

Newsletter: November 2009

In This Issue

- [Loft Walk Success!](#)
- [Greener South Loop Awards](#)
- [Business Profile: Sandmeyer's Bookstore](#)
- [Development Update](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Upcoming SLN Events

Printers Row Park Dedication:
Sat. Nov. 7,
10-11:30 a.m.
700 S. Dearborn
Join in the opening of our new neighborhood park. There will be food, music, singing, dancing, and more! Hosted by Ald. Bob Fioretti in cooperation with South Loop Neighbors, Chicago Community Bank, and many local businesses. Free and open to the public.

SLN Annual Mtg.
Wed. Dec. 9,
7 p.m. at Grace Place.
Come celebrate the end of an excellent year for SLN, vote for new board members, and discuss what's next for the organization.

SLN 10th Annual Photo Show at Harold Washington Library Center:
Meet-and-Greet w/ the Photographers,
Sat. Nov. 14, 2 p.m., 8th floor, Art Reference Room. Refreshments will be served. Free and open to the public.

The show continues at the library through Dec. 31, on the 8th floor, north exhibit case. The exhibit presents the winning photographs from this year's photo contest. All photographs depict the lifestyle, history, or culture of the South Loop.

Keep Someone Warm
Donate new hats, gloves, scarves, socks, and coats.
South Loop Neighbors will distribute all donations to the Legal Aid Bureau at Metropolitan Family Services. Place your donated items in collection boxes at one of the following locations: Chicago Community Bank in Dearborn Station, 47 W. Polk; Alderman Fioretti's 2nd Ward Office, 419 S. Dearborn; or Harris Bank, 1300 S. Wabash. Questions? Call Carole Hanzlyk at 312-876-0100.

Quick Links

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

Happenings

Lake Claremont Press Holiday Receptions
Who doesn't need more festive mingling, free refreshments, and affordable shopping at the holidays? South Loop residents are invited to any of the wine-cheese-cookies-books receptions on the following dates: Nov. 11, Nov. 18, Dec. 2, or Dec. 9, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Lake Claremont Press office at 1026 W. Van Buren, 2nd floor. Bargains will abound. [Click here for more info.](#)

VanderCook College of Music Faculty Recital
Tues. Nov. 17, 4:30 p.m., 3140 South Federal St., 312-225-6288

Prairie Avenue Gallery: Closing Reception for Indie/South Indie
Sat. Nov. 14,
6:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Prairie Avenue Gallery, located in the historic Keith House, 1900 S. Prairie Ave. A group show of independent artists, most who live and work in the South Loop. Featuring painting, sculpture, photography, printmaking, and mixed media works. Art + food, wine, and music. \$10 suggested donation at the door. RSVP and more info: Marcy Baim 312 907-7909 or mbaim@earthlink.net

Italian Cooking Lesson and Dinner
Sat. Nov. 21,
5:30 - 8:30 p.m. at the Clark Ministry Center, 1335 S. Clifton Ave. in Park Ridge.
Learn to make pasta and enjoy dinner with friends. Chef Dino of the Abruzzo Cibus, a cooking school in Abruzzo, Italy, will teach you and school owner Massimo Criscio will be your host. The dinner will benefit scholarships for students at East-West University, in the South Loop. Tickets, \$65.00 per person, include dinner and beverages. To reserve your tickets or for further information, call Diana Austin-Cavaliere at 847-652-0176 or Judy Bacon at 847-975-6776.

Greg Borzo Book Signing At WineStyles South Loop
Tues. Dec. 1,
6-8 p.m.,
1240 S. Michigan.
WineStyles South Loop is pleased to host Greg Borzo, South Loop resident and author of the popular book *The Chicago "L"*, for a book signing with wine. The cost is \$25 and includes a copy of the book, a glass of wine, light snacks and an opportunity to meet and talk with Greg.

