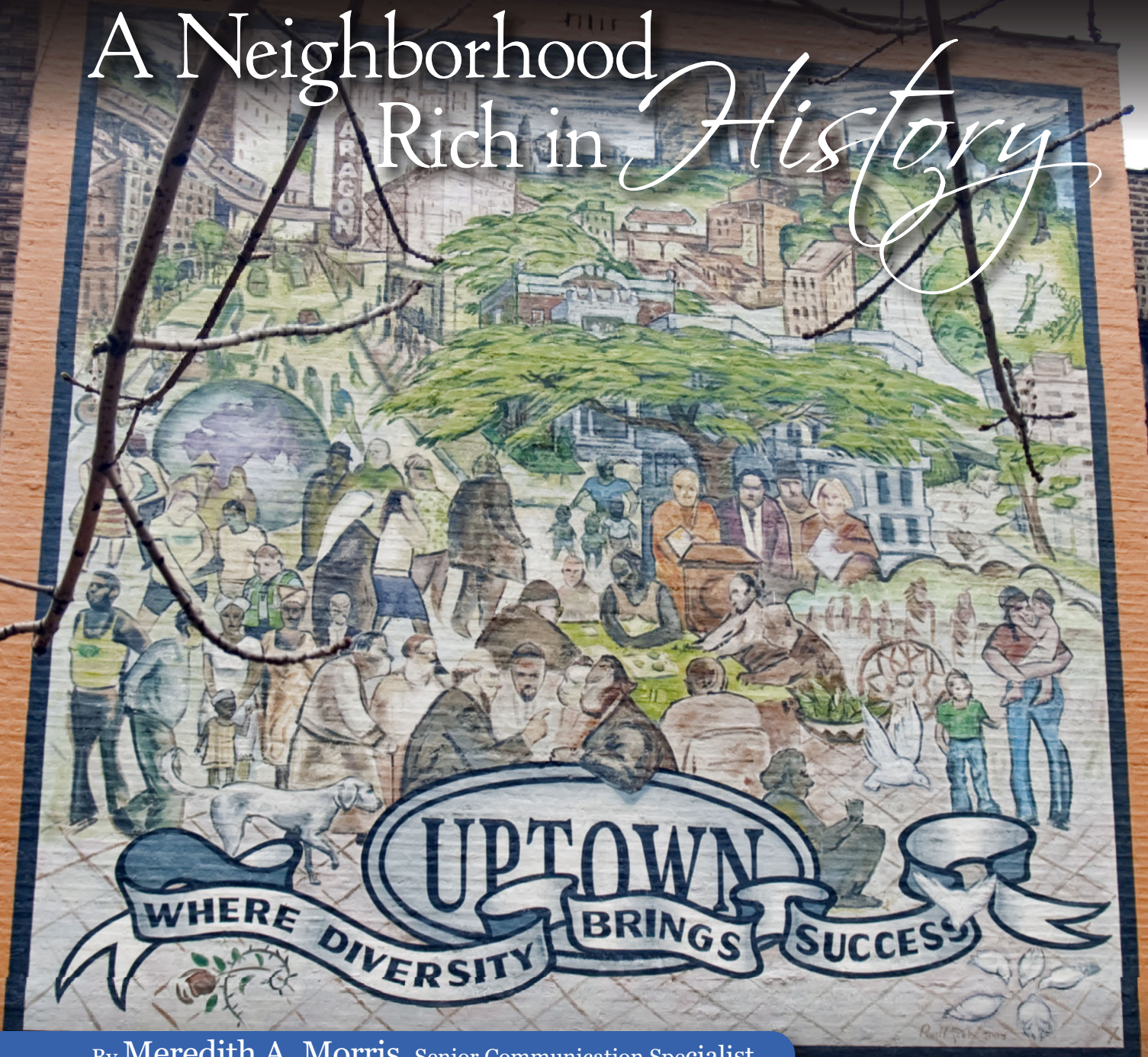


A Neighborhood Rich in *History*



By Meredith A. Morris, Senior Communication Specialist

Dance halls, movie palaces, luxury apartments, department stores.... In its early 1900s heyday, Chicago's Uptown neighborhood was a glamorous destination. To compete with other hot Chicago shopping districts, the area's commerce leaders positioned Uptown as on par with New York City – including sharing a street called Broadway as a central thoroughfare. Defined by Foster Ave. to the north, Lake Michigan to the east, Montrose and Irving Park streets to the south and Ravenswood Ave. to the west, Uptown formerly also included the Edgewater community.

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WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

UPTOWN



The Uptown Theater on Broadway



Modern homes add to vintage streetscapes



Hub of the silent movie era

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As the neighborhood's glittering reputation grew, so did its number of visitors. Uptown was central to the nation's film industry for a decade, after Essanay Studios, established in 1907, became a powerhouse, producing silents with the likes of Charlie Chaplain, Tom Mix and Gloria Swanson. The Riviera and Uptown theaters rose as fabulously ornate movie palaces.

Uptown was also a mecca for major Jazz Age performers, including Glenn Miller, Duke Ellington and Tommy Dorsey, who frequented venues such as the Aragon Ballroom and Edgewater Hotel's Marine Room. At the venerable Green Mill Cocktail Lounge and Jazz Club, popularity was such that the club's history books say Al Capone's henchman, "Machinegun" Jack McGurn, gained 25 percent ownership.

