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Rogers Park 2000

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How Well Do You Know Rogers Park?

Around the turn of the last century, a vast birch forest covered areas of Rogers Park. Name one modern-day street that would have been blanketed under these elegant trees.



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Send your correct response by February 28 to RP2000, c/o RPCC, 1530 W. Morse, Chicago IL 60626, or email your response to rp2000@rogerspark.org. Be sure to include your name, address and phone number with your answer. The winner of a \$25 gift certificate for **Taste of Peru** restaurant will be selected by lottery from the correct responses. Good luck! Look for the answer in the Spring 2009 issue of *Rogers Park 2000*.

Rogers Park 2000's Fall 2008 winner is Daphnee Rene. Congratulations! Question: Rogers Park is home to maybe a dozen outdoor murals, many of them located within train viaducts. Which mural contains the image of this speeding car? Answer: Metra viaduct at Howard Street.

The Broadmoor: Small Token of Change in State of Affordable Housing

By Erica Christoffer

Imagine yourself in the roaring 20s: Howard Street is a booming shopping and entertainment district, and out of town visitors stay at the luxurious Broadmoor Hotel. At night, locals and guests dress to the nines and head for the Broadmoor ballroom for a live show, home of WBBM radio's broadcasts.

Today, the ballroom is gone, WBBM has moved on, and many of those swanky shops on Howard are history. But the Broadmoor is still standing.

About 25 years ago, the Broadmoor was converted into a 90-unit apartment building designated for affordable housing. Much of the neighborhood north of Howard eventually followed suit.

For the Broadmoor, the past two decades have been checkered with drug and gang activity, prostitution, poor upkeep and shady management, says Eva McCann, facilitator for the neighborhood CAPS beat 2422. McCann works with residents, property owners, business owners and police to address neighborhood complaints and criminal activity.

"The property was constantly in and out of housing court and had various building code violations that were

never really repaired," says McCann, who believes previous owners covered up plumbing and repair problems. "That building has been through a lot," adds Mary Jane Haggerty, former director of Rogers Park Community Council's Housing Action Program. "It's always been hard to manage."

In 2006, Chicago's Department of Housing took over the property and assigned it to Community Investment Corporation (CIC), a nonprofit mortgage lender that provides financing to buy and rehab multifamily apartment buildings. While the building was in receivership with CIC, local developer Ljubomir "Lou" Sopic bid on the property. In June 2007 the purchase was finalized.

A New Era

"I always think about what would make it possible for our tenants to pay their rent, not lose their apartments and have some sort of security in their lives," Sopic says.

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Conditions are improving for tenants of the Broadmoor Building (7600 N. Bosworth) with owner Lou Sopic undertaking extensive renovations of this Rogers Park landmark.

Sudanese War Refugees Find New Start in Rogers Park Yet Remain Committed to Improving Life in Homeland

By Erica Christoffer

Standing outside the Deluxe Diner (6349 N. Clark), Peter Magai Bul towers over the people around him. An acquaintance from the neighborhood swerves around sidewalk pedestrians on his bike and affectionately gives Bul a nod, calling him Manute Bol as he passes. At 6 feet, 6 inches, Bul doesn't quite reach the retired NBA star's stature. But they do have other things in common. Both were born in Sudan, both fled the brutal civil war, and now, in the U.S., both work as activists seeking to educate the community and create change in their

homeland. Maketh Mabiior, a fellow Lost Boy and lifelong friend, describes Bul as someone who always has a plan and who works extremely hard.

"He's somebody who would put himself on the line," Mabiior says. "He makes himself busy every day. Sometimes I say, 'Peter, you have to take a break.' The man is everywhere. He's like an ambassador."

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Hope and Persistence in a Time of Loss

Help Available for Residents Facing Foreclosure

By Devin Ross

The U.S. foreclosure crisis continues to dominate the news with tales of heartbreak, sorrow and widespread loss. With the media focusing on the tragedy of our economic meltdown, tales of homeowners who have saved their homes are often overlooked. Increasing numbers of homeowners in the Rogers Park area are partnering with local housing counseling agencies to negotiate with their lenders in order to stay in their homes.

The growing number of boarded-up properties in the Rogers Park area is the most visible sign of the foreclosure crisis. According to the Chicago-based Woodstock Institute, a policy and research organization, 52 homes in Rogers Park and 93 homes in West Ridge were sold at foreclosure auction in 2007. Numbers are on the rise, with 38 homes in Rogers Park and 95 homes in West Ridge going to auction in the first half of 2008 alone. A large portion of these properties lay vacant due to lack of

buyers in the market.

While the number of homeowners who have lost their homes to foreclosure is growing, so is the number of homeowners fighting to remain in their homes. The Rogers Park Community Development Corporation (CDC) is receiving more and more calls from homeowners wishing to schedule appointments. "The media focus on recent government-initiated homeowner rescue plans has given people hope that they will be able to avoid foreclosure," notes CDC director Caleb Sjoblom. "Although these government solutions are not for everyone in foreclosure, there may be a solution, and the best way to find it is to contact a local HUD certified, non-profit housing counseling agency like CDC." The chances of avoiding foreclosure do increase for homeowners who begin working with a housing counselor. "Being able to rely on the CDC when I fell behind on my mortgage really helped me greatly," says homeowner Charles Decker. "Before I

began working with them, I could never get the right person (lender rep) on the phone. The CDC helped me put a plan together and negotiate with the people that can actually make decisions."

CDC housing counselors have helped local residents stay in their homes, in some cases negotiating with lenders to permanently lower their monthly mortgage payments. The agency is currently supporting approximately 40 homeowners in their efforts to avoid foreclosure.

For more information about foreclosure counseling, contact Devin Ross at 773.262.2290, x10.

*Name changed to protect client identity.

Devin Ross serves as a housing counselor with the Rogers Park Community Development Corporation.

Rogers Park West/Ridge Historical Society Honors Past While Looking to Future

"Many hands make light work" is the theme which the Rogers Park/West Ridge Historical Society has been aspiring to live out in the year since losing its tireless executive director Mary Jo Doyle. Many members and volunteers have pitched in to help preserve the history and legacy of Rogers Park and West Ridge.

"This has been a year of rebuilding and regrouping for us," says Society president Jonathan Dixon. "We are building upon 30-plus years of carrying out our mission of honoring the history of our neighborhoods. We're excited about what the future holds for us, and for the opportunity to try some new things to reach out to the community."

Founded in 1975, the Society started meeting on Saturday mornings at the Rogers Park Library (6907 N. Clark). Later, it acquired a permanent home at Devon and Western, eventually moving to its current location at 7344 N. Western.

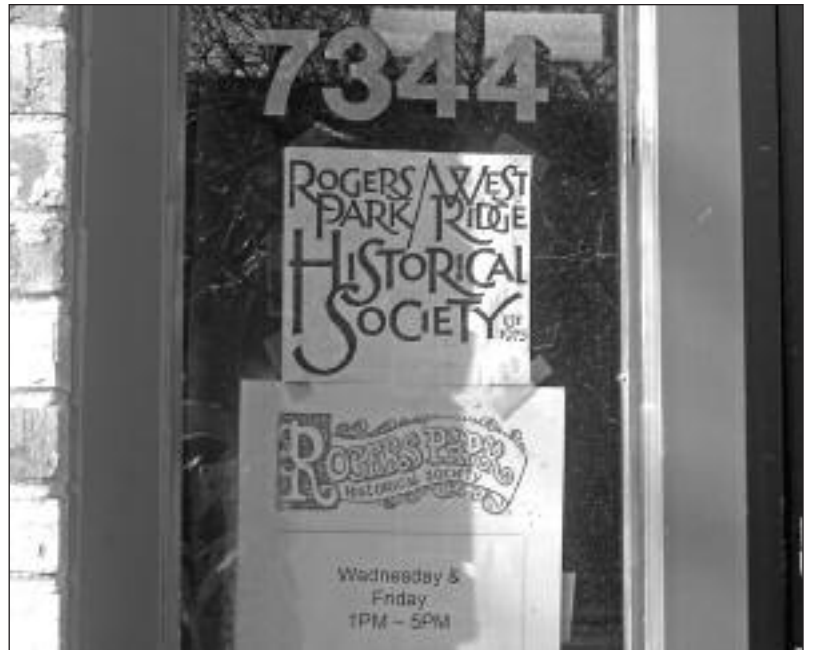
In 2008, the Society brought together history from both the distant and the recent past. This year's house tour and history walk, held in May, highlighted the West Ridge neighborhood. Featuring a number of bungalows and the architecture of Devon Avenue, the tour showcased the area's emergence from farmland into full-fledged city in the early decades of the twentieth century.

