



ROGERS PARK BUILDER

SUMMER 2009
www.rpbg.org

Boom in Condos Hits the Skids Three Experts Discuss What's in Store for the Future

From roughly 2002 to 2005 there was a boom in condominium sales and construction in Rogers Park as demand outstripped supply by far. New buildings were coming up as fast as builders could put them up. Other buildings were being converted from rental buildings to condos. Then came the bust. Almost as quickly as the boom began, the condo market began to drop and has remained largely inert ever since. What is the likelihood that condos will once again take off as demand begins to once again bolster the condo market?

The Builder recently discussed the condo market with three leading lights in the area – Connie Abels, Mak Jahangiri and Ken Sproul. Here are the discussion results:



Mak Jahangiri

Jahangiri: I started out in real estate in Rogers Park about fifteen years ago and have about seven or eight people working for me. From 2002 to 2005 the sale of condo units in Rogers Park really took off. We could hardly meet the demand and the prices kept going up. While the market has dropped, we are still selling condos and they seem to be stabilizing. In Rogers Park especially we have a lot to offer – great restaurants, theaters and transportation. We can walk over to the beach. There's a lot going on. It's a great place to live. I myself have lived in Rogers Park for more than thirty years.



Ken Sproul

Sproul: My original training was in civil engineering, however I have been working in real estate development in various capacities for thirty years. My business partner, Art Mitchell and I started our firm, SMB Development, about ten years ago. We developed a 57-unit project in Rogers Park – LakeView Pointe – located on Sheridan Road as it leads into Evanston, as well as several other projects downtown. We spent the last two years rehabbing an industrial loft building at Chicago and Larrabee into a church.



Connie Abels

Abels: In 1993 I helped Paul Goguen do the first condo conversion in Rogers Park at 7639-49 N. Eastlake and I worked with developers on the second condo conversion at 1309-23 W. Fargo. Last year I sold the most condos in Rogers Park. And in 1997, I sold the first condos north of Howard. I opened my own office in Rogers Park twenty-two years ago and have lived in Rogers Park since 1980.

The Builder: So why did the condo market boom just a few years ago and go kaput since 2005?

Abels: According to CAR (Chicago Association of Realtors) in condos only eighteen percent of units sold in the last two months were distressed sales. Overall condos are proven to be a viable commodity in real estate and re-sales are coming back. People who can take the hit of the current market, or are willing to lower prices of their units to meet the market, are able to sell their units. The same principles still apply – conditions and price.

Sproul: The economic downturn has slowed the volume of sale of condos. But in some ways this has been good for the market. In recent years the condo market was overheated. People were buying condos like stocks and flipping them for quick

(continued on page 3)

Overall Crime Shows Slight Dip – Except for Rise in Robberies

Crime took a slight decline in 2008 in Rogers Park, except for robberies in the Howard Street area, Alderman Moore announced.

He described index crime as including murder, sexual assault, robbery, assault and battery, as well as such property crime as burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft and arson.

While crime dipped in nearly all categories, there was a sharp increase in certain violent crime due to a big increase in robberies, primarily in the Howard Street area, he said. It was this rise in Howard area crime which led former District Police Commander David Sobczyk to launch his Howard Street initiative, which consists largely of an increased police presence in the Howard Street area.

Moore attributed the dip in other index crime largely to the participation of Rogers Park residents in CAPS which asks that they report any incidents of crime and suspicious behavior. He asserted that the 49th ward has the “most active and committed citizenry of any ward in the city.”

Sheridan Road Due for Resurfacing – Work Proceeding in Filling in Potholes

There's good news for residents of Sheridan Road from Evanston to Devon. According to Alderman Moore, the main thoroughfare is due for a resurfacing in the near future.

Although an exact date for the resurfacing project is yet determined, said Moore, it will start either this construction season or next year. Estimated cost will run

(continued on page 3)

Hop Haus – Where Burgers and Beer are King

By Steve Cain, SLC, Chase-Community Term Lending

Have a taste for a kangaroo burger and not sure where to go? Or do you have an insatiable craving for pizza at 3am on a Thursday night and don't know how to satisfy it? Well, you're in luck. Hop Haus, a new restaurant has opened in Rogers Park that features these, and other unusual items, and stays open late (really late) Wednesday through Saturday.

