

ROGERS PARK BUILDER

FALL 2009

www.rpb.org

Kayaks Take Hold in Rogers Park

Kayaks have landed in Rogers Park in a big way. For one, there is the opening of Geneva Kayak Center, a store which specializes in the sale and instruction in the handling of kayaks as well as tours, and what the owner refers to as "adventures" or trips to such destinations as Alaska, Europe, North Carolina and the Apostle Islands, to name a few. The Center is now located in Rogers Park at 7301 N. Sheridan Road.

Shoreline Marathon: Dozens Compete in Race To and From Indiana Border to Evanston

Then there is the Chicago Shoreline Marathon, which is now in its third year. It was held August 29th and involved kayaking from the Indiana border to Evanston. Or as producer-manager Tim Flentye, a founding member of the Rogers Park Builders Group, put it: "We cover the entire Chicago shoreline, stopping along the way." Competitors start out at the Indiana border at Calumet Harbor and run north to Touhy Avenue.



Typical of the kayaks to be seen with increasing frequency in Lake Michigan is this scene of a kayaker plying her skills.

For those who for various reasons prefer a shorter distance, there are two other races: An eight-mile race from Touhy Avenue to Montrose Beach and return, and a four mile relay race featuring four-man teams with each paddler going four miles.

Serving as co-sponsors of the event are the "US Too" prostate cancer group and the "Shedd Aquarium."

"This year," Flentye said, "we've had people coming from as far away as Australia and South Africa. We have in the Marathon a world-class race with world-class competitors." With Chicago being a runner-up in the 2016 Olympic bidding process, the world knows that this city has the ability to host a world-class race like the Marathon."

Entry fees range from \$45 for the Short Course to \$100 for the Relay Race. Prizes, on the other hand, ranged from \$3,000 for the winner of the Marathon to \$250 for the seventh place winner with several other prizes for winners in between. For women there was a \$1,000 prize for the woman who came in first in the Marathon. Flentye indicated that there were 120 entrants in the Marathon this year.

Kayak Center Now Firmly Ensnconced in Rogers Park

Want to learn how to Kayak but have put it off because it was inconvenient or you didn't have the time? You no longer need to delay. The opening of the Geneva Kayak Center, 7301 N. Sheridan Road, has smashed that excuse once and for all.

("Kayak" continued on page 4)

Loyola Unveils Plans for Growth and Expansion

At a recent Builders Group board meeting, Loyola University unveiled plans for future expansion. According to Wayne Magdziarz, assistant to the president, Loyola is beginning construction on an addition to its athletic facility, the Gentile Center.



The 72,000 square-foot addition to Loyola University's athletic facilities will contain training rooms and locker rooms for men's and women's basketball and other sports, athletic department offices and meeting spaces.

The 72,000 square-foot addition to the east and to the south will contain training rooms, a locker room for men's and women's basketball and other sports, athletic department offices and meeting spaces. Magdziarz indicated that the project will commence construction this fall and should be completed by March 2011.

In addition, said Magdziarz, Loyola is completing plans for an amendment to its Lake Shore campus development with the City of Chicago. The amendment calls for significant property acquisition in the south campus area, including the upcoming decommissioning of Damen Hall (and a replacement building for Damen Hall that will match in size and style the university's Dumbach Hall and Cudahy Science) and a north campus plan to include a replacement for Alumni Gym, an addition to the Halas Sport Center and complete renovation of Centennial Forum.

("Loyola" continued on page 4)



Housing Plus: A Strategy to Help Multi-Family Building Owners Increase Property Values and Revenues

Housing Plus, as conceptualized by Marty Cerny, of Jameson Realty, and supported by the City, offers a win-win scenario for Chicago communities. Said Cerny, it taps into a huge resource nearly forgotten over years of zoning changes: the unfinished or otherwise less productive space, at or near grade level, in multifamily apartment buildings.

These spaces can be converted into desirable new affordable dwelling units, said Cerny and thus create new values and revenues for landlords. In fact, he added, the plan offers so many pluses that it is being promoted by Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky as a national housing model.

