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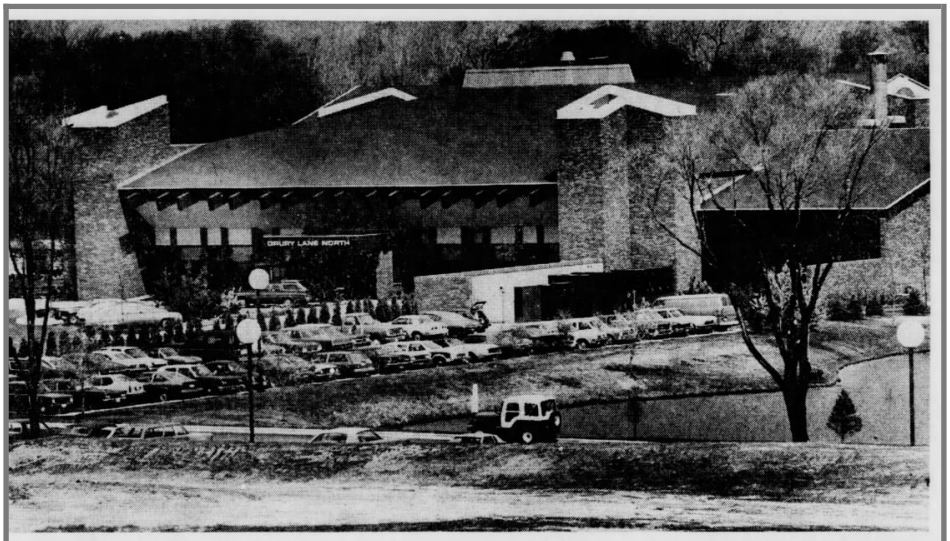

A KITE AND a gusty day were all that fourth graders at Dooley School, 622 Northwood Ln., Schaumburg needed recently to release some pent-up spring fever energy. They made their own kites and took them for a trial flight in a nearby grassy field.

Marriott in Lincolnshire

Resort does better than expected

by TIM MORAN

What do 66,000 people passing through southern Lake County in the past year have in common? They all stayed at the Marriott Lincolnshire resort.

Lee Pillsbury, director of marketing for the Marriott, says the first year of operation of the Lincolnshire resort was beyond the company's expectation in all but a few categories.

Since opening April 2 of 1976, the day of an unseasonable snowstorm, the resort, near the intersection of Milwaukee Avenue and Ill. Rte. 22, has been 10 per cent ahead of projected volume, Pillsbury said.

"WE OPENED IN a bad time for public confidence, and it affected us for the first few months, but we noticed a turnaround in July and August, and it has been surprisingly strong this spring.

"We have been virtually sold out every weekend in January, February and March. We really didn't expect it," Pillsbury said.

The resort includes a golf course, an indoor tennis facility, swimming, a ski slope, the Drury Lane North theater, sailboating, canoeing and paddleboating on a man-made lake. An ice rink, exercise rooms, saunas and game rooms are also included in the resort.

"WE WERE violently opposed by mother nature," Pillsbury said of the ski hill. "We had anticipated 110 days of use on the ski hill, and we ended up with 45. The traditional January thaw came the first week in February, and it never got cold again."

The warm weather even caused some problem with the ice rink. The rink can maintain ice at temperatures up to 45 degrees, and that became a problem in the February thaw, Pillsbury said.

The theater attendance has been sporadic, Pillsbury said. "The Drury has its up and downs. Different plays do better than others. We are now getting better at choosing the kind of plays and stars that people in the area want to see."

Current, well-known stars are sought, and plays that can "take advantage of the star's flexibility," Pillsbury said.

THE AVERAGE STAY of those 66,000 people was 2½ nights, Pillsbury said. The resort also has drawn many business meetings that previously were held at hotels near O'Hare Airport.

The golf course and tennis club are open to nonguests, and have been very successful, Pillsbury said.

Food and beverage sales at the Marriott's three restaurants and three cocktail lounges totaled $6 million for the year, higher than expected, Pillsbury said.

"We never expected to be as popular as we were in the restaurants, and now we have a reputation for being busy," Pillsbury said.