I hope I'll be seeing many of you readers tomorrow morning (Sat. the 7th) at the dedication ceremony for our new Printers Row Park. This event marks an important milestone for the community and for the South Loop Neighbors organization. For those who missed it in the June newsletter, I invite you to read our article about the history of that park and why it is especially significant to SLN. ([Click here to go to the SLN homepage](#)), and then click the article titled **Members Move Mountains**.) It's an impressive and inspiring tale.

Continuing on that thought, SLN is approaching another milestone -- the selection and election of board members for 2010. **I'm writing now to invite you to consider serving on the board** and helping SLN pursue its mission of preserving and enhancing the quality of life in the South Loop.

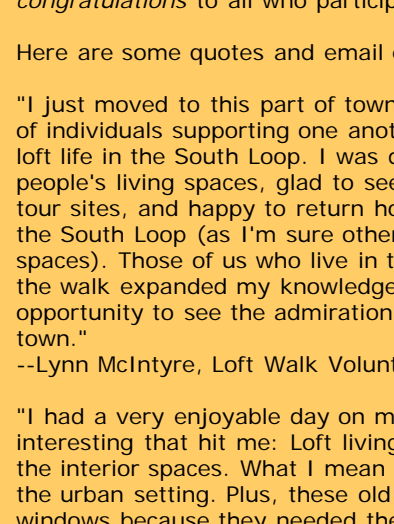
This year has been a big one for our org. We've increased our membership *seven-fold* from the low at the end of 2008 when SLN was considering calling it quits. We've also dramatically increased our activity -- sponsoring a busy calendar of cultural, historical, and social events, creating a Business Partner program for the mutual benefit of local businesses and SLN members, sending out this e-newsletter every month, and more. We've strengthened our relationships with local community groups and leaders and are working more closely with key decision-makers than ever before.

Each of these steps forward leads to the next: the more active and visible we are, the more our membership increases; the more our membership increases, the stronger and more influential we become; the stronger we become, the more we can accomplish; the more we accomplish, the bigger we grow, etc. And in the center of that growth and success cycle is the SLN board -- the core leadership of the group, the people who make the wheel turn.

Thus, we need a strong and dedicated board. **If you share our belief in the importance of community and civic participation, then please consider serving on the SLN board in 2010.** We'll be hosting a leadership meet-and-greet event later this month, which will be an opportunity to share ideas and information, learn a little about the history of SLN and our plans for 2010, let current SLN board members learn a little more about you, ask questions, and just get a feel for what it means to be an SLN board member. Interested? [Click here to email us for more info.](#)

Loft Walk Success!

by Helen Kaplow, SLN VP and 2009 Loft Walk Chair



We did it. After a one-year hiatus, on a sunny Sunday afternoon on Oct. 18th, Loft Walk rallied back to claim its title as SLN's most-loved annual event. Sometimes referred to as "the bear" by SLN insiders who are privy to the strenuous demands of planning this large and hulking event (this year: 9 tour lofts, 70+ volunteers, nearly 2 dozen sponsors, plus advertising, plus press, and don't forget the after-party), Loft Walk has become something to survive for those responsible for making it happen each year. But this year, thanks to the combined efforts of many South Loop residents and businesses, the bear got up on its hind legs and danced (once again).

Four hundred and twenty seven (427) people did the Loft Walk this year, touring our impressive offering of nine, unique and beautiful loft spaces. Loft Walk is an important event for both the South Loop Neighbors organization and the community at large: for SLN, it is our one big annual fundraiser; for the community, it is an opportunity for neighbors to come together and show their South Loop pride (as home owners, volunteers, and sponsors), which is not only fun, it helps to promote and preserve our quality of life. So *thank you and congratulations* to all who participated this year.