On September 17, the Congresswoman hosted a meeting in Washington, DC with a Housing Plus team of Cerny, Ald. Joe Moore, and Brian White of Lakeside CDC, and representatives of HUD and Senator Dick Durbin. The HUD representatives expressed their support of the plan, logistics forthcoming.

The team proposed to create 400 new units, anticipating volunteer participation from building owners in stable neighborhoods like Rogers Park. It would further stimulate \$30 million in real estate construction spending and provide 300 man-hours of work for the labor force, according to Cerny. While owners would be expected to incorporate green design

elements, he noted, the plan is to receive grants to reduce construction costs.

The team also met with VA assistant treasurer Tammy Duckworth and the plan sets aside 100 units for veterans suffering trauma-related illnesses. Subsidized rents for these units are expected as well as funds for Trilogy, a Rogers Park housing service provider. Trilogy will administer home integrated health care services for qualified vets.

Cerny said that there's an ease on property management with tenants in supportive housing situations (e.g. tenants who are quiet and provide rent assurances). The plan encourages owners to create units that are accessible and who will work with Cerny to target people with disabilities. Owners can expect incentives of modification grants and guaranteed rental subsidy for this targeted participation.

Cerny noted that there are an estimated 88,000 multi-family buildings in Chicago with full but unfinished spaces, at or near grade level, which can be converted into new units. In many, there's space enough for multiple new units, at or near grade level, he added.

Cerny can be reached by phone at (773)617-2541 or email at mcerny@jameson.com

Meet Mary Bao: A Woman of Many Hats

Mary Bao didn't intend to make real estate her livelihood. She inadvertently fell into it after working for twenty years as a fashion designer. In this capacity, she used to travel throughout the world.

After several years of study at the School of the Art Institute, she went on to graduate from the University of Illinois in Urbana, where she majored in Asian studies and where she met her husband to be, Neil Lifton.

Neil, a musician, writes and plays music, and is also the proprietor of Duke's Bar in Rogers Park. He would love to play in a Dixieland band.

Mary, who is anything if not busy, was helping her mother, who lived in Cincinnati. She came to Chicago from New York in 1998 and at that time went into real estate development. Before she knew it, she was deeply enmeshed in the work, helping to develop 120 apartments in Kentucky and Ohio.

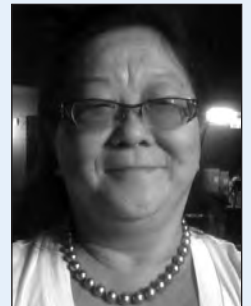
Currently, she is writing a book about her family, which goes back several generations. Her paternal grandparents were both educated at Cambridge University in Great Britain.

Presently, she owns the Pratt-at-the-Lake Building, which has 37 units. Most have a washer and dryer and a dishwasher, she says with some pride.

When she is not involved in the building, Mary is active in a host of Rogers Park organizations, including the boards of the Rogers Park Community Council, the Rogers Park Business Alliance (formerly DevCorp North). To these, add her involvement in the Loyola Park Advisory Council, which among others does fundraising for all Loyola Park activities, including the Art of the Wall Festival.

Last, but far from least, she is involved in the Glenwood Avenue Arts Fest and the Rogers Park Builders Group, where she has been a loyal member since 1998.

In association with the Rogers Park Business Alliance and the Glenwood, she has worked on a pet parade that was held October 24 from 1 to 4 p.m. She credits her Builders Group activities with helping her to make many friends.



30,000 Attend Glenwood Avenue Arts Fest; Shatters Attendance Record

If there was ever any doubts that the arts are flourishing in Rogers Park, they were dispelled by the 8th Annual Glenwood Avenue Arts Fest.

The Fest, held Saturday and Sunday, August 22-23, attracted a record high 15,000 viewers on each day according to Al Goldberg, a Rogers Park Builders Group director and the person credited with instigating the Fest in the first place.

