

TOWN COUNCIL/COMMUNITY POOL RENOVATION BUILDING COMMITTEE

WORKSHOP

MAY 26, 1993

8:00 P.M.

ROBERT EARLEY AUDITORIUM

A workshop of the Town Council/Community Pool Renovation Building Committee was held on Wednesday, May 26, 1993 in the Robert Early Auditorium of the Wallingford Town Hall and called to Order by Chairperson Iris Papale at 8:08 P.M. Answering present to the Roll called by Town Clerk Kathryn J. Wall were Councilors Duryea, Killen, McDermott, Papale, Solinsky and Zandri. Councilors Doherty, Holmes and Parisi were absent.

The Pledge of Allegiance was given to the Flag.

ITEM #2 Discussion on the Assignment of New Charge to the Community Pool Renovation Building Committee

ITEM #3 Discussion on Financial Options for Renovating Community Pool

Committee members present - Jon Walworth, Chairman; Charles Johnson; Steve Knight; Sal Falconeri and Bill Chote

Mr. Walworth stated that the committee feels very strongly that the pool needs immediate repair. The facility enhances the strength of the community. With the recent passing of a bill by the State Legislature permitting certain modifications to the pool without the required review by the State of Connecticut Department of Health the committee was prepared to move forward with their plan to have community pool restored to the recreational facility that it once was. The terms of the legislation, however, allows for the renovation of the pools filtration system only. Currently there is no pipe in place to allow for chlorine to be distributed evenly throughout the pool. The distribution system should also be replaced, it technically can be considered part of the filtration system.

State Representative Mary Mushinsky shares the same viewpoint as the committee with regards to the distribution system being part of the filtration system.

Several members of the Council felt that the workshop was being held in vain due to the fact that no funding has been set aside in the upcoming budget to pay for the cost of the repairs.

Council members informed the committee that Mayor Dickinson made it very clear that he has no plans to fund the renovations to the pool in the near future. The majority would like to see the pool renovated, however, without funding it will not come to fruition.

- 2 - May 26, 1993

They suggested that the committee meet with the Mayor to discuss this issue with him and if they convince the Mayor to fund the renovations then they can return to the Council at a future meeting for approval of the funding.

Mr. Walworth stated that if the design phase were to begin in two months it would take approximately one year to complete. Perhaps it would be best to start in the Fall.

After much discussion on the proposed design phase the committee agreed to contact the Mayor's Office to schedule a meeting with him.

Motion was made by Mr. McDermott to Adjourn the Meeting, seconded by Mr. Killen.

VOTE: Doherty, Holmes and Parisi were absent; all others, aye; motion duly carried.

There being no further business the workshop adjourned at 9:08 P.M.

Meeting recorded and transcribed by:

*Kathryn F. Milano*  
Kathryn F. Milano, Town Council Secretary

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Iris F. Papale, Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kathryn J. Wall, Town Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

MAY 20 1993

Wallingford Community Pool  
Renovation Building Committee  
c/o Department of Parks and Recreation  
701 Center Street  
Wallingford, CT 06492

April 12, 1993

Mrs. Iris Papale  
Chairperson  
Town Council  
Town of Wallingford  
45 South Main St.  
Wallingford CT 06492

Dear Iris:

It has come to our attention that a bill has been passed by the State Legislature that would permit certain modifications to Community Pool without the required review by the State of Connecticut Department of Health. As such, I am writing to you to request a meeting with the Town Council at your earliest convenience to discuss a new charge for our committee. We would also like to discuss possible measures that might put Community Pool on a more appealing financial footing. That is the reason we have enclosed copies of an article from Athletic Business magazine.

I would like to request that this meeting be a "workshop" if possible rather than as a regular agenda item at your regular meetings. It appears to the committee that the matters of discussion are of a technical nature, and that a less structured environment would be more appropriate. Further discussion in a regular Town Council meeting would apt to be more productive after a meeting of the type I am suggesting.

The committee is anxious to continue the work we have started. To that end, I will call you in a few days to discuss our request.

