

# Edgewater artists find display space in empty storefronts

BY KAY SEVERINSEN

Take a walk down Broadway, Bryn Mawr or Granville, and you might feel like you are at a juried art fair.

It's no coincidence that storefront after storefront is full of original artwork.

Thanks to the efforts of the Edgewater artistic community, during the past year the neighborhood's empty storefronts have become de facto art galleries. In little more than a year, about 25 storefronts have joined the program, displaying the art of several dozen local artists who create jewelry, sculpture, paintings, photography and more. The artwork varies from fine art to the craftwork.

Part of a nationwide trend to use vacant storefronts as galleries,

the Edgewater program was the brainchild of Edgewater resident and real estate investor Rae Ann Cecrle.

Last year, during the depths of the economic crisis, she recalled, "In one week, a one-and-a-half-block stretch of street lost four stores. It was really blighted."

She had been using a friend's vacant storefront to advertise a cookbook and posted a notice in the window announcing that she was looking for artists. The phone began to ring and still has not stopped.

Cecrle and her crew named themselves Edgewater Artists in Motion, since they knew they would be moving around – and because they hoped they would be helping Edgewater move forward as well.

The group is now officially an

initiative of the Edgewater Chamber of Commerce, the Edgewater Community Council and the Edgewater Development Corp.

It helped that Cecrle knew people who had vacant real estate. One of the group's largest displays is in a building at the corner of Clara Vista and Broadway. Due to an economy-inspired vacancy, owner Bill Platt offered enough space for nine artists. They also arranged with the CTA to take over vacant storefronts under L stops at Berwyn, Bryn Mawr, Granville and Thorndale.

"Those were in very poor condition," Cecrle said. "We were able to mask them off with painting drapes, and we have put in mostly photography, because it is a dark space. They used to be these dark windows, and now people just love it. It's a good advertisement for the artists, too."

EAIM has purchased display lighting for all the windows, which adds a great deal of life and vitality to the streets.

Some artists, such as co-chairman and art photographer Tracy Poyser, have already benefited.

"My display got the attention of a curator for a local art gallery," she said. "I had my first photo show as a result."

Both women agree that the new program has been a win-win for everyone.

"Not only are we helping the storefront and the artists," Cecrle said, "but it helps the other stores nearby that are occupied. It makes



Edgewater art caption here.

PHOTO COURTESY: TRACY POYSER

**EDGEWATER** cont. on pg. x



10-3-02. Tom Martin (cq) (Right) rings a bell to single store owners to clean the sidewalks out in front of business in Andersonville. Scott Martin (cq) (background) scrubs the sidewalk with hot soapie water. SCOTT STEWART/SUN-TIMES

## North Side neighborhood epitomizes small-town values

BY KAY SEVERINSEN

Andersonville is not just another pretty face.

The North Side neighborhood, headquartered along Clark Street north of Foster Avenue, offers up a smorgasbord of tree-lined streets and unique, attractive businesses, but its longtime Swedish heritage is just a starting point for understanding the neighborhood today.

It is progressive almost beyond all imagining and has instituted the first environmental program for small businesses in the nation. It has welcomed families of all persuasions and today has a significant gay population. It is well aware of its history and roots, and still clings to its Swedish background even as some of the vestiges of that heritage start to

fade. The residents now are a combination of old-timers and new-timers, traditionalists and artistic types, a mix that brings with it the push-pull of ideas and attitudes.

Still, somehow it all works, says Ellen Shepard, director of the Andersonville Chamber of Commerce and the Andersonville Development Corp.

"Even though we are within a great city, Andersonville really functions like a small town," she said. "The community here is very tight knit and the block clubs very engaged in their neighborhood. It's easy to meet people and get involved. And because we have this great commercial district, it's very comfortable and safe. The cool thing about Andersonville is that almost every single business is locally owned and is one you won't find anywhere else."

**NORTH SIDE** cont. on pg. x

# side walk

Andersonville Sidewalk Sale  
July 30 – August 1  
Friday, Saturday, Sunday  
5000-5800 North Clark



www.andersonville.org

# sale

## EXPLORE EDGEWATER



**Saturday, Aug. 21**  
11am to 3pm



**Community Cookbook**  
featuring 500+ recipes



**Saturdays through Oct. 30**  
8am to 1pm

The Edgewater Chamber of Commerce invites you to our diverse, artistic neighborhood featuring award-winning restaurants, services, and shops all with a close knit neighborhood feel. Find local businesses and more details on our events and programs at [www.edgewater.org](http://www.edgewater.org)



1210 W. Rosedale, Chicago, IL 60660  
Ph: 773-561-6000 • [info@edgewater.org](mailto:info@edgewater.org)  
[www.edgewater.org](http://www.edgewater.org) • Become a fan on Facebook

**GOLD IS AT RECORD HIGH PRICES!**  
**Don't sell at Gold Parties or those mail-in envelopes!**  
**Get the most for your valuables!**

**Paying Top Dollar For:**

- Antique & Modern Jewelry
- Coins & Coin Collections
- Sterling Silverware
- Old Gold
- Silver
- Watches
- Diamonds
- Old Guitars



Same Owner & Location since 1980

**CHICAGO GOLD GALLERY**  
**FREE APPRAISALS**  
**773-338-7787**  
**www.chicagogoldgallery.com**

**EDGEWATER** *cont. from pg.*

a community that is attractive to people.”

