

# Daily Herald

PAGE 7

In town for visit

Local History  
Please keep clippings in folder  
subject Milk Pail  
date of material 1995-1999

ars

F2

FOX VALLEY

PADDOCK PUBLICATIONS — 126th Year, No. 301

Tuesday, August 11, 1998

6 Sections 50 Cents

**Tuesday**

## WEATHER

### Just gorgeous

Sunny with a high in the low 80s except upper 70s near the lake. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph. Tonight, clear. Lows ranging from near 60 in the suburbs to upper 60s along the lake. Wednesday, sunny and mild with a high around 80 — Back Page.

## INSIDE

### Clinton's options

A week before Bill Clinton's risky date with prosecutor Kenneth Starr, some of the

## Saving the Milk Pail

### Siblings try to revive complex on Rt. 25

BY ALLISON KAPLAN  
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Poised to jump from the sinking ship that was Fin n' Feather Farm one year ago, the Oehlerking family experienced a revelation when bids in an auction to sell their East Dundee property came in lower than expected.

"We realized no one believes in this place as much as we do," said Sleepy Hollow resident Myra Greskow, who took ownership of the center on Route 25 three years ago with her brother Bruce

Oehlerking and sister Patsy Arnold. "We have to do this ourselves."

They've dropped the old Fin n' Feather name in favor of Milk Pail Restaurant & Entertainment Complex to emphasize the one element of the 60,000-square-foot center which has been a constant success since the 1930s. The Milk Pail Restaurant, located in an 1870s farmhouse, has been nominated to be listed on the National Registry of Historic Places.

Meanwhile, an 8,000-square-foot strip that used to house antique

stores is empty, business is slow at the new French Country Market, the Casino Bingo Hall hasn't fully gotten off the ground and no one seems to know about the Milk Pail's miniature golf course. "We're in a development stage," Greskow said. "To make money, we have to figure out how to spend. We're working very hard."

The siblings are working to implement a broad list of goals — like attracting corporate conferences, establishing a children's

See PAIL on Page 4



Owners of the Milk Pail Complex are hoping the French Country Market, along with theater performances, banquet rooms and the possibility of a hotel, will attract business to the East Dundee entertainment center.

Daily Herald Photo/Mark Black



# PAIL: New vendors sign up when other businesses vacate

*Continued from Page 1*

theater and building a hotel at the north end of the complex on Route 25. Owners are negotiating with a national hotel chain that could potentially agree in the next few weeks to develop an 80-room extended stay hotel at the Milk Pail Complex, Greskow said.

"This would be for the corporate person who has to work in the area for a week or a month," Greskow said.

The Milk Pail Complex is also trying to cash in on corporate lunches and meetings with a board room and three dining rooms available for companies to rent. R.R. Donnelley and Sears have already taken advantage of the facilities.

"There's so much competition among restaurants; we have to give people other reasons for choosing us," Greskow said by way of explaining plans to bill the Milk Pail Complex as a full-service banquet and entertainment center. The Milk Pail banquet rooms, gazebo and garden area have been booked for weddings almost every weekend this summer.

A theater company that had been struggling to attract crowds to the complex since the factory outlet stores closed a few years ago has been dismissed. Now three production companies are promoting musicals and comedy perfor-

mances at the Milk Pail.

Theater Manager Stacey Arnold said over 100 tickets have been sold for a performance later this month of "The Great Kate" — a marked sign of improvement.

"We're marketing ourselves to park districts, tour groups, seniors," Arnold said.

The Milk Pail is considering creating a dedicated theater space to replace the banquet room now used, Arnold said. There is also talk of bringing in a children's theater company.

Other recent personnel changes include the release of Al Fisher, who opened the Casino Bingo Hall in February promising high-tech bingo that would attract crowds of 200 and more seven days a week. Six months later, the hall is open just one night a week, which Fisher has said is due to licensing difficulties. Greskow said owners still have high hopes for the bingo hall. They are now searching for a new company to run it.

Still, co-owner Patsy Arnold said Casino Bingo's failure so far to draw crowds to the Milk Pail Complex has hurt the initial momentum of the French Country Market, which opened last October as a European-style shopping concept with vendors selling arts, crafts and gourmet foods.

"It's been slow," Arnold said.

But the market is not without

promise. While five of the original 50 vendors — including the Elgin gallery Artists' Cove — moved out after their trial 6-month leases expired, several new ones have signed on.

The market even expanded to a second floor space, in anticipation of new tenants Gourmet Junction and Christmas Memories creating more of a draw.

Also, French Country Market recently struck a deal with the state-supported Illinois Artisans Program that gives Arnold access to the program's member list. Several of the juried artists in the state program to promote Illinois arts

and crafts have agreed to place their work at the French Country Market. In addition, some of the professional artists will be teaching weekend art classes.

And there's more — Greskow said the Milk Pail Complex is looking to attract a couple of larger retail shops for the old antiques space.

"We're trying to provide a good product people will enjoy," Greskow said. "Sometimes it feels like we're working hard and not getting anywhere, but we listen to the people around us who keep saying this place is so different, so nice. It spurs us on."

## Local History

Please keep clippings in folder

subject Milk Pail

date of material 1995-1999

# Warehouse

# Wednesday