In August, the Society organized a remembrance for the fortieth anniversary of the 1968 Democratic Convention held in Chicago. Several people from Rogers Park were personally involved on all sides of the events that took place that turbulent week. Held at No Exit Café (6970 N. Glenwood), the event offered a period atmosphere

where participants shared their memories of that fateful time, both in Chicago and around the world. Volunteer services director Glenna Eaves emceed the program. "The diverse, passionate and compelling stories offered insight and perspective on today's decisions for the future of our local and global community," she observes.

Also in 2008, the Society launched two important initiatives that will continue into the new year: an oral history project and a "Big Dig." Headed up by board member Nancy Jane Lauren, the oral history project has been recording histories of area residents and linking them to local and even global history. The "Big Dig" is an effort to catalogue the Society's extensive archives. Each Monday evening, a group of volunteers meets at the Society office to sort through documents, mementos and objects acquired through the years, organizing them into a database that will ultimately be used by the community. "Our prime initiatives in 2009 will include development of our physical and oral history archives," affirms Eaves.

On February 12 at 7pm, the Society will hold its annual meeting at Devon Bank (6445 N. Western). "Everyone in the community is welcome—current and future members alike," says Dixon. "We will elect our board for the coming year and conduct some business, but I want to emphasize that we're going to mix business with pleasure this year!" The meeting will include a showing of rare items that have been uncovered in the "Big Dig" as well as a history presentation that the Society is using to reach out to students in Rogers Park schools. Most significantly, the date of the annual meeting happens to fall on the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln. "What a great opportunity to celebrate such an historical event with fellow history buffs,"



The Rogers Park West Ridge Historical Society currently operates out of 7344 N. Western.

Dixon says. "Everyone should come prepared for birthday celebration befitting the most famous son of Illinois!"

As always, the Society's activities continue to be entirely volunteer-driven. "Our volunteers represent the vast range of talents, skills and perspectives that contribute to the vibrancy of our community," notes Eaves. "It is very rewarding to learn from them while we work (and play) together to advance the mission of the Society." Eaves encourages potential volunteers to contact the Society for an informal interview in order to determine the best fit in terms of projects. "Meaningful volunteer opportunities are available to almost anyone interested in learning more about our local history in a flexible and fulfilling environment," she adds.

For more information, contact the Rogers Park/West Ridge Historical Society at 773.764.4078 or rpwrhs@aol.com.

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Howard Area Community Center Executive Director Focusing on Prosperity for Agency and Clients

For Pamela Barnet—named executive director of Howard Area Community Center (HACC) last January—her first year with the agency has been a time of growth and learning. “Our administrative team is in place and working well together to streamline operations and make sure staff have all the resources they need,” says Barnet. “We’ve also completed strategic planning, so we have a good sense of where we’re going,” she explains.

Working closely with the board of directors and staff, Barnet has spent much of her time setting goals and devising ways to achieve them. HACC operates on a remarkably small budget for administrative functions such as human resources and financial management. One objective for the next five years is to strengthen infrastructure. Another key goal is to improve HACC’s physical space. Currently, the agency operates programs out of six different locations (many of them overcrowded) throughout the community, providing employment, youth, education and central services. “Our programs have been extremely busy,” says Barnet.

Getting to know other neighborhood nonprofits is a priority for Barnet, and she looks forward to partnering with them in new ways. “One of the exciting things about Rogers Park is how organizations have joined forces,” she says. “This makes us all stronger and allows us to contribute even more than we’re able to on our own.”

She is also collaborating with 49th Ward Alderman Joe Moore, the 24th District Chicago Police Department and state legislators to address poverty-related issues in Rogers Park. “I really appreciate the passion that these

groups and individuals have, both for serving their constituents and for trying to find effective ways to work together for maximum impact,” says Barnet, a Rogers Park resident. “I love this part of the city and I’ve been concerned about our poverty issues for a long time.”

A non-profit organization dedicated to assisting low-income individuals and families in Rogers Park, HACC has been a key player in battling the effects of poverty in Rogers Park for the last 40 years.

“HACC provides so many vital services—from emergency food to high school level education—that it’s become a really critical part of this neighborhood,” Barnet adds. “I am drawn to the agency’s mission to help low-income residents to stabilize, and I’m impressed with the range of services developed thus far to attack the multitude of problems that cause and result from poverty in America.”

Barnet joined HACC with over 20 years of professional experience in educational and social service organizations. She has successfully improved operations and fiscal management through strategic planning, policy design and contract negotiation. Most recently, she served for five years as executive director of The Day School (800 W. Buena), which provides special education for students with severe emotional and behavioral disabilities. Barnet holds a Masters degree in Educational Administration and Supervision from Northeastern Illinois University, and another in Educational Therapy from National Louis University.

For more information about HACC services, call 773.262.6622 or visit www.howardarea.org.



Pamela Barnet gives a warm welcome to guests of Howard Area Community Center’s annual fundraiser. Barnet has spent her first year on the job clarifying agency goals and planning for the future.

ZAM’s Hope Expanding its Scope for 2009

New Job Training, After School and Hot Meal Programs in the Works

By Jacqueline Gordon

She may stand a mere 5’2,” but in the eyes of her clients, she’s a giant. Zehra Quadri is founder and president of ZAM’S Hope (6401 N. Artesian), a non-profit community service organization dedicated to empowering low-income individuals and their families. Fierce in her determination to move forward in the year 2009, Quadri speaks with purpose and passion at staff meetings. “I am looking for leadership,” she notes. “In 2009, it’s all about change and improvement.”

Since 2000, ZAM’s has provided an inexhaustible list of free services: after-school programming, job and computer training, legal counsel, ESL classes, citizenship classes, housing assistance, a health center, services for senior citizens, crisis intervention and more. “The after-school program is for youth aged 6 to 17,” she explains. “There has been such a huge response that we have had to turn individuals away. Parents are begging me for a



Members of the ZAM’s Hope family include residents of all different ages and backgrounds.

bigger space.” On December 13, community members came together to celebrate a renovation of the children’s room. Its bright and cheerful colors create a welcoming atmosphere that is conducive to learning.

The children’s room is housed behind a spacious computer area and conference room. ZAM’s also has a pantry for its food shelter. In 2009, Quadri hopes to create a professional kitchen to create some revenue as well as a cashier job training program. She is also developing a health initiative. “I once lost a client because he did not have the insurance to pay for an operation. He died. That was the first time I cried over a client,” Quadri recalls. “He was only 26. Too many young people have passed away due to heart attacks. There are small changes we can all make to improve our health.” Quadri also plans to create

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RPCC Client Profile

Immigrant Abuse Victim Shows Real Courage in Speaking Out

By Rebekah Davis

Alone. In a close-knit community like Rogers Park, loneliness isn’t the feeling evoked from the sight of neighbors congregating cheerfully on the sidewalk, nor from community gathering places where the stranger at the next table can feel like a familiar friend after a 10-minute conversation. Most of us take for granted the network of people who surround and support us. But for survivors of domestic abuse, this is exactly how they feel: *alone*.

Abusers often use isolating tactics to control their partners, taking extra measures to ensure that their behavior isn’t noticed by friends, family and the community. Abusers often will not allow their partners to work outside the home, to maintain friendships or to leave the house unsupervised.

Domestic abuse affects every walk of life and occurs at every socio-economic level. However, our international neighbors are at an even greater risk of isolation when suffering at the hands of abusive partners. Their families are often thousands of miles away. They may not speak English, or they may rely wholly on their partners for financial support or for access to their immigration papers.

This was the case for Mira,* a West African immigrant, mother of three and victim of domestic abuse. Mira first came to the VASP office upset, frustrated and alone. Her teary eyes and uncertain voice spoke of the years of abuse she had endured.

Domestic violence advocates with the Rogers Park Community Council’s Victim Advocacy & Support Program (VASP) sat down with Mira and listened as she told of how her husband physically and verbally abused her. As Mira was not a U.S. citizen, she depended on her husband to advance her immigration case. But instead of helping his wife, the abusive husband used her immigration status against her, threatening deportation if she called the police. Thus, Mira remained silent for years, never reporting the abuse.

That day in the VASP office, advocates explained Mira’s rights under the Illinois Domestic Violence Act (IDVA). Mira found out that she could still receive legal help, even though she was not a U.S. citizen. The advocates also presented Mira with safer living options for her and her children.

VASP accompanied Mira to court, where she obtained an order of protection. With the advocate by her

side, Mira realized she was no longer alone. She bravely shared her story with the judge, rebutting her husband’s lies with grace and determination. Mira knew she was one step closer to living a life free of isolation and fear.

With her order of protection in place, Mira can now advance her own immigration case by petitioning for an I-360 visa. She has a new apartment and friends who call regularly to see how she is doing. Her job allows her to provide for her children. Though far away, her family is doing everything they can to help her succeed.

