Camp directors turn to kids, ski instruction,

By JUDITH BERNE

How do summer enterprises make out in winter? Ice cream parlors push candy and other confections. Bicycle stores offer cross country skis. And directors of one Michigan summer camp operate a lo-cal downhill ski school, Winter Walden, for youngsteen.

Michigan summer camp year.

cal downhill ski school, Winter Walden, for youngsters.

Local directors of Camp Walden, Cheboygan, came up with the idea of a ski school while holed up in a Chicago hotel five years ago, waiting out a blizard

zard. Neal Schechter, Larry Stevens, Har-vey Rubenstein and Don Sill were in

the Windy City promoting the summer camp which attracts a sizeable number of Chicago-area youngsters.

"We were looking for different ways for the four of us to get involved in something during the winter that was child-related," Schechter, a West Bloomfield resident, said.

Rubenstein, a Southfield resident, and Sill, of Novi, both teach in the Birmingham School District.

Schechter and Stevens, of Farming-ton Hills, are former teachers turned full-time camp directors.

"We hit upon the idea of teaching ski-ing to children," Schechter added, "be-

We ais so.

WINTER WALDEN was launched four winters ago with about 90 young-sters transported via two buses on snowy Saturdays to local ski relates.

This year, more than 500 children participate with transportation provided from Huntington Woods, Southfield, Birmingham, Bloomfield Township and West Bloomfield.

Each child pays a membership fee (about \$65) and then \$16.50 each week to cover transportation, instruction (one or two lessons) and ski area fees.

Although the venture shows growth,

ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS and a child-oriented philosophy applied at their summer camp transfer readily to the ski school, Schechter discovered. "We keep asking ourselves, why we didn't do it before," he laughed.

Schechter said enrollment is small compared to the better-established Blizzard Ski School, hased in Birzingham. Blizzard's offers ski lessons to both children and adults.

"We have a great deal of admiration for Blizzard's "Schechter said, believing there are enough skiers to go around." Our growth is in people new to sking," he said. Sill, an expert skier, set up the in-structional program in which a child receives a patch each time he or she masters a skill level.

Sill, an expert skier, set up the in-structional program in which a child noncements and handing out rope tow and ski lift passes.

Once at the ski area the chaperones

Once at the ski area, the chaperones operate as a ski patrol, watching for children having trouble on the slopes. Rubenstein haunts the ski lodge seeking out and responding to kids with problems.

masters a skill level.

Beginners' patches represent local ski areas such as Cabrefae, Sugarioral fand Boyne and progress to more chalenging ski slopes such as Aspen and Alpine skiers. There are 22 instruction-levels.

Rubenstein has responsibility for getting skiers to the hills each week, including a telephone fan out system and administering tender loving care, once they're there.

Pellow school teachers ride each bus,

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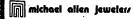


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