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## [URBAN] RECONNAISSANCE

For years I had heard about Bubbly Creek, a stretch of the Chicago River so polluted by organic waste from the Union Stockyards that even a century later the contamination purportedly still causes bubbles of methane and hydrogen sulfide to rise to the surface.



Curious to see if the notorious creek would live up to its name, I decided one Saturday last month to investigate. After first spending some time online researching historic and current maps, I learned that Bubbly Creek is technically the South Fork of the South Branch of the Chicago River, extending from the turning basin at 2700 South Ashland Avenue down through Bridgeport, through the Central Manufacturing District, and finally to the present day headwaters, now a Metropolitan Water Reclamation District pumping station at Racine and 38th Street.

It's not surprising, really, that the story of Bubbly Creek attracted my attention. Since graduate school I have been drawn in by the study of cultural landscapes, and in particular the writings of J.B. Jackson and those he influenced. When one chooses to look critically at everyday spaces constructed by everyday Americans, seeking to decipher insights into culture, history and social patterns, the city becomes an endlessly fascinating place to explore. Decoding our surroundings allows us to better understand the processes and people who shaped our urban context [the past], which in turn allows us to better understand our contemporary condition [the present].

As a parallel interest, it seems that an increasing number of projects in our studio now involve water: water bodies [lakes, rivers, channels, slips, canals, swales], access [river walks, public open space], treatment [stormwater filtration, collection, recycling], energy use [geothermal, district cooling]), context [ecosystems, biohabitats, transportation means, urban amenities] and conservation.

So, musing on landscapes, history, culture, and what water means in an urban environment, what did my search for Bubbly Creek yield?

*It is generally difficult to access the water's edge, which is still most often bordered by large private retail or industrial parcels, or major arterial streets that provide a glimpse of the creek but no place to pull over and*

*linger. There are, however, two interesting exceptions:*

*[1] Canal Origins Park: One of the City's newest parks, this 1.8 acre open space marks the starting point of the historic Illinois and Michigan canal, showcases current environmental remediation and restoration efforts to stabilize the banks of Bubbly Creek, and allows rare public access to the water's edge.*

*[2] Bridgeport Village: With 115 homes already constructed and prices ranging from the mid \$600,000s to over \$1 million, this new residential development features a meandering promenade along the east bank of Bubbly Creek. It's amazing that what was once considered a liability is now an amenity.*

*There is little left of the old Stockyards, save the dramatic gateway arch, the Stockyards National Bank, and street names such as Packers and Exchange Avenues. The area does provide an interesting snapshot of industrial park history however. The Central Manufacturing District, through which Bubbly Creek runs, is one of the earliest planned industrial parks, built in 1905 to capitalize on the influence of the adjacent stockyards. The new Stockyards Industrial Park was formed in 1971, when the last of the livestock processing plants closed.*

*And no, I didn't smell anything terribly foul nor did I see any of the legendary bubbles. I will plan to revisit on a hot summer day, however, to see if conditions change.*

We are lucky to live and work in a City that offers such limitless possibilities for exploration, inspiration, understanding and connection. With the weather thawing, I encourage you to choose a neighborhood, a district, a landmark, a street, an architect, or a theme, grab a sketchbook and camera, and venture out on an [urban] reconnaissance mission. Be sure to mark your calendars as well for the 10th annual Great Chicago Places and Spaces festival in May. Over 200 free tours will be offered this year, including one sponsored by CWA showcasing our members' work.

I look forward to seeing you at our spring events and I wish you a wonderful summer of exploration and discovery.

Best,

Beth Erickson

## [Calendar of Events]

Confirm dates, times and locations with the sponsoring organization. RSVP to all events by emailing [RSVP@cwarch.org](mailto:RSVP@cwarch.org)

### May 2008

- [13] **CWA Spring Lecture Series: Lise Anne Couture** @ The Museum of Contemporary Art, Theater: 220 East Chicago Avenue, 6pm.
- [17] **Great Chicago Places & Spaces: Near South Side by Chicago Women in Architecture.** 11:30am. Visit Muller+Muller's Milenium Park Bicycle Station, Studio Gang's Chinese American Service League and Landon Bone Baker's Archer Courts. Day of event registration at the CAF, 224 S. Michigan Ave.  
  
**Great Chicago Places & Spaces: Madonna Della Strada Chapel @ Loyola University.** 1:15pm and May 18 @ 2:00pm. Walking tour led by Susan Van der Meulen (CWA). Advance registration and day of event registration are available for this tour.
- [20] **CWA Monthly Meeting** @ bulthaup: 165 West Chicago Avenue. Join us for cocktails and networking 6:00-6:30pm, Meeting 6:30-7:30pm. All members are welcome! RSVP

### June 2008

- [12] **CWA Happy Hour** @ the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts: 4 West Burton Place, 6pm. Join us for cocktails and networking. View the current exhibit, "The Pattern: Million Dollar Blocks" by the Spatial Information Design Lab at Columbia University, directed by Laura Kurgan and Sarah Williams.
- [17] **CWA Business Meeting** @ bulthaup: 165 West Chicago Avenue. Join us for cocktails and networking 6:00-6:30pm, Annual Business Meeting 6:30-7:30pm. All members are welcome! RSVP

