

# ROGERS PARK BUILDER

WINTER 2009

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## Answers in Trends in Rogers Park Real Estate Workshop are a Mixed Bag

Results were mixed at the 6th Annual Trends in Real Estate workshop held January 27th at St. Scholastica Academy.

Following the routine of previous workshops, participants were assigned to one of eight tables as they registered. There they, and others assigned to their table, discussed a series of questions in the areas of the general economy as well as real estate in Rogers Park. Questions had to do both with building and apartment sales, and other aspects of real estate, including unemployment rates, market listing rates, apartment rental rates, etc. to get a picture of where real estate in general would stand in 2011. Discussions were led by moderators at each table.



Following the discussion, table moderators reported on where their table stood with regard to each question. For example, the first question asked participants where they thought the Dow Jones stock average would stand in 2011. Answers ranged from a low of 9,000 to a high of 11,125 averaging out to 9,436.

Question two had to do with the unemployment rate for 2011 compared with the unemployment rate for 2009 and with the rate for December 2008 which stood at 7.6% with the estimated average in 2011 standing at 8.228%

Question three had to do with what rate a local lender offers to loan a customer seeking to purchase a multi-family property at a rate of 5.75% in January 2009. Here nearly all tables, except for one, saw interest rates rising from 6.12 to 8.16% for 2011, with the average standing at 7.019%.

Question four involved what a two-bedroom unit in a renovated condo building at Sheridan and Fargo would sell for in 2011, in a unit which sold for \$225 a square foot in late 2008. Here all tables saw price per square foot ranging from \$180 to \$225 a square foot with the average at \$191.25 per square foot.

Question five dealt with the average market time for condos in Rogers Park in 2011, based on the market time in 2008, which was 184 days. Answers ranged from 140 to 240 days with the average standing at 174 days.

The answer for question six as to the price per apartment for a vintage multi-unit apartment building located between the "El" and Clark Street was \$65,000 in 2008. For 2011 estimates as to average price per apartment went from \$60,000 to \$70,000 with one table estimating the price for such an apartment in 2011 at \$85,000. However, nearly all table estimates ran about \$65,000, averaging \$67,156.

Finally, for question seven concerning the rental in 2011 of a four-room one-bedroom apartment building in 2009 at \$805 per apartment, answers ranged from \$755 to \$875. Nearly all answers ran higher than the \$805 an apartment in 2009, averaging \$825 per apartment.

Thus table answers to the seven questions were indeed a mixed bag. Moderators were: Ken Sproul, Jim Stoller, Connie Abels, Al Goldberg, Stuart Handler, Doug Imber, Robert Webster, and Angela Maurello. Mike Glasser, RPBG past president, served as the host in the post-discussion period and designed the questions which were then answered by the various participants.

## Iron Out the Eviction Procedure and Service of Process

The eviction process has taken a brighter outlook thanks to meetings the NBOA (National Building Owners Alliance) has held with the Sheriff's department.

"Our meetings have been positive," said Estella Kiser, the president of NBOA and an RPBG director, "and we are hopeful that the Sheriff's office is going to make some improvements in its practice and procedures."

Several proposals have been made to the Sheriff's office including:

- Allowing a building owner the option of using a special process server in lieu of the Sheriff's office for service of process. This will cut wasted time and make service more expedient.
- Having officers handling the eviction carry cell phones to better communicate with owners about when they are coming to the building.
- Making the inclement weather clear notice of any eviction cancellations timely.
- Clarifying the Sheriff's eviction procedure.

"With our assistance, the Sheriff's Office has put a summary of their procedures on their website, although we have already mentioned to the Sheriff's office that those procedures need to be in greater detail," said Ms. Kiser.

She indicated that they will continue to work with the Sheriff's office so that these and other practical solutions can be implemented.



## Morse Theatre Opens with a Bang to Sell-Out Crowds

Finding a place in the Rogers Park musical spectrum is no easy task, but the Morse Theatre seems well on its way toward accomplishing this goal. According to



*The entranceway to the new Morse Theatre. Since its opening a few months ago, the theatre has been drawing sell-out crowds.*

Andy McGhee, who, with his son Devin and partner Bill Kerpan, are in charge, they are relying on a mixture of jazz, rock 'n roll, bluegrass, blues, and classical music to draw capacity crowds to the theatre, located just east of the Red Line (El) on Morse.

