



(Freeman Staff Photos by Earl Schneider)



## Devil's Hollow's days of glory

By John Engelbert  
Freeman Staff

**OCONOMOWOC** — Devil's Hollow is north of Highway 16, just off Ski Slide Road in Jefferson County, and from out of the hilly forest west of Lake LaBelle looms the slide that was built about 1927.

David Reul, junior high school music teacher and band director, owns the property, 11 acres. Reul built a home atop one of the hills, and though the ski slide looks rickety, it really isn't. He uses it as "a lookout when I'm hunting rabbits" and has other plans for it.

Reul is going to put a windmill atop the steel structure, "good for another 50 years," if he can recoup the cost in power to his home in about 10 years.

In his basement Reul has a large collection of material on Devil's Hollow's days of glory as a ski jumping center — laminated newspaper articles from Milwaukee papers, pictures, posters, even directional signs for people looking for a place to park, programs back to 1928.

His thought is to display a significant piece of Oconomowoc history in some prominent place. And he keeps

on collecting.

The Oconomowoc Ski Club came into being in 1926, organized by 10 Oconomowoc business and professional men.

Not long ago Darven Winger and Willard Leslie reminisced about the club. Leslie was active as an officer for a long time, and Winger jumped from the time he was 14 in 1939 until he married in 1956. He too was an officer. Devil's Hollow was used until 1958.

But the club itself is still in existence and has active members, three of them, all of them Kecks.

Bob and Dick Keck, 38, and 36 now, jump in senior meets, and jumped in international competition some years ago in Poland. And now there is an eight-year-old, Peter Keck. He jumped about two weeks ago in the Pee Wee Division.

In its heyday the club "had a tower and lights, and we jumped out there two or three times a week," Winger said.

Winger is in the tavern business. "When we had to we'd go down to the tavern and get a bunch of guys to come out and pack the slide, and

Continued on page 18

Above, the ski jumps still stands, a good lookout for rabbit-hunting now; at the left, a tournament program from the jump's heyday.