

# Newsletter: September 2009

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## Upcoming SLN Events

**SLN September Mtg and Historical Presentation:** The Chicago "L" and the South Loop - Yesterday and Today.  
**Wed. Sept. 9, 7 p.m.**  
 Grace Place, 637 S. Dearborn  
 Meet your neighbors, learn what's happening in the neighborhood, find out about October's Loft Walk, and for a special program: The "L" Train and the South Loop - Yesterday and Today. For more info, see article to the right. This meeting is free and open to the public.

**Chicago International Film Festival Sampler:**  
 Registration Deadline Mon. Sept. 21  
 SLN Invites You to join us for a special cultural program: three international films at ClIFF and two nights of lecture and guided discussion at the historic ClIFF Dwellers Club with noted film scholar (and long-time South Loop resident) Virginia Wright Wexman.  
 Program Dates: Wed. Oct. 7 and Wed. Oct. 21  
 7 p.m. at ClIFF Dwellers Club, 200 S. Michigan, 22nd floor  
 \$40 for the two-evening series; \$30 for members of SLN or ClIFF Dwellers. Price includes lecture, discussion and snacks at the meetings. Cash bar available. [Click here for more info or to register.](#)

**Loft Walk 2009** is going to happen! Mark your calendars now: **Sunday Oct. 18, 12-5 p.m.** Watch for more info, coming soon.

## Quick Links

**Join SLN or Renew Your Membership**  
 At the website, click **Join** on the right end of the menu bar.

**Discounts at Local Businesses**  
 What's in your wallet? If you carry an SLN membership card, you should remember to pull it out and use it. Free coffee here, 10% off your burger there, discount on your yoga class or massage, even savings on electronics and entertainment: it all adds up. Remember to check the SLN website every now and then to see the latest additions to the list of **SLN Business Partners**. (Look for the article on the homepage.)  
 New Partners: Shell Auto Care, Best Buy, and Jazz Showcase. And more coming soon!

## Happenings

**The Prairie District Neighborhood Alliance Celebrates Daniel Burnham's Return at Their 2009 Block Party.**  
 Sat. Sept. 12  
 Noon to 6:00 p.m.  
 Prairie Ave. at 18th St.  
 Enjoy a unique variety of art, play, music, food, history, and architecture. Festival Tickets: \$7 Entrance Donation. More info at [www.pdnchicago.com](#)

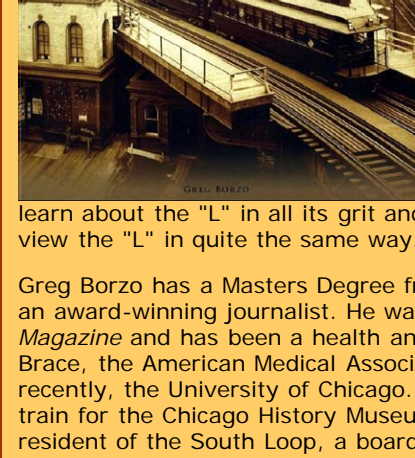
**2nd Ward Legal Resource Center**  
 Every Tuesday  
 4 to 6 p.m.  
 721 S. Western Ave.  
 2nd Ward residents are invited to take advantage of this free legal resource opportunity. Please bring proof of residence and any documents or evidence related to the legal question you want ask or the issue you would like to discuss.  
 2nd Ward Committeeman Bob Fioretti's legal resource center is offered free of charge in cooperation with the Chicago law firm of Conway & Chiavello. For more info, call Ruby Wilkerson at 312-263-9273.

