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To: Architecture Review Committee

Oak Leaves Building on mall to be restored

By CHARLOTTE COOPER

Workmen last week began a major renovation project that will not only bring 30,000 square feet of new office space to the Oak Park Mall, but also return a familiar community name — **Oak Leaves** — to a building which once housed the village's oldest newspaper for more than a decade.

The structure in question, located at 1136 Lake St., is now best known for one of its first-floor tenants, the F. W. Woolworth Co. But between 1929 and 1940, **Oak Leaves** rented the entire top floor of the five-story building, and part of its lobby, for the sum of $7,300 per year. As part of this deal, the property also took on the paper's name — an honor for which Pioneer Press paid an additional $1,200 annually.

After a time, **Oak Leaves** moved to new quarters, and the adjoining Marshall Field's store at 1144 Lake St. leased the upper four floors of the mall building for its annex. In 1979, however, the property was purchased by a limited partnership called Chiby Associates, which last year decided to turn the annex into office space — and to re-christen their new creation the Oak Leaves Building.

The reasoning behind this move, said Chiby general partner Ronald Grais, "was pretty simple. We felt that since we were restoring (the building) to its original use and original grandeur, we should use the original name."

Plans for this project have been on the drawingboard since last summer, when Oak Park's trustees agreed to issue a $2.2 million industrial revenue bond to raise funds which Chiby could use to rehab its building. The firm will pay off this debt by renting the renovated office space, much of which will be ready for occupancy by the end of this year.

In hopes of meeting this deadline, workmen on May 28 began gutting the upper four floors of the Lake St. building to make way for a new interior. Also in the works are an updated entrance and lobby,

(Continued on page 15)

Business

Above, is a photo showing how the Oak Leaves Building looked in the early part of the 1940s. (Photo courtesy of the Oak Park Public Library) At right, is an artist's rendering of how the building will ... after remodeling.

of Bldgs

1136 Lake St.

BUSINESS JOURNAL

Oak Leaves building sold to Shaker owners

The owners of the Shaker Building in Downtown Oak Park last week purchased another office-retail building in the business district and slated it for renovation.

Marc Realty, the Chicago firm that purchased and rehabilitated the Shaker Building, 1100 Lake St., in 1989, on Feb. 28 bought the so-called Oak Leaves Office Center at 1136 Lake St. The company promised to boost tenancy, improve management and perform rehabilitation on their new property.

Kidnastics Play Palace, the building's ground-floor tenant, would not be affected by the ownership change, said Larry Weiner, vice president of Marc Realty. The building once was on the market for $1.2 million, but Weiner said Marc Realty paid less than that amount. He would not reveal the purchase price, however.

The Shaker Building is so named in honor of the advertising firm that rents out the third floor. The office center is so named because the Oak Leaves newspaper once was located there. The Oak Leaves building has been "mis-operated for years," said Weiner, as the building went through mortgage foreclosure and a forced change of ownership.

The owners who had rehabilitated the Oak Leaves building in 1985 were the target of foreclosure, and whe[n] the bank that held the mortgage was seized in the federal government's savings and loan clean-up, the federal government also took over ownership of the Oak Leaves building. Marc Realty purchased the building from the Resolution Trust Corporation, the government's agent for the national savings and loan clean-up.

When Marc Realty took it over, the Shaker Building had been struggling through lagging development as a retail center and was near empty. Since Marc Realty undertook improvements and attracted tenants, nearly full occupancy has been maintained for three years. Marc Realty announced that similar steps would be taken at the Oak Leaves building. Planned immediately is renovation of common corridors, the entrance lobby and the elevator cab.

The Oak Leaves building

... that a food court would be a boost to

Feds take over Downtown building

By CHARLOTTE COOPER
STAFF WRITER

The crisis in America's savings and loan industry has hit another major property in Downtown Oak Park: the Oak Leaves building at 1140 Lake St.

The site was taken over last year by the U.S. Resolution Trust Corporation, because its mortgage had been issued by a failed S & L in Skokie. The mortgage holder, Chiby Associates, then tried to negotiate a new loan with the RTC. But, in late February, the RTC instead asked a federal judge to put the parcel into receivership.

Roxanne Soden, a property manager with Grubb and Ellis, said her firm will run the building until it can be sold by federal regulators. But she stressed that the new arrangement won't affect any tenants in the five-story structure.

"All leases will be honored. We're dealing with people's needs as they call in," Soden said.

Howard Fried, who owns Downtown's Nautilus Fitness Center, plans to relocate to the basement of the Oak Leaves building this spring. He is also constructing a children's playground and restaurant on the first floor.

Leasing agent Dave King said both projects will continue, because Fried has signed leases that extend "for more than five years."

In 1990, the RTC took over the headquarters of GreatAmerican Federal Savings, at Downtown's southeast corner. The building was purchased in July by Savings of America, which opened a branch in the first floor last December.

OP - Bldgs - Lake St

OL 8/30/2012

Auction on building nears

BY NATASHA WASINSKI | Contributor

OAK PARK

A realty firm plans a second property tour of the Oak Leaves building on Sept. 5, with the building up for auction on Sept. 10.

The five-story retail and office property known as the Oak Leaves building at 1140 W. Lake St. is up for auction Sept. 10. | **CHRIS LAFORTUNE** - *Sun-Times Media*

The five-story retail and office property at 1140 W. Lake St. is up for auction after years of sitting in financial flux. The building has been deemed "worthy of preservation" by Oak Park's Historic Preservation Commission.

Foresite Realty will host the property tour from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sept. 5. The two-day online auction closes at noon Sept. 12.