Neighbors have been enthusiastic as well, Poyser said.

“There is no question it brings light and color to the street,” she said. “It’s also attracting more rental business for the owners. And people have told us how excited they are and how they enjoy walking along there.”

When the group first met to discuss the idea, Ceclre said, “We weren’t really sure how it would go. But it really exploded.”

If the economy improves and the storefronts rent out, the artists will need to find new places to display, but that’s OK; it’s part of the plan.

“The main goal,” Ceclre said, “is to make the artwork more visible, but maybe we also will show that there are artists here. There is more of an artistic community than we ever imagined.”

**Even though we are within a great city, Andersonville really functions like a small town**

**NORTH SIDE** *cont. from pg. x*

#### A matter of civic pride

In fact, the dearth of national chain stores is a particular source of civic pride in Andersonville, where 92 percent of the businesses are owned by residents. Officially, any retailer will be welcomed by the chamber of commerce, but unofficially residents prefer their own homegrown businesses, and the closer to home, the better.

Among the many local retailers with names you don’t hear anywhere else are: Svea Restaurant, home of the Viking breakfast and where, if you order the lutefisk during the Christmas holidays, owner Tom Martin will sing you all five verses of “O Lutefisk”; Simon’s Tavern, which dates back to Prohibition and has the original interior; Swedish Bakery, which offers well-loved Swedish favorites marked with little blue and yellow flags, as well as other delicacies; Erickson’s Deli, which is a Christmas-season pilgrimage destination for Swedes who have moved away; Women & Children First Bookstore, a leading feminist bookstore; the White Attic, offering refinished vintage furniture; Brown Elephant Resale Shop; On the Rocks Gems, Jewelry & More; Toys Et Cetera and many more.

Because many of the retailers are also neighbors, they tend to support each other and have created a mindset of shopping locally among many of the residents.

Residents would “shop local” anyway because they take pride in doing so. But a recent study commissioned by the Andersonville Development Corp. has given them even more reason for keeping their dollars in the neighborhood. The study found that money spent in local businesses has significantly more impact on the local economy than money spent on the same street in chain stores.

“If a business is locally owned,” explained Sara Dinges, the corporation’s managing director, “more of that money stays in the community. They tend to hire more local employees and that supports the community, too.”

According to the report produced by Civic Economics, for every \$100 in consumer spending with a local store in Andersonville, \$68 remains in the Chicago economy, while of the same amount spent at a chain, \$43 stays local. The study also found that local businesses generated more revenue per square foot than the neighborhood’s chain stores.

Overall, the entrepreneurial spirit creates an energy that has become self-sustaining in Andersonville, which is a square of land bounded by Lawrence, Bryn Mawr, Ravenswood and North Glenwood avenues.

“Andersonville has always been a trailblazer and has always had that spirit,” Dinges said. “It goes back to being a community that is made up of local business owners and residents who really want to support them. That high level of investment is like a petri dish for trying new things and respond-

ing to the new economic climate.”

During this last economic downturn, Shepard added, “the retailers have had multitudes of people coming in to say, ‘If I cannot find it in Andersonville, I’m not going to buy it.’ ”

Because residents can find almost everything they need within a few blocks, it is quite possible to live in Andersonville without a car, Shepard said. Those who need to venture out of the neighborhood can take the No. 22 Clark Street bus or nearby Red and Brown line trains into the Loop.

#### Historic streetscape goes green

Not only are the shops mostly locally owned, most of them have never been significantly altered. That original streetscape this past spring earned the Andersonville Commercial Historic District a place on the National Register of Historic Places, sponsored by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The designation was bestowed due to the neighborhood’s significance to Chicago and Swedish immigrant history and because it has 116 buildings that together contribute to a distinctive, turn-of-the-century architectural style.

Three years ago Andersonville was named one of the country’s “Top 10 Eco-Communities” by Natural Home Magazine for its commitment to the environment and its walkability.

Since then Andersonville has become only greener.

