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by
GEORGE GRIM

NNINE WACONIA high schoolers can tell you how many nails there are in each board of a large old barn. They pulled out each one.

What's more, they also took down a granary and a garage on the Bob Carlson farm near Mayer, Minn., and used the lumber to put up a building on the top of a hill at Cologne. The nine young men had started something they insisted they'd finish. You'll find the result in "Allen's Thrill Hill," a toboggan run with a tow, lights, the works.

THE HILL is on the Allen Hasse farm. There's a gentle slope, as you look down from the top, then an almost sheer drop. Some 400 feet beyond that stretches a long, slowly leveling run of 1,000 feet. It seemed as though nature had designed a natural toboggan run.

"For quite a few winters, neighbors and their friends came to the farm to slide down our hill," said Hasse. "Then the idea hatched to put it into real shape. These nine high school fellows from Waconia figured it would be a project for them. It turned out to be plenty of work."

The big barn, granary and garage were given to the boys by Bob Carlson. They dismantled it starting last April.

This wasn't a wrecking job or a knock-'em-down, but a disassembly.

They pulled out each nail, salvaged the lumber, and hauled it 10 miles to the Hasse place at Cologne. Victor Koch, Waconia implement dealer, loaned the boys his trucks, free, to transport the lumber.

For weeks, the high schoolers pulled nails. Then, with Allen Hasse's help, they drew plans for the warming house. Up it went, in impressive size for enthusiastic amateurs. It's 40 feet long, 19 feet wide. Inside are a kitchen, an office, and the sizable get-together room for tobogganers.

THE GAS STOVE only cost the boys \$18, because the Roddy brothers, auctioneers, went on the prowl as they conducted sales. There's a rope tow, too, with an old tractor engine that Koch the implement man (his son is one of the nine whose project this became) has loaned.

Allen's brother Howard helped clear the long meadow at the bottom of the hill. The lights were strung up and, last weekend, Allen's Thrill Hill was open for business.

"We have strict rules about conduct," said Allen. "Since the boys are all teen-agers and they run the place, it's not a case of adults cracking down. The rules of no liquor, no rowdyism, are inflexible. Those boys mean what they say."

"WE CHARGE 50 cents a person for the day," Allen told me. "Nobody's going to get rich that way, since we only open for the general public on Sundays from 2 to 4:30 and 8 to 10:30 p.m. What we hope to do is interest church young people's groups. We'd turn on the lights, start up the tow, stock up on refreshments and get the stove going in our warming building for them."

You can call Allen, if this sounds like a toboggan outing for your group. Cologne is about 10 miles west of Shakopee on highway 212. Allen's number at the farm (and Thrill Hill, now) is Windsor 6-2881.