Oh, they have regular burgers as well, along with other crowd-pleasers like chicken sandwiches, onion rings, and various kinds of salads. But it was definitely some of the burger choices that got my attention. If you're not into kangaroo, you can try ostrich or wild boar or lamb, and you can have these burgers with all sorts of toppings, from the traditional – like bacon and cheese – to the more exotic, like grilled pineapple. Asked what the most popular burgers are for her more adventurous diners, restaurant manager Nicole Behlmann said the lamb and kangaroo burgers never fail to please. And don't forget to leave room for dessert. I had a turtle sundae, and it was delicious.

Not surprisingly for a restaurant called the Hop Haus, you will find a long list of beers on the menu, both foreign and

domestic. The restaurant has an especially good assortment of Belgian beers.

Hop Haus has only been in Rogers Park since the start of the year, replacing the former Amphora Restaurant at 7545 N. Clark St. Besides the hundred seats inside the restaurant, Hop Haus has a terrific outdoor terrace to enjoy in the warmer months, with seating for fifty. The terrace is sheltered from the elements by a big canvas ceiling and has a pool table if you tire of sitting and want to get up and move around. The restaurant interior features a large bar with murals of famous Chicago sports personalities and lots of flat screen TVs so that you can keep tabs on how your favorite teams are doing.



Typical of the Hop Haus is the brilliant terrace.

The Hop Haus is open for dinner seven days a week. The hours are 4pm – midnight on Mondays & Tuesdays; 4pm – 4am, Wednesdays & Thursdays; 11:30am – 4am on Fridays & Saturdays; and 9am – midnight on Sundays for brunch and dinner.

The restaurant features daily beer specials and \$5 appetizers Monday through Friday from 4 to 7 p.m. This is the second Hop Haus in the city, joining its sister establishment in River North.

Someone Always on the Move: That's Kimberly Bares

It's hard to pin Kimberly Bares down. In fact, the tall, athletic Kimberly's current position as executive director of DevCorp North for the past eight years, is about as long a stint as she has had in her entire working career.

A native of Binghamton, New York, Kimberly received her bachelor's degree at the State University of New York at Geneseo. About ten years later, after she had already been appointed executive director of DevCorp North, she got her master's degree in Urban Planning & Policy from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Following college, her working career took off when she was appointed executive director, for two years, of an agency in Rochester, New York, which worked with the development of disabled adults.

Following that, she worked for a year in Baltimore in the area of affordable non-profit organizations after which she was appointed executive director of the same agency.

In 1996 she came to Chicago to take a job as executive director of the Berwyn Development Corporation, where she remained for three years. She left to accept the position of executive director of the Edgewater Community Council, for two years, followed by a year as co-director of the Rogers Park Community Development Corporation, after which she accepted the post of executive director with DevCorp.

In her personal life, she and her partner, Robin Langer are raising a three-year-old daughter.

In her leisure time, she loves to run – specifically marathons – several of which she has run right here in Chicago. She is also an avid reader of mystery books and suspense and historical fiction.

Following a one-month stay in Paris, while she was in college, she

learned how to speak and write French, and in recent years, she has concentrated on learning Spanish. If this were not enough, she is also a member of Partners for Rogers Park, a coalition of low-income non-profit organizations. Add to this the Rogers Park Builders Group, where she is a director, and the Rogers Park Parents which sponsors a variety of events for children including a story-telling hour every , and you wonder where she finds time to handle all of these activities.

Her other pursuits include the 49th Ward Green Corps and membership in the Roger Park Transitions which is working to get residents off of fossil fuel into other organic fuels – to help fight pollution.

Under her leadership DevCorp is also undertaking the completion of a series of murals decorating the walls underneath the El, starting with the Red line stop at Morse and Glenwood. She is also proud that DevCorp was the original sponsor of the Glenwood Avenue Arts Fest (page 3) and the Clark Street Festival, scheduled for July 26.

