

ROGERS PARK BUILDER

FALL 2008

www.rpbg.org

Howard Street Station Now Open for Business – First Units are Rented

Howard Street Station, the 17-story building towering over Howard Street, is now open for business. According to Dan Tauscher, property manager, the new 221 apartment building offers many features to potential renters. For one, it is just across the street from the Howard Street El Station and the Gateway Center. Prospective clients can do their shopping for most of the items they need on their way to work or on their way home after work.



According to Tauscher, the property offers a 24-hour hospitality room with computer stations, as well as comprehensive bike storage. Additional storage is available. In addition, the building has a doorman from 4 to 9 p.m., Monday-Friday, and round-the-clock on weekends.

Undoubtedly, said Tauscher, the project's main feature is a stunning view of Evanston and the lake in all apartments. There are also 240 parking places on the first four floors and fitness and exercise rooms, as well as a leasing office on the main floor. Further, said Tauscher, each unit has its own heating and cooling system.

Rentals start at \$1,157 for studios and go on to \$1,346 for one-bedroom/one-bath apartments, and \$2,147 per month for two-bedroom/two-bath apartments. As a special inducement in connection with their opening, Howard Street Station is offering up to two months free rent and an additional signing bonus of \$500 if a lease is signed within 48 hours of a tour and the non-refundable move-in fee is waived.

Project Calling for \$4.4 Million Expenditure

At a meeting called by Alderman Joe Moore to judge where the community stands with regard to paying for improvements to the new Howard El station, those attending voiced arguments both pro and con the proposals. As presented by CTA President Ron Huberman, the plan calls for \$4.4 million to come from the Howard-Paulina TIF (Tax Increment Financing) District to cover several improvements at the Howard El Station:

1. Extend the canopy roof over the El tracks to provide additional protection from the weather for CTA passengers and equipment.
2. Provide extensive enclosures for the north stairways and escalators to better protect the stairs and passengers from the elements.
3. Make additional repairs to the Howard Street viaduct to address further deterioration found after the initial work had begun.
4. Cover the cost of additional major structural repairs discovered during construction.

(continued on page 2)

George Cyrus, Respected Leader and Condo Converter, Passes Away Suddenly



George Cyrus, a highly admired and respected member of the Builders Group for the last ten years, took his own life on September 8th.

Cyrus's firm, Cyrus Development, is primarily in the condo conversion business and has successfully completed dozens of condo conversion projects in Evanston, Lincoln Square, Ravenswood, and other local areas.

Cyrus's father started the firm in 1923 handling both real estate and property management. After joining the firm in 1967, George switched over to condo development which is now the firm's main business.

A graduate of Brown University, George held a master's degree in business administration from the University of Chicago. He was active in the Evanston Chamber of Commerce and in numerous civic and commercial activities, including the Mental Health Association of Evanston, and the Boards of the McGaw YMCA, Focus on Youth Jobs Center, and Evanston Historical Society, among others.

As Builders Group President Marty Max put it: "George was one of the kindest, most giving, people I have ever met. George spoke softly but when he spoke, everyone listened. He will be sorely missed."

George is survived by a daughter, Rachel, a brother Leander, and a sister, Barbara Martin, and a life-long friend, Carol Cyrus.



Glenwood Avenue Arts Festival Attracts Thousands to Check Area's Offerings in Art & Music



A small portion of the crowds that jammed Glenwood, Morse, Farwell, and Lunt during the Glenwood Avenue Arts Festival, which attracted thousands during its two-day run, August 23-24.

It could be described as Rogers Park's largest party and gathering place. We refer to the 7th Annual Glenwood Avenue Arts Festival which drew perhaps the greatest crowds of all – estimated at 10,000 each day on both Saturday and Sunday, August 23-24.

As the strollers walked along Glenwood from

Lunt to Farwell and from Morse west, they enjoyed a clamor of musical entertainment at three stages, one each on Lunt, Farwell and Morse, where a variety of music and talent held sway in jazz, folk, country, latin, reggae and rock in a constant blast of music.

True to its reputation as one of the largest concentrations of local artists and those involved in the arts – glassware, pottery, wood craft – in the city, the festival had more than 85 artists and their artwork on display.

As Al Goldberg, founder of the event, put it, “The festival provided a great opportunity for artists to display and sell their work, and for food and restaurant purveyors to satisfy the appetites of the many strollers.” It was additionally an excellent means for realtors and developers to build lists of prospects for condos, homes and large apartment buildings in the area.