According to a listing on auction.com, online bids for the 64,590-square-foot space begin at $800,000, less than a fifth of what Skokie-based retail developer Seymour Taxman paid in 2005 to acquire the property.

Foresite Realty agent Ryan Moore said the building was initially financed with mortgage-backed security debt and, after months of non-payment, went into foreclosure in 2010.

The lawsuit filed by a subsidiary of Miami Beach, Fla.-based LNR Partners said Taxman, who bought the building for $5.75 million, owed the lender $4.5 million.

Foresite Realty managed the property during the transition period and became its broker when an agreement between the borrower and lender could not be reached, Moore said.

Now back on the market, the building's boutique office space would likely attract Lake Street property-owners looking to expand, as well as developers from outside the Midwest, he said.

"The auction process has a national pull," said Moore. "I expect there to be multiple bidders."

An architectural survey of downtown Oak Park updated in 2005 by the Historic Preservation Commission gave the Oak Leaves building a ranking of "significant," meaning the property was "important enough to warrant individual Oak Park Landmark designation."

Constructed in 1929 with storefront alterations in 1936 and post-1975, the interior was later remodeled to be an annex for a nearby Marshall Field & Co. store.

"It is further recommended that, with respect to any future development or planning initiatives in Downtown Oak Park, every effort be made to preserve those buildings listed as 'Significant,'" the survey states.

The Oak Leaves building is 40 percent occupied, Moore said, noting that a Sprint retailer will soon vacate the property.

Space leased by the Pioneer Press/Oak Leaves from 1997 until October 2009, when it relocated to nearby 1010 W. Lake St., remains empty.

Oak Leaves building goes to RTC in auction

WJ 8-19-92

The Downtown Oak Park building known widely as the Oak Leaves building, 1140 Lake St., was sold at auction last Wednesday afternoon to the Resolution Trust Corporation.

Downtown Oak Park Executive Director Christine Burdick said the sale to the RTC was "exactly what we expected to happen."

The RTC had acquired the building, which now houses Kidnastics Play Palace along with several other businesses, because of a loan default. What apparently happened at the auction was that the RTC did not receive its minimum bid for the property, which would have covered the amount of the loan default, so the building went to the RTC.

A representative from the RTC could not be reached for comment as to how or when the building will be marketed.

The RTC's continued ownership of the building probably will not have any discernible effects on Downtown Oak Park, Burdick said. "The RTC is a responsible owner," she said, "but I just don't expect them to be very active owners." Burdick added that Downtown management had been pleased with the RTC's ownership so far, but that they were anxious to have the "eventual owner" identified and owning the building.

OP-Bldg-Lake

ter a $4.8 million
to purchase the building five
Payments weren't made on the
the property fell into the hands

BUSINESS BRIEFS

The Oak Leaves Office Center will go up for auction later this month.

Downtown building put up for auction by feds

The Oak Park commercial building formerly home to the Woolworth variety store and now home to Kidnastics Play Palace and other businesses goes on the auction block later this month.

The so-called Oak Leaves Office Center at 1136 Lake St. is to be sold a public action on July 29, when sealed bids are due to the Chicago firm selling the building on behalf of the Resolution Trust Corporation, the federal agency assigned by Congress to dispose of properties seized after federal regulators took control of banks and savings and loans judged to be insolvent.

The five-story building was named after the Oak Leaves newspaper, which was a tenant there between 1929 and 1982. According to National Real Estate Clearinghouse, which is handling the auction, the Oak Park building is 65 percent leased and current tenants include Kidnastics, Nautilus Fitness Center, Kelly Temporary Services, Educational and Institutional Cooperative Service, the Mount Sinai Hospital Resale Shop and the offices of the Downtown Oak Park management corporation.

The Oak Park building fell into federal ownership when the mortgage held by previous developers was taken over by a Skokie bank that was subsequently declared insolvent by federal authorities.

National Real Estate Clearinghouse is in the process of selling approximately 150 Resolution Trust properties in 26 states, the Oak Park building will be open for inspection by interested bidders on July 15 and 20. Detailed information is available weekdays at the NRC Sales Center, 312-642-8978.

With state funds, Avenue increasing Austin loans

Avenue Bank of Oak Park has pledged additional loan support to Austin and other communities on Chicago's West Side following a $1 million funding program delivered to the Oak Park bank by State Treasurer Patrick Quinn.

In July 1 ceremonies opening Avenue's new financial center at 5604 W. Madison St., Quinn presented Avenue with a $1 million under his office's linked deposit program. Avenue can now use that money to generate funds that will be used to make loans to Austin.

Avenue president Martin Noll said funds generated by the linked deposit would be funneled into West Side communities over and above the bank's previous commitments. After negotiations with Chicago and Oak Park community groups in the Garfield-Austin Interfaith Network to address previous lack of local involvement by Avenue, the Oak Park bank pledged as much as $40 million in housing and commercial loans in the Austin-Oak Park area.

WJ 7-22-92

Feds put Oak Leaves building on the auction block in August

By ERIC LINDEN

Seized recently by the federal government, the so-called Oak Leaves building in Downtown Oak Park goes to public auction next month.

The five-story mixed-use building at 1136 Lake St. is so named because the Oak Park newspaper many years ago was a tenant in the building. The building is best known as the home for 64 years to an F.W. Woolworth store, which closed in December 1989. Currently, the major tenants in the building are Kidnastics Play Palace and, in the lower level, Nautilus Fitness Center and the Body Essentials activewear clothing shop, both of which opened earlier this year.

