

Sonja's and Lloyd's Great Snowmobile Adventure
By Helen Olson

I went North with Missie and Leah on Thursday.¹ Then John and Carol came up on Friday because of Bonnie's memorial service. Sonja, Sheree and Sheree's friend Marie also came on Friday and went to Lynn's but they all spent a lot of time at K & L's. Sonja missed the turn at Standish, then missed the next turn so didn't get to Lynn's till about 11:00 p.m. Meanwhile they stopped for dinner at a bar that was crowded because they were having the Iosco County Idol contest. The menu didn't look promising, so Sheree asked if they had any vegetarian offerings and the waitress said, "We have buffalo burgers." I think that's how you know you're up North!

We went to the memorial service on Saturday and, as you can imagine, had a good time visiting. Missie and Leah went to visit an old friend who now lives in Alpena. When we got back, Lynn, Sonja and girls were at K and L's. They had tried skiing, but the snow was too sticky and they wound up with snow packed on the bottom of their skis. Then Lloyd got out the only snowmobile he has running and hitched the sled to it. He took off with Sonja in the sled so he could show her the trail with the intention of her then taking everyone else out for rides. They were whipping down through the woods and went up around a curve. Sonja went flying out into the snow and Lloyd kept going with the sled dragging sideways behind him. Somewhere along the way, the sled righted itself. Lloyd proceeded on for about ten more minutes up around the field and back down through the front of the place and the parked cars. When he got back to the house where Sheree and Maria were waiting, Sheree said, "Grandpa, where's Mom?" He looked back at the empty sled and said, "Damned if I know." Then he went off to retrace his path backward to look for her. Meanwhile, she had emerged from the woods and started slogging across the field. Because she wasn't right on the trail, he went zipping past her again. We watched as she came slogging along and kept bending over. It turned out that she was laughing so hard she had to bend over to catch her breath. Lloyd finally found her and they arrived back screaming with laughter. Then Sonja took the girls out for a ride and the snowmobile stalled out on a hill, so we saw the three of them staggering out of the woods again. Sonja came in and declared that she had had enough fun for the day! Lloyd took Missie and Leah out. Leah declared that her mother was "terrified" but that she had almost fallen asleep.

The next day, I was standing in the dining room when a pink hat went swooping by. I thought, "what child is that?" It was Lynn, testing the snow. They all went skiing, including Leah, who did quite well.

¹ This is an excerpt from an e-mail I sent Annette and Dan in February, 2010, after a trip up North. Bonnie Benghauser, whose funeral we attended, was a wonderful family friend. She died in her sleep at age 96.