In the few months of the Theatre's existence, they have had more than a dozen sell-outs, McGhee said, despite the poor economic

times. Even so, entertainers such as Grammy nominated songstress, Suzy Bogguss, folk-rock group, Lowen and Navarro, and many others have done very well. Ordinarily, the theatre schedules local jazz vocalists on Wednesday and regional and national touring groups on Thursday through Saturday.

And on Sunday mornings, in association with radio station WFMT, the Morse schedules classical instrumen-

talists and chamber groups, in programs which are heard by thousands of radio listeners each Sunday. Thus in one week last December attendees could have heard programs presented by a jazz group – Straight No Chaser; a performer billed as “one of the hottest drummers in the business” – Cindy Blackman; The Infamous Stringdusters – a group in the vanguard of acoustic music; and the Norwegian Singers – in a Christmas program of Norwegian songs presented over the airwaves of WFMT.

“On the whole the community response has been great,” said McGhee. That might be the end of the tale, except for the fact that besides the theatre, the Morse includes a 99-seat restaurant, where Peter Camphouse, a Rogers Park resident and a graduate of Kendall College's famed cooking program in Evanston, is in charge.

The food is plain, simple fare, said McGhee, and is all prepared in the restaurant. “We use nothing packaged,” he said.

Finally, the Morse is completing the last stages of a green roof, which besides being environmentally friendly, will be certified LEED (Leadership in Environment and Engineering Design).

The building which houses the theatre originally highlighted vaudeville, then became a silent movie house from 1935 to 1955, was empty for a while, and then became a synagogue for twenty years. Finally, it was acquired by the Geroulis family in 1974, who converted the building into a haberdashery. This it remained until the McGhees acquired ownership last year. And from the way it looks, an entertainment venue it will be for many years to come.

## Meet Tom Heineman, RPBG Treasurer... An All-Round Good Guy

Multi-talented might be a good term to describe Tom Heineman, treasurer of the Rogers Park Builders Group. Tom, who has been a member of the RPBG since its inception fourteen years ago, was with the well-known management firm, Arthur Andersen for 24 years, until its collapse in connection with the Enron bankruptcy several years ago.

Since then he has been spending his time tutoring math – everything up to calculus – he says. Business is booming and he estimates he spends an average of thirty hours a week tutoring high school and college students. Tom also sets aside time for his favorite sports activity – kayaking. He is active in the Sea Kayaker Association, an organization which promotes safe kayaking and better access to the Lake for self-propelled watercraft.

Last year he served as paddling director of the Lincoln Park Boat Blow and accomplished the rare feat several years ago of kayaking around Lake Michigan.

Right now, what time he has left is being spent rehabbing the first floor apartment of his three-flat apartment building on Eastlake Terrace.

A long-time resident of Rogers Park (he settled here in 1972), Tom has owned and occupied a three-flat on Eastlake since 1989. In addition he rents out a condo which he purchased in 1978.



In 1998, he was a partner with several RPBG members in a condo conversion at 1522 Jonquil which he describes as, “the first of a wave of condo conversions which followed in the North of Howard area.” The project served as a stimulus for several other condo conversions north of Howard which followed.

## New Police Commander is a Take Charge Kind of Guy

By Steven M. Cain  
Commercial Term Lending – WaMu



The Chicago Police Department's District 24, which includes Rogers Park, has a new Commander. David A. Sobczyk, took over as Commander just after Thanksgiving. Commander Sobczyk indicated his first priority will be to familiarize

himself with the district, his team, and the issues facing District 24.

Geographically, the District stretches roughly from Peterson on the south to the Chicago City limits on the north, Lake Michigan on the east to the North Shore Channel (Kedzie Avenue) on the west.