Very truly yours,



Jon T. Walworth  
Chairman

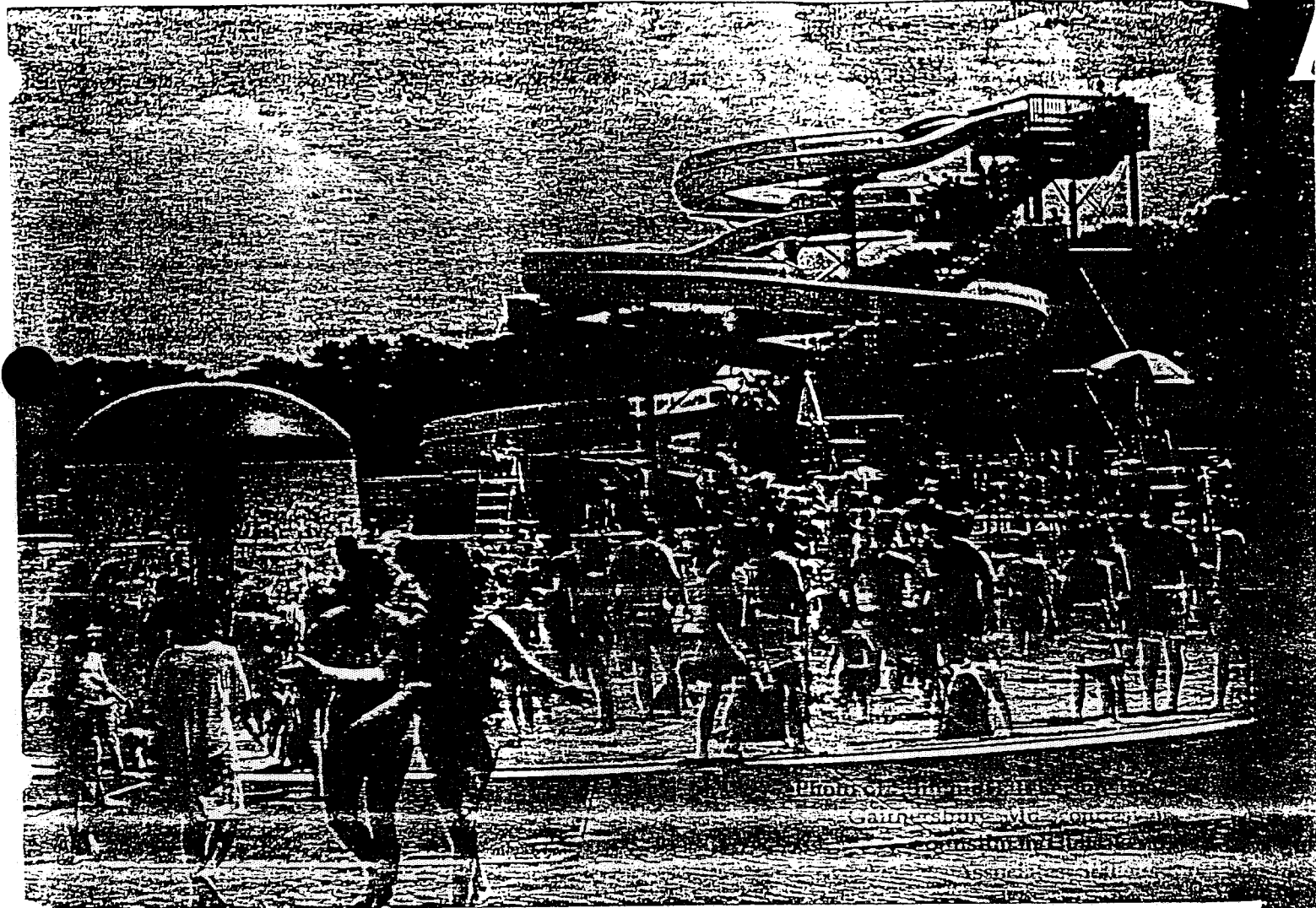
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MAY 20 1992

# THE BIRTH OF THE POOL

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# Rebirth of the Pool

by Carl F. Fuerst

Americans love to swim. Fifty-four percent of the population across the nation enjoys swimming as a leisure activity, and total participation exceeds all other popular activities such as walking for pleasure, bike riding, camping, tennis, fishing and golf.

MAY 20 1993

But with all this interest, we are seeing a decline in attendance at our public swimming pools, a cause of great concern among the 209,000 municipal pool owners across the nation.

