



ROGERS PARK BUILDER

SPRING 2002

www.rpbg.org

Restaurant Revival in Rogers Park

One sign of a revitalized community is the character and dynamic quality offered by its restaurants. In Rogers Park there are many wonderful restaurants, representing numerous cuisines: Caribbean, Mexican, Peruvian, Korean, Italian and of course Indian and Pakistani along the Devon corridor. Due to space restraints, this article will feature only a handful – a sampling (smorgasbord?), if you will, of neighborhood classics and new venues.

We start from the northern edge of Rogers Park at the **Gateway Bar and Grill** on North Clark Street. Formerly known as My Place for... the Gateway Bar and Grill started on Lincoln Avenue and moved to Rogers Park in 1975. According to owner Steve Dorizas (a founding member of the RPBG) and his son, Spiro, who serves as supervisor of operations and entertainment, the Gateway is one of the few north side restaurants to offer dinner and live entertainment. It features a full and varied selection of tasty food with a Mediterranean flare – fresh seafood, pastas, steaks and chops. And the fare is not only Greek, but Italian and French as well.

Some months ago the restaurant underwent a complete revamping and renovation mounting into many thousands of dollars. With thousands of newcomers moving into the community, Spiro Dorizas is excited about the restaurant's potential for the future. He indicated that Gateway is soon planning on opening a garden café seating 65 in the area adjacent to the restaurant. In addition, Dorizas proudly announced that starting April 21 (in time for Mothers' Day!), they will serve Sunday brunch, accompanied by jazz piano, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Proceeding southward on Sheridan just south of Lunt, at 6935 N. Sheridan we come to **Leona's**, one of the most tastefully decorated of a chain of 16 restaurants in the Chicago area, according to Bill Trotter, director of marketing. Located in Rogers Park since 1987, Leona's features a huge menu and the tone is definitely casual. The menu features dozens of Italian dishes as well as hearty American fare and is vegetarian friendly, said Trotter.

About six months ago Leona's took over the operation of a well-established diner on the corner of Clark and Ashland. Now known as the **DeLuxe Diner**, it features breakfast, lunch and dinner. For breakfast there is a fine selection of tasty skillet, pancakes and sandwiches. It also has taken over the operation of a small diner next door, **Maria's**, which features pizza and subs.

Proceeding south to Lunt and westward to Glenwood, is a well-known Rogers Park institution, the **Heartland Café**. According to owner-manager Michael James, a new Associate Member of the RPBG, the restaurant celebrated its 25th anniversary last August.

(continued on page 2)

Expert Sees Opportunity for Family Style Restaurant

Rogers Park has many fine restaurants, but it nevertheless is ready for a good family style restaurant with a well-balanced menu and a nice bar. That is the opinion of Chuck Hamburg, a professor of restaurant management at Roosevelt University and an advisor to the RPBG, and a restaurant business-building consultant, who also lives in the neighborhood. With new condo developments and new homes going up in Rogers Park, he said, there is an opportunity for restaurant entrepreneurs to invest in this type of business.

New RPBG Member to Award Scholarship

A graduating senior at Northside Preparatory High School will receive a college scholarship to be awarded by Prime Property Investors, Ltd. Northside Prep, located at 5501 N. Kedzie, is rated the number one high school in Illinois for academics.

Company principals Barbara Gaffen and Michael H. Zaransky created the scholarship to encourage and support students contemplating a career in real estate work. Studies considered for the scholarship include business, entrepreneurship or related real estate fields. The student receiving the scholarship will be evaluated in terms of academic achievement, community involvement, and a brief statement indicating his or her interest in pursuing a career in real estate.

Prime Property Investors, Ltd., of Northbrook, who joined the RPBG in October 2001, recently purchased and have made great strides improving a building at Fargo and Greenview. This firm, which has been formally recognized by local trade organizations for doing quality development, develops and self manages apartment building rental properties and develops condominiums in Chicago.



The brothers Nandari, Foruzan and Faraz, are shown in their spacious new restaurant, Café Suron, which features Persian and Mediterranean cooking.

Gateway Centre: Marshall's and Footlocker Both Scheduled to Move In

Kevin Richards, head of the Howard Street SSA and a staffer at DevCorp North, announced that two well-known retailers, Footlocker and Marshall's, will soon be occupying space in the Centre. In addition, Gateway is finalizing a contract with Bally's Fitness centers to occupy 30,000 sq. feet of space in the Centre.

"The addition of Bally's to Marshall's and Dominick's gives us three anchor stores for the Centre," said Richards, indicating that this will considerably simplify efforts to lease the remainder of the space in the Centre.