### August 2008

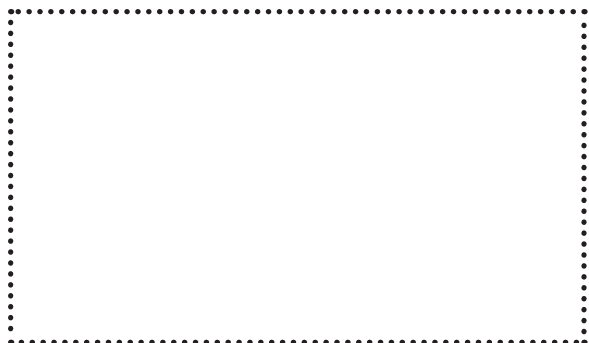
**CWA Happy Hour** with AIA Chicago Young Architects @ Rock Bottom. Date TBD. Check back at the CWA or AIA Chicago website events calendars.

### [CWA 2007-2008 Membership Directory]

> Join CWA now and be included in the 2007-2008 directory. Your membership dues will carry over to our 2008-2009 calendar year. Please download a membership form @ [www.cwarch.org](http://www.cwarch.org)

> Members - If your contact information has changed, please email Kristen at [ArmstrongMatzKL@teng.com](mailto:ArmstrongMatzKL@teng.com)

Deadline for updated/new entries is **May 12, 2008.**





**Proteus Group:  
Embraces Spirit of MBE/WBE Program  
at University of Chicago Medical Center**

In just 6 years, Proteus Group has grown from a small shop to one of the most experienced and successful healthcare architectural firms in Chicago and the Midwest. The firm has expanded from 15 to 60 employees and from \$20 million to over \$500 million in construction volume. Its steady growth is largely due to the team's unparalleled expertise in healthcare architecture/design coupled with the recent boom in healthcare construction.

Most recently, Proteus Group was commissioned to develop and design the fourth floor build-out of the Comer II Children's Center for Specialty Care Clinic complex at the University of Chicago Medical Center.

In order to meet the MBE/WBE requirements of the hospital, Proteus Group decided to team with Brook Architecture and Johnson & Lee Architects to develop a truly seamless project. The entire project team works as an integrated, collective unit and therefore reduces the potential for project errors and miscommunication.

Through multiple meetings with the key clinical stake holders, administration of the Comer Children's Hospital and specialty community committees, Proteus Group was able to define a program which included examination and treatment spaces for the following pediatric disciplines: Allergy,

Cardiology, Developmental, Endocrinology, Gastroenterology, General Pediatrics, Infectious Diseases, Neonatology, Nephrology, Neurology, Pulmonary, Otolaryngology, Ophthalmology, Orthopaedic Surgery, Plastic Surgery, General Surgery, Urology, and specialty pediatric surgery.

As a part of the exercise, Proteus Group also developed preliminary space programs for the second and third floor of the building to be developed in Phase II of this build-out. At this time, the third level contains surgery and a cardiac catheterization lab, as well as a pediatric surgical intensive care unit with private room settings and a pre/post operation recovery area. The second floor will contain a Pediatric Cancer Center for medical oncology, as well as support space for the Comer I complex. The Phase II work is scheduled for completion Program by the end of 2011.

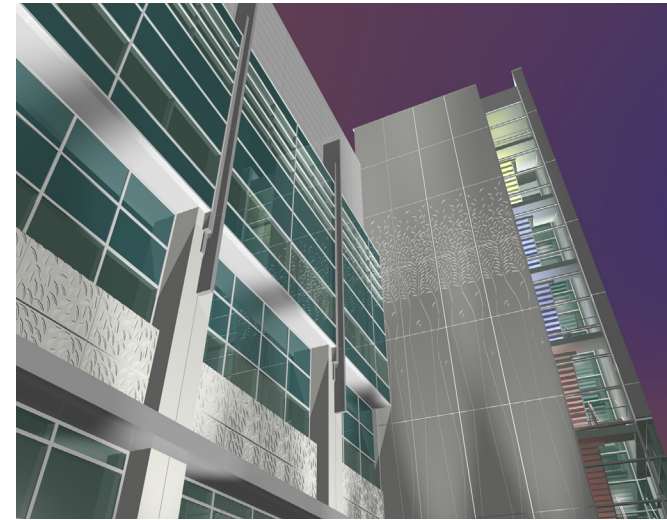
Our MBE/WBE approach is proving very successful for all parties and the affect on each of the team partners is wonderful. Proteus Group assists with training the MBE/WBE team members with regards to planning and design of healthcare projects, cutting-edge BIM software technology, and regulatory/code requirements. This affords the minority firm the opportunity to work on projects not typically awarded to smaller non-healthcare firms. Proteus Group receives the positive benefit of additional staff dedicated to working on the project, is able to better manage staffing and deadlines, and achieves all MBE/WBE requirements. This collaborative environment of project mentoring is the true spirit of the MBE/WBE program and Proteus Group is proud to be a leader in the industry in embracing these efforts.

detail visible from the street to pique the interest of passerby who have been walking or driving by the building for years without giving it a second thought. His love of history and what I think of as lost light are inescapable parts of his method. Lagrange is one of the few contemporary architects — certainly in Chicago — capable of designing everything from 19th Century Parisian “hotel particuliers” to 21st Century steel and glass skyscrapers.

