

Also Invents Ski Daddler Dance—

# Troubles, Deadly Cold Stalk Jerry on 600 Race

"After this race, I must be about 45 years old."

The above remark came out of Gerald (Jerry) Evans of Allakaket who is now 27 years old. Jerry had just finished second on the now famous Midnight Sun 600 race from Anchorage to Fairbanks on Class D classification sno-mobile marathon last Saturday.

For his part in what has to be one of the most gruelling races for man and machine, Jerry received \$1,693.24 for 600 miles at the time of 22:44:26.

Three hundred and thirteen sno-mobile racers started from Anchorage on January 9 and 13 crossed the finish line on January

11 after racing in 50-70 below zero temperatures and some high winds that accompanied the very cold weather.

The race was made with two overnight stops at Glennallen and Tok.

As did great many other racers, Jerry had his share of troubles during the race.

"I flipped a couple of times," he said. "I landed on my head once. Another time I was dragged on the pavement and burned a hole in my clothes by friction."

The most difficulty occurred between Glennallen and Tok when Jerry, who drove his own Ski Daddler with the sponsorship of Terry Franklin's Polaris

Lounge, when he lost both of his skis at the front of the machine.

Jerry said he couldn't steer the machine after losing the skis. He had to turn the Ski Daddler on its side and inverted a large spring so that the bowed side of it would hit the driving surface.

Jerry was able to drive to Tok using that spring in place of the skis and steered the machine with it and his feet. He made the run in 11 hours, one hour before he would have been disqualified.

Another serious complication was that Jerry lost the use of his lights on the way to Tok.

Starting out of Tok after going three miles, his motor stopped and which he couldn't restart for a long while.

He said the run from Tok to Fairbanks was the coldest of the three days and there was icefog all the way.

"I could hardly tell where I was after Eielson (Air Force base) to Fairbanks. While I was driving I kept asking myself, 'Why are you mixed up in this thing?' Jerry said.

He said the cold was overpowering.

Jerry said he might have started a new dance along the way—a Ski Daddler Dance.

He said when you got very cold you got lazy—the first signs of the process of freezing to death.

"Every 15 minutes, I got up on the Ski Daddler and danced around—jumped around while going at 50 miles an hour. This to get the circulation back," said Jerry Evans.

It was estimated that during the race where low temperatures were encountered, the chill factor was somewhere around 140 degrees below zero.

Jerry said all he got was a small frostbitten nose and numb toes. He wore a face mask all the way and helmet as did all the drivers.

Jerry's friends said that if "the tough kid" hadn't had so much trouble along the way, he would have won the race. His performance was credited to superb physical condition.

Jerry himself credited "the pit crew" for the success of his race headed by team captain Lucky Lentz and maintenance chief Marvin Jennings. Others in the team were Larry Murray, Perk Perkins, Bill Worly, Cliff Rouse, Don Frank and a girl team member, Brook Bennett.

"Brook Bennett gave me the face mask I used during the race," said Jerry.

In Class A, Basil Harington, Fairbanks won with the time of

23:19:06; second, Alfred Verkorkian, Soldotna, 23:49:40; third, Ed Pfeiffer, Fairbanks, 25:58:43; fourth, Richard Bateman, Anchorage, 27:26:20.

Class B was won by Jim Austin, Anchorage, 17:52:09; second, Leslie Bradley, Fairbanks, 19:14:13; third, Louis Youngdahl, Eagle River, 20:40:22; fourth, Don Hegwer, Soldotna, 23:53:52; fifth, Jim Burnett, Roseau, Minn., 20:55:51;

Class C was won by a lone driver Don Drews, Roseau, Minn., with the time of 18:39:10. He collected \$4,400.

Class D was won by Tony Burkell, Roseau, Minn., 17:46:36; and Jerry Evans, Fairbanks, 22:44:26.

Jerry Evans is an electronics technician at the Gilmore Creek NASA Acquisition Station near Fairbanks. He and his wife, Madrene, have one child, a girl Marie, five months old.

How did Jerry help to keep his face from frostbites?

"I chewed gum all the way. When my face got cold, the gum got hard and I had to chew harder."