He noted further Gateway's ownership has hired Ms. Barbara Muehl, of Trident Development LLC, to serve as property manager supervising the overall leasing of space at the Centre and Robert Swierbut, of NAI Hiffman, Inc., is now the Centre leasing agent.

("Restaurant Revival" continued)

The restaurant features traditional American cooking, with a Mexican bent as well, and has recently introduced several Asiatic dishes to its menu. It also champions buffalo meat, which James says is obtained from a small ranch in South Dakota and is rapidly rising in popularity since its introduction several years ago.

Several years ago, the Heartland took over the operation of the *No Exit Café*, just a few doors to the north on Glenwood. Open Thursday through Sunday, it features entertainment and is available for private parties as well as community functions.

In addition, the multi-faceted Heartland building also includes the *Red Line Tap*, just north of the Heartland on Glenwood, and the *Heartland Studio*, an intimate 50-seat theatre.

Finally, residents of Rogers Park are discovering our two newest restaurants (both of which serve lunch). The *Café Suron*, located just east of the White Hen Pantry, on Sheridan and Pratt (1146 W. Pratt) has opened with rave reviews. Last year, the Nandari brothers, Foruzan and Faraz, both Persian refugees, devoted nine months restoring the space (check out the beautiful original tile floor that they discovered and restored) to its elegant and tastefully decorated condition. The Nandaris feature a tasty mixture of Persian, Mediterranean and Cajun dishes, prepared by Chef Mostafa, formerly the chef at Reza's.

Last November, Sandra Waite-York opened *San's Belizean Soul*, located at 2221 W. Howard, because "my dream has always been to have a Belizean-American fresh cooked meal, for people who want fresh food and don't mind waiting for it. My specialties are coconut curried shrimp and stewed snapper - I cook seafood like no one else." Ms. Waite-York personally transformed the site to its warm and inviting environment, with a friendly wait staff (usually her daughter). Be prepared to leave with a leftover container, because servings are as generous as they are delicious.

Involved and a Quick Study - That's Connie Abels!

Connie Abels would be the first to admit that she has made a few mistakes in climbing up the real estate ladder to her current position as owner and operator of RE/MAX North Coast Realty. But she is a quick study.

Her first job right out of high school was working for a large well-known life insurance company, which she did not enjoy, she admits. So after mulling over various job options she decided to go into property management and wound up managing a large 21-unit building at Foster and Cumberland in 1977.

Two job changes later she ended up as on site manager at the old Rogers Park hotel where her job was to convert the property from an apartment hotel into a regular unfurnished annual lease apartment building doing renovations, one unit at a time for the 168-unit building.

In 1982 she moved into the building, where she started to learn property management from the ground up. After several years she became bored and received permission to get a part-time job renting apartments. She was hired by what she describes as a 'Mom and Pop' rental agency in Lincoln Park, where she made more money part-time renting apartments than she did in her full-time job and she was having fun. She did so well that the agency owners wanted to take her on as a partner when she was only 29.

She obtained a brokers license in 1986 and in the naive assumption that all she needed was a copying machine, she opened her own real estate office - although admittedly she had never sold a piece of property in her life.

She opened her office at the Rogers Park hotel at Pratt and Sheridan. While handling the duties connected with man-

aging the hotel, she operated her office, specializing in management, leasing of rental properties and she learned sales as well. From that modest beginning, she has seen her office grow to now number eight full-time associates. She plans to move into a new office, which will double her current space in the Granada building, in the near future.

Her office handles commercial, residential properties, and condo developments. While specializing in Rogers Park, she has handled transactions from as far as the Indiana state line to Wisconsin.

Besides her activities in the Builders Group, where she is a charter member, she is a director of the Rogers Park Community Council and a member of DevCorp North, Friends of the Library, and the Rogers Park-West Ridge Historical Society. She holds awards from the Chicago Association of Realtors, and the Rogers Park Community Council Tender Loving Care Award.

She sees much more involvement in Rogers Park on the part of developers and homeowners and this in turn has made for more stability in the community.

When she started her office in 1987, Rogers Park was 80 percent rental and 20 percent private ownership. One of her main objectives in her mission statement is to see that ratio approach 50 percent rental and 50 percent private ownership. Connie Abels comments on the stability, "by creating more ownership and personal investment, it helps reduce the transience that a high rental ratio creates."



Neighborhoods Within Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods within Neighborhoods, Twentieth Century Life on Chicago's Far North Side is the name of a new 240-page book loaded with photos and interviews of the famed and just plain folk in Rogers Park and West Ridge.