Sobczyk, a native Chicagoan born and raised on the northwest side, is a 27-year veteran with the police department. He is a graduate of the University of Illinois at Chicago with a B.A. (1984) in criminal justice and the Illinois Institute of Technology with an M.A. in Public Administration (1988).

Sobczyk's most recent position with the police department was Commander of the Deployment Operations Center, which acts as the intelligence hub for the entire department. Prior to that, he served as Commander of the Vice Control Section, which handles matters involving licensing, prostitution, and gambling. He has also worked in Gang Intelligence and has served as Tact Lieutenant, Tact Sergeant, and Gangs Specialist.

Sobczyk is the third person to serve as District 24 Commander in the past three years. This turnover does not represent a problem for the area, he said. Former Commander Bruce Rottner now heads up Area 3, which comprises most of the North Side. Sobczyk's immediate predecessor, Steve Caluris, has taken his former job as Commander of the Deployment Operations Center.

He stated that his immediate objective is to do everything possible to keep the crime statistics in Rogers Park moving in the right direction as violent crime continues to decline in the area.

Further, he said, the perception of crime and criminal activity must be taken seriously even if crime is on the decline. To that end Sobczyk intends to maintain open communications with the people and institutions that comprise the community.

## Safety and Security are Object of Local Officials Meeting

Several suggestions to make Sullivan High School a safer place in which to work or study came out of a meeting held recently. According to State Senator Heather Steans, these include implementing a dress code, staggering dismissal times so that all kids do not finish high school at the same time, seeking greater involvement from school officials and parents with the community, and providing more opportunities for youth activities after school.

In addition to the Sullivan suggestions, those attending the meeting suggested the need for additional constructive activities for the area, such as a Boys and Girls Club in the community, and additional youth programs at schools. In addition, it was suggested that there be greater police intervention, including foot patrols, and cameras to combat gang activity on Morse Avenue.

Along with Ms. Steans, State Representative Harry Osterman, and Alderman Joe Moore will meet with the outgoing District 24 Police Commander Steve Caluris and the new Commander David Sobczyk.

One of the group's first priorities will be meeting with the Sullivan High School principal and local school council about implementing a dress code and staggered dismissal times.

## Clark-Devon Hardware: The Store that Grew with the Times

When Clark-Devon Hardware opened its doors in Rogers Park 85 years ago, it was strictly a "Mom and Pop" operation, but over the

years it has grown into one of the largest hardware operations in the entire city. Certainly, it is the biggest hardware store on the north side, says Ken Walchak president, who, with his brother Ed and brother-in-law Tom Plummer, run the store.



Ken Walchak, president of Clark-Devon Hardware, surrounded by the dozens of lights which are for sale in his store.

According to Walchak, the store carries more than 25,000 items – everything from nuts and bolts to snow blowers which run \$1,500 and up. A store of Clark-Devon's proportions needs help, and help it has, more than seventy employees. Because of the huge inventory it carries in its 15,000 square-foot of space, you could well say that if you can't find it at Clark-Devon Hardware, located on the corner of Clark and Devon, you can find it anywhere.

In recent years the store has organized an outside sales force calling on customers all along the lakefront. "You know-if you can't come to us, we'll bring it out to you," Walchak said. It has also begun an equipment rental business upon which it has pinned high hopes. Despite the current economic slump, Walchak asserts that the business is holding up well. And to be sure, Clark-Devon Hardware expects to be around for many years to come.



BY MARTY MAX - PRESIDENT, ROGERS PARK BUILDERS GROUP

## As I See It Landlords Must Know Who Lives in Their Buildings

I told this story to the Rogers Park Builders Group at the last meeting and thought, "what a great real-life landlord story to tell all of you." We rented a three-bedroom apartment this past September to four students, one going to the Art Institute. His name: Robert Smith.

Robert's home is in New York. His father, John, was originally from Chicago and had moved to New York city many years ago. He still has family in Chicago as well as business. He is a very responsible father.

Although he had agreed to sign and guarantee the lease, we brought his son and the others to the office and made them all sign the lease; he, giving them a parental talking to; me, the landlord's talk.