“People here really care about our effect on the planet,” Shepard said. For that reason, a committee of local residents and environmental experts decided to start an environmental program for Andersonville businesses. They wanted something like the national LEED program (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, an internationally recognized green building certification system) but nothing was useful for small business owners. Most were too expensive or were designed for companies with lots of employees, buildings and vehicles.

“It took us a couple of years to synthesize the best of the programs that existed and add in our own metrics, and then more importantly, figure out how to measure success,” she said.

The committee set up a program that awards three stars based on the greenness of the business, but it is tough to win even one star, Shepard said.

“We didn’t want to make it easy to do. For any level we require you to track your garbage and give us a year’s utility bills before and after to see how your actions change the amount of energy you use,” she said.

#### Businesses get on board

One might expect that during a tough economic time the program would be a slow starter, but that has not been the case. Already seven businesses have earned at least one star and four have earned three stars.

Among the three-star businesses is the enthusiastic – and occasionally over the top – Hamburger

**NORTH SIDE** *cont. from pg. x*

## Horizon Realty Group

### Chicago Apartment Rentals

Edgewater

Lakeview

Ravenswood

Rogers Park

Uptown

Wrigleyville



**773.529.7200**

**HORIZON**  
**REALTY GROUP**  
 Real Estate Management • Development

**www.HorizonRealtyGroup.com**

## Sampling the neighborhoods' available homes



PHOTO: SEVERINSEN

In the friendly communities of Edgewater and Andersonville on Chicago's North Side you can find a wide range of home styles, from single-family homes priced at more than a million or basic flats for less than \$150,000. The neighborhood has an abundance of condos priced less than \$500,000; many are gut rehabs and come with parking.

However, you may not need a car. Andersonville is within walking distance of Brown and Red Line stops as well as the Clark Street bus line. Edgewater is bisected by the Red/Purple lines, with stops at Berwyn, Bryn Mawr, Thorndale and Granville.

Here are some examples of properties on the market now for sale in these communities:

**5452 N. Glenwood, \$465,000.**

Three bedrooms, two baths, 2,000 square feet. A refurbished condo with hardwood floors, large windows, a den, dining room and one-car garage.

Five bedrooms, 3.5 baths. Finished basement, kitchen with breakfast island, sunroom, media room, master suite with whirlpool, family room with fireplace, central air.

**5148 N. Ashland, \$379,000.**

Four bedrooms, four baths. Full dining room, basement, original woodwork, central air conditioning.

**1429 W. Catalpa, \$559,000.**

Three-bedroom, two-bath penthouse, 3,100 square feet. Top floor of a vintage six-flat. Great room with library wall and rolling ladder, leaded-glass display cases. Modern kitchen with breakfast room, den, master suite, two-car garage, basement storage.

**1717 W. Winona, \$899,000.**



5-29-09 Sonat and Robert Birnecker, owners of Koval Distillery in Andersonville.

JEAN LACHAT/SUN-TIMES

## ● ● ● BRIDGEVIEW BANK GROUP

Are you looking for A Better Banking Experience in your neighborhood?

[www.bridgeviewbank.com](http://www.bridgeviewbank.com)



### FREE iPad

Stop by your local Bridgeview Bank branch and redeem this ad for a chance to win a **FREE iPad**.<sup>1</sup>

### .50% APY Bonus

Open a Premium Checking Account and receive an **additional .50% APY** for 12 months.<sup>2</sup>

### You can find us in your community at these locations:

Andersonville – 5117 N. Clark St. | 773.989.2890

Edgewater – 6041 N. Clark St. | 773.989.5781



Moodys 3 x 6

1 No limitations on who may respond. Entry limited to one response per day. Offer may be withdrawn at any time. Ask to speak to a Personal Banker for details. 2 Annual Percentage Yield (APY) of .50% is added to the APY that we offer on the day the account is opened. Minimum Balance to Open Account: You must deposit \$100 to open this account. Minimum Balance Requirements to Avoid Imposition of Fees: A maintenance fee of \$20 will be imposed every statement cycle if the daily balance in the account falls below \$2,500 any day of the statement cycle. A \$2,500 minimum balance is required to earn APY. Fees may reduce earnings.



kay- Caption here

PHOTO: SEVERINSEN

## NORTH SIDE *cont. from pg. x*

Mary's Chicago, which has made huge changes and seen enormous savings so far.

At Hamburger Mary's all carry-out packaging is made from renewable sources. The restaurant purchases only non-bleached, high recycled-content paper for napkins and tissue; has converted nearly all lighting to CFL and LED bulbs; recycles all glass, plastic, cardboard, paper and metal; installed dual flush toilets; and has developed extensive energy management

procedures.