Major stage sponsors included the Heartland and No Exit Cafés – Lunt Avenue Stage; Morseland Café and Morse Theater (scheduled to open soon) – the Morse Avenue Stage; and Farwell Stage – Lifeline Theater and Duke's Bar. Other major sponsors included SSA 24, Community First Bank, Camelot Realty, Commonwealth Edison and S & C Electric. Among the many Builders Group sponsors were ReMax NorthCoast, Alpha Adjusting, Devon Bank, DevCorp North, Al Goldberg, Loyola University, and Rogers Park.com. In addition the Builders Group sponsored the community area.

“Altogether this was a terrific way to get to know your neighbor and to see firsthand what makes Rogers Park tick in the way of arts and crafts,” was the way Al Goldberg put it.

(continued from cover)

A major concern voiced during the discussion which followed Huberman's presentation was that there be enough money left in the TIF, after paying for the above improvements, to cover the proposed Howard Avenue Streetscape Project between the CTA and Sheridan Road. Alderman Moore assured all present that even after funding the proposed improvements for the El station, there would still be more than \$4.8 million left in the TIF before it expires in 2011.

After hearing the various arguments pro and con on the proposed improvements, Alderman Moore decided that he'll negotiate with various City departments to attempt to get as much TIF funding as possible for the Streetscape project. The estimated cost to complete the Streetscape project is \$5.5 million of which \$4.7 million would come out of the TIF funding. But the TIF money would cover only those portions of the Streetscape project within the TIF boundaries, he said.

Rogers Park from A to Z – Yours for the Asking on www.rogerspark.com

Educational, informative and entertaining – these are three words which could be applied with equal validity to Mike Glasser's website on Rogers Park...www.rogerspark.com.

And for anyone new to Rogers Park, or for that matter, anyone who currently resides in this area, the website has proven a god-send. Among others, it contains lists of community groups such as DevCorp North, the Rogers Park Community Council and a slew of others including the Rogers Park Builders Group.

Other sections list names and addresses of prominent local officials – Alderman Moore, Cook County Commissioner Larry Suffredin, just to name a few of the politicians in this section. Still other sections list grade schools, private schools, and universities (Loyola and Northwestern); transportation resources, and even private blogs such as Sandy Goldman's “And That's My Opinion,” Eve Brownstone's “Brownstone's Therapeutics” and “Chicagois.”

And perhaps the most valuable listing of all – the classifieds section: homes and condos, commercial property and apartments for sale and/or rent. All of this information, and a good deal more, is available by clicking on the www.rogerspark.com website.

Mike Glasser, founder and owner of the website, and immediate past president of the Builders Group, conceived the idea of creating the site about eight years ago in the belief that the site would be a good link to other Rogers Park organizations and would help to show the area in a positive light. This in turn would help to overcome any of the negativism perceived by many about Rogers Park at the time.

As Mike put it, it would help to show “the best of what Rogers Park has to offer.” As a result, he and Charlie Didrickson, marketing director, are constantly updating lists, especially the home page which is changed weekly to make it more current.

There is no question that if you want to learn more about Rogers Park – its history, leaders, leading organizations and much more – seek out www.rogerspark.com on the internet.

Cutting the ribbon



to her new basement apartment at 1740 North Shore Street is Lydia Davis, a victim of cerebral palsy. Ms. Davis and her husband, Anthony Smith, a stroke victim, recently became parents of a baby girl whom they would have had to put up for adoption were it not for the apartment which was made available to them through the efforts of Marty Cerny, of Jameson Realty. Marty is a member of the RPBG. The apartment is the first of twelve basement apartments in three Rogers Park buildings being made available to those in need. Also shown are, left to right, Alderman Joe Moore, Marty Cerny, Steve Golovan, Chief Executive Officer of Chicago Greystone Realty, and Anthony Smith, her husband.

Amphora Restaurant – Downtown Style with Neighborhood Prices

By Steve Cain • Washington Mutual Bank

Steve Dorizas is a long-time business owner in Rogers Park with a uniquely American story of hard work and determination. Born in Greece in 1942, Steve grew up on the island of Kephallonia in the Ionian Sea. While it may sound like a paradise to Chicagoans, the Mediterranean island was not where Steve saw his future. He had bigger plans.

