



ONE CITY  
MANY VOICES

**Thunder Bay's Anti-Racism Advisory Committee produces this monthly column to promote greater understanding of race relations in Northwestern Ontario.**

## The end game . . .

BY SANDI BOUCHER

As an entrepreneur, as a mom, as a woman committed to life-long learning, I am constantly researching new and innovative ways to achieve my goals. Recently, I came upon an article that advised "Do not fall in love with the product you create or the service you provide. Rather, fall in love with your ideal client." These words deserved pondering.

My thoughts turned to our city, and a scenario I see play out here and in surrounding communities time and time again.

So many fear change, they long for the days of old, days past that have now been highlighted via the lens of fond memory, with hardships and shortcomings forgotten in the passage of time. So many do not focus on "the end game" but rather, sadly, focus on the process that will get us there. They focus on the service or the product and not the benefit.

So, what is the end game? A prosperous city for all? A city where all can enjoy safety and peace and freedom and opportunity?

I would hope so, I would truly hope so for my family, my offspring and now my grandchild. But how will we get there? Are you strong enough, wise enough, liberal enough to realize . . . perhaps it is time for a new way?

Have no fear. No one wants to throw the baby out with the bath water, but new times deserve and require new ways of doing things.

We are not the man or woman we were yesterday — we are older, wiser. Do we not therefore deserve improved methods to match our improved skills?

Similarities bring us together, differences force us apart. Perhaps it is time to look deeper, to find the threads that bind us.

As a First Nations woman, I follow seven simple teachings. To live my life with wisdom, love, respect, bravery, honesty, humility and truth. These words are not foreign to non-aboriginals. They are not that different from your teachings . . . perhaps we are not that different at all.

Like you, I want a city where neighbours once again look out for each other, where doors can be left unlocked and children are free to play without fear.

I am not the enemy nor is my race, and I am wise enough to realize and admit that like with any other race we have our shining stars and our lost souls, our mentors and our idiots. Do not judge us by the lost, do not expect us all to shine. Simply work with us, to achieve the end game.

I pray one day my grandson will play alongside yours and that they will not care what nationality the other is, what language their parents speak, or how much money their family has. They will know simply that they are neighbours, they are friends, and that together anything is possible.

That is my dream. That is my "end game" and it is one I work hard to achieve each and every day, alongside some amazing colleagues made up of a multitude of backgrounds, religions, cultures, races, creeds, sexual orientation and financial abilities. We are all citizens of Thunder Bay and together we can make sure that statement always invokes pride.

Thank you/Miigwetch. 24/04/3

*Sandi Boucher is a published author, activist, and motivational speaker. A member of the Seine River First Nation, she is a longtime resident of Thunder Bay.*