**Alderman Bob Fioretti's 1st Annual Golf Outing and Fundraiser**  
 Mon. Sept. 21  
 Tuckaway Golf Club  
 27641 Stony Island  
 Crete, IL 60417  
 Registration: 8:30 a.m.  
 Start: 10 a.m.  
 Dinner and Reception: 3:30 p.m.  
 Info and RSVPs: Hanah Jubeh 312-854-8018

**Hyde Park Jazz Festival**  
 Sat. Sept. 26,  
 11 a.m. Sat - 2 a.m. Sun  
 15 hours of free jazz entertainment in 12 creative and unusual venues in Hyde Park. For more info and line-up of musicians, check out the Hyde Park Jazz Festival website.

Summer is over already, and fall is hitting hard with a busy calendar. There is a lot happening in the South Loop in September and October, so come to the SLN General Meeting on Wed. Sept. 9 to get all the news. And as always, I encourage you to forward this newsletter to a neighbor. SLN has been steadily growing this year, and that's good for the community at large, so let's keep it up!

## The "L" Train and the South Loop - Yesterday and Today



**THE CHICAGO "L"**  
 South Loop Neighbors is proudly presenting a special program at its general meeting on **Wednesday, September 9th**: Join Greg Borzo, author of the popular book *The Chicago "L"*, for a presentation about one of Chicago's greatest cultural and historical icons. A working antique, the "L" train is 117 years old and has always played an important role in the South Loop. Enjoy scores of old photographs and a funny new movie clip. Travel through time to learn about the "L" in all its grit and glory. Afterwards, you will never view the "L" in quite the same way.

Greg Borzo has a Masters Degree from Northwestern University and is an award-winning journalist. He was editor of *Modern Railroads Magazine* and has been a health and/or science writer for Harcourt Brace, the American Medical Association, the Field Museum and, most recently, the University of Chicago. He conducts public tours of the "L" train for the Chicago History Museum and other groups. He is a proud resident of the South Loop, a board member of South Loop Neighbors, and has been riding the "L" almost everyday for the past 25 years. The Chicago "L". (Arcadia Publishing, 2007) has been favorably reviewed by more than 25 media outlets. For more info, visit: [www.TheChicagoL.com](#).

The presentation will take place at **Grace Place, 637 S. Dearborn, at 7 p.m.** next Wednesday. It is **free** and open to the public.

## Photos Go on Tour, Cards on Sale

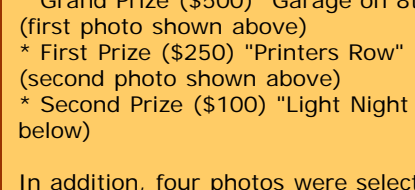
by Greg Borzo, SLN Board Member



The worst part of chairing the **South Loop Neighbors 10th Annual Photo Contest & Show** was not being able to enter a photograph of my own. The best part, however, was celebrating at the **Awards Reception** on August 21, at the Chicago Community Bank in Dearborn Station.

You never know how such an event will turn out. Would it compete with a big ballgame or a ballyhooed reality TV show? Would the rain predicted for that evening keep everyone home?

As people began showing up, we quickly realized that we should worry about whether the refreshments would hold up (they did!) or the bank would hold everyone (just barely!). A record crowd of more than 90 people admired the photographs while sipping champagne, chatting with the photographers, and listening to the music of Duo Simpatico. The room was abuzz with speculation about who would win.



Having been selected from a large number of high quality entries, all of the 20 photographs on display were winners. Nevertheless, a panel of independent judges (all professional photographers) had admirably performed the tough job of selecting the winners of more than \$1,000 in cash prizes.

- And the winners are:  
 \* Grand Prize (\$500) "Garage on 8th St." by Christie Chew-Wallace (first photo shown above)  
 \* First Prize (\$250) "Printers Row" by Jonathan Michael Johnson (second photo shown above)  
 \* Second Prize (\$100) "Light Night Pool" by Mel Theobald (shown below)

- In addition, four photos were selected in the Greeting Card Category (\$50 each):  
 \* "Printers Row Roots" by Ann Tracy  
 \* "River City" by Ron Schramm  
 \* "Printers Row" by Jonathan Michael Johnson  
 \* "Garage on 8th St." by Christie Chew-Wallace

The handsome **greeting cards are on sale at Sandmeyer's Bookstore and Chicago Community Bank in Dearborn Station**, as well as at all SLN events.