A prime culprit may be the facilities themselves. Many pools, particularly those in service for as long as 50 years, need repairs or replacement. Unfortunately, revenues seriously lag behind rapidly increasing

*Continued on page 34*

*It's water, water everywhere, as municipalities across the country gear their new and renovated aquatic facilities to the varying needs of all patrons, young and old.*

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## Sun Splash Municipal Water Park Cape Coral, Fla.

Cost: \$5 million  
1992 Revenue:  
Projected (through 12/31): \$600,000  
Actual (through 8/28): \$1,167,245  
1992 Attendance:  
Projected (through 12/31): 80,700  
Actual (through 8/28): 128,959

by James Wilgus

When municipal aquatic programs lost city funding and an elevated bacteria count forced the city's health department to close Lake Kennedy for swimming in the spring of 1989, the Cape Coral (Fla.) Parks and Recreation Department was forced to make its recreational facilities more competitive with the private leisure market.

City officials created a new revenue source with

"Sun Splash," a municipal water park. Following a growing trend, they decided to forego a traditional rectangular city pool complex. In its place they created a series of pools and activities characteristic of for-profit private water theme parks.

Sun Splash began operations this spring. Cape Coral's goal: to use facilities to provide its 78,000 residents with recreation, while creating profits to offset annual operating costs. Thus far, profits have surpassed expectations. In the first month alone, Sun Splash exceeded revenue projections by \$20,000.

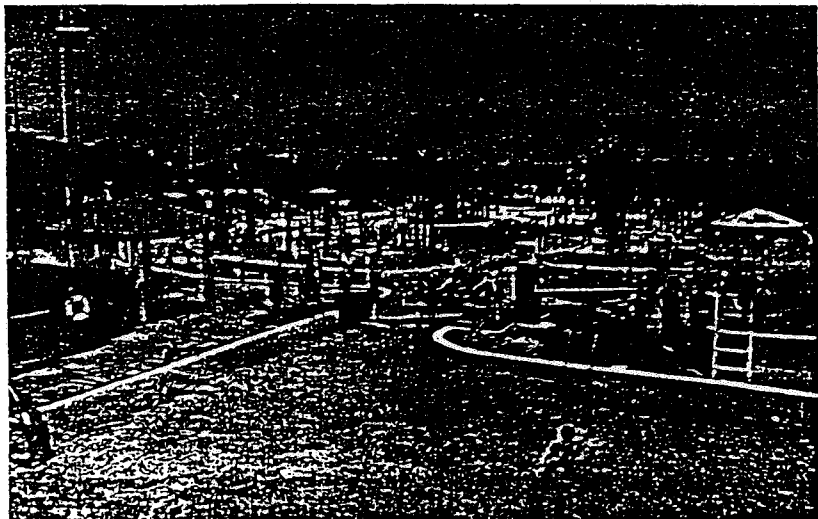
Although many water parks have been developed by cities and counties around the country, Sun Splash is one of the first to be open year-round, a revenue boost afforded by the temperate climate of Florida's southwest coast. Sun Splash features three new activity pools that attract all family age groups — a sandcastle children's pool, teen/adult pool and family pool with adult otter slides. A continually flowing "river" surrounds the three pools and connects all of the water activities.

Water-related features more typically found in private water theme parks — such as rope bridges, water cannons, a castle with an alligator-style moat, bubblers and geysers, serpentine body slides, and deep water activities that include synchronized swimming — entertain children and adults alike.

In addition, a group pavilion can accommodate up to 500 people, and includes a stage area and a nearby dry playground. Support facilities at Sun Splash include an arcade, swim shop, first-aid center, kiosks, cafeteria-style food concessions, changing rooms and administrative complexes.

The long and narrow site selected for the water park is located across from a lakeside residential community. Approximately 10 percent of the project budget was devoted to special landscaping in an effort to contain noise from the park. Berms, shrubs and trees serve as noise buffers and create a tropical atmosphere for park attendees. □

James Wilgus is an aquatics specialist with Heery International, 999 Peachtree St. N.E., Atlanta, GA 30367, 404/881-9880.



Financed by a \$5 million revenue bond, Sun Splash was designed by Atlanta-based Heery International. According to James Wilgus, Heery's engineer for Sun Splash, "The family aquatic center concept works because it marries the fun of a waterpark with the program elements found in traditional rectangular pool complexes."



expenses. Increased tax subsidies are required, but are only reluctantly available.