Another source of pride is starting a new for profit subsidiary – PLACE – which consults with various communities, including Lakeview East, Lincoln Park, Little Village and West Town, about attracting business and neighborhood revitalization.

She is looking forward to DevCorp's moving to new and spacious quarters as this is being printed and to changing the name of DevCorp North to something more in keeping with the mission of the organization. And in the works is the kickoff of a plan for Sheridan Road, which will impact residents of both sides of that thoroughfare from the North Side to downtown.



Get Ready for Rogers Park's Big Event: The 8th Annual Glenwood Avenue Arts Fest

More than 7,500 people are expected each day of the two-day run of Glenwood Avenue Arts Fest, to be held Saturday and Sunday, August 22-23. With admission free, Fest Founder Al Goldberg said, "This is one of the biggest bargains you can get in Rogers Park. Besides the multitude of artwork on display, the show will be supported by a variety of musical groups, as well as by purveyors of tasty snacks and food presented by Rogers Park's leading restaurants."



Part of the throngs of people that jammed the Glenwood Avenue Art Fest last year.

Following the precedent of earlier events, the Fest will be held on the cobblestone streets of Glenwood, between Farwell and Lunt, and Morse Avenue between Greenview and the El station.

In addition, Goldberg indicated, the public will be invited to visit the studios and galleries in the Glenwood Avenue Arts District. "Altogether, this is a wonderful way to meet your neighbors and friends and to take in some of the beautiful works of art that the area has to offer."

Also, the Fest is an excellent way for businesses to interact with the community as sponsors. Realtors and developers are able to showcase their condos and apartments.

He indicated that following the precedent of previous years the Fest will feature all kinds of art and sculpture – some 85 artists are expected to show their works.

Providing the means and support to enable the Fest to be held are the various sponsors including: Lifeline Theater, the Morseland, the Glenwood, the Heartland Café, Duke's, Reside on Morse, Community First Bank, DevCorp North, SSA #24, and others.

Mess Hall: A Forum Where Anyone Can Sound Off On Various Issues

To anyone who has been in the service, a mess hall is a place where you and your fellow enlistees get your meals. But there's another kind of mess hall and it's located in Rogers Park at 6932 N. Glenwood thanks to RPBG director Al Goldberg and his wife Cookie who donated the space.



Workshops are an important adjunct to the Mess Hall's program.

Now entering its fifth year, members of the Mess Hall, or keyholders as they're known, meet periodically (there's no particular time) to discuss matters of interest to the group.

According to Goldberg, the Hall "helps to create an identity for the neighborhood. The intermittent free events help to bring together people of various backgrounds – the theatrical, the artistic, and of course the Mess Hall Keyholders – and provides a platform for voicing opinions on various subjects, such as a recent exhibition focusing on "hobohemian" culture. The group presented photocopies from Chicago's unforgotten radical nightclub – the Dill Pickle Club, hobo gatherings, and a timely look at the origin of American counterculture and working class art leading up to the Great Depression.

Goldberg stressed the community building aspect of Mess Hall. "Mess Hall is a forum from which we all benefit," he said. "If you are keen about some issue, here's a ready-made forum for sounding off and letting others voice their feelings and thoughts on the issue – any issue."

To Goldberg, the space fills a very vital object. His only objection is that he would like to see the space used more often with more events centered on Rogers Park.

("Boom in Condos Hits the Skids" continued from cover)

profits. This was tough on condo boards and owners who moved into the buildings. Large numbers of buildings were being rented or put up for re-sale, which made it harder for unit owners living in the buildings to establish communities. Today the buyers are owners who are moving into the developments, working hard to build strong communities within their buildings. Also the condominiums in Rogers Park are more affordable, so the drop off in prices and sales has not been felt as much as in other areas.

Jahangiri: Today we see fewer condos being rented out by their owners and that is good because the owner is more likely to want to keep their property up.

Abels: Financing is key to sales, and today this is less of a problem for potential buyers than it has been in the past two years. Lenders are demanding better credit scores and higher down-payments and FHA loans are back. There are loans available for condos again.

("Sheridan Road Resurfacing" continued from cover)

\$1.4 million and will be paid for primarily with funds taken from the federal stimulus plan. A part of the cost will come from a statewide capital program proposed by Governor Pat Quinn, and approved by the state General Assembly in early April.

