



WRIGLEYVILLE



BRIDGEPORT



Welcome to the Neighborhoods

FALL CLASSIC EDITION: Bridgeport & Wrigleyville

by **Brett Ashley McKenzie**

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“Welcome to the Neighborhood” profiles a Chicago community each issue and highlights the major draws of buying and selling property within that community, as well as local perspectives on the neighborhood and interesting facts for you to share with your clients.

Beat it, Beantown. Take a hike, Bronx. This fall, there is only one baseball town, and that’s Chicago. The Chicago Cubs (who, at press time, were an impressive 30 game over .500) and Chicago White Sox baseball teams are at the top of their respective leagues, practically guaranteed playoff spots, and the prospect of a Crosstown Classic World Series looms large on the North and South sides.

Allowing ourselves to dream of a hometown Fall Classic, *CR* is shining the spotlight on Chicago’s two baseball neighborhoods, Wrigleyville (the area surrounding Wrigley Field, contained within the Lakeview neighborhood) and Bridgeport (including the neighboring Armour Square neighborhood, home to the U.S. Cellular Field).

Bridgeport Heritage and History

The Bridgeport neighborhood on Chicago’s South Side has many claims to fame, and one of the richest histories of any Chicago community. It is the birthplace of both Mayors Richard J. Daley and Richard M. Daley, home of the Illinois Institute of Technology, and is often referred to as the location of U.S. Cellular Field (the White Sox stadium is actually located in Armour Square, one block east of Bridgeport).

Celebrity and notoriety aside, Bridgeport is responsible for linking the city of Chicago with several industries with which it has become inseparable: banking, canal building, construction, and labor, to name a few.

Once known as “Hardscrabble,” Bridgeport in the 1830’s was a fur-trading outpost located along what was to become the Illinois and Michigan Canal. The ambitious canal project was intended to allow the passage of boats from the Great Lakes to the Mississippi River, and demand for skilled laborers was high. Recruitment efforts by canal commissioners attracted workers who had recently completed the Erie Canal as well as newly-arrived immigrants to the United States, the majority of which were Irish. Due to insufficient funding, canal laborers were paid for their dangerous work in “Land Scrip,” which allowed them to purchase property in Bridgeport. Canal work ceased for a period of two or three years, during which time many laborers were forced to squat or attempt to find new work in Bridgeport’s quarry.

Because of weather conditions, quarry and canal work (which resumed in 1845) could only be performed during warmer months, so many laborers worked in packing houses in the winters. The canal was finally com-

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Bears Cupcakes at Ace Bakery



The Grandstand



Homes in Bridgeport

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pleted in 1848, by which time Irish and German populations had grown substantially. It was at this time that several Catholic and Lutheran churches were established, many of which operated their own schools for the immigrants' children. By the 1870s, thanks to employment opportunities with the Chicago Union Stock Yards, Union Rolling Mills, and New Lumber District, Bridgeport began attracting large numbers of Italian, Czech, Polish, and Lithuanian immigrants.

In 1910, Charles Comiskey built the "Baseball Palace of the World," at the intersection of 35th Street and Shields Avenue. "White Sox Park" quickly became referred to as "Comiskey Park," and despite the old stadium's teardown in 1990 and replacement by what is now known as U.S. Cellular Field, many diehard fans still refer to the park as "New Comiskey." U.S. Cellular Field was built right beside the site of Old Comiskey, which now serves as a parking lot for the new stadium.

The White Sox first World Series was won at South Side Park, their home at the time, in 1906. They won the 1917 World Series in Old Comiskey, and the 2005 World Series in U.S. Cellular Field.

Bridgeport Hot Spots

True White Sox fans know there's only one place to catch a bite before a game or catch up after. Schaller's Pump (3714 S. Halsted St.) has been serving up corned beef and cabbage, hash browns, and cold beer for 127 years. Still a family-owned and run operation today, Schaller's Pump offers affordable, home-style fare (dishes

range from \$5 to \$9) and unique historic traits, such as a prohibition-era peephole hidden behind a beer poster in the bar.