But those new businesses, owned by Oak Parker Howard Fried, will not be affected by the building's upcoming sale, according to court documents and to attorney Stuart N. Rappaport, who is handling arrangements before the Aug. 12 public auction. Rappaport said a U.S. District Court judgment ordering the sale specifically mandates that the new building's owner honor leases for the Kidnastics and Nautilus businesses.

Some interest expressed

Rappaport said some potential buyers already have expressed interest in participating in the public auction, but "that doesn't mean anything one way or another." Rappaport had no estimates or predictions of who would bid, of future plans or of how much the building might bring on the open market.

"It'll be interesting to see because it's an important part of Downtown Oak Park," said Rappaport, who lives in River Forest and who said he has taken his children to Kidnastics.

The building's course to public auction is lengthy. In March 1989, Rappaport said, the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, a savings and loan regulatory agency, was appointed conservator of Skokie Federal Savings and Loan Association, which held the mortgage for Chiby Associates, the partnership which purchased and redeveloped the 1136 building in 1985. In July 1989, the bank board closed Skokie Federal, which was taken over shortly thereafter by the Resolution Trust Corporation, the new agency created by the U.S. Congress to lead the savings and loan bailout.

The RTC was appointed receiver of Skokie Federal in February 1990, and the RTC held the Chiby loan. The loan was declared in default in February this year and in June, the U.S. Court ordered the public sale.

Other tenants not protected

A number of other tenants are located in other parts of the building, and their fates under new ownership are not known, said Rappaport. Unlike the cases of Kidnastics and Nautilus, the federal judgment does not specifically protect leases in the building for the Mount Sinai Hospital Resale Shop, which is on the ground floor at 1140 Lake St. And among a group of office tenants in the 1136 building are the offices of Vegetarian Times magazine and the Downtown Oak Park management corporation.

The building auction is to take place on Wednesday, Aug. 12, at 4 p.m. in Room 2302 of the Richard J. Daley Center in Chicago.

OP-Business - Lake St

BUSINESS

OL 9-2-92

This place is really jumpin'

By CAROL CHRISTIAN
STAFF WRITER

It's hard to tell from Lake Street, but Kidnastics Play Palace, 1138 Lake, is a jumpin' place.

With 17,000 square feet, the long, narrow storefront has activities from rowdy to reflective for children through age 12 and a pizza restaurant which seats 195 people.

The main entrance is on the north side of the building on a bricked alley known as Prairie Way, which yields easy access from Holley Court parking garage at Harlem Avenue and Ontario Street. Passersby on Lake Street see little indication of how busy the place is inside, but owner Howard Fried said most of his customers appreciate the proximity to the parking lot.

"This is a destination place," said Fried, who also owns Nautilus Health Club next door.

"The majority of people who come here leave their houses and get in the car for the purpose of coming here."

Because many of Fried's customers are carrying presents for birthday parties, they find it easier to walk 50 feet from the parking lot than a block down Harlem and around the corner to Lake.

"I don't think any businessperson in the United States would say, 'Make 10 percent of your clientele happy,' " Fried said. "My No. 1 concern is to make my business run easily for my customers."

Fried said visibility on Lake Street was not as important to his business as it might be to other local retailers because he expected to draw customers from the entire Chicago area through advertising and word of mouth.

One of a kind

"There's nothing like this in the city of Chicago. This is the kind of place that can bring people from a big area."

Kidnastics opened May 8 and now averages about 250 kids on a week day and 400 on weekends.

"We get a lot of day-care centers coming in," Fried said Thursday, noting that one center had brought 70 children that morning on the spur of the moment because heavy rain precluded a planned outdoor activity.

Summer is a traditionally slow period for indoor playgrounds, but Fried said his highest count in one day had been about 500. Weekends are busy with birthday parties, such as the 19 which took place Aug. 22 and 23.

Fried signed the lease last November on the site which formerly housed a Woolworth store. He spent about $600,000 to renovate the space and another $250,000 to purchase equipment. Fried received a retail-rehab grant of about $165,000 from the Village of Oak Park after the business opened.

Christopher M. Loudon/Pioneer Press

At the Kidnastics Play Palace, the kids rule.

Noisy good time

Last Wednesday afternoon, a couple hundred kids and parents were scattered from one end of the place to the other, having a noisy good time.

Among them was Cathy Minnick of Chicago, who was there with her three children, Tony, 2, Margie, 6, and Danny, 7. The children had come last month with their day camp in Chicago and wanted to return, Minnick said.

Having been there about 2½ hours, the Minnick children showed no signs of slowing down. As their mother tried to keep an eye on all three, the kids were busy running in and out of the main feature at Kidnastics — an 1,800-square-foot, two-level system of tunnels, rope ladders, slides, ball pits and a bouncy air mattress called a "moon walk."

Kathy Shenone of Elmwood Park was trying to take a photograph of her sons jumping up and down on the moonwalk.

"Tommy, turn around," she called as Tommy, 5, and Matt, 3, careened around the net-enclosed air mattress.

The boys, who were on their first visit to Kidnastics, were having a great time, Shenone said. "They love it." Shenone had come with her sister-in-law, Nancy Kioussis of Elmwood Park and her children, John, 5, and Veronica, 2.

Kioussis said she liked the general atmosphere but noted that the the toddlers' playground — the section visible through the Lake Street window — should be bigger.

Veronica had found the small playground too crowded with babies but was intimidated by the larger system of tunnels, ropes, slides and pits, her mother said. "She's too big for this and too little for that."

Likes the slides

But Minnick, the Chicago mom, said her 2-year-old, Tony, had no qualms about the big equipment. "The little guy likes the slides best," she said, just as her daughter went whizzing past with garish colors on her face. The "makeup" was washable paint she had put on in front of a lighted mirror.