Meanwhile there is further good news on another traffic front regarding potholes. Here Ald. Moore advises that the city Department of Traffic is moving speedily to fill potholes on 49th ward streets. Although the job is not yet complete, Moore asked residents for the location of potholes that remain. Residents knowing of such potholes are asked to call (773)338-5796 with the exact location of the potholes.

DevCorp North Names 2009 Honorees for Community Service

At the DevCorp North Annual Banquet the 2009 award winners went to those who, in the words of Dorothy Gregory, “know that the best way for anything to happen is to work together.” Each honoree, she said, has seen “a chance to provide a congenial atmosphere and has gone forward.”

Façade of the Year: CLARK DEVON HARDWARE, the single largest independently owned hardware store in the nation, is the winner. Clark-Devon Hardware, is “the store where if you’re in the trades or a weekend dabbler, you get first-rate assistance.”

Community Partner: Here the message, according to Ms. Gregory, is simply that “you can’t come here and be destructive. You can’t cross the boundary line between Evanston and Chicago and thumb your noses. The residents on both sides of the boundary, appreciate this and everyone wins because everyone is working together. For their partnerships and love of their neighborhoods the Community Partner Award goes to HANDS ACROSS HOWARD.

Business Leadership: THE COMMON CUP is the place where a whole lot of Rogers Park works together to meet friends, talk over business and to solve problems and in the process get a cup of good coffee and feast on some delicious pies. The Business Leadership Award goes to The Common Cup for offering food, drink and community in Rogers Park.

Friend of Rogers Park Award: For their efforts in organizing, and their love of their neighbors and their neighborhood, the Friend of Rogers Park Award goes to THE ROGERS PARK PARENTS GROUP.

President’s Award: Here the award goes posthumously to MARY JANE HAGGERTY whom Ms. Gregory described as “quirky, vulnerable, outspoken, courageous and quick to give credit to her co-worker. What a legacy she has left us. How much better Rogers Park is because of her. I am honored to present the family of Mary Jane Haggerty with the President’s Award.”

Artists of the Wall Festival Draws Thousands to Loyola Park

Vast numbers of people seeking a little beauty and artistic adventure were attracted to the 18th Annual Artists of the Wall Festival held at Loyola and Lake Michigan on the rocks situated on the beach on Saturday and Sunday, June 20-21.

According to Mary Bao, Arts Chairman and a member of the Builders Group, the Festival received 110 entries in three categories – children, teens and adults. As the dates of the Festival approached, artists worked feverishly to get their works ready in time. The major sponsor this year, as it has been for the past few years, was Clark-Devon Hardware.

Artists are encouraged to let their imaginations run wild and the most creative works in the minds of the judges received prizes ranging from \$50 to \$300. To make the two days of the Festival complete, there was a wide array of musical support on hand.

Proceeds go to support activities at Loyola Park. This year, the Festival has pooled its resources for the first time to repair the Windform Sculpture at Pratt and the lake in observance of the 30th anniversary of the completion of this masterpiece.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



BY MARTY MAX - PRESIDENT, ROGERS PARK BUILDERS GROUP

As I See It It's a Remarkable Day

As I have said before, I love to use this column to be a property owner advocate: to express to the public that not all landlords are bad. To show you, with real life stories, the trials and tribulations of being a property owner. Not this time. This time, I want to talk about giving your time and money to a worthy cause. I know, in these economic times, who is giving? I said the same thing at the start of 2009. I was not going to give to any charities, non-profits and community organizations. I said, “I just can’t afford to give this year.” UNTIL LAST FRIDAY.

A while ago, I was blessed to be asked to be on the board of the Rory David Deutsch Foundation (the RDDF). Although I never knew Rory, he was the son of a family that I became friends with, and who I admire tremendously. The Rory David Deutsch Foundation was established as a living tribute to Rory Deutsch, a sensitive, bright and warm-hearted seven-year-old. The Foundation funds research in medical laboratories to study devastating pediatric brain tumors.