Unlike its predecessor, a chronological story of Rogers Park and its development from 1809 on, this book focuses on six Rogers Park neighborhoods: Loyola, Morse Avenue, Howard Street, Ridge, West Rogers Park and North Town. It features essays by radio's well known commentator Hugh Downs, congresswoman Jan Schakowsky, and New York Times Sports Columnist, Ira Berkow. The authors are Neil Samors, Mike Williams and Mary Jo Doyle, executive director of the Rogers Park – West Ridge Historical Society.

Besides 130 never before published photos, the book features 175 interviews and quotes from such well known personages as comedian Shecky Greene, comedy writer Harold Ramis, and novelist Scott Turow, and contains a forward by Dan Miller, formerly editor of *Crain's Chicago Business* and now business editor of the *Chicago Sun-Times*. The cost: \$35 for non-members; \$30 for members. Immediately available from the Rogers Park – West Ridge Historical Society. Contact Mary Jo Doyle at the Society at (773)764-4078. Books are also available at Barnes & Noble, Borders and Brent's bookstores, at the Chicago Historical Society and the Chicago Architecture Foundation.

How to Avoid Problems with the City on Waste Disposal

One of the least favorite places in the city for landlords and property managers to visit is "Streets and Sanitation" court on Addison near Western. There hearing officers entertain complaints levied against building owners by Department of Streets and Sanitation workers alleging unkempt premises. Building owners however can avoid such prosecution (and fines imposed), and more important, keep the community's alleyways in a clean and safe condition, by getting adequate trash pickup on their properties.

Ralph DePinto, Refuse Coordinator of the 49th Ward, noted that to stay on the right side of the law on waste management, building owners and managers should arrange for at least two to three garbage pickups a week with their scavenger services. "Some building managers try to save a few bucks by cutting down on the number of scavenger pickups they schedule a week and that's where they go wrong. Before you know it, their dumpsters are full and the area around the dumpsters are full of refuse, which in turn attracts rodents."

"When we run into such situations, we take photos of the entire area and the owner faces penalties of \$200 or more for each violation," said DePinto. He further noted that the dumpster must be closed tight so that refuse does not fall out of the dumpster. And the area surrounding the dumpster must be kept clean as well.

Currently, buildings of four or more units up to ten units, must have at least one dumpster. A 30-unit property must have three dumpsters and pickups should be scheduled for three times a week. DePinto further explained that the scavenger service must label each dumpster with the name and address of the owner or the management company.

Buildings of four units or less qualify for city pickup, he added, and have no need for their own dumpsters.

Property owners or landlords with waste disposal problems or who need information about waste disposal requirements should contact Tony Cusumano, Refuse Collection Coordinator for the 49th Ward, (773)262-5767 or write him at 6441 N. Ravenswood, Chicago, IL 60626.

1530-36 W. Fargo 7057-61 N. Damen

Two new condo developments in the North Rogers Park area have been placed on the market, according to Michelle Browne, of Mak Browne & Associates, the exclusive agent.

The first, Fargo Court Condominiums, 1530-36 W. Fargo, features 26 meticulously rehabbed vintage homes and 21st century conveniences, said Ms. Browne. She noted that each home features a carefully planned kitchen, stylish bath, in-unit laundry hook-ups and new windows. In addition, it offers Grohe fixtures, designer lighting, chrome hardware and special detailing, which make it an excellent value, said Ms. Browne.

Units are priced from \$118,000 to \$124,000 for one bedroom and from \$133,000 to \$179,000 for two bedrooms.

The second development, East Ridge Pointe Condominiums, which Ms. Browne described as an exceptional value, are 17 homes located at 7057-61 N. Damen. The one, two, and three-bedroom homes feature a variety of layouts. Each offers quality craftsmanship, a new chef's kitchen, gas fireplaces, new windows, and loads of closet space, said Ms. Browne.

Prices are as follows:

*One bedroom \$125,000 to \$135,000
Two bedrooms \$145,000 to 155,000
Three bedrooms \$175,000 to \$185,000.*

Five of the units are sold, Ms. Browne reported. Mak Browne & Associates is the exclusive agent for both developments. For information, contact Michelle Browne at (773)604-7111.

1434-44 W. Lunt

The Bella Fiore Condominiums are located one block west of the Morse Avenue El stop. These 24 fully rehabbed units range in size from 1,000-1,400 sq. ft. and feature spacious two bedroom and one to two bath units. These condos offer an exciting contemporary design featuring imported Italian kitchen & bath cabinetry finishes. Other highlights: steel appliances, granite counters, hardwood floors & high tech lighting will be standard finishes. Limited parking available for purchase. Pre-construction prices range, \$130,500 to \$275,500. Ready for market this spring. Contact Sharon Kozak at Coldwell Banker for details: (773)908-8002.