Mira has come very far from the first day she walked through the door of the VASP office. Nobody would have guessed it that day, but Mira loves to laugh and can find humor in seemingly hopeless situations. With friends, family and advocates who helped her walk through a difficult time, Mira now knows she is *not alone*.

To learn more about VASP services, call 773.338.7733.

*Name changed to protect client identity.

Rebekah Davis serves as a court advocate for the Rogers Park Community Council’s Victim Advocacy & Support Program.

SULLIVAN

Sullivan Students Prepare for Successful Healthcare Careers

Dynamic Program Offers Real-Life Training and Experience

By Yulia Borisova

Anyone visiting the main classroom of the Medical and Health Careers Academy (MHCA) at Roger C. Sullivan High School (6631 N. Bosworth) can see that this program is for real. One corner looks like a hospital room: two beds occupied by dummy patients and equipped with IV stands. Next to them is a phlebotomy lab: a table with a few eerie-looking dummy arms for practicing blood draws. On the opposite wall are X-ray and CT scan pictures as well as anatomical charts. And everywhere are drawings, paintings and collages made by the students for various projects.

MHCA students Agatha Giannos, Darrington Reneau and William Ng are eager to talk about the skills they have acquired in the course of their study. Giannos shows off her CPR certification card. Using one of the dummy arms, Reneau casually demonstrates his expert way of drawing blood. Then all three of them explain what a laryngoscope is ("I saw this thing on the 'House' show," Reneau comments) and show how to use it. In spite of their nonchalant air, it is apparent that they are all proud of their knowledge and accomplishments.

MHCA started approximately 10 years ago as an initiative of the Chicago Public Schools Education to Careers (ETC) department. ETC aims to combine "a rigorous college-prep high school academic curriculum and hands-on training in career and technical subjects and workplace competencies." At Sullivan, MHCA students take from one to three advanced placement (AP) courses each semester. These courses are offered by a number of participating institutions including Wright College, Loyola University, DePaul University, Roosevelt University and National Louis University.

Giannos and Reneau say that the classes really help them "get a foot in the door" when it comes to entering college. MHCA instructor Judy Ginsburg, MD, emphasizes the program's distinguishing characteristic: to help students get to college. "It is important to us that they go into healthcare, but most importantly, we want to help them pursue their interests through college," she comments.



Left to right: Darrington Reneau, Jamila Wesley and Sergio Diaz practice post-surgical suturing on a medical mannequin with real surgical instruments. The students are enrolled in Sullivan High School's Medical and Health Careers Academy.

The program's success rate in this respect is currently a striking 100 percent. Ginsburg stresses that although MHCA students come from diverse backgrounds, the program gives everyone an excellent chance to succeed.

In addition to high quality general education, MHCA students get extensive exposure to various health-care related occupations. A physician for 25 years prior to joining Sullivan, Ginsburg shares with students her wealth of

knowledge in such courses as Anatomy of Physiology, Introduction to Health Occupations, and Medical/Health Professions. She teaches them how to use a host of real equipment and engages their interest through creative projects.

A typical week for a senior might include regular classes, Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) classes at Wright College (new this year) and trips to Children's

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News from Roger C. Sullivan High School

By David Boby

Another Sullivan teacher joins the best of the best!

Renata Nessinger makes three! Three National Board Certified teachers at Sullivan High School, that is. Nessinger (world languages) recently received the good news that—like her peers Elizabeth Campe-Montcalm (history) and Deborah Hogan (English)—she too has earned the prestigious National Board Certification for teaching (NBCT). A growing body of research links NBCTs with improved student achievement because of the rigorous standards and high expectations placed upon NBCTs in order to pass. Currently, less than 1,000 out of more than 33,000 Chicago Public Schools teachers have earned NBCT status!

Care to mash?

Along with their peers from Northside College Prep, Whitney Young and other schools, Sullivan student journalists Tyler Hughes and Aurelia Espinosa have been accepted to the staff of "The Mash," a new, Chicago Tribune-sponsored student newspaper. To see Hughes' interview with film star Keke Palmer, Espinosa's opinion article about "grades for cash" and photos of the Sullivan girls' volleyball team in action, visit www.themash.com. In the search engine (upper right-hand corner of page), type in SULLIVAN and click "enter."



Sullivan students dress like "nerds" for Wacky Tacky Day on October 7.

Just for parents

Attendance was high at two free parent workshops sponsored by the Sullivan Parent Advisory Committee on November 13. Dr. Harry Kall, school psychologist and financial aid specialist, led two workshops: "Increasing Your Child's Motivation to Learn" and "The College Financial Aid Process." The committee plans future workshops for Sullivan parents.

And more just for parents!

Who says field trips are just for students? On December 13, a busload of happy Sullivan parents took off for Borders Bookstore followed by a free lunch at Old Country Buffet. All parents received a complimentary \$25



Student Aaron Simms proudly displays his custom designed skateboard.

gift card to spend at the store. Kudos to the Parent Advisory Committee for another great event!

Silence the violence

Accompanied by teacher Joan Castro, more than 40 Sullivan students marched in Grant Park on October 26 to show their solidarity with oppressed children in Darfur. Silence the Violence is a student effort to raise awareness of extreme conditions facing children in the Darfur region of Sudan. Students raised money for the cause through pledges, learning how they can make a difference by coming together as a community.

The sporting life

This year, Sullivan added bowling, golf and softball to an already winning sports line-up. Beginners luck? Hardly. Coach Rick Tadelman and the softball team won first place in their conference to qualify for the city play-offs. With a little help from Sullivan math teacher Gregory Zagorski, brother Mike launched the golf team with six enthusiastic players. Next up for the brothers Z at Roger C.? Coaching boys' basketball. Triple-threat? Nicole Bock—already a popular school counselor and junior varsity volleyball coach—now adds bowling coach to her impressive list of titles.

Welcome to the Saturday Social Center!

You don't have to be a teen to attend Sullivan—at least on Saturdays. With something for everyone, the Sullivan Saturday Social Center is open to students, siblings and parents on most Saturdays from 9am to 1pm. Students and their family members may play basketball, volleyball and ping-pong; use the school's computer labs to complete homework and access the internet; and even swim in the pool (managed by the Chicago Park District from 8am to 4pm). Free student tutoring is also available. For more information, call 773.534.2000.

College and Career Lab Opens

This year, there's another reason for juniors and seniors to feel special: the counseling department has

opened a College and Career Lab in room 134—a special room just for juniors and seniors to use in planning for the future. Reference books and computers are available for college and career research.

Not your average clinic

Did you know that Sullivan has an on-site health clinic? The ACCESS Health Clinic provides physicals, first aid, immunizations, and even grief and loss counseling. Has your family and/or your student lost someone or something significant due to divorce, illness or death? Is anger or grief preventing your student from focusing on schoolwork? Offered in conjunction with Sullivan's counseling department, the ACCESS Grief & Loss Group provides a healing setting to help students recover from tragedy and get on with life. For a counseling appointment, call 773.534.2000. For information about other ACCESS services or to schedule an appointment, call 773.761.5309.

Math team is number one (and two!)

Led by math teacher Shinae Jeon, the Sullivan math team emerged victorious at the Chicago Citywide Math League competition, held November 22 at DeVry University for all north-side public schools. The Tigers math team won first place overall, while students Keshav Regmi and Mikael Takuoam won first and second place respectively for individual students. Jeon could not be more proud of these two juniors! Not one to rest on her laurels, Jeon and the team are hard at work practicing for the next competition January 31.

And in other news ...

More than 40 Sullivan students showed up to donate blood at the November 21 blood drive sponsored by Yvette Gonzalez and the Latino Club ... About 175 juniors and seniors attended Sullivan's October 29 College Fair, where they met with representatives from 25 universities.

A 14-year local resident, David Boby teaches English and journalism at Roger C. Sullivan High School.



Senior Joshua Trinidad braves the needle at the school's November 21 blood drive.

Sullivan Students Prepare for Healthcare Careers

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Memorial Hospital for a clinical internship. Beginning with junior year, MHCA arranges summer internships at such top institutions as Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Rush University College of Nursing, the Cook County Bureau of Health Services, UIC Colleges of Nursing and Pharmacy, Mercy Hospital, Stroger Hospital, Swedish Covenant Hospital and Albertson's Jewel-Osco pharmacies.

Ginsburg received a grant from Wright College to cover the cost of tuition, fees and textbooks for students enrolled in its CNA program. Student response has been very enthusiastic. As the college is extremely pleased with Sullivan students, it intends to offer additional courses such as Emergency Medical Technician training and phlebotomy.