By 1968 Steve had emigrated to the United States, found his way to Chicago and was working in the restaurant industry. By 1971 Steve was able to open his first restaurant on Lincoln Avenue called **My Place For**. In 1976, Steve opened in his new location where **Amphora** now sits, at 7545 N. Clark, in Rogers Park.

When Steve opened My Place For, the Howard Street area was a vital middle-class neighborhood anchored by such institutions as **Benefit Trust & Life** and a dense concentration of retail establishments serving the surrounding community. But as time passed, the neighborhood began to change.

A big blow was BTL's move to a north suburban location in the mid-80s. With their departure, the Howard Street area began to

decline more rapidly and the area began to be perceived in the minds of many as unsafe. The next ten years were rough for the businesses that stayed put.

In 1996, Steve revamped My Place For in favor of a new concept and opened the **Gateway Bar and Grill**. In the years since, a lot of good things have happened in the area with new residents moving in and new retail stores opening up.

While the area still carries a reputation as being less than safe, Steve says the reality is actually much better. He sees an increasingly vibrant community emerging with more young people moving in and more businesses opening up to cater to the changing demographics.

About a year and a half ago, Steve decided to make another change to take advantage of the good things happening in the area: he closed Gateway and opened up a sleek new food establishment—the beautiful Amphora Restaurant, featuring Greek and Mediterranean cuisine. Steve says that Amphora offers downtown style with neighborhood prices. In fact on any given evening, you can choose from as many as five or six entrees for \$9.99. Amphora is open Tuesday through Sunday, 4 p.m. to midnight.

Barnet Named Director of Howard Area Community Center



Pamela Barnet is the new Executive Director of the Howard Area Community Center, a non-profit organization which assists low-income individuals and families in Rogers Park to stabilize their lives and to learn skills they need to become effective members of the community.

With more than twenty years of experience working with educational and social service agencies, Ms. Barnet served as Executive Director of the Day School, which provides special outreach ceremonies and after school programs for special needs youth.

Prior to that, she was the Chief Executive Officer for the Victor C. Neumann Association, which provides a full array of day and residential programs from cradle to grave for adults with developmental disabilities and/or mental illness. She also was Chief Clinical Educator at Children's Memorial Hospital and Director of Education for Lawrence Hall Youth Services.

HACC was established in Rogers Park in 1967 as an outreach of St. Jerome's Church to provide for the emergency needs of local residents by supplying food and clothing. It also offers a second chance for youngsters who have dropped out of traditional public school and provides full daycare and early childhood education, including headstart, for children from birth to five. It also works with adults to increase their reading and math skills, to earn a GED and to improve their ability to find and keep jobs.

As the new head of HACC, Ms. Barnet administers a service program with a budget of \$6 million which employs 95 employees full-time as well as 45 part-timers.

Typical of the organization's achievements is a \$15,000 grant it received recently from Blue Cross and Blue Shield for its community health programs. The grant was in recognition of such services as HIV prevention, assisting with accessing affordable prescription drugs and medications and referrals to private providers.

The Numbers Tell the Story: Foreclosures Up, Home Sales Dip to New Lows

Foreclosures in Cook County soared 68 percent to 5,378 over the same time period last year according to RealtyTrac, an article in the August 14 *Sun-Times* notes. The article further quotes the Illinois Association of Realtors in stating that home sales in the Chicago area dipped 29 percent in the second quarter – prices slipped more than 2 percent.

One in every 401 households in Cook County was in foreclosure according to RealtyTrac. In Chicago, foreclosures rose 51 percent to 7,041. Single family homes and condos sales in the Chicago metropolitan area slipped 28.9 percent, from the second quarter of 2007 said the state Realtors group. The median price fell 2.3 percent to \$250,000. In the city, home sales fell 25.4 percent, but the median price rose 5.1 percent to \$310,000.

For Young and Old Alike: Gale Park Community Center Offers Sports and Recreational Activities

Gale Park Community Center, offering athletic and recreational facilities for Rogers Park youth and adults, is now open.

According to Targett Johnson, the facility's physical education instructor, it is located next to Gale School in Gale Park and boasts a fitness room with cardiovascular equipment including autodyne bikes and two treadmills. Fitness facilities will be available to the public for \$42 for three months.

There is also a full-size gymnasium with basketball hoops for basketball games. There is also a large club room, which can be split into two rooms, for art projects and homework.

"This is more than just a sports or recreational facility," said Johnson. "It is available for students after school as a place where they can do their homework and study." Hours are 12 noon to 8 p.m. Monday-Friday and 9 to 5 p.m. on Saturday.