But while the long-standing institution of providing swimming pools is in jeopardy of a serious decline, today there is hope for the future. Across the nation examples of innovative and exciting aquatic facilities are setting new standards for design and the public's response has been extremely positive.

Thousands of traditional outdoor public swimming pools are deep-water rectangular tanks, ringed by a narrow concrete deck and enclosed by a chain-link fence. The public is making it clear that it no longer considers such a sterile, stockade-like environment a desirable leisure amenity.

Designers have already begun to see that change is paramount for the future success of the public swimming pool. In their new designs and plans for revitalizing the thousands of older, traditional pools, designers are focusing on four realistic and achievable objectives:

- satisfying a broad range of aquatic interests
- attracting greater youth, adult and family participation
- increasing attendance and revenues to help the facility become financially self-supporting
- being attractive, exciting and safe

— a quality leisure experience.

While many ideas have been advanced, the change in concept of design can best be reflected in facilities known as leisure pools or family aquatic centers. These centers, which provide a vast array of new outdoor experiences

*Across the nation, aquatic facilities are setting new standards for design and the public's response has been extremely positive.*

and aquatic activities in a quality leisure environment, have been successfully implemented in dozens of American communities.

One of the most popular and significant changes is the introduction of a zero-depth pool. The expansive new pool mimics a natural beach, and the gradual transition from the deck to deeper water provides easy entry into the water. The gradually sloping pool bottom provides the ideal area for a

variety of water activity. Parents are active participants with their children — a welcome change from parents watching their children splashing alone in a separate wading pool.

The zero-depth pool has proved to be a valuable addition to the public swimming pool and is being applauded by many who found little to enjoy in the traditional pool's minimum depth of 3½ to 4 feet of water.

Many other features distinguish the family aquatic center from the traditional pool. A major adult complaint of overcrowding has been satisfied by expanding the enclosed area around pools. User density has been reduced and the perimeter fencing can often scarcely be seen by pool participants. The new park-like area surrounding the pool has succeeded in eliminating the confining "stockade" effect of most older pools.

In addition to the zero-depth pool, a variety of aquatic alternatives provide a new level of entertainment value for young and old. The water flume slide today comes in a variety of sizes and configurations; water playgrounds featuring "water in motion" — water jets, waterfalls and the like — offer great ways for the family to enjoy a new water experience. The exhilaration of standing beneath a pounding waterfall or challenging the spray of water jets are all new and exciting opportunities for the pool patron.

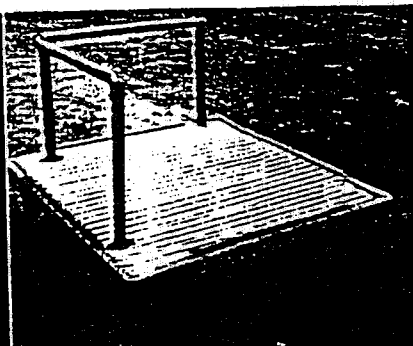


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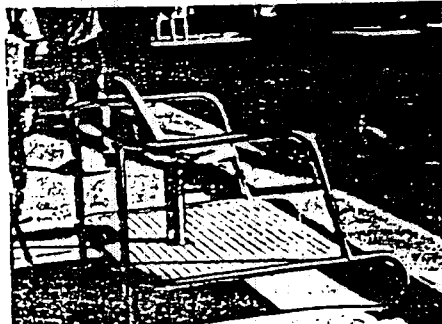
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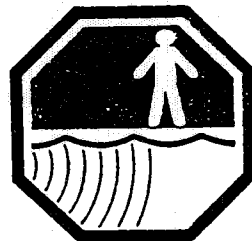
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# Sun Prairie Family Aquatic Center Sun Prairie, Wis.

Cost: \$2.3 million  
 1992 Revenue  
 Projected: \$87,000  
 Actual: \$191,036  
 1992 Attendance  
 Projected: 38,000  
 Actual: 101,687

season passes at the new aquatic center totaled 728 family, 172 individual. The projected attendance figure, 38,000, was passed on July 10, after 42 days of operation. By late summer, attendance had passed 90,000 and was climbing rapidly — this in spite of one of the coldest summers in memory.