New Units Coming Up in North Rogers Park



Several all brick, all new construction developments for North Rogers Park have been announced by Camelot Realty. According to Rich Aronson, president, the first, an eight-unit building at 7410 N. Winchester (above) will feature all of the amenities – all maple cabinets, granite countertops, jacuzzi bath and shower, etc. Includes three three-bedroom, two-bath and three two-bedroom, two bath priced at \$279,000 and up. There are in addition two lower level two bedroom, two-bath units which are wheelchair accessible priced at \$189,000 and up. Available in early 2003.



The second development, at 1617 W. Estes (above) is a nine-flat all brick building, the foundation of which is down. It consists of two buildings, connected with a wood deck. Includes six units of two-bedrooms, two baths, \$289,000 to \$309,000 and three units of four bedroom, three bath duplexes. Units feature all of the amenities plus wood burning fireplaces, and wrought iron fences, priced at \$369,000 on up. For information, contact Rich Aronson at Camelot Realty at (773)465-2200.

PR Committee Agenda: New Brochures, Website Revisions

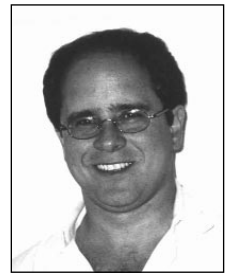
Public Relations Chairman Jake Weiss has unveiled his committee's 2002 plans: release of a new RPBG colored brochure (3rd edition), and continued revisions to the RPBG web site, at www.rpb.org. Weiss acknowledged the efforts of Carla Price, who, with his committee, is overseeing the design of the brochure (complete with the sunbather on the cover), as well as the efforts of Fundraising Chair Mark Kruse, who, with this committee, is completing the arduous process of funding these two initiatives. Ms. Price anticipates a summer release of the brochure, with initial production of 10,000 copies. The RPBG web site, designed and maintained by local web designers Calin Day and Tim Krueger, of Future Solutions, will continue to feature Rogers Park real estate developments, monthly press releases, and an updated Vendors List.

"With time, it should be possible for us to integrate portions of the brochure into the web site, and to highlight the many strong points that the community has to offer," said Weiss.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I See It ...

by Mike Glasser
President, Rogers
Park Builders Group



Benefits of Knowing Your Community

The scene occurs in various neighborhoods, if not throughout the country. The setting: an open community meeting at a fieldhouse or at a school auditorium, whose purpose is to review a proposed real estate project. The developer, with his attorneys, architects and engineers at his side, nervously places site designs on their easels, awaiting the onslaught of tough questions from community residents who they suspect are preparing to express their concerns about the new development. Sure enough, the attendees barrage the developer with questions about a number of concerns: project design, pricing, parking, traffic flow impact, etc.

Investors and developers who take time to learn more about the community in which they intend to invest, need not be put to task like this. True, any substantial development will meet some level of opposition. But responsible developers who know their market can anticipate the questions and issues that the community will likely pose, and be prepared to address them responsibly.

The benefit to the developer of understanding the community goes beyond avoiding embarrassing situations at community meetings. It promotes astute investing. The developer who takes the time to get to know the community will be in a better position to understand the potential risks and rewards of proceeding with a particular investment.

A wise stockbroker actually scolded me once for not having a firm understanding of the companies in which I owned some stock. After changing brokers, I realized that he was right. There is plenty of good information available about investments in equities such as stocks, bonds, and precious metals, but not as much about a unique commodity such as real estate. How do we get accurate and reliable information about real estate and the investment climate in various communities?

The Rogers Park Builders Group as well as other builders groups that exist on Chicago's north side (Edgewater, Uptown, and Lincoln Park have long standing organizations), can offer its members a wealth of information about the community that the investor can hardly get anywhere else. The information comes in various forms: the status of important developments around the community, and their impact on the surrounding neighborhood. Our information also comes from important contacts we make with other local real estate professionals, residents, and community leaders with whom we maintain a dialogue about community growth. The greater involvement that the member has with the organization can often yield a greater return.

With the substantial sums that many people are putting into real estate, developers, investors and other real estate professionals should take time to learn more about their investment – a particular tract of land, as well as the community surrounding it – by being involved in a builder's organization. Those who do are usually rewarded monetarily and with pride that they are serving the community in which they invest.

