

August 2013

The outdoor swimming pool season in Bella Vista ends around Labor Day, just as it has for many years going all the way back to 1924. That's the year the Linebarger Brothers, who had opened a summer resort in 1917 surrounding Lake Bella Vista and decided they needed another attraction, so they built a large pool, named The Plunge, at the north end of Lake Bella Vista. The site of the pool is now a grass covered lawn between the Veterans Wall of Honor and the VFW building...in fact, the VFW building formerly housed the snack bar and restrooms for the pool.

The June 3, 1927, issue of the Bella Vista Breezes, reported, *"To give the patrons of Bella Vista one of the finest swimming*

pools in the Ozarks, Linebarger Bros. spent about \$15,000. It is a model of its kind and was constructed early in 1924. Five months were required in its building. The pool is 60 x 150 feet in size and ranges from 2 feet to 15 feet in depth. It is built of re-enforced concrete, and officials state that five miles of steel re-enforcing material were used in its construction. Three large drain pipes are located at the lower end of the pool, which empties it in from 15 to 20 minutes. To fill the pool requires about three hours. About 2,000,000 gallons of water are required to fill it, which is done daily."

The pool was filled with water piped from a big spring out of a cave at the south end of the property located diagonally across the street from the VFW building.

That property is now a private residence with a large pond, formerly known as the Trout Farm, in front of it.

Carole Westby Harter, granddaughter of C.A. Linebarger, remembers when she was a child in the 1940's and '50's how her grandfather would throw prizes and coins to the bottom of the pool to encourage kids to learn to swim and use the pool. The August 16, 1938, issue of the Bella Vista Breezes reported, *"Popular (also are) the small coins that are broadcast into the pool every Sunday afternoon...pennies, nickels and dimes amounting to \$5 in all are scattered in the pool for bathers to scramble after. The effectiveness of the prizes for drawing crowds to the already popular Plunge was pointed out by the Bella Vista management. The pool is doing its biggest business in several summers, it was said."*

In addition to a tall diving platform at the north end, the pool had several unusual features, including a big spinning top that floated in the pool on which swimmers could spin around until they fell off into the water, and a large wheel sitting on the concrete beside the pool, where swimmers climbed to the top and then were thrown into the water as the wheel turned.

Area residents and visitors continued to use the pool until Cooper Communities closed it in 1990. It was filled in during 1994 at the request of the VFW to reduce their insurance rates.

Picture 1: The large swimming pool, named The Plunge, was opened in 1924 by the Linebarger Brothers.

Picture 2 The Linebargers provided several "toys" to enhance the swimmers' enjoyment