This year, for the first time, the **Photo Show will tour** after its August showing at Chicago Community Bank. During the month of September, the show will be on display at **Epic Burger**, 517 S. State St. In October, look for the exhibit at **Café Mediterra**, 728 S. Dearborn. Then, in November and December, the Photo Show will move to the **Harold Washington Library Center**. This means that more people than ever will see the Photo Show this year, which we count as more success for SLN and our participating photographers.

This exciting cultural event would not have been possible without the **generous support of our sponsors**. I hope you will take note of these excellent South Loop neighbors and support them in their businesses. Spotlight Sponsors, all of whom have supported the program for several years in a row, were: [Central Camera](#), [Chicago Community Bank](#), [Mercy Hospital & Medical Center](#) in Dearborn Station, and [Powell Photography & Digital Imaging](#). [South Loop Referral Group](#) was a supporter at the Darkroom Darling level.

- The following were Frameworthy Friends:  
 \* The Chicago "L" book by Greg Borzo, [www.TheChicagoL.com](#)  
 \* Equilibrium Energy + Education, [www.equilibrium-e3.com](#)  
 \* Door Consultants, 312-906-9313  
 \* Gazette, [www.gazettechicago.com](#)  
 \* Hackney's Printers Row, 733 S. Dearborn  
 \* Marilyn Peterson  
 \* Mortgage Resource Group Inc., [www.mrgloans.com](#)  
 \* Darlene Walton

See you all at next year's Photo Show. In the meantime, keep those cameras clicking!

For another account of the Photo Show Awards Reception plus some interesting history about the 10-year strong event, click this link to check out the [Chicago Journal column by Bonnie McGrath, titled 'The Photos of Our Lives'](#).

## South Loop Artists

**Business Profiles: Chew-Wallace; Johnson; Theobald**  
 by Helen Kaplow, SLN VP

This month, for our business profiles, I decided to feature our three, Photo Contest top winners, who all happen to be professional artists and all happen to live in the South Loop. Beyond their winning photographs, I think their other work is worth a look. Wanting some art to display in your home or office? How about buying local?

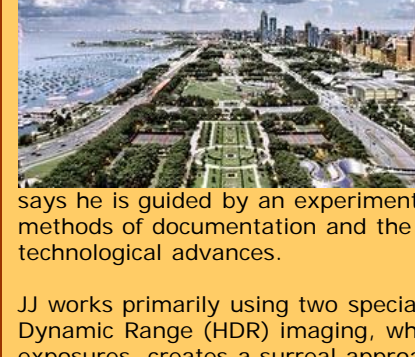


**Christie Chew-Wallace** has been creating art since she was old enough to pick up a crayon. Her parents were very proud of her talent but did not have the funding for an art education, so they bought her an art course from a T.V. commercial. Christie passed with flying colors! Now an accomplished painter with representation at major galleries, Christie also sells her own work at art fairs, including the One-of-a-Kind Show at Chicago's Merchandise Mart.

Of her current work, Christie says, "In my early years I painted sunsets, landscapes, green fields, flowers, then moved to the figure. I worked in photography then sculpture, even dabbling in 3D wall sculpture. Finally, I went back to oils, my first love, and tackled the almighty abstract. When I first started experimenting with big canvases working freely with just color and space, I was lost. Instead of looking to an accomplished artist for guidance, I stumbled over myself, but by working through many canvases and experiencing many failures (which are underneath some of my current successes) I have moved, gracefully, towards my current popular series - geometric shapes featuring the beauty of color."