Here are some quotes and email excerpts from this year's participants:

"I just moved to this part of town and was unaware of the community of individuals supporting one another in their appreciation of living the loft life in the South Loop. I was delighted to be able to enter other people's living spaces, glad to see that my building was on the list of tour sites, and happy to return home knowing I had the best place in the South Loop (as I'm sure other home owners felt about their spaces). Those of us who live in this neighborhood know its value, but the walk expanded my knowledge of the area and gave me the opportunity to see the admiration others have for this unique part of town."
--Lynn McIntyre, Loft Walk Volunteer

"I had a very enjoyable day on multiple levels. One thing especially interesting that hit me: Loft living is about the exterior views as well as the interior spaces. What I mean is that part of the loft experience is the urban setting. Plus, these old factory buildings tend to have large windows because they needed the light. And each of the lofts on this tour had very distinctive views from their large, industrial windows. One loft looked out at the old train station clock tower, which was like something from an old postcard. Another loft looked out on a close-up view of the giant bronze owls on the rooftop of the library building -- SO dramatic. Each exterior view was like a perfectly framed picture of the loft experience."
--Terry Phillips, Loft Walk Ticket-Buyer

"The loft walk was fun and exciting. I was glad to have people come and see what is loft living all about -- spaciousness, simplicity, functionality, and art. I myself learned a thing or two from seeing what my neighbors did to their respective spaces to accommodate each lifestyle. The loft walk gives one a feeling of a small neighborhood amidst the big industrial city of Chicago."
--Lea Lua, Loft Walk Homeowner

"I've been a Loft Walk volunteer before, and this year I found the kaleidoscope of personalities (of the tour-goers and their reactions, the loft owners and their decorating senses, and my fellow volunteers in their decent mode) as fascinating and entertaining as ever. And free pizza at the after party, what could be better?"
--Sue Sidun, Loft Walk Volunteer

"What a great Loft Walk! We go every year. This year, my husband and I had a few guests join us and we all had a really wonderful time. My favorite spot on the tour was the condo with the authentic Irish steel fireplace... what a cozy and comfy home!"
--Holly Francis, Loft Walk Ticket-Buyer

"It was a fantastic experience. It was fun to see all the purple bags circling the neighborhood. And thanks much for placing me in the Burns + Beyerl Architects loft for my volunteer assignment. As an interior designer, I was thrilled to see the latest technology and building materials from an architect's perspective, including the wonderful Green Roof Garden. (They had a model of a cross-section to show how it is designed. Very cool!) Edward Twohey, Principle for the firm, gave me a great tour so I could pass on valuable info to all the guests that came through the space."
--Jaqi Green, Loft Walk Volunteer

"It's not a matter of *if* I will do it again. I absolutely *will* do it. We had a huge turnout [at our open house]. I'd say nearly 300 people. A steady stream of people all day. I met a ton of friendly people, all potential clients, and not only that, my homeowners were there and they had a great time too. It was a fun and productive day."
--Mark Fischer, Realtor and Open-House Sponsor for Loft Walk

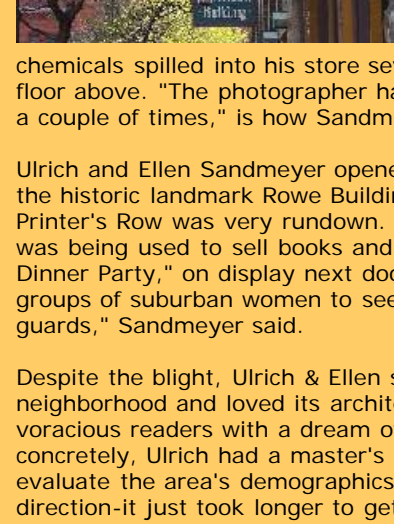
"We had about five times more traffic than I typically do for an open house. The exposure was wonderful and many 'seeds' were planted for the future. I even got a call-back on the property I was showing. So being an open-house sponsor was definitely worthwhile. My advertising dollars were well spent."
--Ellen Donnelly, Realtor and Open-House Sponsor for Loft Walk