Another toddler undaunted by the bigger kids was Kristie Wurglitz of Chicago, who will be 2 in October. She was there with her 4-year-old brother, Ricky, and her parents, Greg and Carol Wurglitz.

"I think it's fantastic," Carol Wurglitz said of the variety of Kidnastics activities. "I've never seen a face-painting counter before."

Wurglitz added that she had taken her children to another suburban indoor play facility whose primary attraction was a larger version of the tunnel-slide-ropes-moonwalk device. "It's huge. You can't find the kids," she said of the other establishment.

(Continued on page 118)

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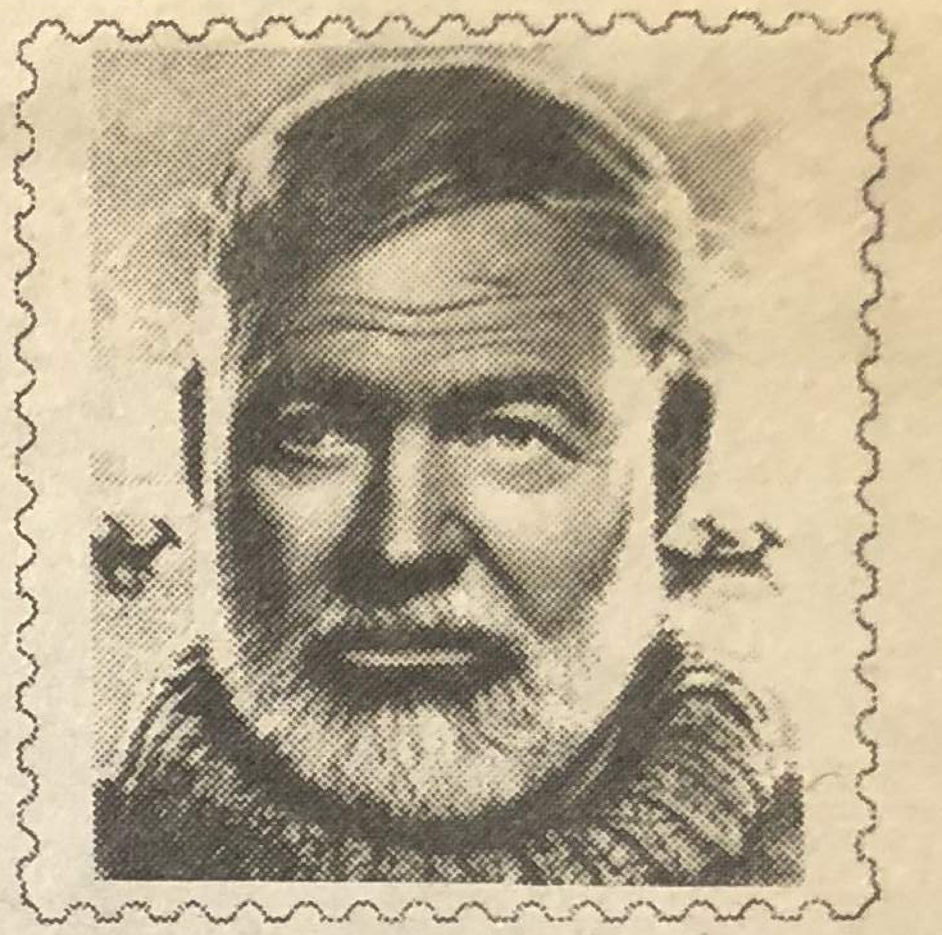

Hemingway Week

Page 48

Downtown Woolworth's closing

Long-time store to leave Jan. 1990; officials see new opportunity

By ERIC LINDEN

F.W. Woolworth's will close its Downtown Oak Park store next January, a corporate spokesman said Tuesday morning, confirming longstanding speculation.

Woolworth's New York spokesman Joe Carroll said the corporation has made the decision to close because the store at 1136 Lake St. "has been incurring losses for a number of years." He said, "I wouldn't want to quantify it with a dollar figure, but the losses have been significant for a number of years."

Carroll said the decision was made recently by officials in Woolworth's New York office. Last week, officials for Downtown Oak Park and a representative of the owner of the Lake Street building which houses Woolworth's said they had no knowledge of Woolworth's plans. However, with less than a half-year remaining on Woolworth's lease, the landlord had been making contingency plans based on Woolworth's possible departure.

Woolworth, a variety and general merchandise store, has been operating in the Downtown Oak Park space since October 1925, Carroll said. "That's quite a stretch," he said, but he maintained the decision to close the store was dictated by the Downtown operation's lackluster sales.

"They've informed me that there have been many changes in that Oak Park area," Carroll said. "Stores have left and business is down. That's a contributing factor (in the decision). It's been found to weaken the sales environment."

Woolworth's lease for approximately 18,000 square feet in the Lake Street building expires at the end of January 1990, and the store will vacate the space in that month, Carroll said. He said he could not say if the landlord had been told of the decision.

Christine Burdick, executive director of the Downtown Oak Park corporation, said she was surprised by the confirmation Tuesday morning. On further reflection, Burdick said the closing presented an opportunity to improve the Downtown retail mix. Ronald Grais, owner of the Woolworth building, already had been exploring potential new tenants, Burdick said. She also said she was confident that a new business in the space could improve on Woolworth's, which Burdick said had been "inconsistent" in its commitment to the Downtown area and to the store.

"As has been our experience in the past, stores that keep up their physical appearance and their merchandise are the ones that are successful. Woolworth had not been consistent in those areas recently," Burdick said.