[Click to see more of Christie Chew-Wallace's work at her website.](#)

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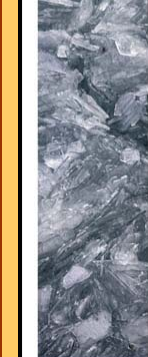


**Jonathan Michael Johnson** (or JJ), describes himself as an artist, documentarian, music lover and admirer of science. He specializes in producing innovative, urban documentation using advanced photography. JJ uses the name **Planck Studios** to represent his body of work, in homage to physicist Max Planck (developer of quantum theory). Like Planck, JJ says he is guided by an experimental approach, where both his methods of documentation and the subjects he chooses are inspired by technological advances.

JJ works primarily using two specialized techniques. Digital High Dynamic Range (HDR) imaging, where one image is built from multiple exposures, creates a surreal approach to documentation. JJ's Multi-Exposure process combines multiple medium-format transparencies to create a highly detailed image with greater range than negative film. Says Jonathan, "My work is a marriage of technology and art. I feel it is my duty to offer a transparent process. I share my process openly and believe my documentation creates a rich experience for my audience."

[Click to see more of Jonathan Johnson's work at his website.](#)

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**Mel Theobald** tells us, "For most of my life as an artist I have been a painter. My creative interests shifted dramatically in the summer of 2001 when I first put my hands on a digital camera. In progressive stages, I began to see the potential for images that would combine the content of my paintings with the freedom to explore the creative manipulation of a photographic surface. Using the computer and mouse as an extension of the brush and paint, it came as a great surprise that I could think as a painter and work in a photographic medium."

particularly water. So it may be no surprise that his winning photograph was a picture of a swimming pool. But Mel explains that this photo was somewhat of a departure for him, as he typically depicts the abstract qualities of water, whereas the Photo Show image was more personal for him; it is a picture of the pool where he swims.

[Click to see more of Mel Theobald's work at his website.](#)

## Development Update

by Helen Kaplow, SLN VP, and Dennis McClendon, SLN President



**Chicago's Old Post Office** was purchased in late August, at auction, for \$40 million by reclusive buyers known only as International Property Developers North America, Inc. Alderman Fioretti told the *Chicago Tribune* that he had met with the buyers, who proposed a mixed-use project.

The last developer with plans for the building had proposed demolishing a significant portion of the building's volume that spans the Eisenhower Expressway. However, the new purchasers took the property subject to a deed restriction that protects the lobby and exteriors, which presumably would rule out such massive changes by the new owner.

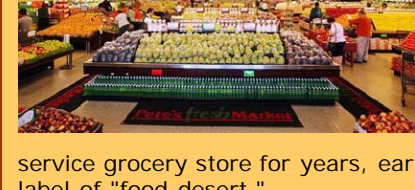
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The *Chicago Sun-Times* reports that **Buddy Guy's Legends** is moving up the block from its present South Loop location at 754 S. Wabash to **700 S. Wabash**, a building that housed the jazz and world music club HotHouse until mid-2007. Renovation is under way on the two-story building.

News that the famous blues club is moving comes a decade after reports first surfaced that Legends would have to close or relocate when the property was donated to Columbia College. The bad economy, which cooled plans for new construction projects at Columbia, allowed Legends management to bide its time in the club's 20-year home until a suitable replacement site could be found. [Click to read the full story at the Sun-Times.](#)

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**Prairie Avenue Books**, at **418 S. Wabash**, a touchstone institution for architects in Chicago and around the globe, closed its doors on August 31st.

**Powell's Books**, at **828 S. Wabash**, closed on Sept. 1st, ending a run of more than 30 years in the neighborhood.

Prairie Avenue Books owners blamed the sales tax in Chicago as a primary reason for their closing, while Powell's owners blamed the increasing neighborhood rents for shuttering the South Loop store. For the full story by the *Chicago Journal* on: the [Prairie Ave. closure](#), click here; the [Powell closure](#), click here.