"My loft was on the tour -- in The New Franklin Building. However, my partner Mark and I had to be in Maine that weekend, so we entrusted our place to SLN and their volunteer docents. We arrived home at 4:50 p.m. on Sunday, to be greeted warmly by 'loft-sitter' docents. In my absence, my neighbor Janet Diaz had staged the loft for dramatic impact. And she'd done an impressive job. Upon seeing the changes when we walked through the door, Mark and I both exclaimed, 'This is fabuloust Amazing! I can hardly believe it!' Noticing the surprised look on the docents' faces, we explained, 'We live here! We just didn't know how beautiful our home is until this moment!'"
--Beth Urech, Loft Walk Homeowner

And finally, *Loft Life* magazine was one of several publications to cover the event. [Click here to see what Loft Life had to say in their recap.](#)

Greener South Loop Awards

by Gail Merritt, SLN Member and Greener South Loop Founder



The Alliance for a Greener South Loop celebrated the winners of the first annual Greener South Loop Awards a few weeks ago at South Loop eatery Tapas Valencia. South Loop buildings and businesses were recognized for their progress in charting the path for how all businesses and buildings will operate in years to come.

It seems that some operations, like recycling, have almost become a standard throughout the South Loop. But our honorees have raised the bar for managing business and building operations in earth-friendly ways.

Judges of the award applications were Angela Ford, President and CEO of TAG Sustainable Consulting Group, and Dana Kenney, Assistant Commissioner, City of Chicago Department of the Environment, Energy and Sustainable Business Division.

Winners fell into three categories: Green, Greener, and Greenest.

2009 recipients of this recognition are:

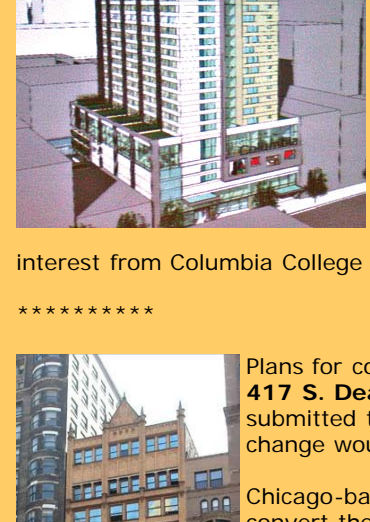
- Institutions**
Greenest: Columbia College of Chicago
- Businesses**
Green: The UPS Store
Greener: Flaco's Tacos and Hackney's restaurants
Greenest: South Loop Best Buy

- Residential Buildings**
Green: Film Exchange Lofts
Greener: Dearborn Tower Condominium Association
Greenest: State Place Condominium Association

Award winners received a plaque and will display window decals that recognize their efforts. This was an important first step in the Alliance's commitment to recognize and celebrate progress along the Journey that will take us closer to our goal of minimizing our community's environmental impact. In the coming months we'll be documenting and sharing the practices of our winners. For more info: www.greenerouthloop.org.

Business Profile: Sandmeyer's Bookstore, Anchoring Printers Row for 27 Years

by Greg Borzo, SLN Board Member



Ulrich Sandmeyer has a penchant for storytelling and a nose for the punch line.

This summer his bookstore handled the sales for a meeting of the Historical Novel Society where some 300 authors talked about and signed their books. Sandmeyer likes historical fiction but really didn't know what he was getting into with this event. Turns out the group is heavily into romance and pulp. "I never thought I'd make a living selling bodice rippers," Sandmeyer said.

Chemics spilled into his store several times from a darkroom on the floor above. "The photographer had to buy my science fiction collection a couple of times," is how Sandmeyer summed up the story.

Ulrich and Ellen Sandmeyer opened their store at its present location in the historic landmark Rowe Building (714 S. Dearborn) in 1982 when Printer's Row was very rundown. The first time they saw the space it was being used to sell books and posters from Judy Chicago's "The Dinner Party" on display next door. "She was courageously bussing in groups of suburban women to see her show-accompanied by armed guards," Sandmeyer said.