Exposure to various working environments and employers offers a solid start-off point for future successful working experiences, enabling students to make informed career choices early on. Their attitude to learning becomes more focused and mature. Senior William Ng spent six weeks last summer working at a CT scan lab at Northwestern Memorial Hospital. "I learned a lot," he

notes. "And the internship will look really good on my resume." Ng is seriously considering studying computed tomography after he graduates from high school. Agatha Giannos suggests another practical advantage of the program: "You get to know a lot about your body—much more than an average person knows. When you go to doctors, you understand what they tell you much better. And it really helps you make better decisions about your health."

The program's benefits are difficult to overestimate. What it lacks right now is more publicity to help it develop further. "We would really like to attract more students," says Ginsburg. "With more students we could get more funding and more equipment. We could bring more service to the community and, hopefully, prepare more future professionals for the field of healthcare."

Originally from Russia, Yulia Borisova came to the U.S. in 1998 to attend graduate school in journalism. Currently she is a stay-at-home mom.

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Sudanese War Refugees Find New Start in Rogers Park

continued from first page

Bul's actions reflect a need to create change. One of approximately 125 Lost Boys of Sudan living in Chicago—40 of whom live in Rogers Park—Bul's vision comes from an unbreakable bond with his fellow Lost Boys and those still in his homeland.

In 1988, war came to Bul's village in southern Sudan. He was 6 years old. "You have Africans fighting Africans because they see difference in terms of religion. This is a religious war," Bul says.

Humanitarian groups estimate that the ongoing Sudanese conflict between the government-run Islamic military of the north and the non-Arab Africans of the south has killed nearly 2 million people and displaced 4 million people. The United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants says that 1 in 5 of the southern Sudanese population has died since the war began in 1983.

The south suffered not only militarily; no development occurred, no investment was made in the area and few could find employment. No schools or clinics were built. As people were unable to grow crops, starvation grew increasingly common. Of the children in southern Sudan, boys were either targeted for military recruitment or killed. Girls were taken as slaves.

In order to escape, Bul and his mother ran away and proceeded to walk for three months with other children from his village to Ethiopia. Along the way, his mother's leg became infected and she could no longer walk. She rode back to Sudan on a truck carrying water. Bul continued on to Dimma, a refugee camp in the eastern part of the country, with about 1,000 other children.

He would not see his immediate family again for 20 years. The youngest of nine children, two of Bul's siblings died of illness before he was born. One of his older brothers—who fought in the southern rebel army—now lives in Nairobi, Kenya with his wife. Bul's father died in 1991 in the war.



Rogers Park resident Peter Magai Bul is towering in both stature and spirit. A Sudanese refugee, Bul co-founded the nonprofit Ayual Community Development Association in order to improve conditions for those still displaced by war in his homeland.

The vast majority of those who fled Sudan were between the ages of 5 and 12. They slept on the ground or in trees. "We lost a number of children," Bul recalls. "Some died because there was no water and so forth." Bul lived in the Ethiopian refugee camp for four years.

"When it rained, you were only sleeping under a tree. Because you are sleeping outside, you get sick and you die. We saw hundreds of children die each day from hunger and disease," Bul says. "We were only children. This is not something you would forget."

The few adults served as caretakers. Children elected group leaders who divided them into groups and charged them with tasks. They would set out into the forest to collect wood. Some made small huts to sleep under. Others built fires and cooked for the group.

"Since we lost hundreds of children each day, and there were no adults to bury those children, you'd have to look within the group and send people to carry those dead bodies to the cemetery and bury them," Bul says. A group leader, Bul would report back to the adults on the status of the children: who was alive, who had died, what they needed.

Because many of the children came from different villages, they spoke different Afro-Asiatic languages. There were even different dialects within those language variations. In addition to surviving, children kept busy learning to communicate with one another using hand gestures

and teaching one another words.

In 1991, the refugees were forced to leave Ethiopia due to civil unrest. They returned to Sudan, but not before crossing the Gilo River at the Ethiopian-Sudanese border. Thousands of children died in that river as most did not know how to swim. Only a few weeks after returning to eastern Sudan, the group left again, this time for Kenya.

Bul lived in Kakuuma Refugee Camp in northern Kenya for nine years. This time, they received aid from the U.N. and the Red Cross. He started school in 1993. Instead of a week or more without food, the children now went only a couple days without eating. The rations sufficed. They no longer picked wild berries or hunted for meals. "It was better than Ethiopia, but it was still a refugee camp," notes Bul. "Many of the children still died from disease."

A number of girls who made the journey were placed with host families in Kenya. The Lost Boys, as they came to be known, stuck together—they had become one another's family. They would wake at 6am, dress and go to class until about 1pm, when they had time to visit or play soccer.

They lived in the camp among other refugees from Congo, Ethiopia and Somalia. There was no work for adults. Some materials were provided for them to build common areas.

"We'd go to the community and help with building those houses, but it was not secure," he says. "The local people sometimes were attacking us because they were struggling, too. They didn't have food. So when we were given food by the U.N., sometimes at night they'd come in looking for something to survive."

There was never comfort, never a period of safety or rest for Bul and the other Lost Boys of Sudan. Bul was plagued by the question, "Will these atrocities end with us?"

"I think when you live in that situation, see so many bad things, see children dying, children giving up, and you have been in that situation for a number of years ... you don't worry about when your day comes," Bul reflects. "You're not even scared anymore. For me, I wasn't concerned with what I had to deal with each day." Rather, his concern was for what the children would have to deal with in the future. At that point, only 12,000 to 16,000 Sudanese children remained from the 27,000 who had originally fled Sudan.

Bul could easily have been one of those who didn't survive, and he knows it. When the group proceeded to Kenya in 1992, Bul became so ill that he could not walk. The group used a blanket to carry dead bodies out to be buried. Sometimes they would carry their sick in the same blanket. Bul would not set foot in that blanket. He forced his body to keep moving.

"I remember when we stopped, we were walking at night and people did not want to be attacked. I couldn't walk and I didn't want to die with anyone. Some of the guys wanted to be with me. I told them to let me rest here," says Bul. The next day he was on the road by himself. He collapsed under a tree on the side of the road. "I don't know when the ambulance came," Bul says. "The next morning I woke up in a bed. I wondered, 'Did they capture me?'"

Then the doctors came and Bul learned he was in Kenya. A month later, he reunited with his group at the refugee camp. They thought he had died. His clothing had been given away.

In 1999, the decision was made by the U.S. to bring 4,000 Sudanese refugee children to this country. "We had to go through different interviews," says Bul. "They chose boys who they believed would thrive best in the U.S." He remembers the day the acceptance letters arrived at the refugee camp. The young men stood in a circle as the delivery person called out names. Some would pray before opening the envelope.

At the age of 19, after living in refugee camps for 13 years, Bul was one of the lucky ones chosen to go to the U.S. It was a bittersweet moment for Bul, who was happy for the opportunity, but heartbroken to leave the others. In 2001, Bul became one of seven original Lost Boys to resettle in Chicago. The boys had never been in an urban



Refugees of the Sudanese war typically walked for months before reaching safety in Ethiopia. In the past 25 years, about one-fifth of the entire south Sudanese population have suffered war-related deaths. Photo courtesy BBC News.

setting. Never seen snow. Bul experienced culture-shock, to say the least.

"Every time you met an American they don't want to talk to you. Because you don't speak English well, it was so hard to talk to them. I think that was the most difficult adjustment," says Bul, whose English is thick with a slight British accent.

Bul started attending classes at Truman College in 2002 majoring in political science and pre-law. He is now transferring to University of Illinois, Chicago. He found work at a hotel and moved in with other Lost Boys living in Rogers Park. Things started coming together.

Yet Bul never forgot those he left behind in the refugee camp. He currently serves as president of the nonprofit Ayual Community Development Association, an organization he co-founded in order to draw attention to the situation in southern Sudan, and to raise money to improve conditions for those still displaced.

Mabior, who grew up in the same Sudanese village as Bul, made the trek to the refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya alongside Bul. Their experiences have mirrored each other for 20 years. He, too, was a chosen Lost Boy who came to live in Chicago. And he, too, now works with the Association along with Lost Boys and American volunteers from across the country.

In a relatively short time, the Association has managed to build the Pongborong Primary School—fully stocked with books—in southern Sudan.

"By giving people education, it gives them the opportunity to learn about Sudan itself," Bul said. "People don't have the knowledge. They don't have the opportunity to learn that this is a country with different backgrounds. This is a diverse country."

Bul has always been a leader, Mabior says, starting back in the refugee camps when he took care of other children, and today as he organizes the community and speaks on the issues facing Sudanese people. "Peter has a vision," Mabior says of his friend. "We are going to change things in our country."

In December 2007, Bul returned to Kenya and Sudan. He saw his mother for the first time in 20 years. "I was shocked that I could not recognize the village where I was born," he notes.

Villagers voiced concern to him that the war in Sudan will continue if elections are not carried out properly next year. "This is about equality. People should be given the opportunity to govern if they are capable," comments Bul. "There is a little peace now; so many people in the refugee camps are going back."

