

Swooshing in MW!

By Jody Miller

Winter activities from my childhood in Manitowish Waters were varied and didn't involve motors. The Lake Lenore Ski Hill was created in the 1950's by the Ilg family at the corner of Highways 51 and W. Amenities included a rope tow and a small warming house. No fees were charged, but mothers contributed hot chocolate, cookies and doughnuts, while fathers volunteered to keep the tow running and help monitor the skiers. Ski equipment was basic: leather shoe boots, wooden skis with bear-trap bindings, and wood and leather ski poles.

It's where most children in town learned to ski, and weekends were not complete without at least one day spent flying down the hill and then trying to stay upright while being pulled uphill by the noisy tow. Sometimes metal flying saucers and wooden toboggans were included in the mix, which made for some harrowing near collisions!

Ice fishing was another family sport, and as children, we thought it great fun to be driven onto a frozen lake, scoop ice out of the holes, watch for a red flag, yell "tip up" and run like crazy to pull up a fish. The wooden ice shacks were often quite cozy with wood stoves to keep warm. Having a bonfire on the ice to roast hot dogs and marshmallows was not unusual and especially welcome when the fish weren't biting!