Despite the blight, Ulrich & Ellen saw great potential in the neighborhood and loved its architecture. Both were librarians and voracious readers with a dream of running a bookstore. More concretely, Ulrich had a master's in urban planning, which helped him evaluate the area's demographics. "They were all going in the right direction-it just took longer to get there than we thought," he said.

The bookstore's prospects improved with the neighborhood's. Although rarely crowded, the store has turned a profit in all but three of its 27 years. That's because the Sandmeyers, the store's only fulltime employees, run many off-site events and fill bulk orders from nonprofits, libraries, charter schools and the like. "You have to go out and find the business," Sandmeyer said.

It helps to be closely affiliated with the Printers Row Lit Fest, which Sandmeyer describes as a "second Christmas." It helps, too, that the Sandmeyers own their location, having purchased it early in the shop's history. "In today's market, an independent bookstore that doesn't own its space is in trouble," Sandmeyer said.

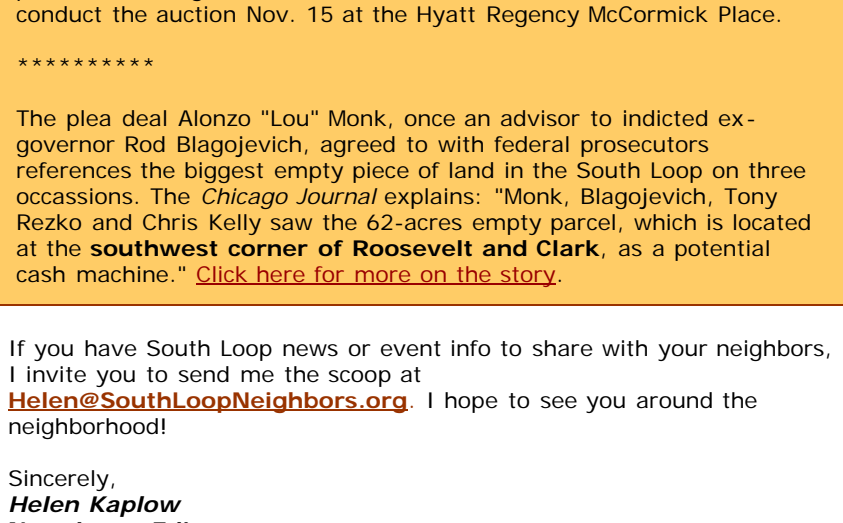
The Sandmeyers, who have not turned their bookstore into a coffee shop, get enough walk-in business to confirm that they're on the right track. "We have hundreds of long-time customers who like what we've done, who like the fact that we're here," Sandmeyer said. "We even have a second generation of loyal customers."

"We love what we're doing, have survived a few recessions and have no plans to move. In fact, I think that one day they'll carry me out of this place."

Note: Sandmeyer's Bookstore is an SLN Business Partner; when SLN members show their membership card, the bookstore will issue one of its own discount cards, good for a 10% discount for a year (card normally sells for \$10 but is free to SLN members).

Development Update

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



After years in the planning, **Printers Row Park** finally opens November 7, with a 10 am ceremony. The design, by the South Loop's own Site Design Group, uses curving brick paths to beckon pedestrians in from the sidewalks on Dearborn and Federal. Plantings are carefully designed for the enjoyment of park visitors, not the everyday needs of dogs. To give the park a sense of place, benches have been designed as if they were pulled from an oversize printers heliobox-the bin where printers kept bits of raised metal type they no longer needed before melting down the lead slugs and reusing the metal. The reversed lettering on the benches is set in an appropriate early 20th century typeface and consists of fragments of South Loop residents names, both old and new.

1140 S. Wabash at 860 Development, which plans an **800-bed student residence** on the site. The 26-story project would include a small amount of parking, dining facilities, and gallery or similar space that would be occupied by a university tenant. The small vacant parcel fronting Roosevelt, just east of the L station entrance, would be developed as retail space and permit residents to enter the building directly from the unpaid part of the CTA station. Kargil told the Community Development Commission that it had letters of interest from Columbia College and Flashpoint Academy.