For three months after making his homecoming, Bul could not talk about it. He was in shock after witnessing the continued problems in his homeland.

But in his head, he was planning. Planning what he could do next to help. The people are tired of war, tired of refugee camps. They are ready for change.

Bul gave his word to support them. It is his lifelong commitment, his quest. "We (the U.S.) are the richest country in the world in terms of resources, but those resources have been misused. Then there is Sudan, one of the poorest countries in the world. We can use our resources to help them," Bul says, "and I have to do my best to help as well."

Erica Christoffer is a freelance journalist living in Rogers Park. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in public affairs journalism at Columbia College.

Spirit of Rogers Park 2008

Rogers Park Community Council Captures “Spirit of Rogers Park”

56th Annual Meeting and Spirit of Rogers Park Awards Celebrate Community

By Kathleen Gruber and Cathie Bazzon

Approximately 50 friends and neighbors convened at Loyola University's Simpson Living & Learning Center on October 25 to celebrate “The Spirit of Rogers Park,” the Rogers Park Community Council (RPCC) 56th Annual Meeting and awards gala.

As in years past, RPCC board president Roy Witherow kicked off the evening with a warm welcome, after which the new board of directors was elected (look for more information about new directors in the Spring 2009 issue).

Every year, a significant factor in the event's success is the international buffet representing Rogers Park's diverse restaurant community. Nearly 20 local restaurants—some even outside Rogers Park—contributed everything from samosas to pasta. The Fred Krubel Trio provided live entertainment.

“Attendees at this year's elegant, low-key Spirit of Rogers Park celebration clearly enjoyed themselves,” notes RPCC executive director Elizabeth Vitell. “It's hard to go wrong with such great food, fabulous entertainment and excellent company. Kudos to Charlotte and her committee!”

Vitell is referring to RPCC board member Charlotte Kovacs, who worked tirelessly as head of this year's planning committee. Other organizers include Roy Witherow, Jason Schoenfelder, Tom Lisy, Lorraine Dostal and Kathleen Gruber, to name a few.

After dinner, Witherow joined Kovacs at the podium to pay tribute to this year's Spirit of Rogers Park award winners.

The 2008 Charlotte Goldberg Citizen of the Year award was presented to the Morse Theater and Century Public House.

Few buildings in Rogers Park tell a better story of our neighborhood's history and our neighborhood's future than 1328 W. Morse, site of this exciting new entertainment destination. Built in 1912 as a nickelodeon and vaudeville house, it entertained Rogers Park adults and families for 18 years until closing as the Great Depression deepened. Reopened when times were better, 1328 W.



Charlotte Kovacs (left), RPCC board member and lead organizer of this year's Spirit, greets fellow board member Amy Scutt.

formance space and music hall along with a 100-seat restaurant and separate broadcast studio. Renovation was not easy. But through tough business times, fire and other delays, the McGhee dream did not fade. The theater finally opened this October to rave reviews, with the Chicago Tribune saying that “everything about the Morse,

Paulina).

In 1983, the idea for a soup kitchen to serve Rogers Park's hungry was cooked up during a conversation between Reverend Bob Tschannon-Moran (founding pastor of Good News Community Church) and concerned friends of the church. Soon afterward, the church began to serve an evening meal one night a week, with volunteers coming together to dish up soup, salad, meat, bread, milk and dessert.

In 1988, the kitchen was serving meals five nights a week. Three short years later it was serving hot meals 365 days a year.

Good News Community Kitchen recently celebrated its 25th anniversary as a place that fills the hunger and slakes the thirst of those who gather outside its doors every night at 5:30. But Good News isn't just a soup kitchen: it is an anti-hunger organization committed to service, collaboration and advocacy.

Last but not least is the story of four Irish setters and their owner Andrew DeLaRosa, all of whom found a welcoming home in the dog-friendly community of Rogers Park.

DeLaRosa is this year's “Spirit of Art” award winner. A preservation carpenter by trade, he began his artistic journey making trellises for his building's garden. As he worked, neighbors would compliment him on his art. “I didn't consider it art,” says DeLaRosa. “I was just doing what I loved to do.”

Soon DeLaRosa outgrew his building's garden, finding a nearby studio and open areas where he could display his art.

He encouraged artists just starting their careers, renting out studio space for a very small fee. He also underwrote exhibitions of their work by opening a gallery, refusing to collect a commission from artists who sold work.

DeLaRosa has touched Rogers Park with the fantastic, transforming the intersection of Lunt and Sheridan and the garden of Lifeline Theater (6912 N. Glenwood) with sparkling and dancing mermaids, dragons and flying fish.

It is neighbors like the Morse Theatre, Good News Community Kitchen and Andrew DeLaRosa that make our community as unique and as eclectic as it is.

The Rogers Park Community Council is proud to salute the “Spirit of Rogers Park!”

Kathleen Gruber is a community activist and former member of the RPCC board of directors. Cathie Bazzon serves as RPCC's associate director.



Guests of the Spirit peruse the silent auction table, which included gift baskets hand-assembled by RPCC executive director Liz Vitell and original jewelry creations by board member Mary Bao.

Morse over the years has been a movie theater, a synagogue, a business center and finally a shoe repair shop.

Today, 1328 W. Morse tells us that the future will be great—great because of neighbors who believe in Rogers Park: Andrew McGhee, his son Devon and their partner Bill Kerpan.

These men had a grand vision: a near 300-seat per-

from its Art Deco décor to its deeply burnished wood surfaces, suggests grown-up sophistication. In an age of grunge, postgrunge and postmodern grunge, the Morse defies convention, offering refinement and chic in every visual detail. The acoustics sound nearly as good as the theater looks.”

The winner of RPCC's “Spirit of Compassion” award was the Good News Community Kitchen (7649 N.

The Rogers Park Community Council gratefully acknowledges the following businesses and individuals for their generous sponsorship of the 56th Annual Spirit of Rogers Park awards:

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The Broadmoor: Small Token of Change

continued from first page

Sopoc's property development is a family affair, started back in 1975 by his father and uncles. Today, Sopoc, brother Dennis and mother Mary own and oversee about 500 rental units in Chicago.

"The building has improved," says McCann. The Broadmoor has undergone several internal makeovers during the past year, yet the work is still in progress, Sopoc explains. "We spend most of our time investing in our properties," he says.

Since purchasing the building, Sopoc has tried to retain "good, loyal" tenants who have lived in the Broadmoor for many years. At the same time, he has done away with the gang and drug activity through evictions and court orders. Crooked security guards have been replaced.

In addition to the 90 residential units—about a quarter of which are subsidized—the Broadmoor also has six commercial units on the first floor. McCann says getting rid of problem tenants was a good first step. But she'd also like to see Sandy's convenience store closed. "Lots of people in the neighborhood would love to see that store gone," says McCann, a Rogers Park resident. "Several months ago the police raided the store and found an unregistered gun on the premises, and arrested several people within the store suspected of possession of drugs."

On the repair side, Sopoc is changing out the old heating system for a new steam system, allowing tenants more air temperature control within their units. "About 75 percent of units now have the new heating system," he says. "Our goal is to make the building energy efficient as well as affordable." The Broadmoor has also received plumbing, electrical and bathroom upgrades, new windows and patio doors. Sopoc estimates that all renovations and upgrades will be completed in early 2009.

Affordable Rental Housing: the Bigger Picture

While the situation may be looking up for residents of the Broadmoor, affordable housing is still suffering from a lack of both quantity and quality in Rogers Park.

According to a study conducted last winter by the Housing Committee of Partners for Rogers Park, the experiences of black and Hispanic renters are far less positive than those of white renters. Lakeside Community Development Corporation executive director Brian White—who served as principal author on the study—cited the "existence of a dual rental housing market, one for minorities and another for non-minorities."

Results from the 583 renters surveyed suggest that minorities are more fearful of losing their apartments to condo conversions. They also have less housing security, are more likely to live without a lease and had more negative comments about the conditions of their apartments.

"It is such a complex issue that we almost regret trying to distill it down to a single cause," says White. "What we know is that tenants are having problems, just as we know landlords are too."

White suggests that the city re-examine its housing voucher programs and the Chicago Residential Landlord Tenant Ordinance (RLTO) to try and improve program administration, and in doing so, create more housing.

"The city has too few resources to address problems on its own, so it should be looking at ways to enlist private market landlords in support of its mission," White says.

Alderman Joe Moore (49th ward) agrees that resources for preserving and maintaining affordable housing are slim. Programs such as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, are fought over in a pool of stiff competition. "There are not a lot of tax credits to go around," Moore says.

He places blame at the federal level. "The government in Washington simply does not provide the financial resources for us to really preserve affordable

housing," he says, pointing to needed incentives for property owners.

