monitoring: monitoring allows an organization to be aware of potential problems and be in a position to address them quickly and effectively.

Implementation strategies: measures such as mandatory training of all staff, organizational change initiatives, special programs and sharing information about the organization's anti-racism vision statement and policy with staff and management are required in order to successfully implement an organization's anti-racism goals.

Evaluation: ongoing evaluation of an organization's anti-racism program is important to ensure its effectiveness.

For further information or copies of the Commission's Policy and Guidelines on Racism and Racial Discrimination visit the Commission's web site at [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca) or call 1-800-387-9080.





# Examples of racial discrimination

People can experience racial discrimination in a variety of different ways. In its most overt form, racial discrimination can occur as a result of stereotyping, prejudice and bias. Racial discrimination also occurs in large measure through subtle forms of differential treatment.

A fact sheet from the Ontario Human Rights Commission says racial discrimination may occur because of overt prejudice, hostility or negative feelings held by someone about a racialized person or group. People are treated unfairly; such as by being refused a job or apartment simply because of bias toward them based on race and related grounds.

People may also experience racial discrimination because of stereotyping. Stereotyping typically involves attributing the same characteristics to all members of a group, regardless of individual differences. It is often based on misconceptions, incomplete information and/or false generalizations. In most cases, stereotypes assume negative characteristics about a group. Even those who are well meaning and not overtly biased can nevertheless stereotype.

Racial profiling is a form of stereotyping that has particular implications for racialized persons. The Commission has defined racial profiling as any action undertaken for

reasons of safety, security or public protection that relies on stereotypes about race, colour, ethnicity, ancestry, religion or place of origin rather than on reasonable suspicion, to single out an individual for greater scrutiny or different treatment. Race only needs to be a factor in the conduct alleged to constitute profiling.

Some considerations that help determine whether racial profiling occurred include:

- Statements that indicate stereotyping or prejudice such as racial comments;

- A non-existent, contradictory or changing explanation for why someone was targeted;

- The situation unfolded differently than if the person had been white, or

- Deviations from normal practices or an unprofessional manner

Subtle and subversive discrimination has been identified as one of the most common ways racialized people experience unequal treatment. Subtle forms of discrimination can often be detected only upon examining all the circumstances. As well, contrasting how a racialized person was treated with how others were treated in a comparable situation, or looking for patterns of behaviour will help to determine whether subtle discrimination was at play.

While comments about race may sometimes be made, this is not necessary for a finding that subtle racial discrimination has occurred. Racial discrimination need only be one of the reasons for the treatment received.

There are many examples of subtle forms of racial discrimination. In employment, it can take the form of failing to hire, train, mentor or promote a racialized person. Racialized persons may find themselves subjected to excessive performance monitoring or may be more seriously blamed for a common mistake. And, normal differences of opinion or failing to get along with a co-worker may be treated as more serious when a racialized person is involved.

Subtle racial discrimination can occur in a variety of other contexts as well. In housing, racialized persons may be turned away as tenants, or may not be granted equal access to maintenance and repairs. Issues also arise in services and facilities including malls, restaurants, movie theatres, education services and healthcare services.

For further information or copies of the Commission's Policy and Guidelines on Racism and Racial Discrimination see its web site at [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca)





# Where to now?

We hope this newspaper insert has provided you with new insights on racism in Northeastern Ontario.

Limited extra copies are available by contacting Young People's Press, 374 Fraser St., North Bay, P1B 3W7, 705-495-8887.

Debwewin project committees in North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie and Timmins are working to implement the eight recommendations from last year's study. Those recommendations, rather lengthy to list here, are found on the project web site at [www.debwewin.ca](http://www.debwewin.ca)

In addition, the North Bay and Timmins groups are pursuing funding to work on implementation of the Canadian Coalition of Cities Against Racism 10-point plan. The 10 commitments are:

Set up a monitoring, vigilance and solidarity network against racism at the city level  
Initiate or develop further the collection of data on racism and discrimination, establish achievable objectives and set common indicators to assess the impact of municipal and other policies

Support victims and contribute to strengthening their capacity to defend themselves against racism and discrimination  
Ensure better information for city dwellers on their rights and obligations, on protection and legal options and on the penalties for racist acts or behaviour by using a participatory approach through consultations with service users and service providers  
Facilitate equal opportunity employment practices and

support for diversity in the labour market through exercising the discretionary powers of the municipal governments

The cities commit themselves to be equal opportunities employers and equitable service providers, and to engage in monitoring, training and development to achieve this objective

Take active steps to strengthen policies against housing discrimination within the cities  
Strengthen measures against discrimination in access to and enjoyment of all forms of education and to promote the provision of education in mutual tolerance and understanding

Ensure fair representation and promotion for the diverse range of cultural expression and heritage of city dwellers in the cultural programs, collective memory and public space of the city and promote interculturality in city life  
Support or establish mechanisms for dealing with hate crimes and conflict management

For further information on anti-racism please see the YPP web sites at [www.debwewin.ca](http://www.debwewin.ca), and [www.equalitytoday.org](http://www.equalitytoday.org)

The Department of Canadian Heritage's web site has significant information at [www.pch.gc.ca](http://www.pch.gc.ca)

The Ontario Human Rights Commission can be found at [www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca)

The Canadian Race Relations Foundation web site is [www.cr.ca](http://www.cr.ca)

The City of Sudbury's anti-racism project web site is at [www.sudburydiversity.ca](http://www.sudburydiversity.ca)

## Reflecting on the Truth

By Laura Ouellette

### Light exposes.

That's good news for anyone in the dark trying to figure out a solution to a problem like racism. But it's not always pleasant—because we don't always like what we find or see about ourselves.

Yet anyone who's ever turned on a light late at night knows: after that initial blinding sting, your eyes begin to adjust as you gradually open them more, so you see what's around you and can begin to move forward without stumbling or getting hurt.

This illustration grew out of a question that kept running through my mind while illustrating these stories and while watching this project unfold: Once everything here is said and done, once we do see the truth within and around ourselves, what do we do with it?

Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins and North Bay persons aren't the only ones being reflected upon here. If you've seen yourself in any of these illustrations or stories, then the Debwewin Project will have helped in part to shed some light on an ongoing problem, in

much the same way we take a look at ourselves in the mirror. The rest is up to you.

We can use this study—like a hand-held mirror—to our advantage, by taking a look at ourselves and reflecting on what we can do to eliminate racism. The problem is, that same tool can be used by some wrongly: because while mirrors can be used for self-examination and can shed light on our own appearance, we can all too easily react with a knee-jerk response in our discomfort, and shift the mirror, and our focus, onto someone else.

When we hide in this fashion, we also deflect the light of truth away from us. Should the other person react defensively in the same fashion, it's the same result one gets holding two mirrors face-to-face: the reflection will forever continue, and in this case, no light gets through to anyone.

So when will it stop? It begins with each of us taking an honest look at ourselves (or re-shifting and returning the focus back to ourselves) and how we can become part of the solution—not part of the problem—in eliminating racism.

We may not always like what we see in ourselves, but it can be the beginning of a change for the better, and it begins with our taking a look in the mirror.