"My twin brother [Brandon] and I have always been active environmentalists," said co-owner Ashley Wright in an interview with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "We helped start one of the first recycling programs ... back in high school in the late '80s. When we opened Hamburger Mary's Chicago, we wanted to have as little impact on the environment as possible, which is hard for restaurants. When [Andersonville Development Corp.] first mentioned the idea of green certifica-

tion, it was a no-brainer for us."

Another eco-busy business is the three-star Green Genes. Only a couple years old, the children's eco-clothing store opened on Earth Day and started out living the green dream with bamboo floors and counters, low-VOC paints, recycled and biodegradable materials used in packaging. When customers order clothes online, their items usually arrive in reused boxes and packing materials.

The other two three-star businesses are the home products store GreenSky and the Coffee Studio.

In addition to starting Eco-Andersonville, the community also has instituted an unusual recycling program for the street bins used by shoppers in the commercial district and spent the week of July 12-16 celebrating its efforts with events and programming for the neighborhood's first Green Week.

"A lot of people think it's just big corporations like Wal-Mart that have to create the sustainability index," Dinges said. "But our small businesses are already doing so much. Even small things, such as a chiropractor whose office faces south, installed solar blinds. We've found that small local businesses can do a lot with a little."

## Edgewater/Andersonville dining options

### EDGEWATER

**Blue Elephant, 1235 W. Devon (773-262-5216).** Some folks might think this tiny place is an offshoot of Indian on Devon, but a recent makeover has the place reaching for the sit-down crowd and those who are willing to experiment. Chef/owner Ida Pasty has classic French training; she's kept prices low while she pushes the Thai envelope with Westernized quirks.

### Habibi, 1225 W. Devon (773-465-9318).

You will feel like you have stepped out of Chicago and into the Middle East, starting with the lion-head fountain in the middle of the room and going right up to the fabulous cuisine at moderate prices. Appetizers include hummus with shawerma and grilled shrimp kebabs; entrees include shish kebab beef and lamb chops.

### Moody's Pub, 5910 N. Broadway (773-275-2696).

Yes, you can come here to rock around the clock, but the food is good, too. Double-fisted burgers, chicken sandwiches, enormous salads and more all set a high bar for the moniker "bar food."

### ANDERSONVILLE

**Hamburger Mary's Chicago, 5400 N. Clark (773-784-6969).** Diners are invited to "eat, drink and be Mary," and that's easy to do. The food, as you might imagine, centers around hamburgers, but there is plenty for



1/2 lb. hamburger at Moody's Pub, 5910 N. Broadway.  
JEAN LACHAT/SUN-TIMES

dieters and vegetarians to enjoy as well. And when it's not mealtime, Hamburger Mary's is all about fun, from karaoke to "drag queen" bingo, to the all-around sense of friendly inclusiveness.

### Sunshine Café, 5449 N. Clark (773-334-6214).

Yummy Japanese comfort food starts here, with items like the onigiri, a rice sandwich rapped in seaweed with a pickled plum in the center. Savory gyoza stuffed with pork or a huge bowl of hot udon noodles will have you dreaming in Japanese.

### Svea, 5236 N. Clark (773-275-7738).

Adored by locals, this small Swedish diner offers up some of the best breakfasts in Chicago, as the lines out the door might attest. Try it for breakfast or lunch; weekdays are best for getting a table quickly. Check out the fruit soup, the Viking breakfast with lingonberry pancakes or, if you are brave, opt for the lutefisk during Christmas season and be serenaded with the song, "O Lutfisk."

Find Out  
Today  
What Lies Ahead  
for Tomorrow

Call today to  
schedule  
your reading

**To Provide Guidance and Advice in  
Times of Stress & Decision Making**

**5553 N. Broadway, Chicago  
Step's away from Bryn Mawr Redline Station  
773.271.6200**

Chicago's Bed & Breakfast

5863 North Glenwood  
Chicago, Illinois 60660  
773-955-5555  
www.House5863.com

Your all access pass to the Chicagoland auto market.

**Every day in the CHICAGO SUN-TIMES**

# PRIVATE AFFAIRS. WE MAKE THEM OUR BUSINESS.

**WE SET UP. WE CLEAN UP. YOU HAVE A BALL!**

**WHIRLYBALL**

## Sounds Good, Doesn't It?

Contrary to popular belief, WhirlyBall not only hosts the best corporate events, we throw the most memorable private parties, too. Just add "party" after each word - birthday, anniversary, promotion, farewell, welcome home, bachelor/ette, rehearsal, holiday, team victory and family, just to name a few.

**WHIRLYBALL.COM**
**800-8-WHIRLY**

**Mention WBEDGE when reserving and take \$30 off each reserved court hour until September 30, 2010!**

**CHICAGO | LOMBARD | VERNON HILLS**