Like White, Moore says that he too supports alternative methods of creating affordable housing. He points to a recent addition to a Rogers Park building that created extra units on the lower level, which was previously unused. The new apartments are handicapped accessible and affordable.

Sopoc says he sees the issue of affordable housing as interconnected with education and healthcare. "Unless we have a living wage and unless we have healthcare, just having affordable housing is like having a fancy stereo in a car that doesn't run," he notes.

Sopoc, White and Moore agree that when renters and landlords consider each other to be on opposing sides, it halts progress. "It is our belief that renters and landlords are linked in common purpose," says White, who is working to create a 49th Ward Tenants Advisory Committee.

Progress has been made as the 49th ward office now shares building permit information with housing groups. White says that tenant and landlord education has increased, as have efforts to coordinate housing services among organizations in Rogers Park.

In addition, the city's condominium advisory task force has taken up some of the ideas produced by the Housing Committee of Partners for Rogers Park. "I personally feel as if there is more conversation going on about these issues," says White. "We will be much more successful in developing and sustaining a healthy neighborhood housing market when advocates, landlords, and community residents work collectively to address the problems of tenants and landlords alike."

Erica Christoffer is a freelance journalist living in Rogers Park. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in public affairs journalism at Columbia College.

The Broadmoor's Glamorous History

By Marolyn Taylor

The Broadmoor Hotel was built at the corner of Bosworth and Howard in 1922. In the Roaring Twenties, Howard Street was a thriving new business and entertainment district, and the Broadmoor was usually filled to capacity. On Saturdays, women clad in silks and furs and men in top hats and tails flocked to the hotel's spacious ballroom to dance the night away. Local movie palaces such as the Adelphi (7075 N. Clark) showed silent films, often to a packed house.

Jazz was in the air, and so was something else—a newfangled invention called the radio. Just months after the Broadmoor's opening, a new station began broadcasting from the top floor of the hotel that had quickly become the jewel of

Howard Street. When asked to register "call letters" beginning with the letter W, station managers made an adroit and proud selection for this strange request—WBBM, for "We Broadcast from the Broadmoor."

Fast-forward to the 21st century, and WBBM is headquartered at 33 N. Dearborn in the Loop. Both WBBM Radio and WBBM TV are affiliates of media giant CBS. WBBM NewsRadio 78—winner of many prestigious awards—can be heard hundreds of miles from Chicago.

Freelance photographer and writer Marolyn Taylor has been a Rogers Park resident since 1984.



Back in the Roaring Twenties, silent movies like Harold Lloyd's "Safety Last" (1923) thrilled crowds at movie palaces in Rogers Park and throughout the city. Although Lloyd is usually rated number three in the silent comic pantheon (below Chaplin and Keaton), he is lauded for his tight scripts and precise sight gags. Information and photo courtesy www.seraphicpress.com.



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Source: Chicago Association of Realtors, 3rd quarter 2004-2008 'Fast Stats' data base



Chicago Math & Science Academy Spreading its Wings

Successful Charter School Hopes to Occupy Site of Former Clark Mega Mall

By Jason Barczy

Students and teachers at the Chicago Math and Science Academy (CMSA) in Rogers Park are becoming more and more convinced that "nothing is impossible." After all, it is currently the school mantra!

In just five years of operation, CMSA has managed to outgrow its current location at St. Jerome's (1709 W. Lunt), and plans to move into a bigger space that will better suited to school and student needs.

CMSA is eyeing the former site of the Clark Mega Mall (7212 N. Clark) for a brand-new building that will provide a better learning environment for students and allow for more after-school programs.

"We always want to enrich our students however we can," says CMSA principal Ali Yilmaz. "We want to improve our programs outside of the core curriculum. Having a brand-new facility will allow us to do more and will also be a good investment for us."

According to Yilmaz, the new 54,000-square-foot facility will cost \$10 million. "In fact, when you spread it over the years and include the purchase of the building and the renovations, it's over \$10 million," Yilmaz notes. "Essentially what we're doing is investing in the Rogers



The Chicago Math & Science Academy hopes to build a new facility at the site of the old Clark Mega Mall.

Park community." Locals apparently agree, as feedback from a community forum hosted by 49th Ward Alderman Joe Moore was overwhelmingly positive. The school's development team also approached DevCorp North (1557 N. Howard) to discuss potential Clark Street zoning

changes as CMSA needs to comply with zoning code to obtain a building permit. "The parcel in question is currently zoned for commercial use but must be changed to a residential designation before the project can move forward to completion," explains Faye Walker, who serves as director of the Rogers Park Community Council Housing Action Program. Walker also sits on the 49th Ward Zoning and Land Use Advisory Committee.

With an initial enrollment of 225 students (grades 6 through 12), CMSA was founded in 2004 as a charter school whose rigorous, innovative curriculum focused on math, science and technology. CMSA will graduate its first class of seniors this upcoming spring. The school ranked third among 97 non-selective high schools in Chicago, according to the May 2008 Prairie State Achievement Exam.

"I'm proud of being here and moving up like we are," says CMSA junior Jeovanna Tovar, a 17-year-old Rogers Park resident. "We'll have more after school programs that'll be more diverse by having a variety of them. It's better for everyone as a whole."

continued on page 13

West Rogers Park Community Organization Empowers and Engages Residents

By Zachary Schiffman

The West Rogers Park Community Organization (WRPCO) originated in the summer of 2005, but its roots extend back to the mid 1990s, when residents began campaigning for construction of a new local elementary school to address overcrowding. Despite widespread support, residents were divided over whether the school should be located in Warren Park as originally proposed by city officials. Controversy over this issue highlighted the community's need to address not only educational issues but also those relating to real estate development and land use.

WRPCO's founding members cut their teeth on these issues, gaining further experience through their service on the Boone, Armstrong and Clinton Local School Councils. They continued to push for the construction of a new public elementary school after plans to build one in Warren Park were dropped in favor of preserving green space.

In the summer of 2005, several former members of the Boone Local School Council—along with other neighborhood residents—called the first meeting of the organization that would eventually be known as WRPCO. Totalling about 30, these people came together not so much to gripe about what they *didn't* like but to celebrate what they *did* like about the neighborhood, including its

establishment of a community planning board to oversee land use and real estate development in the 50th ward. Almost 90 percent of the ward's electorate voted in favor of this measure—the highest favorable vote for any local referendum on that year's ballot. The Community Planning Board came to be last spring. In a related matter, WRPCO also prevailed upon 50th Ward Alderman Bernard Stone to develop a TIF Advisory Board to oversee expenditures of a newly approved Touhy-Western TIF district.



The art fair showcased holiday-themed artwork like this light and airy sculpture, which evokes feelings of peace and harmony.

In addition to enabling residents to shape the future of the neighborhood, WRPCO holds quarterly meetings to showcase community reports and surveys, including the recent "Devon Avenue Needs Assessment" undertaken by leaders of the South Asian community. In the near future, it plans to present findings of a Community Housing Audit conducted by Lakeside Community Development Corporation, a nonprofit organization that works to preserve and develop affordable rental housing.

WRPCO's education committee has also been productive, especially in its efforts to bring together members of the public and private school communities who would otherwise exist in separate orbits. Although plans to build a new school have been approved, public schools remain overcrowded while private schools are underused. In order to foster a sharing of resources and talent, the committee has created a principals' roundtable, bringing together leaders of both public and private schools. In 2006, the committee sponsored a public/private school basketball tournament, and last year, it organized a student art fair, featuring holiday works of art by students of public and private schools. The second annual art fair was held at Devon Bank (6445 N. Western) on December 3.

WRPCO has also hosted a number of public-service events such as aldermanic candidate forums. In January 2008, it sponsored "Get to Know Your Public Representatives" with Ald. Stone, State Senator Ira

Silverstein and Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky.

WRPCO meetings are typically attended by 90 to 100 residents, while WRPCO's official membership has grown from 30 to about 200 in the past three years. "In 2009 and beyond, our biggest challenge will be to secure a continuing voice in the future progress and development of our community so that it remains diverse yet harmonious," comments WRPCO chairman Sharda Thapa. "We plan to achieve this by focusing on community planning, education, youth activities and outreach."

WRPCO (2835 W. Fargo) is strictly non-partisan in all its activities, and meetings are open to the public. The organization seeks to bring together the diverse elements of West Rogers Park, offering community members an open forum for establishing and pursuing common interests.

For more information about WRPCO, call 773.764.6481 or email chair@wrpc.org. Meeting minutes, organization by-laws and other information is available at www.wrpc.org.

Local resident Zachary Schiffman formerly served as chair of the West Rogers Park Community organization.

Winter in the Parks

From ice skating at Warren Park to fitness training at the new Gale Park field house, the Chicago Park District winter season offers something for everyone. Space is still available for many programs and events.

