

Issue 1

Return of the Jedi
March 5, 2005

We did the snowmobile thing today. (Us locals call it a sled.) Suz and I rented two Ski-doo sleds at around 11 AM. One of our friendly neighbors Cliff, who said he would serve as our trail guide, joined us. And, with thousands of miles of trails on the UP, we were glad to have some local advice for our first trip out.

First, we needed a helmet. You can rent those too and it's the law, you've got to wear one, any color you want so long as it's black. So another ten bucks and we kind of looked like Mr. and Mrs. Darth Vader. (See attached pic) Then with my slurred voice echoing from the tiny holes in the face of the helmet, I sounded like a "tipsy" Darth Vader.

Leaving the Motel (the rental place), we had to cross the parking lot where the snow had been cleared. First lesson, the sled can't be steered on pavement. You point it; go some then get off, realign the sled, point it toward some snow, and go again.

Once on the snow we could steer okay. Down a couple of

streets, infringing on a few front yards, then across a major highway and finally we found the trail.

Now for the fun part. It was a beautiful sunny day so sunglasses were definitely in order, and with the temp soaring close to 30, we were warm and cozy. Zooming along at about 20 to 30 MPH, we were enjoying the snow-covered countryside. 30 MPH seemed plenty fast. Then Cliff, (former friend) took off at 90 MPH! That's 90 miles per hour! Way too fast for us Californians who kept calling the "sled" a Jet Ski. Soon we too were going fast. Well, somewhat fast. Susan hit 45 once, and I got it up to 60, but who's keeping track anyway.



After a while on the old snowmobile trail, taking a pee became our next challenge. Our former friend failed to tell us not to tank up on coffee before hitting the trail. Well I guess the challenge was really Susan's challenge. Cliff and I didn't see it as much of a challenge. Moreover, Susan didn't think our evaluation of the situation was at all funny. I guess there

have been other female Darth Vaders on the trail because Cliff came to the rescue, he knew just where the closest "dump station" was.

We next found the local "watering hole". The ROCK BOTTOM Tavern. It was loaded with fellow jet skiers. We all looked like Darth Vader, except for a couple of non-locals who wore bright red and yellow helmets. You could tell us local experienced riders from the Trolls from down on the Lower Peninsula. (Us locals refer to visitors who live below the bridge as "Trolls") Those lowly Trolls come up here with their fancy dancy souped up sleds and flashy matching outfits, and act like they own the place.

Anyway, after a beer and a Philly Cheese sandwich we're ready to hit the trail again. Okay, Susan and I are tired; we're actually ready for a nap. Cliff asked if we should keep going or head home. Guess which we voted for.

We got home about 5 PM. We did about 75 miles, purchased \$25 worth of gas, we didn't hurt anybody and we didn't hurt ourselves. (Then again, maybe we did hurt something. As I write the e-mail, my whole body aches!)

All in all a great day. I think we're ready for our very own sleds.