You know that any bar hailing itself as the "Anti-Cubby Bear" (the Cubby Bear being a famous Wrigleyville haunt for Cub fans) is serious White Sox stomping ground. Jimbo's Restaurant & Lounge (3258 S. Princeton Ave.) was featured on national television during the 2005 World Series and has only increased in popularity since. Offering savory pub fare and daily specials (\$6.50 each) ranging from Meatloaf to Ocean Perch, Jimbo's captures the White Sox spirit year-round.

**What's selling in...
Bridgeport?**

FastSTATS second quarter 2008 (8060)

Attached Single Family	Detached Single Family
Units: 7	Units: 19
Median Price: \$235,000	Median Price: \$340,000

Check out neighborhood stats for all 77 Chicagoland neighborhoods at www.ChicagoREALTOR.com.

FastSTATS consists of average sales price, median sales price, market time, units sold and percent change for Chicago and the suburbs.

For classic, unpretentious Italian food, Trattoria (605 W. 31st St.) cannot be beat. Traditional dishes like spaghetti and meatballs and eggplant parmesan are expertly paired with delicious Tuscan Chianti and rich desserts. The laid back, café atmosphere is perfect for a quiet lunch, but business is hopping at night time, so for parties of four or more, call ahead (312.326.3500).

For Italian specialties and deli food delivered right to your door or served up right in their café, Gio's Café/Deli (2724 S. Lowe Ave.) features classic favorites like sausage and peppers,

homemade ravioli, and cannoli for can't-be-beat prices. Local REALTORS® in the area say the food and atmosphere in this friendly deli "defines Bridgeport."

Twenty-five thousand Chicagoans can't be wrong: when it comes to party cakes, Ace Bakery (3241 S. Halsted) can't be beat. From wedding cakes to éclairs, mini cheesecakes to chocolate-covered strawberries, Ace Bakery can satisfy any craving your sweet tooth can muster.

Who's Buying in Bridgeport?

Bridgeport has always maintained its share of historic single family homes, but new construction is sweeping the neighborhood, drawing a new demographic to what has traditionally been a family community. "Bridgeport is fast-emerging with new construction, and the hottest properties are condos, townhomes, and single family homes," says Nicole Pusateri, Broker, Bricks Realty. "We are seeing many first-time buyers as young 20-years-old, newlyweds, and young professionals choosing to be closer to the city, buying condos."

However, the family feel of the neighborhood won't be disappearing any time soon. "Most residents have lived here for generations and contribute to the rising values of real estate by reinvesting into new homes," says Pusateri. And families also make up part of Bridgeport's newcomers. "The surge of new construction single family homes has brought families from the suburbs who want to save time and money with long commutes to downtown," Pusateri explains. "And we occasionally get the empty nester that comes back to their neighborhood after moving away for many years."

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Wrigleyville's Very Own Sluggers



Wrigley Field Home of the Chicago Cubs



Harry Caray's Tavern

Close proximity to the Lakefront, the Illinois Institute of Technology, UIC, and the South Loop are big draws for many prospective Bridgeport residents. According to Pusateri, "Bridgeport continues to thrive and welcome prospective buyers into its friendly community."

Wrigleyville

Although within the greater Lakeview neighborhood, the community of Wrigleyville dances to the beat of its own drum, rowdy when the Cubs are on a tear, glum when they're in a slump, and always impossible to park in on game nights.

Wrigleyville Heritage and History

Long before the first pitch was thrown at Wrigley Field, the area now known as Wrigleyville served as a trail and campgrounds for three Native American tribes. In 1837, a Swiss man named Conrad Sulzer became the first white resident. In 1853, James Rees and Elisha Hundley built a hotel on the shore of Lake Michigan, named the Hotel Lake View for its unobstructed view of the lake. A cholera epidemic in the downtown area sent residents north to what is now known as Lakeview, and by 1857, the population was growing quickly.

Today, the name Wrigleyville applies to the area immediately surrounding Wrigley Field, and during baseball season, the neighborhood buzzes with activity. Sports bars and sporting goods and fan gear shops are packed to the brim with Cub fans unable to score tickets to the games, which tend to sell out quickly. When baseball is not in season, trendy

restaurants and live music venues keep the action going.

Because Wrigleyville is located within another neighborhood, its borders are unofficial, but many residents consider the boundaries to be Irving Park to the North, Halsted to the East, Southport to the West, and Roscoe to the South.

