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Area's newest ski resort opens with sea of mud replacing snow

By DENNIS McCHURCH

No, unfortunately I did not get to ski with Billy Kid last Saturday; but I did ride on the back of a crawl-type vehicle with him. What a hilarious sight we must have made riding, holding on to each other with one hand and using the other to hold a ski pole in a further attempt to maintain our balance and to refrain from falling off into the sea of near bottomless mud that surrounded the lodge and the small strip of snow that the people of the area had fought to hold for the promotional photography involving Billy.

For several years the Chestnut Mountain Ski Area has battled sporadic unseasonal warm weather and winter rains in an attempt to provide the local skiers with an opportunity to ski without traveling the great distances of the West or the East in an attempt to reach the mountains, or even the long drive to the upper reaches of Wisconsin or Michigan. Russwood, Inc. has now joined this struggle against the weather and has created Plumtree, a new ski area on Lake Carroll, which is near Mt. Carroll, Ill.

Russwood, Inc. is primarily a recreational land development company which is selling home sites in the surrounding area. The purchasers will be allowed free skiing privileges at Plumtree. Plumtree like all ski areas is a profit seeking business which is providing a much desired service to us, the hunters of broken bones and empty pockets.

Plumtree has three slopes that are serviced by a 1,400-foot chairlift, a 1,000-foot T-bar, and a 900-foot pony lift.

The area has an American Certified Ski School with 25 instructors. On the weekend the Plumtree ski school utilizes two instructors in each class with a maximum of eight students per class. Plumtree has a rental shop stocked with 300 pairs of bindings mounted on fiberglass skis and ski boots.

NO SKIING TODAY — They couldn't ski at Plumtree Ski Area's opening day, but famed skier Billy Kidd found a delightful way to pass time. He chats with Nancy Kelser, Bettendorf, left, and Carole Sellers, Davenport. (Argus photo)

In an attempt to aid naure, two snow making machines have been installed by Plumtree at a cost of $23,000 per machine. It is going to take a lot of lift ticket fares to pay for these machines, when the price of lift tickets ranges from $2.50 to $6.00. The cost is dependent upon the age of the skier and the time of day and week. They are going to offer not only night ratesbut also half-day tickets which will be sold at reduced prices. The half-day ticket relieves one from struggling out of bed in the pre-dawn hours in order to allow for the necessary travel time, so as to arrive at the ski area early in the day to take advantage of the full-day lift ticket one is forced to purchase at most ski areas in the midwest regardless of his or her time of arrival.

Plumtree has instituted a policy that will allow only the sale of 600 paid admissions per day. This will hopefully insure the maximum amount of actual skiing time and reduce the exasperating extensive waiting one normally is forced to endure at most ski areas. To eliminate the misfortune of traveling to the area only to be turned away, write or call for reservations at Plumtree Ski Area, Dept. R, P.O. Box 200, Shannon, Ill. or call 815-493-2881.

City League basketball

Little Alfies, Modern Woodmen and Embassy Lounge sored city league basketball wins at the Rock Island High School girls gym last evening.

In the opener, Little Alfie's received 20 points from Dennis Teague and 11 from Jim DeDecker in downing Foulks Trucking 45-49. Robert Muskeyvalley had 14 for the losers.

Dave Bloomberg hit for 13 to pace Woodmen to its 63-49 victory over Rock Island Independents.

It was almost all Frank Riley for Embassy Lounge in its four-point win over a tough Athletic Shop team. Riley canned 28 for the winners. Keith Nowack with 23 and Al Minick with 18 were tops for the losers.

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