The first priority is brain-stem gliomas. The RDDF, among other funds, established in 2005, the Rory David Deutsch Malignant Brain Tumor Research Project Endowment. The purpose of the fund is to support research into malignant brain tumors, under the direction of Children’s Memorial Hospital and Dr. Stewart Goldman.

Last Friday, Dr. Goldman, who is a remarkable human being, took us on a tour of the research labs and introduced us to his team of doctors, who are trying to find a cure for this terrible disease. Wow! These remarkable people, totally dedicated to finding a cure, totally supported by philanthropy. Dr. Goldman was asked, “How does the research continue in these tough economic times.” His answer was that he appreciates anyone who gives us any amount of money. That is the only way to find a cure, he said. I saw this first hand, I met people, I saw the equipment and I heard the voices. Mindy and Ross Deutsch, along with Dr. Stewart Goldman and his team, are committed to one day telling a family of a child that has a brain tumor (brain stem gliomas) that their child will have a future and live a long and happy life.

So, no matter who you support, don’t stop your support. If it is a half or a quarter of what you usually give, that’s okay. The doctors, volunteers, and community organizers work hard and deserve your support.

Next time, I will be my usual self, talking about real estate. This time, however, I ask all of you, no matter how hard it may be, to please continue supporting your cause. That’s how I see it. See you next time.

Contributions may be sent to: Rory David Deutsch Foundation, P.O. Box 547, Highland Park, Illinois 60035

Chicago Waldorf School: Enhances Student Learning by Catering to the Whole Person

It's situated in a large brown building of three stories which houses the pre-kindergarten through grades eight and an adjoining two story structure for students in high school at 1300 Loyola Street. It is the site of the Chicago Waldorf School, one of nearly 1,000 such schools which span the globe.

The school, founded in 1974, has been in its present Rogers Park location for fifteen years. It has a current enrollment of 354 students.

What's unique about the Waldorf school? According to Lisa Payton, director of admissions, plenty. Waldorf schools teach in ways that correspond to the child's developmental needs at specific ages.

In classrooms full of light and life, she said, Waldorf students learn traditional academic subjects through time-tested teaching methods that serve the students well. "At Waldorf, we try to engage the hands and heart, as well as the mind of the student, to cultivate a real enthusiasm and understanding."

"Waldorf is geared toward bringing out what's inside each student as opposed to filling them with prepackaged information. We are dedicated to teaching students *how* to learn rather than *what* to learn. Thus they graduate prepared to handle whatever life may bring to them."

"We do not teach students what to think, but how to think," she explained. The school is 34 years old. "In science for instance not only do the students learn the facts of a theory, but they strive to recreate that theory. They are actually involved in the experiment themselves."

For example, she pointed to a motorcycle which the students rebuilt themselves. "Furthermore," she said, "they built the computers that they use in their labs." An even more amazing experiment is perhaps the solar panels atop the school which power a handful of light bulbs. "They provide students hands-on experience in physics and science not available in any book," she said.



The curriculum starts with the morning lesson – the first two hours of the day in grades one through twelve. Students learn a particular subject for the first two hours for four weeks. Then they create their own books. There are no textbooks, she emphasized. Teachers in the early grades teach mostly by telling stories, facilitating the development of their imagination which in turn supports understanding and inspires a love for learning. Anyone can sign up. There's no admissions process.

The Chicago Waldorf School has programs for children from birth through grade twelve. From ages three to six students have several options and can attend two to four days a week. Tuition ranges from \$4,000 for the two-day program to \$13,000 for five full days. In grades one through eight the tuition is \$14,500. High school tuition runs about \$18,000, she said, explaining that the higher cost is due to the expense of a rich curriculum and the materials associated with many special subject courses.

"For instance," she said, "we had a stone carver here for several days to teach students the art of stone carving," and she pointed to several examples throughout the vicinity.

In addition, Ms. Payton explained, "there is a strong community service component in high school. She noted that ninth grade students will soon be working with farmers in Wisconsin. Tenth graders, she added will visit Taos, New Mexico to work on a pueblo and eleventh graders will travel to a community in Pennsylvania that works with developmentally disabled adults.

The destination of twelfth graders varies. Last year they went to Israel and this year they are going to Costa Rica to work with an indigenous economy.