The new aquatic center features amenities plucked from other facilities that city officials toured during the design phase. The zero-depth area has an arced, 210-foot-long perimeter, as well as three fun fountains and three overhead water sprays. A 208-foot-long waterslide sends participants with a splash into the deepest part of the main pool (5½ feet). There is an adjoining 25-meter, eight-lane competition pool and an area set aside for water basketball. The separate diving pool boasts two 1-meter diving boards and an 18-foot drop slide.

Surrounding this are a large deck and grassy areas for sunning, two sun shelters, concession and picnic areas, and a bathhouse. A large and extremely popular sand play area sits next to the pool, separated by a gate equipped with an automatic spraying system for removing sand. This area features wet and dry sand areas that include interactive playground equipment, as well as two sand volleyball courts.

The center is lighted for evening use, and its state-of-the-art mechanicals include an underwater sonar security system.

Even with admission fees kept low — \$2 for adults and \$1 for youth and senior citizens — total revenue for the center ended the season virtually even with operating costs. □

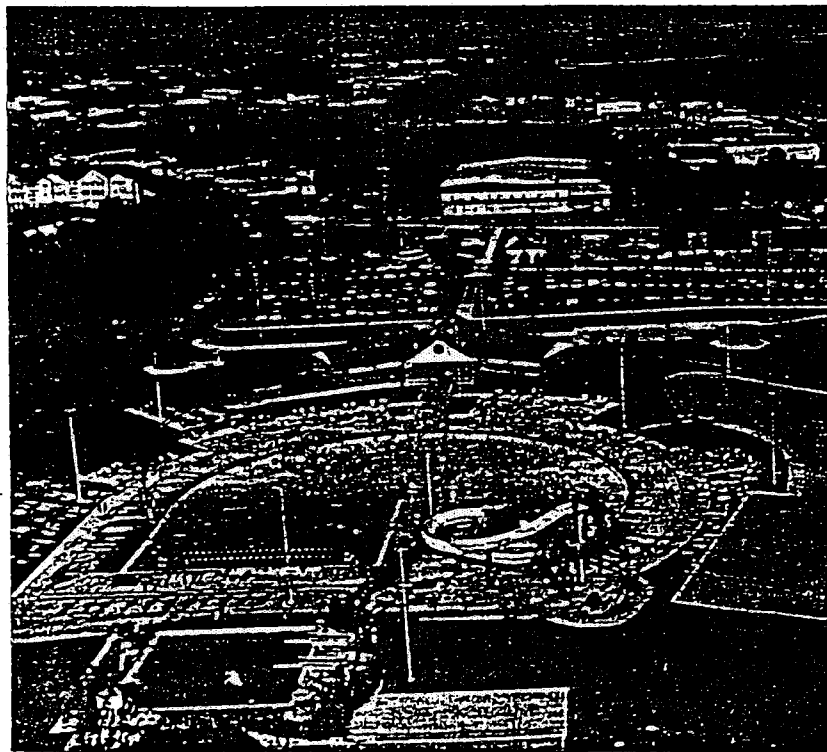


Photo by Craig Wilson, Kite Aerial Photography

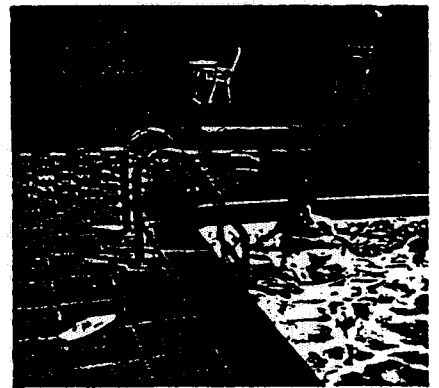
**T**he trouble with making projections is it's so easy to be wrong. So when officials in Sun Prairie, Wis., took to their crystal ball, they gingerly predicted attendance at their new facility would double and then crossed their fingers. They were way off the mark.

In 1991, the old rectangular public pool attracted 17,700 swimmers. Only 78 families and 38 individuals chose to purchase season passes. This year,

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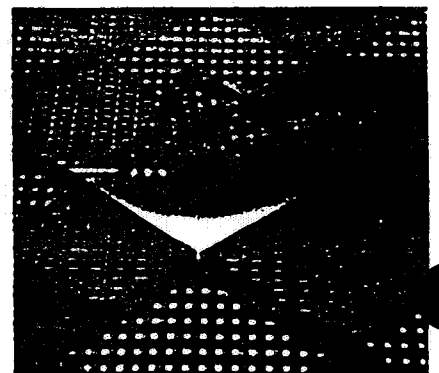
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Diving boards in today's pools are often considered optional features. Many newly revitalized facilities have excluded diving entirely, or at least have removed the 3-meter boards. Diving remains an option based on local needs.