Camelot Realty Reports New Developments



2130 W. Touhy

Camelot Realty reports two new developments are either already on the market or will be available by January 2009.

The first building, “The Parker,” at 2130 W. Touhy, is three blocks to the Metra and four blocks from the El and close to shopping, restaurants and nightlife. It is ready for Fall/Winter occupancy.

Features include all brick and limestone construction, gourmet designer white, granite and stainless kitchens, ebony stained oak hardwood floors, gas starting wood-burning fireplaces and in-unit washer and dryer. In addition, units offer private patios or decks, separate storage lockers and include garage parking.

Condos in the seven-unit structure are three-bedroom/two-bath and start at \$315,000 and up. In addition there is one four-bedroom/three-bath duplex available at \$525,000. All units offer immediate occupancy.

The second property, the GreenMore, 6955 N. Greenview is available for January 2009 occupancy and is already 35 percent sold. The 12-unit luxury condos’



6955 N. Greenview

spectacular features include: all brick and masonry construction, elevator building, cherry/granite/stainless kitchens, master suites with spa baths, and brazilian cherry floors. Besides balconies and decks, the units include heated garage parking.

Units are priced as follows \$325,000 for a three-bedroom/three-bath duplex; \$625,000 for a four-bedroom/three-bath duplex

Rich Aronson, managing partner of Camelot Realty, states that prospects for sale of the units in the GlenMore condo are excellent. “New restaurants, cafés, and the newly-renovated Morse Theater, scheduled to open this fall, will almost certainly attract more buyers.”

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



BY MARTY MAX
President, Rogers Park Builders Group

As I See It Better Days are Coming

It's funny. I usually look forward to writing this article. As I mentioned previously, it's my way of venting. It's my way of representing all landlords in explaining to you the landlord's side of various issues. I was planning to tell you a story about how I became involved with a window project in conjunction with the City of Chicago. It totally backfired on us. The great news however is that the City is helping us to work our way out of this, but I really don't feel like talking about landlord issues at this time. Instead, I would like to talk to you about something entirely different.

As you have read on page one of this newsletter, our director George Cyrus, recently took his own life. When I found out that George had passed on, I was shocked. He was in very good shape for his age – actually in great shape for any age. But when I found out that he had taken his own life, I was in denial. No way. No way. No way. The Cyrus name in Evanston was a prominent one. George, as his father before him, loved Evanston and invested in the community he lived in. George sold real estate, developed real estate and was active in many community organizations.

The RPBG was lucky that George loved Rogers Park and all it stands for. In our organization, if anyone needed advice about anything involving real estate, George was the man you would go to. George, in his quiet way, would give you his opinion on some matter and then remind you that it was only his opinion. He never wanted to sound as though he knew more than you.

We know that one of the reasons George took his life was financial. Times are tough for just about everyone, but especially so for those of us in real estate. For the sake of this article, I am going to talk primarily about real estate. For brokers, agents, developers, rehabbers, landlords and managers, it's really been difficult. Coming off some of the greatest times in real estate, we have moved to a time in which our incomes in the past two years have been drastically reduced.

With the change in the way financial institutions are doing business, we are facing severe credit problems while we try to keep our expenses down and our employees working. I am sure that George was experiencing some of these very real concerns. But to take your own life? No way. No way. No way.

It is not great out there. Times are tough for all of us, but look at it this way: It can only get better. And it will! See you next time.

Dan Sullivan: Rogers Park Visionary Whose Dream Has Come True

Dan Sullivan has strong antecedents in Rogers Park. His great-grandfather put up two buildings at the corner of Jarvis and Greenview which his grandmother owned and managed for several decades. Following his grandmother's death in 2003, Sullivan got the inspiration to remake the once flourishing area which had gone seedy into a dining and shopping area. He purchased the buildings which became the cornerstone of his dream which he called "Jarvis Square." Then, he purchased another commercial building next door and leased out several storefronts in a building across the way.

Sullivan did not let his lack of real estate experience deter him from proceeding with his dream. He rehabbed his 22 residential units and sought out a commercial manager to lease out his storefronts. But he ran into a bottleneck. While there were management outfits that could have brought in chains, that did not sit right with him. "If it was going to be done right, I'd have to do it myself," he said.