In short, she said, Chicago Waldorf School focuses on developing the whole student. Combining arts and academics helps students learn, in an integrated way, gaining greater comprehension and confidence in their own abilities.

Delay on Evictions Almost Drives Owner Out of Business

You'd think that a company that owns 800 apartment units in the western suburbs should be able to show a nice profit for its operations...Right? Not necessarily.

Speaking at the April board meeting of the Builders Group, Mike Slinkman, of Countryside, told the sad tale of how he stands to lose his properties unless action is taken promptly to compel Sheriff Dart to evict various tenants who have not paid their rents for more than a few months. He contended that the Sheriff's "playing by his own rules." He announced last Fall that he was holding off on evictions to "protect people" from unlawful evictions due to foreclosures. And he compounded the problem by refusing to evict anyone during the holiday season from December 10 to January 5. He further worsened the problem by claiming that it was too cold to evict anyone in January or February.

In short, Slinkman says, it took three or four months to get his eviction cases before the Sheriff and another few months to evict

because of the holidays and the weather. At this rate, he asserted, he stands to lose every property that he owns.

Slinkman's company, founded in 1993, owns and operates many apartments in the western suburbs. With ten employees, the firm pays personal, federal and employment taxes, one of thousands of firms that allow the state to continue to operate.

As an example of what he is facing, Slinkman asserted that Cook County Assessor Houlihan had doubled his property taxes. He asserted that he paid the county \$40,000 in taxes – more than twice what he is currently paying in taxes for just one unit. And to make matters worse, Cook County Board President Stroger has raised the sales tax, which now ranks with highest in the nation. He called on landlords to contribute whatever they can so that he can pursue the problem in court. After hearing his story, president Marty Max asked that all who wish to contribute should send their checks to the RPBG and he in turn will send one check to Slinkman.

OUR MISSION

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.

RPBG Executive Committee

- Marty Max, President
- Carla Price, Vice President
- Tom Heineman, Treasurer
- Mark Neil, Secretary
- Ken Sproul, Chairman-Government Relations
- Mike Glasser, Chairman-Website Development/Membership
- Al Goldberg, Chairman-Arts
- Dan Sullivan, Chairman-Planning & Development
- Laurene Huffman, Chairman-Outreach
- John Brauc, Chairman-Fundraising
- Estella Kiser, Chairman-Public Relations
- Carla Price, Chairman-Finance Committee
- Paul Goguen, Founding President
- Terry Sacks, Writer/Editor



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

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone (Daytime) _____

Phone (Evening) _____

E-mail Address _____

I'm Interested In _____

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

Uncommon Ground Restaurant Builds "Green" Rooftop to Meet Community Needs

Chalk up another first for Rogers Park. The Midwest Organic Services Association has designated a 2,500 square foot rooftop on top of the Uncommon Ground Restaurant as the first certified organic farm in the nation situated on a rooftop. The rooftop, which is thirty feet above the restaurant, grows a variety of vegetables from peppers to tomatoes, which supply the restaurant owners, Helen and Michael Cameron, with the various items that go into the meals they serve.

Not only do they grow their own rooftop vegetables, they also use five solar panels to heat nearly seventy percent of the water used in the restaurant. Also on the rooftop are two beehives which this year produced over forty pounds of honey. And the Camerons also find time to teach urban agriculture classes to the local Waldorf School third graders (see page 5)

While there are many green roofs in Chicago, said Mrs. Cameron, they are not necessarily set up for full-time production or to teach awareness of the possibilities of urban agriculture. Nor was it a snap to build the rooftop farm. For one thing they had to dig an extra five feet into the basement to accommodate the heavy-duty steel beams to support the farm. Then too, the Camerons have strived to make the restaurant as green as possible.

Supplementing the rooftop farm is a weekly farmer's market, sponsored by local "green" organizations. Nearby is Loyola University with whom Uncommon Ground has worked with a biodiesel class and whose environmental science department they now supply with vegetable oil.

In short, as Helen Cameron puts it, "Our mission is to stand as a working model for other restaurants, businesses and homeowners to show what is possible in an urban environment."