Then the Great Depression hit.

Uptown's economy changed radically, beginning in the 1930s and continuing through the 1950s. Shoppers who used to access the area by car or el train now had the option of bypassing Uptown and heading further north on the newly extended Lake Shore Drive. In addition, as more people sought housing on low budgets, the neighborhood's architecturally spectacular large apartments and hotels became ideal for converting into small rentals to serve incoming low-income residents.



Public art colors busy streets

Neighborhood buildings deteriorated and crime rose, until the 1970s. Then, social service organizations entered the area, residents joined community organizations and entrepreneurial residential and commercial investors showed renewed interest in Uptown's stunning vintage properties.

Uptown has been on the upswing since that time and is challenged most significantly today by a public perception problem, said Mark Zipperer, managing broker/owner of his RE/MAX Edge office located on the neighborhood's southern border. Zipperer has lived in Uptown's Buena Park area since 1998.

"If you appreciate a mixed of range of property types, incomes, ethnicities and lifestyles, Uptown is it," Zipperer said. "And that said, we're sitting right on the lake. This is a very desirable location."

According to Zipperer and also to Bethanie Williams, REALTOR® with Chicago Home Partner, @properties, Uptown is poorly represented today by negative media coverage that seems to get more attention than the neighborhood's ample supply of good news.

"Even ten years ago the number of things to do in Uptown was limited. We've really progressed recently, in terms of our number of restaurants and other destinations," said Williams, who bought her Uptown condo in 2001. "There is an army of people who have lived here for a long time and are dedicated to rejuvenating the area."

With the arrival of recently elected 46th Ward Alderman James Cappleman, change is truly on the horizon, Zipperer attests. A member of the ward's Zoning and Development

What's selling in...
UPTOWN?
FastSTATS 1st Quarter 2012 (8003)

Attached Single Family	Detached Single Family
Units: 97	Units: 10
Median Price: \$140,000	Median Price: \$585,000

Check out neighborhood stats for all 77 Chicagoland neighborhoods and select suburbs 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.

WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

UPTOWN



Independent businesses abound



Quintessential Uptown living



From movie palace to concert venue

Committee representing real estate, Zipperer said that some long-discussed revitalization projects are now scheduled to be done, including overhaul of the Red Line's Wilson station. Community advocates also hope to see renovation of the beleaguered but prominently located Uptown Theater.

"The time is now for us to turn the corner," Zipperer said, adding that local leadership seems newly empowered to coordinate development dollars and civic resources to move ahead.

Clients touring Uptown properties aren't waiting for additional rejuvenation. They want to be in the neighborhood now, and for the same reasons Williams herself moved in, she said: proximity to Lake Michigan, public transportation, downtown and "all the North Side has to offer."

Another great draw is affordability per square foot, which Zipperer sees as Uptown's chief advantage.

"You can get a less expensive place here in general or a larger place for less money," he said.

Williams agreed, adding that her clients often find Uptown a more affordable destination than other neighborhoods where they may be looking, like Lincoln Park.

The wealth of Uptown's housing stock is multi-family, including 3-, 4-, 6- and 10-flats in the neighborhoods and larger buildings on main drags, like Marine Drive and Lawrence Ave., Williams said. Buyers include smaller households that don't need stand-alone homes, including downtown commuters and senior citizens. Most units, even in vintage buildings, have garage or alley parking available, plus zoned residential street spaces that alleviate a parking crunch.

Some single-family homes are available for families, including in Uptown's Hutchinson Historic District in Buena Park. Adorned by Prairie Style and Victorian mansions, this is where former Illinois Gov. James Thompson lived with his family.

What will help solve Uptown's public perception problem, as Zipperer calls it, is the arrival of more commercial development to supplement the upcoming high-profile renovations. Zipperer is thrilled with the relatively recent opening of a Target store on Broadway, and cites the steady northward push of other big-box retailers from the Near North Side.

"We are crying for commercial development in this area but in this economy they're slow to come out here. We need the foot traffic, but with a range of new restaurants and other changes, it's beginning to increase," he said.

Fortunately, there is no shortage of engaged community residents working on Uptown's behalf.

"We were very involved before the most recent election and we continue to be. It's exciting to be a part of a transition," Zipperer said. "It's fun to get to know people in your community in that way." **CR**

Photos by Meredith A. Morris of the Chicago Association of REALTORS®

Uptown Destinations

Bar on Buena
910 W. Buena Ave.

Big Chicks/Tweet
5024/5020 N. Sheridan Rd.

Crew Bar + Grill
4804 N. Broadway St.

Green Mill Cocktail Lounge
4802 N. Broadway St.

Fat Cat Pub & Restaurant
4840 N. Broadway St.

Golden House Restaurant and Pancake House
4744 N. Broadway St.

Magnolia Café
1224 W. Wilson Ave.

Marigold Indian Restaurant
4832 N. Broadway St.

Sun Wah Bar-B-Que
5041 N. Broadway St.

Aragon Ballroom
1106 W. Lawrence Ave.

Riviera Theater
4746 N. Racine Ave.

Harry S. Truman College
1145 W. Wilson Ave.

Target - Wilson Yard
4466 N. Broadway St.

Japanese American Services Committee of Chicago
4427 N. Clark St.