417 S. Dearborn, to student housing have been submitted to the alderman, although no zoning change would be required.

Chicago-based Conlon & Co. has drawn up plans to convert the diminutive 11-story building into an 80-bed dormitory. Conlon fund manager R. Scott Prosser says, "There's a lot more demand than there is student housing" in the Loop. "Everybody's really reacting very positive to it. It's very boutique-y, and will be designed for more senior-level students." [For more on the story from Crain's, click here.](#)

Look for Kerasotes to open the **movie theaters at the Roosevelt Collection** on December 18th. The theaters will feature all-digital projection, reserved seating, and upscale food service being developed by restaurateur Jerry Kleiner. They're likely to be the only retail tenants for most of the next year.

Construction is well along on **Columbia's new Media Production Center at 16th and State**. The lobby of the new building includes the reconstructed terra cotta arch from the 1923 Famous Players-Lasky/Paramount film exchange building at 1327 S. Wabash, demolished two years ago. The building is scheduled to open for the spring 2010 semester.

The eight-story **YMCA Building at 830 South Michigan**, part of the Michigan Boulevard historic district, is in danger of being demolished. The building's owner has applied for a demolition permit, and a court hearing last week gave the city a Nov. 12 deadline to produce a plan for saving the structure. The 1895 YMCA Building was owned for decades by Johnson Publishing, which allowed the roof to collapse and the interior timber structure to badly deteriorate. Developers had proposed an 80-story building for the site, a project which would have preserved only the facade of the old building, but that project was cancelled earlier this year. The concern now is that the city building department will order demolition of the building for structural reasons.

A new home for **Buddy Guy's** is under construction in the Ridge Block, the building that most recently housed FedEx Kinko's at **Balbo and Michigan**. The new ground-floor venue is being designed by South Loop architectural firm Burns + Beyerl, whose offices were included on last month's Loft Walk. A gift shop and party rooms will also be part of the complex.

Look for Physicians ImmediateCare to open a walk-in clinic at **811 S. State**.

YMCA-USA has dropped plans to build a national headquarters in the South Loop. The site, at the southeast corner of **State and Harrison**, is again for sale.

A British developer has taken possession of the **Old Post Office** building after a couple of weeks of uncertainty. A firm headed by Liverpoolian Bill Davies was the high bidder at \$40 million when the building was auctioned off on August 27, but the Davies group balked at closing, raising fears that the Postal Service would have to turn to the second-highest bidder or remarket the property. Once Chicago's Olympic hopes had been dashed, however, Davies negotiated a new price of \$23 million and completed the purchase in October.

A **small park at the south end of Library Tower** was recently landscaped, fulfilling the developer's agreement when the land was purchased from the city. The area had been used for construction staging and sales center parking.

Twenty condominiums in a **South Loop Motor Row** development are to be sold at auction after the project's developer assembled a group of private investors who took the 52-unit project out of foreclosure. Units in the three-building complex at **2303 S. Michigan Ave.** are being offered with minimum bids set at roughly half the developer's asking prices, according to a statement from Sheldon Good & Co., which will conduct the auction Nov. 15 at the Hyatt Regency McCormick Place.

The plea deal Alonzo "Lou" Monk, once an advisor to indicted ex-governor Rod Blagojevich, agreed to with federal prosecutors references the biggest empty piece of land in the South Loop on three occasions. The *Chicago Journal* explains: "Monk, Blagojevich, Tony Rezko and Chris Kelly saw the 62-acre empty parcel, which is located at the **southwest corner of Roosevelt and Clark**, as a potential cash machine." [Click here for more on the story.](#)

If you have South Loop news or event info to share with your neighbors, I invite you to send me the scoop at Helena@SouthLoopNeighbors.org. I hope to see you around the neighborhood!

Sincerely,
Helen Kaplow
Newsletter Editor
SLN VP