Around the end of September, the kids had a big party. A really big party. I received several emergency calls that night, which made me miss my play. I was really angry. I e-mailed John that Sunday morning explaining what had happened and how disappointed I was in the kids.

But this guy was a stand up chap. Not only did he have the kids waiting for me at my office to apologize, but he flew in Wednesday to assure me that it would never happen again. The kids were excited about the apartment, he explained, and the party had gotten out of hand.

Right about Thanksgiving, Robert asked to meet with me. He advised that he was homesick and that he and the others might move back to their homes after the holidays. We talked about all of their options and made sure that he understood that he, the others, and his Dad were responsible for the lease.

His father called me a few days later assuring me that if Robert did decide to move back home, he would be responsible for the apartment – that he would either pay the rent or sub-let the apartment.

The holidays passed without hearing from the Smiths. And I assumed that Robert had decided to stay. Around the second week in January, I got a frantic call from a neighbor who lives next door to the kids. She said that the FBI had the building surrounded and had smashed down the doors of two apartments – one being the kids' apartment, and that they had chased and arrested one or two people.

Of course, by the time I got to the building everyone had left. The kids' apartment had been ransacked and the doors were all busted. The FBI had left a phone number and had told the neighbor that they were pursuing a wanted armed bank robber.

I called the FBI within a few hours of the raid and am still waiting for a reply and an explanation. More importantly, how was I going to call John and tell him that his son or one of his roommates was an armed bank robber that had just been arrested by the FBI.

After I had asked him how his holiday was, he replied, "it had been great since Robert had decided to stay home." What a relief. I asked about the others. He said that they all had moved out December 19th. I told him what had happened and the silence that followed seemed to last forever. He was speechless.

I asked who was living in the apartment now. He told me that his son had befriended a guy named Jones who needed a place to stay for a while. John met him, took him to breakfast, lunch, and dinner. He was just going to let this kid stay in the apartment until he came back to get the rest of Robert's things at the end of January. John insisted that there was no way that Jones, who was 19, could be an armed bank robber.

That Saturday, while reading the Sun-Times, I came across a story headlined **45-Second Bandit Apprehended in Rogers Park**. The 45-second bandit was the 19 year-old Andrew Jones who was living in our building. He was wanted for ten armed bank robberies.

Why the name the 45-Second Bandit? Because he would tell the teller: "**You have 45 seconds to give me the money or I will shoot you.**" Thus, the 45 Second Bandit. Can you believe it? When I told John, I think he was ready to throw up.

John has since paid me seven month's rent and feels terrible. He also told his brother to change his locks at home. I am still waiting for the FBI to contact me to perhaps pay for the damage they had caused. This is a great example of why landlords should do background checks. And it's also a great example of why tenants must follow the rules and communicate with their landlords.

### Mary Jane Haggerty Dies Advocate of Fair Housing for All

Mary Jane Haggerty, a staunch fighter for affordable housing for all Rogers Park residents, regardless of background, died recently at her home in Skokie. She was 56.

For the last twelve years her efforts as Housing Director of the Rogers Park Community Council were aimed primarily at working with oppressed people in the area to obtain affordable housing.

After growing up and attending school in Rogers Park, she obtained a degree in history and anthropology at Northeastern Illinois University. Prior to joining the staff of the Community Council, she worked for the Catholic Youth Organization and the Edgewater Community Council.

Ms. Haggerty is credited with playing a key role in cracking a scam by a slum landlord with a dozen buildings which had been allowed to deteriorate and become fire and water hazards, and provided shelter for drug dealers and squatters. The perpetrator of the scheme was sentenced to nine years in prison after pleading guilty to mortgage fraud.

In hearing of her death, Marty Max, president of the RPBG, said, "Ms. Haggerty put her heart and soul into her work in attempting to maintain affordable housing for all people. The spirit and know-how she brought to her work is irreplaceable."