Steve Herseth, attorney for Grais, said last Friday the company had been talking with Woolworth about the possibility of a lease renewal. As of last week, Herseth said the parties were "still talking. I don't know what they are going to do," Herseth had said.

But Herseth also said the landlord was "beginning to plan they might leave." Herseth said the contingency plans were what "any prudent landlord" would do if a major tenant had a lease expiring and was not committed to an extension.

OP-Bldg - Lake St

Planned indoor playland hinges on village grant

WJ 11-13-91

By ERIC LINDEN

A new playland for children complex being planned for Downtown Oak Park's vacant former Woolworth space would bring investment of at least $700,000 and would be "the shot in the arm Downtown Oak Park needs," officials unveiling the proposal said Monday.

If the village government approves a retail rehab grant currently estimated to be $100,000, those involved with the development said, the Kidnastics Play Palace would open at 1136 Lake St. next March or April. A government committee is to consider the grant request Nov. 26, with village board action tentatively slated for early or mid-December.

Formally proposed now is a complex featuring various activities, play space and party rooms for children age six months to 13 years, plus a restaurant with seating for approximately 300 and an area for adults to wait while children partake in the activities.

Howard Fried

'Something for everyone'

Developer Howard Fried, owner of the Nautilus Fitness Center at 1132 Lake St., likened the proposed Kidnastics complex to children's theme parks such as the Discovery Zone and McDonald's new Leaps and Bounds concept, now being piloted in DuPage County. Fried said he has visited those and other similar businesses and developed the Kidnastics concept "with my own ideas from a lot of different places.…There will be a little something for everyone," he said.

Fried estimated that more than $200,000 in equipment such as tunnels, cargo nets, balance beams and slides would fill the now-vacant former Woolworth space. And David King, vice president of McCollom Realty, which handles leasing for the building, estimated construction costs to be at

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development last month, officials either declined comment or urged no publicity until all arrangements were final.

Leo Martinic, a vice president of First Chicago Bank of Oak Park and current president of the Downtown Oak Park board, who also was briefed on the project Monday, said he would "basically reserve comment" on the proposal until its future was fleshed out and more detail provided. Generally, however, Martinic agreed with proponents that a successful Kidnastics playground would be "a shot in the arm" for Downtown Oak Park.

Fried and King said the Kidnastics concept is new to the immediate area and would be a major draw to Downtown Oak Park. They said that people would come from thoughout the city and nearby suburbs and that "spinoff" benefits to the downtown business district were immense and beyond estimate. They predicted that new businesses would open to serve the children and their parents coming to Kidnastics.

"Why wouldn't you want to open up a hobby shop next to where there are hundreds of kids?" Fried asked rhetorically, "or a toy store?"

"The spinoff potential I think is phenomenal," said King.

The retail rehab grant program was created last year to encourage retail expansion in Oak Park's Tax Increment Financing district, which includes Downtown, The Avenue and the South Marion business district. The program provides matching grants from the TIF fund for construction of new or expanded retail space. An advisory committee which includes two village trustees reviews the plans and makes recommendations to the full board for final action.

The development proponents said construction costs would be less than might be expected because much of the building's infrastructure, such as Woolworth's former kitchen space, which would fit the new uses and because the building underwent some rehabilitation in 1985 when it was purchased by the partnership headed by Grais.

OP Bldg - Lake St

Playland

Continued from page 1

least $500,000.

Also in the project, Fried's Nautilus business would move to the lower level of 1136 Lake St. Fried said Nautilus would nearly triple in size, expanding the exercise facilities and adding an indoor running track, other new programs and a 1,000-square-foot retail shop to sell athletic wear and exercise equipment and accessories. Fried said he hoped that the Nautilus memberships would at least double from the current 2,500.

King said both projects must be together because of the economics involved. "It's a package deal," he said. "they both have got to fly."

The joint proposal would fill some 34,000 square feet of the former Woolworth space, which has been vacant since the variety store closed in Oak Park in 1989. Fried, an Oak Park resident and owner of the Nautilus business for two years, said he was putting "a lot of my own" money into the project. But he and King also said the village government grant was a critical element in the project. "There is no way to make this deal work without a retail rehab grant," said King.

Largest proposal in memory

Fried said Kidnastics would move into the first and second floors of the 1136 building, which is also known as the Oak Leaves Building, and his Nautilus business would relocate to an additional 17,000 square feet in the lower level. King said the Kidnastics business would be the largest to move to Oak Park in memory.

"It may be even bigger than when Woolworth's moved in 40 years ago," said King.

Fried said he signed last week a long-term rental of the space with the building's ownership, headed by Ronald Grais, a Chicago developer and former president of the Downtown Oak Park board. With that lease signed and with the grant decision looming, those involved last week reversed their stance on publicity about the new project. When *Wednesday Journal* reported on the potential new development last month, officials either declined comment or urged no publicity until all arrangements were final.