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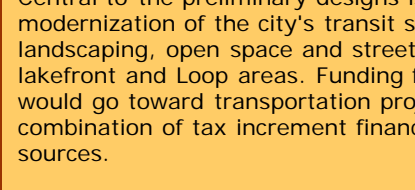


**Pete's Fresh Market** has been selected to develop a grocery store on the long-vacant parcel at the southeast corner of **Madison Street and Western Avenue**. The city, which owns the land, chose the local, family-owned retailer over Jewel-Osco and Food4Less.

The selection of Pete's will mark a sea-change for the Near West Side, an area that's been without a full-service grocery store for years, earning parts of the neighborhood the label of "food desert."

Department of Community Development Commissioner Mary Bonome told residents at a meeting in late August that Pete's offered the best package out of 12 criteria - from financing options and proposed construction timeline to local hiring plans - established by the city. Pete's plans to build a 50,000-square-foot store. The Chicago-based company hopes to break ground next summer and open in June 2011. An estimated 150 full-time jobs will be available at the store. [Click to read more at the Chicago Journal.](#)

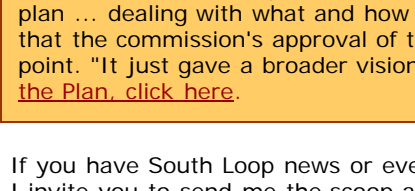
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Local and regional names lead the list of specialty vendors expected for the soon-to-debut food emporium in the West Loop's long-planned **MetraMarket**.

Coming to the 15,000-square-foot Chicago French Market, the food emporium that will anchor MetraMarket, the 100,000-square-foot street-level retail complex in the Ogilvie Transportation Center, will be: Canady Le Chocolatier; Pastoral Artisan Cheeses, Bread & Wine; Vanille Patisserie; Sweet Miss Givings; Chicago Organics; Completely Nuts; Fraternite Notre Dame; Albano's Deli; Flip Crepes; Wisconsin Cheese Mart; and Espression by Lavazza. Inspired by hubs of seasonal stands in Europe, Chicago French Market will be open year-round, six days a week. This portion of the MetraMarket complex is expected to open in late October.

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The *Chicago Journal* reports that the Chicago Plan Commission signed off on the **Chicago Central Area Action Plan** in a unanimous vote in August. Developed by the city's Department of Zoning and Land Use Planning, the plan envisions \$15.5 billion worth of infrastructure and urban design projects in and around the downtown area through 2020.

Central to the preliminary designs is the development and modernization of the city's transit systems, along with a range of landscaping, open space and street improvements throughout the lakefront and Loop areas. Funding for the plan, \$14.2 billion of which would go toward transportation projects, would likely come from a combination of tax increment financing and state, federal and private sources.

While some hailed the Plan and the effort it represented as "amazing" and "beautiful," prominent Printers Row resident Enrique Perez asked that the commission turn down the plan, claiming that it would have a "deleterious effect, specifically on the South Loop."

Perez warned that the plan would substantially raise the neighborhood's current building density. The plan, he added, "obliterates" building height restrictions advocated by various resident organizations in the neighborhood. "While there's nothing inherently wrong with tall buildings, the increased density ... will fundamentally change the character of the South Loop and the quality of life for its residents," said Perez. He also said that parking conditions and elementary school capacity in the South Loop and beyond would suffer from the potential expansion wrought by the plan.

Ald. Bob Fioretti said Perez's criticisms did not reflect the reality of the proposal. "This is really a transportation-oriented plan," he said, "not a plan ... dealing with what and how we're going to build." Fioretti said that the commission's approval of the plan didn't change much at this point. "It just gave a broader vision," he said. [To download chapters of the Plan, click here.](#)

If you have South Loop news or event info to share with your neighbors, I invite you to send me the scoop at [Helen@SouthLoopNeighbors.org](mailto:Helen@SouthLoopNeighbors.org). I hope to see you around the neighborhood!

Sincerely,  
**Helen Kaplow**  
 Newsletter Editor  
 SLN VP, Membership