EXPANSION OF THE cocktail lounges to put a greater emphasis on dining and dancing is planned for the future.

The Marriott has had an overwhelmingly beneficial impact on the Village of Lincolnshire, according to Administrator Walter Eisenstein.

A rooms and admissions tax levied by the village brought $60,000 in revenue for the year; sales tax brought $20,000; and water and sewer revenues rose $50,000 because of the resort, Eisenstein said.

"Adversely, we haven't been affected that much. We spend an extra hour whenever we have to snowplow, and the police chief says it is no worse than any new single-family home. There are not that many calls out there," Eisenstein said.

TRAFFIC HAS CAUSED some problems, and the village is trying to get the state to put a traffic light at the Marriott entrance on Milwaukee Avenue. Village studies show 9,000 cars come in and out of the Marriott per day, and three auto accidents have occurred at the entrance since the resort opened.

The effect the resort has had on flooding and water retention in Lincolnshire and downstreams areas draws some disagreement.

F. T. "Mike" Graham, Lake County Planning, Building and Zoning Committee chairman, said, "If not the entire area, at least 90 per cent of the area is built in the flood plain.

"I'm sure it provides a service. My major objection is the fact that the Marriott people found cheap flood plain land, annexed it to a village without strict ordinances and the entire complex will have a noticeable effect on flooding downstream," Graham said.

THE HOTEL complex will cost taxpayers through subsidized flood insurance and government programs to clean out water holding areas, according to Graham.

Pillsbury and Eisenstein disagree, however.

Pillsbury said eight man-made lakes are located on the property. "Every cubic foot we took out of the flood plain, we put back in reservoirs and water retention areas."

Eisenstein said that the golf course is a water retention area, and was inundated with water during the rainy period in mid-March.

"If it hadn't been there, I'm sure the flooding would have been more extensive in Lincolnshire," Eisenstein said.

Pillsbury said the Marriott Corp. is pleased with Lake County and the Chicago area.

"We think Lake County and the whole metropolitan area is a tremendous place to live and do business. We have easily over $100 million invested in Lake County operations, and we are looking at more growth and development."

An industrial park is planned near the Marriott Great America Park in Gurnee, Pillsbury said, as well as improvements to the resort facilities in Lincolnshire.

"Lake County epitomizes everything good about American life, business and growth in the next 10 years. It has culture, life style, entertainment and a very stable and healthy government situation throughout the area. We look forward to a banner year," Pillsbury said.

Homeowners-village meeting tonight

A coalition of Arlington Heights homeowners associations has asked village trustees to attend a meeting today in hopes of establishing better relations between the village board and homeowners groups.

The public is invited to the meeting, which will begin at 8 p.m. in the Williamsburg Room at the Arlington Heights Federal Savings & Loan Assn., 25 E. Campbell St.

It is the second meeting of the coalition, which was formed this year, said Joan Hammerstone, president of the Westgate Civic Assn.

"What we're trying to do is get a better rapport going with the board. It is intended to be an open forum — an open flow of communication," Mrs. Hammerstone said.

"We want the homeowners associations to know the meeting is to be on a positive basis. We would like to cement a relationship, rather than constantly fight with them (trustees)," she said.

"WE WANT to show the board we can work together on a positive basis if they keep us informed. The (Chicago Bears) stadium proposal last year was an example. Once we were informed, things settled down," she said.

No agenda has been outlined for the meeting, but Mrs. Hammerstone predicted the proposed repeal of the village's utility tax will be discussed extensively.

"The board seems to be split on this subject and we'd like to know if repealing the tax will force our taxes up," she said.

Mrs. Hammerstone said the coalition hopes to meet every 2-3 months, with homeowners association presidents taking turns setting up the meetings.

Joint parks facility use discussion today

A special meeting of the Arlington Heights and Buffalo Grove park districts will be held today to negotiate joint use of facilities and boundary agreements between the two districts.

The meeting will be at 8 p.m. at the Buffalo Grove Aquadome indoor swimming pool, Buffalo Grove and Arlington Heights roads, Buffalo Grove.

In the past, the two districts have had reciprocal agreements allowing residents of one district to use the fa-

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