## Alderman Moore Named Most Valuable Local Official by Leading Progressive Magazine



Alderman Joe Moore has been chosen “Most Valuable Local Official” by *The Nation*, one of the leading liberal magazines published in the United States, and the nation’s oldest magazine. According to the Washington correspondent for *The Nation*, who selected the magazine’s 2008 Most Valuable Progressives’ list:

“...Alderman Moore stands out as an example of the sort of steadfast and effective, grassroots, progressive who has fought the powerbrokers again and again and frequently prevailed. Moore refused to be constrained by the supposed limits of local government. He has gotten the City Council to oppose the war, defend civil liberties and take on chain stores that batter local businesses.”

## Chicago Math & Science Academy: School Ranks in Top Ten of City’s 108 High Schools and is Seeking More Space

In its brief existence, the Chicago Math and Science Academy, one of Chicago’s sixty, or so, charter schools, has achieved quite a record. For one, the school’s middle school is ranked in the top ten out of the city’s 108 high schools. “Our students are virtually guaranteed college admission once they complete their studies here,” said the school’s principal, Ali Yilmaz.

The school has an enrollment of 484 students, covering grades six to twelve. While 85 percent live in Rogers Park, the rest are from all over the city. But space is at a premium. For this reason the school is seeking a zoning change so that it can move into the old Clark Street Mall site at 7212 N. Clark (across from Touhy Park).

As a measure of the Academy’s popularity, it received 480 applicants for only thirty spots in the 9th grade, so to allocate the few spots fairly, it relied on a lottery. “This is something we have had to resort to a few times to be fair in enrolling students,” said Yilmaz.

“Every child can and will learn at CMSA,” he stressed. “Nothing is impossible.” And he added that not a single minute is wasted. The curriculum focuses on math, language arts, and science. Middle schoolers receive ninety minutes of math, ninety minutes of language, and seventy-five minutes of science daily. While this might seem like quite a heavy dose in these three areas, it seems to agree well with the students. And if the proposed zoning change goes through, they will have bright new quarters in the Clark Street Mall to convert into classrooms, studies and a gym. The school’s future looks bright indeed.

## Village Theater to Reopen After Extensive Renovation

The Village Theater, 6740 N. Sheridan Road, is scheduled to reopen this spring under new ownership after extensive renovation, inside and out.

The theater, and the building of which it is a part, was purchased last year by Anthony Fox, of CDF Capital. Fox has already rebuilt much of the terra cotta façade exterior and will soon start on the interior renovation.

He plans to continue to show first run movies in all four theaters, and occasionally in the largest theater they will show art films and some live performances, such as poetry readings, comedy acts, children’s performances and other culture acts.

The building housing the Village North also is home to a Starbucks and a Thai restaurant, both of which will continue to operate.

## New Morse Avenue Café Offers Full Pantry of Drinks and Desserts

Morse Avenue is getting to be quite an entertainment and food locale. Besides the Morse Theater (see page 2) and the Morseland Restaurant, there is the newly opened Alhambra Café, at 1622 W. Morse. Besides fair-trade organic American coffee, the Café offers artisan teas, European quality coffee drinks, refreshing cold drinks, smoothies, ice cream shakes and locally baked goods and café desserts. Also available is free WiFi.



Alhambra Cafés hours are Monday thru Thursday, 7a.m. to 7p.m. and Saturday and Sunday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. They are closed Fridays.

## New Firehouse Dedicated Amidst Ceremonies and Tours

It’s official. The new 49th ward firehouse, at 7340 N. Clark (across from Touhy Park) was dedicated on January 10th with refreshments and tours.

The state-of-the-art 15,000 square-foot facility replaces the old firehouse, at 1713 W. Greenleaf. The new facility contains a circular drive which will enable emergency vehicles to exit the facility quickly and effortlessly. It also contains a fitness center for firefighters.

Plans for the future of the old Greenleaf firehouse have not been finalized, but there is a possibility, according to Alderman Moore, that the Rogers Park Historical Society will acquire the station for its offices and a museum.

**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.

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

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**The Morgan at Loyola Station & 6700 North Sheridan Road**



The Morgan at Loyola Station, 6774 N. Sheridan Rd., will be opening in the spring of 2009. It will consist of 152 market-rate apartments and 202 parking spaces. There will also be 33,000 square-feet of retail space of which the anchor tenant will be CVS. And there is still available space for lease.