"Lap lanes" are showing a significant gain in popularity. Usually established at 25 yards in length, the permanent lap lanes are in constant demand as a daily fitness activity by many adults and youth.

Upon leaving the water, a majority of patrons seek a more passive relaxed environment. Sun, shade and concessions are essential ingredients for their enjoyment. Sun decks with chaise longues and sun turf areas are popular features for casual relaxation and small social group activity. While a sunny day is desired by all pool-goers, it is essential that opportunities are available to relax in the shade of trees or sun shelters.

With many visitors staying longer, quality food and beverages are of greater importance. Concession stands, concession decks and shaded patios provide the opportunity to enjoy a variety of refreshments and are considered an essential service by today's pool patron.

One key innovation offering "bring them back" appeal is the introduction of sand play. A sandy beach provides an opportunity for children and adults

to participate in an age-old pastime of playing in sand and flowing water. Sand volleyball courts provide a high-energy activity for many young adults.

The success of the family aquatic center can be measured by the increase in attendance, particularly among

*The zero-depth pool brings parents and children together — a welcome change from parents watching their children splashing alone in a separate wading pool.*

adults and families, that has occurred at new facilities around the country. This is good news for the municipalities who are the suppliers and custodians of our public swimming pools.

A 1991 survey of 17 new and revitalized family aquatic centers in the Midwest determined that all had significantly

increased attendance and revenues over the previously operated traditional pool facilities. Fifteen of the 17 enjoyed revenues that exceeded expenses.

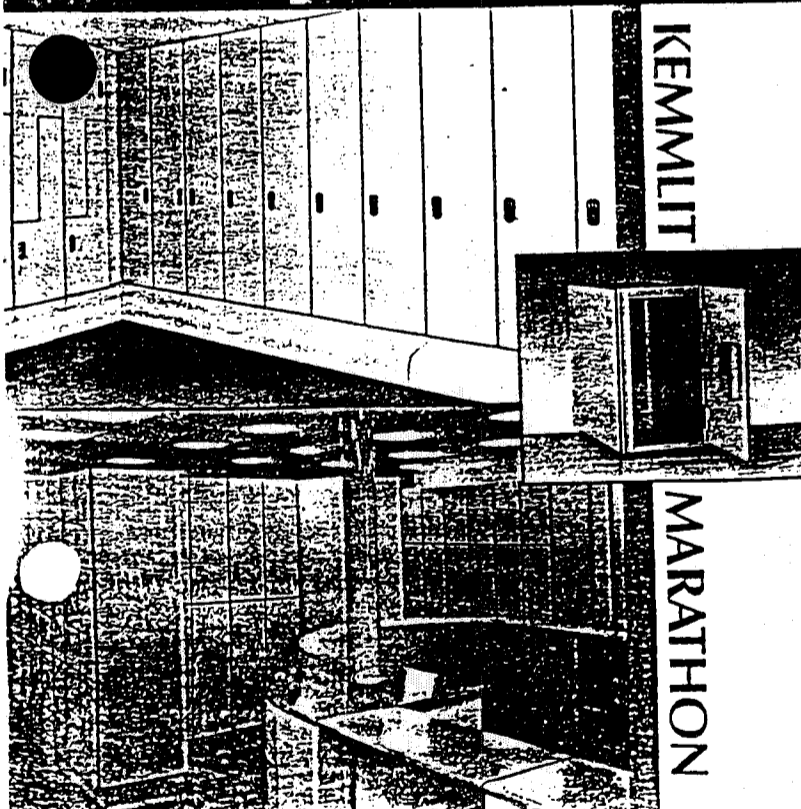
New aquatic centers in Kettering, Ohio, Washtenaw County, Mich., and Wheaton, Ill., reported positive account balances of \$133,335, \$200,089, and \$119,000 respectively for the three-month summer season.

