

# How I Got a New Sled and Almost Lost my Life !

Joe Randig

I have been waiting for some snow to help get me into a wintery frame of mind but it's near the end of January and we have not seen much snow. I'm talking about an old-fashioned winter like when I was a kid in the 1950s. The snow started after Thanksgiving and it snowed 'til the end of February.

I was lucky because we lived on a street with a hill that would be blocked off for sled riding when we had enough snow, and I loved to go sled riding. Even though I wore leg braces and walked with crutches I could manage to get myself to the top of our hill and I could ride a sled just about as good as anyone. My little brother and I would wait with great anticipation for that first good snowfall.

As we walked home from school on those cold winter days our pace would quicken as our street came into view several blocks away. There it was, the faint red glow from the old lantern that hung from the sawhorse barricade at the end of our street which meant we were going sled riding. We couldn't move fast enough to get home and change into our play clothes which would include an extra pair of pants to keep us warm. The extra pants didn't help much; after a few hours of sledding I was soaked through down to the leather on my brace.

I was about 12 and my brother was 9 when we set out on our first sled riding adventure for the season. My brother would pull both our sleds to the top of the hill. He didn't waste any time, jumping on his sled and down the hill he flew. It took me a little longer because I would lay my crutches on the sled then I would lay on top of the crutches. I was just starting to push off when I noticed a car turning the corner along side of the sawhorse barricade behind me. I thought he saw me and would stop and let me get out of his way but he didn't see me and didn't stop. Lucky for me he was going slow as the car drove over me. The under side of the car dragged me off my sled and I was laying on the snow-covered street with a big tire on my left and right and a motor running inches from my back. I could hear my little brother screaming from the bottom of the hill as the car with me under it slowly slid down the hill. My right arm was wedged tight against a front tire but the tire wasn't rolling. The driver must have had the brakes on; otherwise my arm would have been crushed. Eventually the car slid to the side of the street and came to a stop along the curb.

Aside from having the crap scared out of me I came out of the ordeal unharmed. My sled was another story. I never saw it after that day but a week later my neighbor, the man who ran over me, came to our house with a new sled for me.

Things were different back in the 1950s. I didn't go to the hospital; the police were not called; no law suits were filed. It was just an accident. And that's how I got my new sled.

As I think back on the events of that day I realize what could have happened and now know that my guardian angel was sled riding with me that day.

*Joe Randig*

