

AS I SEE IT Wonders never cease here in Lake County

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It isn't enough we have a state tree, flower, bird, crop and fossil. Soon, we'll have the Seven Wonders of Illinois, thanks to the state's Bureau of Tourism. Tourism boosters have come up with this Seven Wonders promotion to, well, boost tourism. In Illinois. In the dead of winter. Timing, it seems, is everything in the Land of Lincoln. Sen. Barack Obama showed that last weekend, himself becoming a tourist attraction on the way to the Democratic nomination for president.

The tourism bureau's Web site - www.enjoyillinois.com - is set up where my fellow Illinoisans can vote through the end of this month for the state's Seven Wonders. Tourism officials believe those might include Millennium Park in Chicago; the Superman statue in far downstate Metropolis; the Garden of the Gods in Shawnee National Forest; Wrigley Field, the Mississippi River and the Cahokia Mounds.

It's a wonder someone hasn't offered an unindicted Chicago alderman for one of our Seven Wonders.

Of course, we all recall the original Seven Wonders, compiled by Greeks and Romans way, way, way back in the day. I'm unsure if they were compiled for tourism reasons, but it would make sense. What else would draw a person to Babylon but hanging gardens?

Besides the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the other ancient Seven Wonders included the Great Pyramids of Egypt, which are the only wonders still standing; the 40-foot statue of the king of gods, Zeus at Olympia in Greece; the 120-foot high Colossus of Rhodes on the Greek island of Rhodes; the Temple of Diana, also in Greece; the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, built for an ancient ruler of a kingdom in ancient Turkey; and the Pharos of Alexandria, a near-600-foot lighthouse at the mouth of the Nile in Egypt.

Certainly, the first Seven Wonders list puts to shame the meager attempt by Illinois to duplicate the ancient marvels. Which is why Lake County, which everyone living here knows is wonderful, should have its own Seven Wonders. **To start with, you want pyramids? There's the Pyramid House of Jim Onan on Dilley's Road in Wadsworth.**

Does nothing compare to Fountain Square in Waukegan when it comes to hanging gardens? Or perhaps, a new auto recycling center in Gurnee, the new garden spot of Lake County.

The ivory throne of Zeus? Could that be but in Libertyville where the Republican Assembly of Lake County is enthroned.

The Jack Benny statue at Clayton and Genesee streets in downtown Waukegan reminds me of the Colossus of Rhodes, surveying Waukegan Harbor and Lake Michigan, nearby by another monument, the Genesee Theatre.

Diana -Artemis as the Greeks called her - was an athletic huntress, and where else would athletes hang but at Halas Hall in Lake Forest, home of the Bears. The Sky Trek tower at Six Flags Great America is a beacon lighting the way for tourists to visit Lake County, much like the Pharos of Alexandria.

And for a mausoleum, there's always St. Sava Serbian Cemetery between Gurnee and Libertyville, where a daughter has been searching grave sites for the lost remains of her father.

With a list like this, who would want to drive all the way to Little Egypt and see a some kind of wonderful national forest?