Revitalized traditional pools that included the amenities of the family aquatic center concept also reflected positive account balances. Those in Skokie, Des Plaines and Niles, Ill., showed balances of \$65,000, \$81,000 and \$151,000 respectively. With the dream of the public swimming pool having user-fee revenue that exceeds annual operating expenses a reality, the need for local tax subsidies has the potential of being significantly reduced — or eliminated.

The results, say the professionals involved in these projects, have been encouraging:

- Upon completing a leisure facility study in 1988, the Kettering (Ohio) Parks and Recreation Department agreed to abandon an aged pool and build a new outdoor family aquatic center as an adjunct to its recreation center and indoor pool. Upon its completion, at a cost of \$2.5 million, summer attendance soared, from 53,000 in 1989 to

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133,250 in 1991. Says Jim Garges, the director of parks and recreation, "Our facility was a success from day one."

• The Washtenaw County (Mich.) Parks and Recreation Department opened its Rolling Hills Water Park in the summer of 1991. Of the \$3.4 million facility, which combines a wave pool, zero-edge pool and waterslides into one pool, Director Fred Barclay says, "The imaginative plan has resulted in a facility that exceeded our expectations. The people in the community love it."

• Skokie (Ill.) Park District's director, Dan Brown, says of his department's \$1.2 million revitalization of an existing public pool: "The Skokie Water Playground has been one of the most innovative and exciting facilities that the Skokie Park District has constructed in the last 15 years. We have tripled our pool attendance and revenue. The community has responded with a great deal of excitement and enthusiasm that has continued over the last three years."

• Bensenville (Ill.) Park District pioneered the concept of the zero-depth pool along with the features of the water playground and the wet-sand playground when it opened its 1,500-capacity aquatic center in 1985 at a cost of \$2.1 million. "We are extremely satisfied with our aquatics facility," says Director Bob Kunkel, "and it has

received a very positive response from our residents. The most popular aspect of our facility is the zero-depth area. I would never consider a conventional swimming pool."

• Wheaton (Ill.) Park District opened its \$5.2 million aquatic center

*With user-fee revenue exceeding annual operating expenses, the need for local tax subsidies has been significantly reduced — or eliminated.*

in 1989, and attendance has since exceeded 150,000 patrons annually. Director Robert Dunsmuir calls the Rice Pool and Water Park "the ideal blend of aesthetics and practicality." Built as the park district's second swimming facility, it combines swimming areas and play areas in a social setting that appeals to all ages. "The zero-depth pool invites family involve-

ment by affording safety for the very young, the elderly and the handicapped," Dunsmuir says, "and the three water slides provide excitement. The large grassy sunbathing area and the pool decks offer quiet relaxation, and the sand volleyball courts are busy from dawn to dark."

Dunsmuir notes that construction of this facility was made possible by a combination of opportune circumstances — the passage of a referendum that increased the park district's recreation tax, and the donation of land from a local foundation. "The Rice Pool and Water Park is the realization of a long-time dream for the people of Wheaton," he says, "and in this case, the reality far surpasses the dream."

As has become readily apparent, the traditional public pool has failed to meet the needs of the millions of adults and families who have an interest in swimming as a leisure activity. The challenge of responding to the high level of interest among youth, adults and families must be the primary goal of those responsible for the future of public swimming pools. A new and exciting era for swimming as one of our nation's foremost leisure activities is at hand. □

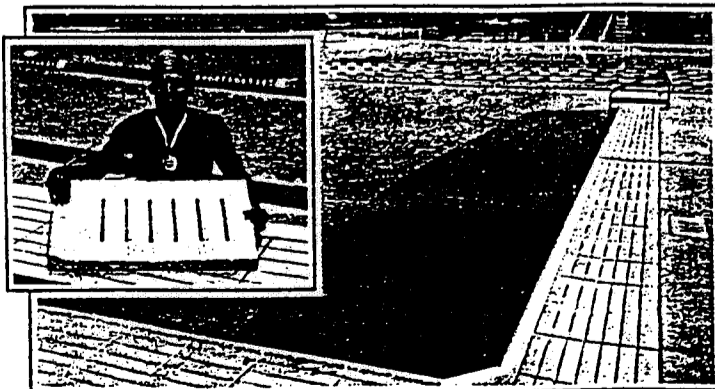
Carl F. Fuerst is president of Leisure Concepts and Design Inc., 300 W. Golf Road, Mt. Prospect, IL 60056, 708/398-3004.

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