

Georgian

\$1.95

# RAY TODAY



**Monster cottages  
debated in Georgian  
Bay Township**  
4, 5 and 6

**Family snowshoe  
trails at Blue  
Mountain**  
15



" linking recreationists, residents and tourists with nature Winter 2004-5 #67



## Tacking on ice

Lake Simcoe cottager sails his patented  
winter sail board up the frozen Lake

by Charles Chepregi

**S**ome of the local "Snowfer" gang: Joe, Allan, Russ, Moira and me, Charles and a few other guys, headed up to Willow Beach on Lake Simcoe for a fun weekend of sailing. The conditions looked really promising; 10-12 knots coming from the north. There was no one else around - the whole lake was ours. The wind direction was onshore, but that was pretty academic really; it makes no difference when the surface of the lake is as hard (if not harder) than the shoreline! The ice was over two feet thick, and there was hard-pack snow on top of that; all topped off with a thin layer of fresh powder, sculpted by the wind into gentle undulations so it looked like lazy rolling waves. When you get up to a good speed it gives a real roller-coaster ride.

It was mid-March, and the days were getting longer and warmer, although the temperature was still only just above freezing. The dazzling sun rays reflected from the crystalline snow surface - it was beautiful. We couldn't ask for anything better.

It was five metre weather (not often you get to say that about a 10-12 knot breeze!), and it was evident that everyone was in a real hurry to get ready. Every minute not used for sailing was a minute wasted. I used to feel this way when I started windsurfing in 1985, and it's great to

Sailing a "Snowfer" over the smooth ice of Lake Simcoe last year were Russ Dewar (left) and Joe Albert. The board was invented, patented and is now being produced by Lake Simcoe cottager Charles Chepregi, who just couldn't get enough sailboarding out of the summer months. The technique is similar to windsurfing, without the worries over tipping. Rolling spills do happen, however, and helmets are strongly recommended.

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