He spent the next few months meeting with hundreds of prospective tenants. Some balked at the neighborhood. Others Sullivan rejected outright. When all the chips were sorted out, he had eight new establishments including: an Italian restaurant, an Irish pub, a dog groomer, a theater company, a wine shop and also, an offsite office for Northwestern's Medill School of Journalism, which has since moved out. Sullivan himself is an alumnus of Northwestern's Kellogg School of Business.

The results: attractive storefronts, colorful interiors and moderate prices to draw a steady stream of customers.

Acknowledging that the area had some ways to go, most tenants seem to feel like Ted Ries, the proprietor of Poitin Stil, an Irish bar which opened in 2005. "In the long run, I felt that this area would thrive," said Ries, and indeed it has.

DevCorp Purchases Solar-Powered Compaction Units

Four solar-powered compaction systems, capable of holding up to five times the amount of garbage as a traditional can the same size, have been purchased by DevCorp North. Resembling mailboxes, the compactors are completely solar powered.

According to Courtney Owen, commercial district planner for DevCorp North, which manages the Howard Street SSA as well as the Clark/Morse/Glenwood SSA, the receptacles act as "souped up" garbage cans. You can find these big belly units near the El stations on Howard and on Morse Street.

Since the installation of the new trash receptacles, litter has been considerably lowered. And, she noted, it is easy to know when the cans need emptying as a red light will flash on the side of the can. This cuts down on the number of trips necessary to empty them.

Owen further stated that the cans discourage "fly dumping" which occurs when people put household or commercial garbage into litter bins on the street. The new cans discourage this since those who try such dumping have to place the garbage in piece by piece and are almost certain to be noticed.

Recognizing that he still was lacking a key tenant to act as a motor for his little mall, Sullivan acted after negotiations with several national chains and smaller business did not pan out. He decided to enter the coffee business himself. He opened Charmers Café at 1500 W. Jarvis and Dagel and Beli in an adjacent storefront later in 2005.

After an initial shakedown period in which admittedly numerous mistakes were made, Sullivan says that these problems have been ironed out and the two businesses together now handle more than 250 customers a day.

Dan joined the Builders Group about four years ago and sees as one of its functions helping members to better understand the complexities of law involved in owning property, including large multi-unit buildings.

Within two years Charmers and the "Dagel" were in the black, says Sullivan. He credits a good part of their success to neighbors who wanted them to succeed. "The people who came in here were just glad that something positive was being done in the neighborhood, so they went along if we got their orders wrong."

For having the courage of his convictions and persisting in the face of long odds for success, we are happy to name Dan Sullivan as this month's honorable member and wish him many long years of success with his creation – Jarvis Square.



Dan Sullivan, creator of Jarvis Square, peeks out of the framework of Charmers, one of the key establishments in the Square.

Jack Markowski, Former City Housing Commissioner Appointed Head of CIC

Jack Markowski, former Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Housing, has been appointed president of the CIC (Community Investment Corporation) succeeding the late John Pritscher, who passed away earlier this year.

Markowski came to the CIC after serving as president of Park Bank Initiatives, a community development affiliate of Park National Bank. Prior to that he was the City's Commissioner of Housing from 1999 through June 2007.

The organization which he heads, CIC, is a pooled-risk mortgage lender specializing in multi-family rehab in lower income neighborhoods. The CIC's mission is to be the leading force in neighborhood revitalization through innovative financial programs.

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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Nearing completion



as we go to press is this handsome new firestation at 7350 N. Clark Street. The 16,000 square foot building replaces one at 1723 Greenleaf built more than a century ago. The new facility's features include locker rooms and bathroom facilities for men and women, a fully equipped fitness center and oversized garage doors to access today's larger vehicles. There also will be a circular driveway to make for more safety in leaving and entering the building. In addition trucks will be able to pull directly out of the station instead of backing out, and there will be living quarters for 16 firefighters and four officials and paramedics.

Residents are Pro Metered Parking and Making Jarvis Two-Way from Sheridan to Clark

At a community meeting called by Alderman Joe Moore in late July to obtain community input on two traffic issues, those in attendance favored a proposal to install parking meters from Clark or Ashland to Sheridan Road partly as a means of preventing daytime or long-term parkers from taking available spaces in Jarvis Square.

But another proposal to make Jarvis a two-way street between Sheridan and Clark, which was favored by those attending, was turned down by city engineers as being unfeasible because the street is too narrow.

Moore indicated that he would need more time to study the proposal for metered parking before reaching a decision.