Wrigley Field was built in 1914, costing only \$250,000 at the time which may be hard to swallow, considering today's asking price for park would total around \$90 million dollars. The park was initially named after Weeghman

after Wrigley had bought out all shares of the team, the park was renamed "Cubs Park" and finally, in the first case of naming rights, renamed the park to "Wrigley Field." The distinctive ivy covering the walls of Wrigley was planted in 1937, and the scoreboard, built that same year, is still manually operated (also noteworthy, it has never been hit by a home run ball).

The only Cubs World Series victories (so far) did not occur at Wrigley Field, but at the West Side Grounds in 1907 and 1908. Many diehard fans blame Billy Sianis, initial owner of the Billy Goat Tavern, for cursing the team in 1945 by bringing his pet goat into the stadium. When he was asked to leave because his goat was not allowed in Wrigley, he allegedly placed a curse on the Cubs that they would never win a World Series at Wrigley Field.

Wrigleyville Hot Spots

Just north of Wrigley Field, Wrigleysville Dog (3735 N Clark St.) is the place to enjoy a polish and cheese fries before the game. With prices arguably more reasonable than those inside the park, it's no wonder Wrigleysville Dog is packed before and after the game.

In 2007, legendary sportscaster Harry Caray returned to Wrigleyville in the form of Harry Caray's Tavern (3551 N. Sheffield Ave.), offering 53 flat-screen TVs and and quality pub fare in a more relaxed, sports bar-like atmosphere than his famous Italian Steakhouse, without sacrificing quality. The bar is 60-foot-6-inches long, the exact distance from the pitcher's mound to home plate. Enjoy the Holy Cow® Burger Bar while

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**What's selling in...
Wrigleyville/Lakeview?**

FastSTATS second quarter 2008 (8006)

Attached Single Family	Detached Single Family
Units: 596	Units: 37
Median Price: \$350,000	Median Price: \$1,000,000

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Park after Charlie Weeghman, a restaurateur, whose team the "Chicago Federals" (also known as the Whales) were the first to call Wrigley home. The Whales, after winning the last Federal League championship, went under after only two years in action. In 1916, Weeghman bought the Chicago Cubs, along with chewing gum magnate William Wrigley Jr., who would ultimately own the team outright in 1919. The Cubs, which from 1893 to 1915 played at the "West Side Grounds" at 912 S. Wood Street, played their first game at Addison and Clark on April 20, 1916. In 1920,

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listening to the crowd roar across the street in Wrigley.

For the ultimate sports fan whose companions may or may not be on quite the same level, Sluggers World Class Sports Bar (3540 North Clark St.) offers the best of both worlds. With more than 30 televisions tuned in to live games, pool tables, batting cages, great food, and even dueling pianos, it's nearly impossible to be bored at this Wrigleyville bar.

If an oasis from the action is what you crave, Chens Chinese & Sushi (3506 N. Clark St.) offers an escape from the Cub crowds. With a calming ambience, two beautiful sushi bars, and delicious Chinese and Japanese dishes, you'll forget you're two blocks away from a major league stadium. The sushi is artfully prepared, the savory Chinese dishes like the Sesame Chicken come in hefty portions, and the mile-long martini list offers a satisfying alternative to the basic beers served in other Wrigleyville eateries.

If baseball isn't your thing, but stand-up comedy is, the Improve Olympic (3541 N. Clark St.) will have you laughing your white socks off. This improv comedy troop produced veteran Saturday Night Live comedians Chris Farley, Tina Fey, and Mike Meyers, as well as current SNL cast member Amy Poehler.

Who's Buying in Wrigleyville?

According to C.A.R. Director Andrea Geller, Vice President of Agent Operations, Sudler Sotheby's International Realty, Wrigleyville residents tend to remain in the neighborhood, "coming in as first-time homebuyers, and upgrading from condominiums to townhomes to single-family houses."

In addition to the draw of Wrigley Field, the surrounding area sees "continued growth of new restaurants, shops, and bars," says Geller, and the conveniently accessible transportation (there are Red and Brown line stops within walking distance of Wrigley Field) appeal to newcomers and existing residents alike. **CR**

Photos by Kali Loader & Brett Ashley McKenzie of the Chicago Association of REALTORS®