As viewers strolled the brick-laid streets of Glenwood Avenue, between Farwell and Lunt, and the 1400 block of Morse, they were exposed to a mélange of paintings and other art work, theater, music, food and drink.

In addition there were local Rogers Park food vendors scattered throughout the area offering everything from French crepes to burgers and pad thai.

“Truly this was a festive and joyous occasion,” said Goldberg. To add to the fun and excitement of the Fest, there



The crowds attracted to the 8th Annual Glenwood Arts Festival reached a record high 15,000 for the two-day event.



Food vendors were scattered throughout the Fest.

were three live stages, featuring 48 musical acts.

Kidfest featured a family friendly circus, theater, dance and music aimed primarily at young children and their parents. The other stages featured music from soul and reggae to the blues and bluegrass.

Following the tradition of previous Fests, many Glenwood Avenue artists opened their studios to visitors.

Sponsoring the Food Court Tent was Camelot Realty. Food purveyors included the Morseland, the Heartland Café, J.B. Alberto's, Grande Noodle, Grill Inn, Duke's, the Glenwood, and the Golden Pear (specializing in crepes).

Other major sponsors included SSA#24, Community First Bank (sponsor of Kidfest), and Reside on Morse, Ald. Joe Moore, Lifeline Theater, S & C Electric, Art Space RP/Al Goldberg, Peoples Gas, and the Rogers Park Builders Group.

Gardening Group Going Strong in Our Community

When several Rogers Park residents sounded a trumpet call for all Rogers Park residents interested in gardening to get together to form a club, there were only a few who answered the call. But that was a few years ago. Today the Club's membership has vaulted to approximately two hundred, divided evenly between men and women.

For the \$10 membership fee, those with the gardening bug from throughout the area can attend the monthly meetings. Anyone can participate in community projects as well as qualify for small cash grants to landscape areas along the public way. Included among these projects are the landscaping of the circles at the end of Morse Avenue, under the tutelage of Bob McSorley.

Other gardening projects which the group has tackled include the embankment along the Metra tracks at Greenleaf and Ravenswood, thus beautifying areas which would otherwise look scraggly and unkempt.

Under the heading of smaller grants for gardens in the public way the group allocated approximately \$3,000 to cover almost twenty projects last year.

Pictorial descriptions of projects and lectures are featured at the group's monthly meetings held at the Rogers Park Pres-

byterian Church and a “garden meander,” or walk, is held annually. This year the meander went from Albion and North Sheridan along the Loyola University campus to Piper Hall.

Another big event which the group looks forward to with anticipation is what it calls a “Garden of Treasures Sale and Fundraiser” in which members and other interested parties donate plants, planters, and anything else related to gardening for sale. This strictly fundraising affair is held from 10:00a.m. to 1:00p.m. the last Sunday in September at Jarvis Square. Last year's affair raised nearly \$4,000, which came in handy when funds were distributed for the gardening projects the group sponsors.

For further information on the Rogers Park Gardening Group visit their website at rogersparkgardeninggroup.org



Onlookers browse through the wonderful assortment of items for sale at the annual “Garden of Treasures Sale and Fundraiser.”

("Kayak" continued from cover)

According to Scott Fairty, the owner-manager, the Center carries all kinds of kayaks, both single and double man operated. Besides offering sale and



Interior of the Geneva Kayak Center, 7301 N. Sheridan Road.

instruction of boats for beginners, the Center offers what he termed "adventure" tours to various destinations in Europe, Alaska, Wales, Georgia and other spots in United States and across the globe. So get down to the Center and in no time you will be going "full speed ahead" and "ship ahoy."

("Loyola" continued from cover)

"We expect the planned development to be substantially completed by late fall for filing with the city," said Magdziarz.

In another area of the Lake Shore campus, Loyola Station Phase II (to be located on the southwest corner site of Albion and Sheridan) is being delayed, said Magdziarz. Project financing challenges due to the depressed real estate market and tight capital markets, have put the project on hold for the time being.

