

THE FLYING FEMMES -

WOMEN'S CROSS-COUNTRY SNOWMOBILE GROUP

By JOYCE ROXBURY

Are you a woman who just never seems to get enough snowmobiling? Someone adventuresome, who always seems to be looking for something more? If so, then cross-country snowmobiling is for you.

Several years ago Sally Ayers and I got together after a day of snowmobiling and talked about how much we would like to take an overnight snowmobile trip, such as our husbands had been doing for a number of years with a men's group known as the "Dirty Dozen". Their stories always sounded like so much fun! So, with our husbands' support and encouragement, we began to plan our first safari. We chose the area we wanted to cover, sent ahead for maps and made our motel reservations. This first trip turned out to be about the best one ever! Along with our other travels, we covered the 100 Mile Snofari out of the Crandon area. We laughed so hard at the expressions on peoples' faces when we went into the various pit stops to get our cards punched. Everyone wanted to know where our men were. Oh, we did make a couple of wrong turns, ending up on the wrong trails for short distances, but it all worked out. All in all, it was the start of many years of fun ahead.

Machine trouble? Sure. It happens with the best and newest machines. On our first trip, the weather became very warm and Sally had some trouble with her machine over-heating. On our second trip, I had the engine on my brand new sled seize up. But, as any man would do, we hooked a rope on and towed it to the nearest pit stop where I called my husband. He loaded his sled on the trailer and brought it right up for me to use so that we could complete our scheduled trip. An



Important thing to remember before you contemplate such a trip is to know your machine. Learn to change a spark plug and drive belt. Carry the proper tools for

your sled, as well as a flashlight, knife and some good, strong tape (duct tape works great for many things). Also make sure that you carry a tow rope.

Our second cross-country trip was made even more interesting with the addition of outdoor writer Dorothy Deer. She has an excellent eye for the photographic and helped add humor to the trip when she missed a corner, winding up in the brush once and a huge snowdrift another time. These things occasionally happen even to the best of drivers.

On our third trip, we really enlarged our group, feeling that the more, the merrier it would be. (Too many could be trouble, though, so we decided on a total of six sleds.) We also included a back-up vehicle with a four-place trailer and two extra sleds. And, as it turned out, we needed the extra machines! Marilyn Schoessow, a real quiet gal, picked an argument with a tree. The crazy tree had stood in one place for 50 years or more but when Marilyn came through, it jumped right out in front of her! Needless to say, she lost the argument. We pulled out the duct tape, taped her hood together enough to make the next rendezvous with our support vehicle (they met us at pre-arranged road crossings & pit stops), and kept merrily on our way.

Last winter's trip included the same group with new back-up drivers. It was at this point that Carol Ayzvazzadeh dubbed us the Flying Femmes and Sally designed a logo which we all had painted on our helmets. We also wear yellow tulips on our helmets, just to denote the female gender to all passing snowmobilers. This trip, totaling over 400 miles, turned out to be our biggest challenge yet. It was 25° below zero when we left Eagle River, bright and sunny all day, although still cold, and about 30° below zero 195 miles later when we arrived in the Hayward area about 9:00 p.m. A good, hot shower or swim in the pool was very inviting. Once you have been part of a group of women doing something like this, you hate to stay home, even if you don't feel exactly up to par. Jeanne Bauer rode with us but after the first day, had to load up her machine and get in the back-up vehicle, suffering from extreme shoulder and neck pain, which turned out to be a pinched nerve. This can happen and it's one more good reason to have a back-up vehicle when you are traveling long distances. As part of the pre-trip planning, we had called a snowmobile club in Hurley for maps, etc. They sure gave us the royal treatment! The night before we arrived, they specially made sure all the routes we would travel were groomed, which was just super. After being on the trail a couple of days, this was certainly appreciated.

We will definitely be back on the trail this coming winter although as yet we do not know where we're headed to. Look for the Flying Femmes insignia on our helmets or our yellow tulips. If you get to the Eagle River area and care to swap stories, look us up. Our trail system is the greatest and so is our hospitality.