Mark your calendar now for this year's Black History Month celebration slated for February 22 at Loyola Park. This Rogers Park tradition promises great food, entertainment and meaningful interaction for all.

For more information about programs taking place at our many parks, call 312-742. PLAY (7529) or visit www.chicagoparkdistrict.com.



Neighbors enjoy working out on state-of-the-art equipment at the new Gale Park Community Center (1610 W. Howard).



This year's WRPCO-sponsored student art fair attracted viewers from communities near and far. The fair was held December 3 at Devon Bank (6445 N. Western).

high-quality public and private schools, diversity and unique mix of commercial, residential and recreational areas. In order to maintain and augment these assets, members created an organization with two standing committees: one to address educational issues and the other to address issues pertaining to development and land use. Later, they added a youth involvement committee to address the interests and needs of neighborhood youth more fully.

WRPCO's first big effort was to place a non-binding referendum on the November 2006 ballot calling for

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The beautiful space that was the old Café Suron on Pratt near the lake is now Ropa. If that name hints of a continental style, the menu offers tasty if straightforward American fare in a smart bistro-style setting. Specialties include grilled meats, seafood and a most welcome wine bar. The wine list offers good bottles (average \$40), specializing in well-chosen California labels. However, we found wines by the glass wanting for selection and quality.

The menu lists a soup of the day, which on our visit was a light and flavorful asparagus soup; created without the usual cream base and laced with fresh crunchy asparagus tips. From the grill, we ordered the beef tenderloin (\$22). The filet cut was clean, tasted grass-fed and grilled rare; a simple but tasty presentation. Ropa's hot and creamy version of the classic mac 'n' cheese side dish is recommended.

Another entree we tried was sautéed shrimp and scallops (\$19). The seafood was fresh and perfectly seasoned—just enough to allow the honest shellfish flavors to come through. A slight buttery crunch gave way to tender juicy scallops and shrimps served with a fluffy al-dente rice pilaf that had just a hint of citrus and a slight

peppery warmth. Owner and operator Tarik Emanet urged us to try a signature dish of steamed mussels in wine and tomato broth served with garlic crustinis. It looked and smelled wonderful. Finally, the tiramisu dessert was light yet still rich, with cocoa and coffee flavors.



The Ropa menu also offers sandwiches, burgers (about \$8) and an assortment of pasta dishes (about \$14). He has ongoing daily food and drink specials like homemade Sangria on Mondays.

"I cut my restaurant teeth at the Loop's Swissotel and

By Paul Marcus



before that in the kitchens on Royal Caribbean cruises," says Emanet. At Ropa he is very hands-on. In addition to his managerial duties, he developed the menu, designed the seductively lit room, and prepares some of the dishes himself.

It is welcome to have a new quality restaurant in Rogers Park. The beautiful near-lakefront location provides a cozy cold-weather atmosphere, as well as dining al fresco come the warm spring or summer weather.

Filmmaker and foodie Paul Marcus is a 10-year resident of Rogers Park.

Rogers Park is Music to Ears of Violinmaker Laurence Anderson

By Seth Schwartz

After 20 years in the business, local violinmaker Laurence Anderson realized that to reach the next level, he needed to broaden his methods. Armed with a special work visa, he recently took time off to live in France, studying with mentors Frank Ravatin and Francois Denis in the village of Vannes, located on the Atlantic coast in the province of Bretagne.

Biking the six miles to work was a welcome change of pace. Anderson's day started at 10am and usually went until 7pm. He could see the ocean from his bedroom window.

Anderson's stay in Vannes was followed by two months in Paris studying the work of a number of craftsmen. "It was a chance to work with people whose trade I had seen and admired," says Anderson today. "I was able to rethink the craft. The French are less competitive, so they share ideas. In this business, you never stop learning. One violinmaker told me, 'You don't know what you're doing until you've made your fiftieth violin.'"



Violinmaker Laurence Anderson gives a work-in-progress his full attention. Photo by Marolyn Taylor.

To mold an instrument is a painstaking process. "You can't learn from pictures," explains Anderson, who went so far as to make a plaster cast of a 1715 Stradivarius to refer to in his work. "These are very precise machines, like race cars. You can feel and hear the difference between instruments."

Anderson's tour overseas gave his career the added resources to develop skills. "I have 50 pages of notes," he says. "There are so many minute details. My scrolls used to have a labored look; now they have a look that flows."

"I also reconfigured my planes (devices used to cut the wood on the violin) to make cutting easier," he continues. "I was able to cut lines that flow more smoothly. I bought three new gauges to do finishing cuts. You want to make as few cuts as possible, and I was able to reduce my cuts from six to two. I also narrowed my blocks by 2.5

millimeters on either end." (In "violin speak," blocks are internal supports that hold the rib structure in place.)

Listening to Anderson talk about his craft, it's hard to believe that his career initially appeared to be headed elsewhere. After graduating from Notre Dame University he went on to earn a Master's degree in French literature from Indiana University. While in graduate school, Anderson began to make furniture and found a comfort level working with his hands. He moved to Faribault, Minnesota in 1981, where he built and restored antique furniture in his own shop for seven years.



A violin body in the early stages of carving (right) compares starkly to one that is near completion. Photo by Marolyn Taylor.

In 1987, Anderson moved 10 miles north to Northfield where he began his ongoing labor with the violin, training with David Folland for 10 years. During that time, he made 10 violins and restored all kinds of string instruments.

Beginning in 1990, Anderson studied violin restoration for four summers at the Oberlin Music Conservatory (near Cleveland, Ohio) with the late master Vahakn Nigogosian.

Anderson eventually began to formulate his own varnish. After two decades of tweaking the formula, he's finally got it to his liking. "You start with a basic recipe and then you modify it," says Anderson. "You want it clear and clean so that it gives a certain shine to the wood."

"I love wood working, and the violin is the ultimate wood working project," Anderson notes.

About four years ago, at a New York conference on violin design, Anderson met Argentinian Horacio Pineiro (now over 80 years of age), one of the top makers in the world. "I was trembling!" Anderson recalls. "He told me he thought he could learn some new things."

This is a golden period for violin making. "There are more great violin makers in the world than there have ever been," Anderson notes. "The field is extremely competi-

tive. You never stop learning."

His goal is to complete six to eight violins annually for the next 15 years. "I want to leave a legacy," he admits. "We all have egos. Ultimately, I want to have 150 instruments out there."

At 54, Anderson couldn't be happier. He has found the ideal location for his shop in the heart of Rogers Park—a second-floor, 30 x 12-foot studio at 6934 N. Glenwood with a close-up view of the Morse "el" platform. It took two months to put everything in place. "This is the nicest spot I've had," says Anderson, who often puts in 12-hour days. "I start at 10am and I get perfect light year-round. By the shadows on the wood, I can 'read' my curves, which determine the violin's sound."

The day also holds periodic comic relief. "The El makes for good entertainment," says Anderson. "Some of the people wave [to me] and I wave back."

Rogers Park suits the Andersons very well. "I walk two blocks to work," he says, "and my wife Samara rides her bike to work. We're thinking about staying awhile!"

Seth Schwartz is a freelance writer and long-time Rogers Park resident.

CMSA

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Enrollment is now at 484 students, with a maximum cap of 550. Current facilities are outdated, with no air conditioning, no handicap accessibility and electrical wiring that dates from the World War II era. Classrooms are operating at maximum capacity. Teachers and administrators have exhausted every resource the building has to offer, going so far as to build makeshift walls to provide offices to counselors.

"The new building will take us to a new level in terms of meeting our expectations," says CMSA dean of academics Chris Austria. "There are so many limitations with the building we're in now. It constricts our creativity." Austria, 37, has two children attending the school: a daughter in seventh grade and a son in his junior year of high school.

CMSA hopes to open the doors to its new facility next August. "The students and the larger community have stood by us and believed in us," says Yilmaz. "With their support, nothing is impossible!"

For more information about CMSA, call 773-761-8960 or visit www.cmsaonline.net.

Jason Barczy moved to Chicago in the summer of 2008 after graduating from Central Michigan University with a bachelor's in journalism. He has worked at two daily newspapers and currently writes about university sports at bleacherreport.com.

INSIGHT ARTS

Serving Up Art with a Twist

Progressive Organization Links Artistic Expression with Social Progress

By Celina Aguilar

Complete with a grocery store, library, coffee shop and restaurant, the 1500 block of Morse is more than a typical neighborhood epicenter. Between the Morse red line “el” stop and Ashland sits Insight Arts (IA), which has sustained a Rogers Park presence for 17 years.