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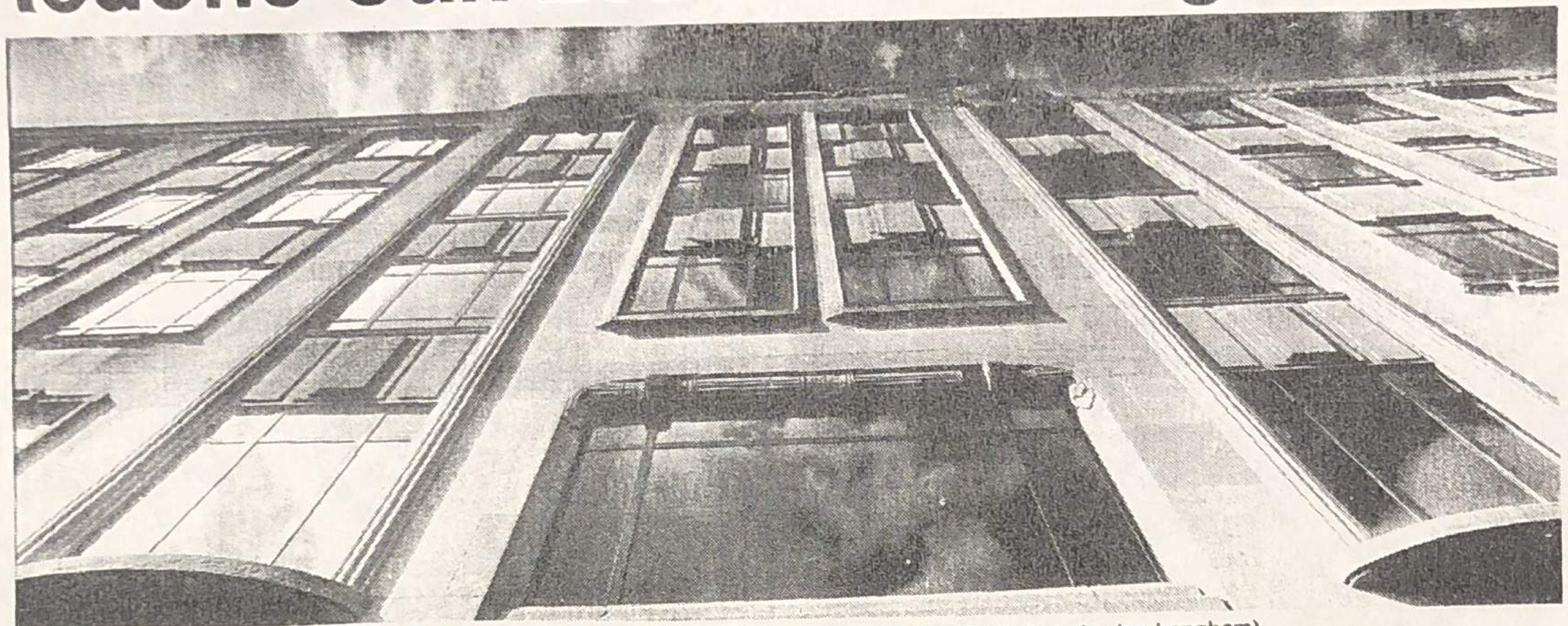
5-7-86 5-7-86 OL

Redone Oak Leaves Building debuts



The renovated Oak Leaves building on Lake St. retains much of its original art deco exterior.(Staff photo by Jon Langham)

By Harriet Vrba

The developers and leasing agents for the restored Oak Leaves Building, 1010 Lake St. consider their new building, renovated at a cost of $2.2 million, comparable in quality to anything downtown Chicago or Oak Brook has to offer.

The major renovation project on the building, which takes its name from its first tenant, began May 28, 1985, and brings 32,000 square feet of new office space to the Oak Park Mall. A formal open house introduced the renovation Tuesday.

The definitive connection between Pioneer Press and the Oak Leaves building, according to historical documents and Pioneer minutes, is sketchy. It is known that a building permit was issued to Pioneer Press in 1929 for construction by Avery Brundage Construction Co. of a building designed by S. Crowen & Assoc. Cost: $200,000.

The site had housed, at one time, the Marwitz Grocery as well as the Mt. Carmel Colored Baptist Church.

BUT IN ~~1982~~ 1928 the growing newspaper needed more room for its printing and office space. The president of the company at that time, Telfer MacArthur, offered to sell a 75-foot parcel of land he owned on Lake St. near Harlem. He offered it for what he had paid for it plus a reasonable ca[illegible]charge. According to the minutes, the board agreed to pursue this.

From this point, the existing records The trustees felt a printing plant would not members of the board of directors of Pioneer opted to purchase the Oak Leaves site, construct a building and then lease it back to the company.

Interestingly, the company had intended to erect a printing plant and office building at the site, but opted to remove the printing plant plans from consideration because Marshall Field's had announced its intention to construct a store next door. this is my first renovation of a building in be an appropriate use in what appeared to be a prime retail district.

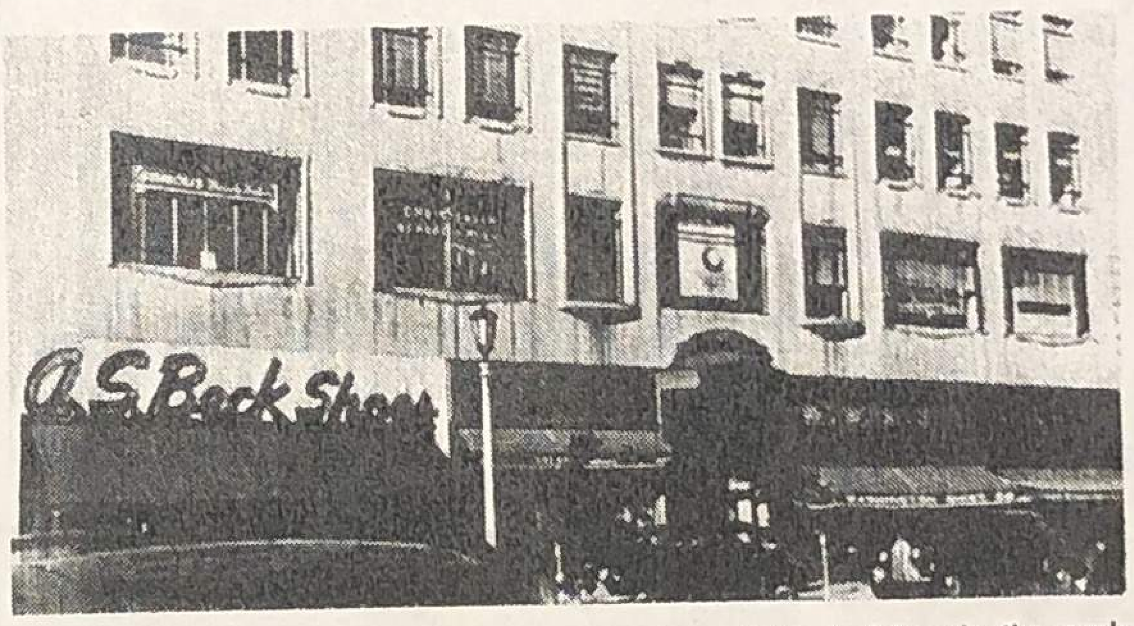
Between 1929 and 1940 it is known that Oak Leaves occupied the entire top floor of the five-story building and part of its lobby for $7,300 per year. As part of this deal, the property also assumed the paper's name, an honor for which Pioneer paid an additional $1,200 annually.