Twenty-Eight and Successful: Meet Carl McElroy

Many hard-working people consider investing their savings in rental properties. However, owning and operating an apartment building is more than an investment; it's a full business! How does one go about the cumbersome, yet rewarding process of turning around a property? We wish to acknowledge the efforts of someone who has done it: Carl McElroy, 28 years old, who through hard work, strategy and good business sense has turned around a 52-unit building at 1624 W. Morse. Carl, a new associate member of the RFBG, offers real estate investors an example of how hard work and good timing can yield successful investment, and help revitalize a neighborhood.

CM: When I was looking for investment property in the summer of 1996, I must have made more than 500 phone calls that summer. And I was familiar with the general demographics of the South Side, the West Side and the North Side as well. In looking for property I became more familiar with the values from the North Shore to Lincoln Park to Evanston to Edgewater and Lakeview and on down the line. And then there was Rogers Park with which I wanted to become familiar. So I came up here and saw the housing stock available and the general properties and I immediately saw that the area was undervalued in comparison to neighboring communities, which meant that I could get a building at a discount, and I did. I started work to bring to fruition the potential that I saw in Rogers Park: a lot of pretty housing stock, and some crummy buildings, but with all of the amenities of the other lakefront communities on the North Side, so I could see no reason for such a disparity in the values. And I think the values have come along. But what I would like to see now is that everybody else make capital improvements to their properties also, as well as installing good management.

The Builder: What kinds of tenants do you have right now – single people, couples?

CM: I've got a lot of students from Northwestern, Loyola and DePaul, as well as Lincoln Park young professionals who were priced out of that area. They really appreciate the quality of the building; and the value

they get for the price and they don't mind traveling another 5 to 10 minutes on the El for the savings.

The Builder: Do you have any idea of what you have invested in the building since you acquired it in 1996?

CM: I've invested roughly \$700,000 in improvements to date. I was 23 when I acquired the building and not in the position to get all of the needed financing immediately. CIC came in and began working with me to achieve all of the project goals. Initially, I started out slowly with the bank. I think they wanted to see if I would survive. With time they decided to extend a loan of \$425,000 and additionally two subsequent loans to complete the project to date. Now I'm in a position with my equity that I can keep this running really well and have the option to begin acquiring more property.

The Builder: What were you doing prior to acquiring the building?

CM: I was attending school – the University of Illinois in Champaign – where I was an industrial organizational psychology major. I had been doing real estate throughout my college days – buying and selling houses – and saw the potential. I'd buy houses, fix them up and sell them.

The Builder: So how has it been going? Have you received good reactions from other landlords?

CM: I've received positive reaction from other landlords, but with many landlords in this area, their buildings were not as rundown as mine, so they were in a position where they did not have to do much to get the building all rented. But I still think the standards are pretty low and that's why I'm not the one to push for adding more affordable housing because Rogers Park *is* affordable housing. And it has been for a long time. I would like to see other owners work harder to get to my level and I think they would see improved business results as well as stable property values.

The Builder: Is there anything else that you're planning for the near future?

CM: Yes, I'm hoping to close on a new occupant for our commercial space – a café.



Carl McElroy, stands proudly in front of his 52-unit building at 1624 W. Morse.

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.

R PBG Executive Committee

- Mike Glasser, President
- Paul Goguen, Past President
- Marty Max, Vice President
- Tom Heineman, Treasurer
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- Al Goldberg, Chairman-Membership
- Mark Kruse, Chairman-Fundraising
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 Phone/Fax (773) 743-7453 • e-mail: tjacks@aol.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) _____

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: tjacks@aol.com
 Website: www.rpbg.org

DevCorp North to Honor Glasser, Other RPBG Members

Four of this year's award recipients at Devcorp North's Annual Awards Benefit, including RPBG President, Mike Glasser, are members of the Rogers Park Builders Group. The annual gala, will be held at 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, April 24th at St. Scholastica Academy, 7416 N. Ridge. Also slated to be honored are the following RPBG members: Audrey Patton and Jon and Julian Mickelson, Business Leadership Awards.

According to Kimberly Bares, DevCorp North's executive director, DevCorp is honoring Mike as a person who goes beyond the call of duty in building bridges to community groups through various programs and activities.

Call Devcorp North at (773)508-5885 for ticket information up to the day of the event.

SAVE THE DATES

Coming up soon are several important dates of several community organizations that we support and with whom we work closely

•
 Rogers Park Community Council
 50th Anniversary Celebration
 Saturday, June 22

•
 DevCorp North Awards Banquet
 Wednesday, April 24, 6:00 p.m.
 St. Scholastica Academy

•
 Open House to Introduce the Society's New Book,
Neighborhoods Within Neighborhoods: 20th Century Life on Chicago's North Side
 Sunday, April 28
 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
 Rogers Park Westridge
 Historical Society