Insight Arts is a contemporary arts organization dedicated to increasing access to cultural work that supports progressive social change. A unique organizational model allows IA to engage in community based, regional and national work. IA’s work is guided by the assumptions that access to information, education and art is a basic human right; that meaningful social change is dependent on the creation of cooperative social and political structures; and that time for contemplation and analysis is crucial to community and individual empowerment.

In May, IA began to hold events in the storefront space at 1505 W. Morse adjacent to Common Cup, a shared space referred to by Insight Arts as The Center for New Possibilities (CNP). Use of this space has been a point of transformation for Insight Arts, its patrons and participants as CNP has opened its doors to events that welcome a variety of lifestyles and beliefs. Diverse individuals intersect regularly at the space.

One of IA’s first programs in its new space was “Imagining an Obama Administration,” a discussion series created in June after then-Senator Obama was selected as the Democratic party candidate. Initially created in response to the issue of race, the series prompted dialogue about the campaign, including Obama’s position on

key issues. Although the series ended in November, participants continue to ponder the question of race in our society, keeping the momentum of the series alive.

In October, IA merged with artist and curator Baraka de Soleil to create a “Studies ‘n Black” discussion series, modeled after a similar series developed by de Soleil for patrons of Wrigleyville-based LINKS Hall, a community meeting space. Discussions were held every Monday at CNP, whose storefront-style layout has helped to make such programs successful. Each week in October brought a new engaging dialogue, often with a different group of individuals. The program is an amazing example of IA’s ability to bring together artists with other members of the community. “Partnerships like the one with Studies ‘n Black provide forums for critical discourse between community members and artists and educators of all backgrounds,” notes Maritza Bautista, who attended all of the discussions. IA hopes to continue the dialogue that was sparked during discussions in the upcoming year.

Another powerful IA program is Women Out Loud, a revival of Chicago’s first all-women’s open mic. Since August, Women Out Loud has cultivated a consistent following of female spoken word artists and non-artists, including renowned spoken-word performer Nikki Patin. Women Out Loud offers a safe, nurturing space—the perfect backdrop for women to share words that weave together their life experiences. A strong sense of connectedness and community is felt by these women, who support each other through both spoken and unspoken moments. “As each audience member recited her poem,

I noticed the passion and confidence she exuded through her words,” recalls Shatara Johnson, who attended the October performance. “Each individual owned the stage as well as the space.”

On December 20, IA held its second annual Winterfest, celebrating the many programs and events Insight Arts has supported throughout the year. At this joyful event, participants in IA programs get to know one another and other community members while enjoying live music, poetry, video screenings, ballroom dancing lessons and a youth shadow puppet performance.

In response to the economic crisis facing the U.S., IA is creating a discussion group that will address implications of the crisis on a global, national and individual scale. The series is scheduled to begin in mid-January.

As Morse Avenue has seen changes over the last 17 years, so has Insight Arts. Executive director Craig Harshaw and IA board members have managed to keep IA afloat during hard times by operating with volunteers. IA has seen the desire, passion and commitment of individuals and communities to effect social change, and responds to ever-changing political, social and economic climates. The many people, ideas, artistic disciplines and cultures that intersect along the 1500 block of Morse have as much inspired IA programs and events as contributed to the organization’s success.

For information about participating in or supporting Insight Arts programs, visit www.insightartsliberation.org.

Celina Aguilar serves as arts education director for Insight Arts.

Insight Arts Senior Program Brings Palette of Color to Morse Avenue

By Anita Alcantara

The Insight Arts Adult Senior Program takes place at the Center for New Possibilities (1505 W. Morse) every Thursday from 1 to 4pm. This free program is designed for older adults who may not have the opportunity to formally study art or take classes. Participants may want to make gifts for the holidays, add to income through cottage industry in the arts, or need help in getting started in a new art medium. Many have a vision for a better world community and enjoy making new friends.

Teacher Sandra Peterson’s focus is on fabric arts, using different painting techniques on T-shirts and silk scarves. She also assists students to paint on paper and make jewelry. Currently working with the Evanston Art Center and with Presbyterian Homes (also in Evanston), Peterson has a passion for helping people develop cottage industry in the arts and for finding new uses for existing products and materials. Local artist Cheri Fields—a former participant who also mentored fellow artists—leads a Saturday beading group at the Center.

Finished pieces are displayed in the Center’s storefront window. “I didn’t do any painting until I came here (to the class), and I’m so pleased with my pieces up here for showing,” says newcomer Jerry Amara. “Sandra



Participants of the Insight Arts Adult Senior Program (1505 W. Morse) are encouraged to express themselves through painting, drawing, jewelry-making, meaningful discussion and other creative outlets.

showed me how to mat and frame my art.” Participant Dorothy McFarland says, “We seniors are so happy to have a special place to come together in making new things.”

When the group decided to organize an Open House and art sale, artists began making more and more pieces. Peterson sought out extra donations of materials and tools. Everyone encouraged each other’s efforts, building into a supportive artist community. Insight Arts executive director Craig Harshaw and staff members Celina Aguilar, Maritza Bautista and Kahphira Palmer came by to see the action and help out. Flyers about the event were posted and distributed in the neighborhood, while information was printed in local newspapers and posted on websites.

In October, Insight Arts moved its senior program from United Church of Rogers Park (1545 W. Morse) to its current location adjacent to The Common Cup (1501 W. Morse) where Insight Arts now has a gallery. The move took place in the middle of the sales event preparation!



In November, Insight Arts participants exhibited and sold their works at an Open House and Sale that drew visitors from the Rogers Park community and beyond.

Held in November, the event was a big success. Six participants racked up a sale and received funds. A small amount of revenues were returned to the program in order to purchase supplies.

The wheelchair-accessible Center is open every Thursday from 1 to 4pm. Some students accept custom orders. For more information, call 773.409.4687.

Anita Alcantara serves as director of the Insight Arts Adult Senior Art Program.

Donations Wish List

(Insight Arts Adult Senior Art Class)

New T-shirts, 100% cotton (any size, any color)

Plastic aprons, plastic gloves, plastic placemats (available at local dollar stores)

Pencils (plain, drawing, watercolor, charcoal)

Paper and paper pads, any type

Canvas for painting (on roll, pads, canvas board)

Painting stretcher boards (wood), any size

Foam core board and large scraps

Beads (any type) and unwanted or broken jewelry

Large picture frames (new or used)

Silk scarves (we’ve found best quality for art and price from trading companies such as Dharma trading, www.dharmatrading.com)

Fabric (any type except wool stored in moth balls) and fabric trim

Thread and sewing supplies

Cash donations (tax exempt) for supplies

ZAM's Hope Expanding

continued from page 3

High Tech Senior Program, matching youth from the after-school program with seniors from the community who wish to learn how to use e-mail and other programs.

On November 22, Cook County Circuit Court clerk Dorothy Brown hosted a mortgage foreclosure education summit. Quadri felt it was such an important event for clients to attend that she rented a bus for transportation.

The inspiration for ZAM's Hope came out of Quadri's own struggle to piece together a life for herself and two daughters after a divorce. She discovered how difficult it was to obtain resources from agencies and decided to help others in need like herself. "I started these services out of my home. As soon as I started opening my home to others, I saw a chance to make a difference in the community," she recalls. At the time, she was working two full-time jobs at O'Hare International Airport. "I sat down with my girls and said, 'I can do this, but I need your help. I won't be able to check your grades or help with your homework every night. But I don't want to see B's or C's!' I needed their approval first, and was very lucky to have their understanding."

Not only did they support her decision, but one of her daughters came up with the name of the organization. The letters 'ZAM' represent the first initials of their first names. It is a symbol of their unity and desire to spread hope to others in similar situations.

Quadri holds down a full-time career as Assistant Chief Deputy Clerk in the Juvenile Justice Division, Circuit Court of Cook County. She

goes directly from work to ZAM's. "It is not in my nature to sit around," she admits. "I have to be doing something." When asked about her sign in the window that claims 24-hour service, she shrugs casually. "I have my cell phone with me constantly," she says. "I have been awakened in the middle of the night. In those cases, I will typically encourage the caller to have police take them to a shelter."

Her biggest challenge continues to be lack of funding and resources. "We have been extremely lucky in receiving funding from the city and private donors," Quadri notes. "But there is so much more we can be doing." It is not luck, however, that attracts donors. It's the trust she instills in them. To budding activists looking for funding, she advises, "Keep your donors notified about what you are doing. Invite them to make unannounced visits. Keep them in the loop with your activities and future plans."

Residents who are in the mood for delicious meat samosas or potato dosas—or who would like to see some beautiful saris—are encouraged to visit the ZAM's office.

For more information about services or volunteer opportunities, call 773.764.6064 or visit www.zamshope.net.

A former Peace Corps volunteer, Jacqueline Gordon has lived in Rogers Park for eight years and works in the area of higher education administration. She has a strong interest in Chicago's Indian and Pakistani communities.

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