In 1946 a 100-by-106-foot addition was erected at the rear of the building. It consisted of a single story and basement with a second floor erected on the rear 54 feet.

THAT SAME YEAR Woolworth signed a long-term lease with Sun Realty Co. then owners of the property.

From 1949 to 1984 Marshall Field's leased the upper four floors of the building. This eliminated office space in the Oak Leaves and formed an annex for the department store.

In 1985 Ronald B. Grais, a Chicago developer purchased the five-story building with his partner, Larry Goldschmidt of New York, after a friend called his attention to the structure on the Oak Park Mall.



A variety of tenants occupied the ground floor of the building in the early 1940s. (Photo courtesy of the Oak Park Public Library)

"I took a look at it and was impressed with the possiblities and the fine location," he said.

They engaged Braun Skiba as architects and McCollom Realty Ltd. as leasing agent.

"I AM PARTICULARLY excited as this is my first renovation of a building in suburban Chicago," Grais said. "Outside of the downtown area, there are few opportunities for such a project, especially in the western suburbs."

The first step in the renovation was a complete gutting of the interior, with only the structural walls and floors left standing.

The new entrance and lobby reflect the art deco architectural style of the building constructed in 1929.

David King, leasing director of McCollom, convinced that the Oak Leaves Building "is the finest office building in Oak Part, or, for that matter, in the western suburbs," set to work attracting corporate business to the village.

The tenant list is impressive. Bristol Meyers moved its offices from Detroit. Metropolitan Life Insurance has located its corporate offices in the building.

AND EDUCATIONAL AND Institutional Cooperative Service Inc., a nine-state buying service for hospitals and universities, moved out of Chicago to locate on the mall.

Other tenants include the Oak Park Mall Commission.

King said there are four reasons why the renovated building is proving so attractive to corporations.

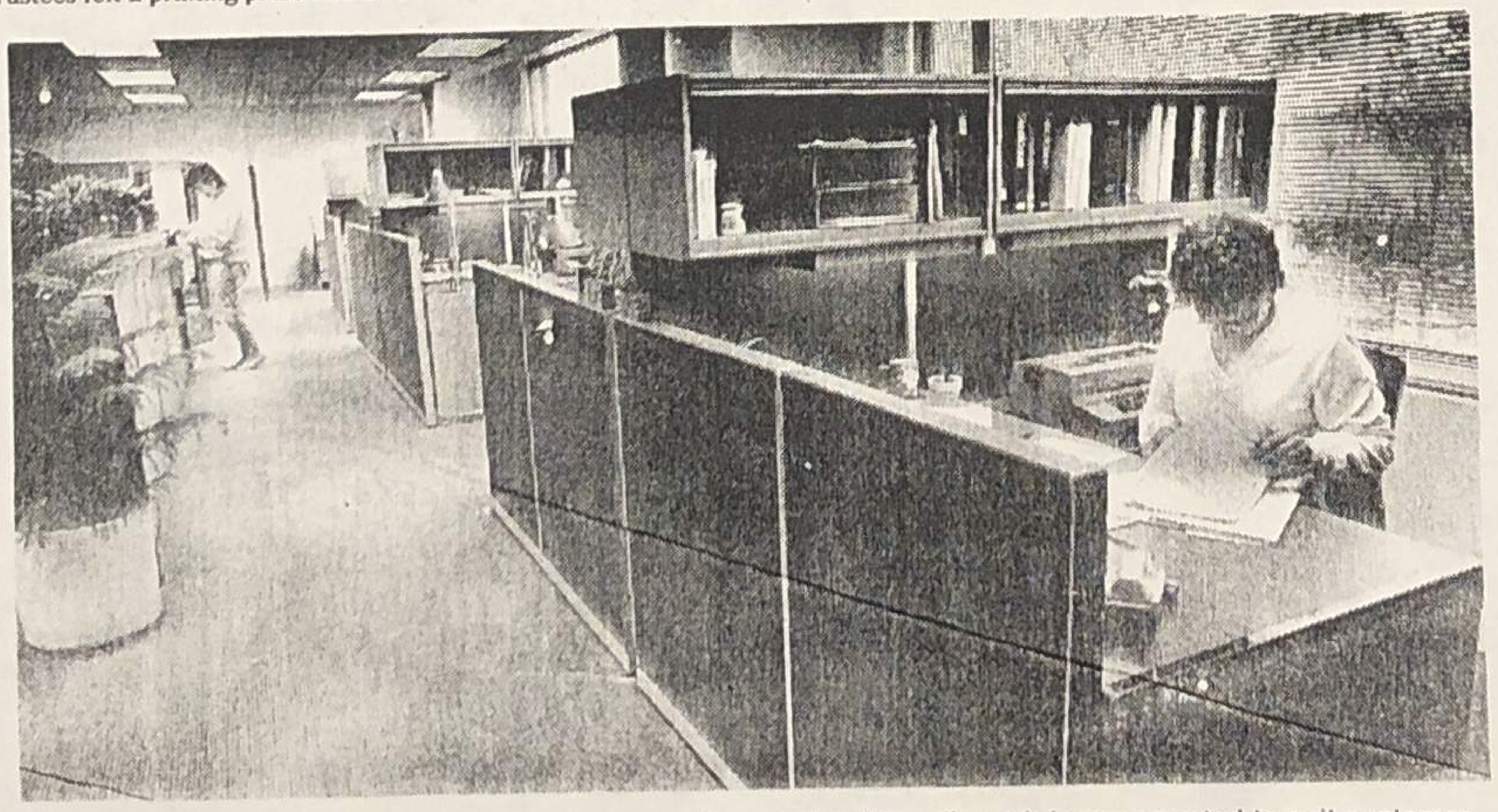
"It's a first-class, quality building, competitive with anything in Oak Brook.

