

## Oak Ridge Ski Club: Do-It-Yourself Tale

Trials, tribulations — and successes—of one of Janesville's ambitious do-it-yourself projects were told to Lions Club members this week by Joe Johnson, who reviewed the history of Oak Ridge Ski Club.

Nucleus of the club was a group of ski enthusiasts who built a small hill in Riverside Park in 1957 on a yearly budget of \$18, but the Oak Ridge Ski Club, which now has 135 memberships, most of them families, now serves almost 500 skiers from Janesville, Milton, Evansville, Beloit and other communities in the area, Johnson said.

Johnson recalls that the Riverside Park tow was built from an old truck engine and body which periodically caught fire and even more often was raided and damaged by roving vandals.

The present version of the club was formed by a group headed by John Koppius, who in 1961 made arrangements for access to Scott Hill on City 14, according to Johnson. He said the club owes many persons for its success but

most of all, Ray Scott, who has permitted the use of the "very excellent hill" for the past seven years.

The club, chartered in 1962, was "off and running" after it obtained an old tractor from Don Helgesen, lumber from John Marling and earth moving work from Bill Ryan and S. W. Reeder. A rope tow was fashioned with the tractor, some old car wheels and poles from the telephone company, and trails were hacked through the brush.

At the end of the first year, members, weary of carrying gasoline and building fires to thaw out the tractor, obtained a discarded 25-horsepower electric motor from General Motors Corp., and the tow was completely rebuilt.

An eye-catching chalet, designed and built by Bill Marx, can accommodate about 75 persons around a large circular fireplace. "This has been perfected to the point where now it no longer fills the building with smoke," Johnson said.

Midway in the club's second

year, an A-frame storage building was erected, additional mercury vapor lighting installed and adequate snow grooming equipment purchased.

The tow will handle about 350 persons per hour, according to Johnson, who said that a state safety inspector called the club "one of the best small operations in the state."

"Facilities at the Oak Ridge club are equal to most of the commercial resorts in Southern Wisconsin in both vertical drop and length of run," said Johnson. He called the \$30 a year family membership "a bargain," in comparison with the ease an average family has in spending \$50 in a single day's skiing at a commercial resort.

Johnson said the club still

has ambitious plans, including artificial snow-making equipment on the hill. This, he said, would eliminate such dismal failures for skiers as the winter of 1967-68 when the tow never was put to use. In an average year, members get almost 200 hours of skiing, however.

The club does sponsor some trips to ski resorts in Northern Wisconsin, Upper Michigan and Colorado. Officers are Robert Mowris, president; Bill Wood, treasurer; Roger Edwards, secretary; and Fred Wienecke, chairman of the board.

Guests at the meeting were Dave Parker, Ken Holmes, Mike Bier and Chris Doman, Junior Lions, and Elmer Schwichtenberg and Al Morris.