In addition, Magdziarz commented, the Morgan at Loyola Station (a new rental building) is completed with a portion of the retail part of the project (CVS and Five Guys) already opened. Approximately forty percent of the rental apartments in the Morgan are under lease.

Former DevCorp North Now to Be Known as Rogers Park Business Alliance

The former DevCorp North has a new name: The Rogers Park Business Alliance. "The new name is much more in keeping with the spirit of our organization," said Kimberly Bares, executive director.

In addition, the RPBA (Rogers Park Business Alliance) has moved from Howard Street to new and more spacious quarters at 1448 W. Morse and is much closer to the Rogers Park Community Center, also on Morse.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



BY MARTY MAX - PRESIDENT, ROGERS PARK BUILDERS GROUP

As I See It Help May Be On Its Way!

Okay, back to the landlord stuff. Back in the summer of 2008 there was an article in this very paper about the Neighborhood Building Owners Alliance (NBOA). We explained that the NBOA is an alliance of Chicago neighborhood building owners seeking to promote quality and affordable housing by encouraging sensible, effective and fair regulations. What's more, this would be done by education and the responsible development, ownership, and management of multi-family housing in Chicago's communities.

In other words, the Alliance was organized to give Chicago apartment building owners and developers a voice that directly affects their business as well as their ability to provide critically needed affordable and quality housing for Chicago residents.

We got together the heads of the neighborhood organizations, including the RPBG, and targeted three problems that building owners are having at this time. One, being the building department and the city inspection process.

Please don't misunderstand me. I am not saying that buildings shouldn't be inspected. We just feel that we as building owners should have a working relationship with the city to solve some of the problems that the city feels some buildings have.

We have tried to talk to the inspectors, hearing officers and even past building commissioners. Most have listened but we really never got anywhere until now.

Commissioner Richard Monocchio was appointed by Mayor Daley as the Commissioner of the Building Department. He comes from the Department of Housing and understands that the majority of housing and the majority of affordable housing is supplied by the private sector. He understands that the property owners only source of income is the rent and expenses which cannot exceed income.

Although he said he would never jeopardize one's safety, he is willing to listen to our concerns. He spoke not too long ago at an RPBG meeting. After he faced a very intense question and answer period, he ended by giving out his email and phone numbers.

Explaining that we are all in this together (wow), he proceeded to set up a meeting with the NBOA directors and the lead inspector for each territory. Finally, he added Estella Kiser (president of the NBOA) and me to his advisory board. I might add that we were the only ones that represent the smaller property owner on the board.

I could go into more detail but that is really not the purpose of this particular article. I'm usually one of the first to complain about the city and the way they operate. I wanted to be one of the first to welcome the Commissioner's willingness and openness to listen and maybe learn from the owners on the street. I'm really excited about working with the Commissioner and I think, believe it or not, he is excited to work with us. No, this is not a suck up. I just had an inspection of one of our buildings and we didn't pass - oh well. See you next time!

New Restaurant on Pratt Offers a Lot for the Money

By Steve Cain • Senior Loan Consultant Chase Commercial Term Lending

A year ago this September, a new restaurant opened in Rogers Park called the RoPa Restaurant and Wine Bar. According to the friendly and knowledgeable manager, who told me to call him Oz, RoPa is a contraction of the first two letters of “Rogers” and “Park,” celebrating the neighborhood in which it is located.

This is the first Chicago restaurant venture of the owners, Aykut Sinanoglu, Serdar Dede, and Tarik Emanet. All three gentlemen have extensive restaurant backgrounds. Mr. Sinanoglu is the local partner. While he does not reside in Rogers Park, he lives close by on the North Side.

RoPa specializes in American cuisine with Mediterranean flair. Every night there is a three course, prix-fixe menu available for \$17.95. You can also order a la carte. Featured are a variety of soups and salads, an assortment of appetizers, and several chicken, fish and meat entrees with rotating pasta specials. Except for the ice cream, all the desserts are homemade and include a wonderful cheese cake, tiramisu, and crème brulee.