"Second, the geographic location is perfect. It's 20 minutes to O'Hare Airport, 15 minutes to Oak Brook and the East-West tollway, and 15 minutes to the Loop.

"Public transportation by Northwestern train is just a block away. The Lake St elevated is just a half block from the building, and the bus is practically at the door.

"And, finally, the amenities of the Oak Park mall are there for those who work in offices."

BEGINNING WITH THE entry, and carrying the color scheme throughout the building, the architect chose gray with accents of burgundy for the carpets, walls, washroom fan you."



The interior offices are done in shades of gray and burgundy with walls and doors mounted to suit customer preferences. (Staff photo by Jon Langham)

Chicago Tribune (Chicago, Illinois) · 18 Nov 1928, Sun · Page 45

Near West Town Transfer Point

Above is the Oak Leaves building to be erected at 1136–40 West Lake street, Oak Park, near the corner of Lake and Harlem—one of the most important transfer points in the west suburban district. E. N. Crowen and associates are architects.

Oak Leave prospective rendering

terations.

John Cummings Lindop states that 76 per cent of the rentable space in the new Oak Leaves building, at 1142 West Lake street, Oak Park, adjoining the new Marshall Field building, has been leased. Space in the upper floors has been taken by the following: Utility Appliance corporation, Household Finance corporation, Illinois Life Insurance company, George H. Jones, Pioneer Publishing company and others.

Oak Leaves Building early tenants

FOUR MORE LOOP CONCERNS GOING INTO OAK PARK

With the first signs of spring, building in Oak Park's business areas gathered speed and four more loop concerns announced plans to locate branches in the world's largest village.

Leases have been signed for space in the new Oak Leaves building, 1136-42 Lake street, by the Washington Shirt company, the Walk-Over Shoe company, the Cutler Shoe company, and Andy's Chocolate shops.

The Oak Leaves building, which will be three stories high, adjoins the land on which Marshall Field & Co. will erect a big structure for a west suburban branch. Other big loop concerns which have already opened stores in the Lake-Marion district of Oak Park are The Hub, Richardson Furniture company, and Lyon & Healy.

Carl H. Fliessbach, 343 Thatcher avenue, River Forest, who is general manager of the Walk-Over Shoe company, says he considers the Lake-Marion district the "hot business spot" on the west side of Chicagoland.

Oak Leaves building leases

has sung both in America and abroad. Mr. Lane has held important musical positions in connection with St. James Methodist church and Edgewater Presbyterian church in Chicago and the Winnetka Community church.

Pioneer Co. to Erect Building in River Forest

Pioneer Publishing Co. of Oak Park, publisher of Oak Leaves and Austinite, is erecting a building on Central avenue, just west of Bonnie Brae, which will house its printing plant. It will have a frontage of 100 feet and a depth of 207, and will be one-story.

The location is between the new Bonnie Brae garage and the Schuettler plant, another new building in River Forest industrial section, in which Bowman Dairy Co., recently purchased a large tract of land, and will erect a million-dollar bottling plant.

The Pioneer plant is now on South boulevard, which is Central avenue in River Forest. They are between Harlem and Marion. Recently they announced that they would erect a three story building on Lake street, which they would occupy. It is expected that they will have their offices in their new Lake street building, which will otherwise be rented.

It is understood that the building now being occupied has either been sold, or will be sold soon. Excavation for the new building in River Forest has been started, and probably will be ready for occupancy within sixty days, and it is understood that the contractors have orders to push construction with all possible haste.

Commercial Assn. Has Annual Election

River Forest Commercial association held its annual election of officers Thursday evening at the Village Hall. There were reports of the year's activities. This paper went to press too early to give the result of the election this week. George A. Rossman has served as president this year, and Albert E. Webster has been secretary.

Oak Leaves builds press building in RF

Clipped By:

MacRostie

Mon, Jan 29, 2024


WOOLWORTH'S
WOOLWORTH CO.
WARDS
THE
Baker's Shoes
BUSCHES Jewelers
NIGHT PARKING PROHIBITED ON ALL STREETS 2:30 AM TO 6:00 AM
NO U TURN
NO PARKING BUS STOP
Villager Restau
HOUSEHOLD FINANCE

Walk-Over Shoes in Oak Leaves building