On the night that I was there, I sat at the beautiful polished wood bar and tried a couple of appetizers with a glass of red wine – a nice Malbec from Argentina. At Oz’s recommendation, I tried the calamari and the tuna tartar. Both

were delicious. The tartar especially was perfect for a late summer night, a generous portion of fresh tuna served with cold chunks of cucumber, tomato and a little red onion to spice it up.

The restaurant also features some nice drinks and wine specials. On Tuesdays and Sundays, all bottled beers on the menu can be had for just \$2 a pop. Every Wednesday is \$4 martini night. Despite the low price, RoPa uses good vodkas in their martinis, either Smirnoff or Finlandia. On Thursday nights you can order any glass of wine on the menu for just \$4.

The restaurant is open from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Tuesday through Thursday and Sunday and 5:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday. The main dining room seats 90 to 100 people. There is also a party room that can accommodate an additional 25 or it can be reserved for special gatherings and events. If you decide to reserve the party room, you can create special menus for your guests

that average between \$17-18 per person and include a full menu of items, served family-style.

Reservations are suggested but not required. RoPa is located at 1146 Pratt Blvd., just east of Sheridan Road. The phone number is (773)508-0002 or you can check them out on their website at www.roparestaurant.com.



(Above) This handsome sign beckons passersby to partake of the food and drink of the RoPa restaurant, opened last year on Pratt Blvd., just east of Sheridan Road. (Below) Interior shot of the RoPa Restaurant.



The Village North Theater Reopens Under Its Old Name “400”



Once the 400 Theater, then the Village North, now returns to its original name of simply “400.”

The movie theater formerly known as the 400 Theater is once again the 400 according to the new owner, Anthony Fox of CDF Capital.

For more than sixty years the theater was known as the 400 Theater, but its name was changed to the Village North in the early 90s.

According to Fox, the theater has undergone a complete revamping. Much of the terra cotta façade has been restored and the interior has been renovated with eco-friendly materials. New screens have been installed, curtains and carpeting throughout the theater, as well as updated seating and audiovisual equipment. In addition, said Fox, the concessions area has been replaced with new cabinetry and equipment to enhance the theater’s new look.

Fox indicated that the theater will continue to show new-release movies in all four theaters, and will occasionally show art films and offer some live performances, such as comedy acts, poetry readings, children’s activities and other cultural events, in the largest of the four theaters.

The building housing the new 400 also includes a Starbucks and a Thai restaurant which will continue to operate.

The Rogers Park Builders Group's mission is to encourage and support responsible residential and commercial property investment, development, and ownership in the Rogers Park community. Looking far beyond bricks and mortar, the RPBG initiates and supports collaboration on city and community actions to create a destination community.

OUR MISSION

- Marty Max, President
- Carla Price, Vice President
- Tom Heineman, Treasurer
- Mark Neil, Secretary
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- Mike Glasser, Chairman-Website Development/Membership
- Al Goldberg, Chairman-Arts
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- Carla Price, Chairman-Finance Committee
- Paul Goguen, Founding President
- Terry Sacks, Writer/Editor

RPBG Executive Committee



Mary Jane Sacks • 1708 W. Jarvis Avenue • Chicago, IL 60626
 Phone/Fax (773) 743-7453 • e-mail: rpbg@rogerspark.com
 Website: www.rpbg.org

Please Send Information About Becoming a Member of the Rogers Park Builders Group

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Comments

Mail to: Mary Jane Sacks, Administrative Director
 Rogers Park Builders Group
 1708 W. Jarvis Avenue • Chicago, IL 60626
 Phone/Fax: (773)743-7453
 e-mail: rpbg@rogerspark.com
 Website: www.rpbg.org

Ribbon Cutting at the New Chicago Math and Science Academy



A goodly crowd attended the official ribbon-cutting of the new Chicago Math and Science Academy in its new facility at 7212 N. Clark. The school, which focuses on math and science, has 600 students in grades six through twelve and a waiting list of more than a thousand. It boasts two new science labs, two computer labs and wireless internet throughout. An estimated 80 to 85 percent of the students enrolled are from Rogers Park.