Style has to come from somewhere, of course. In Lagrange's work, more often than not, it comes from context, both literal and metaphorical.

The immediate inspiration for 840 North Lake Shore Drive, a condominium building, is the Blackstone Hotel on Michigan Avenue, a 1908 Beaux Arts gem by the firm of Marshall & Fox with an exquisitely rendered Second Empire roof. The latter building, however, is only a starting point. Lagrange excels with small sites and irregular sites and 840 has both. The result is a stylish amalgam of Classical detailing — that astounding roof! — and Modern proportions that probably shouldn't work but does due to the overall restraint Lagrange shows in melding the two idioms.

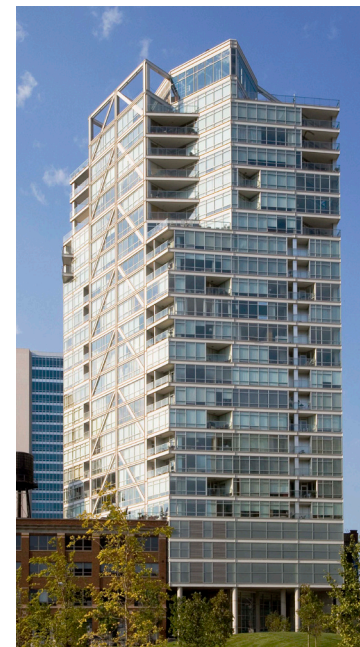
Similarly, Erie on the Park, a steel and glass condominium tower with exterior diagonal bracing in River North, starts as an homage — this time to the nearby John Hancock Center — but becomes something far more interesting and unique. For all their grandeur, there is something a little off-putting about Bruce Graham's larger commissions. There's heaviness to them — left over from the Brutalist 1960s — that is out of synch with today's drive for ever lighter, more transparent construction. Erie suggests a partially deconstructed Hancock that has been renovated for human inhabitation. Nothing is hidden. The asymmetrical setbacks and sharply angled planes are cutaways that reveal the heart of the building and at the same time create some of the sexiest apartments in the city. Finally, and most importantly, there is process. For Lagrange, a building's style is determined only after the particulars of its program — its site, use, budget and neighborhood — have been carefully weighed and analyzed. High end residential in historic neighborhoods, for example, inevitably tips toward traditional. But irregular sites in changing neighborhoods invite a



*Image Above (Proteus Group)  
Exterior rendering at night of the Comer II Children's Center for Specialty Care at The University of Chicago Medical Center. In addition to the new interior build out of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th floors, the project involves the design of a new stairwell tower, new elevator installations and the recladding of the entire north façade of this existing building.*

more modern approach. Erie on the Park, 840 Lake Shore Drive, Park Tower and the rest demonstrate this commitment in different but compelling ways. On the surface, they differ considerably. And yet, the same process of rigorous analysis that produced one also produced the others. In the end, all provide satisfying solutions for challenging architectural problems. Lagrange's work over the last 20 years, summarized here, shows an architect keenly aware of both trends in modern culture and the shifting realities of the real estate market. They also demonstrate his tenacity. Many of these projects took years — even decades — to reach fruition. Park Tower, for example, his largest commission to date, took six years from initial meeting to start of construction.

Even more intriguing is Union Station, a building Lagrange has worked on in various capacities since his earliest days as an independent architect. To review the various development schemes for the complex is like watching 20 years of real estate hopes and dreams pass before one's eyes: differing combinations of offices, stores, hotels and condos are endlessly juggled and re-juggled. The one constant is Lagrange. After completing an initial renovation in the late 1980s, he designed two major additions that were never built. He's now working on a third. What is interesting is to see how his ideas have evolved over time. The current version is by far the boldest and most innovative."



Each year, the CWA Foundation awards a \$2000 scholarship to a woman in her penultimate year of study in an accredited architecture program in Illinois. This year, the competition attracted a total of 12 entries from IIT, Judson College, UIC, and UI Urbana-Champaign. Project submissions were required to be recent studio work, and were required to include a 500 word essay/project narrative, a project submission formatted on 2 - 8.5x11 sheets, a letter of recommendation, and a resume.

CWA gave an Honorable Mention to **Karen Rust, UIUC**, whose project was a new terminal for Frankfurt International Airport in Germany. This year's winner was **Katja Linnig, IIT**, whose submission was a new high school for the City of Chicago.

The scholarship is awarded each year at the CWA Spring Brunch, this year held at Avenue M on Sunday, April 27. The guest speaker was CWA Past President **Linda Searl**, who presented a body of work spanning more than 20 years, and spoke on her experiences in the profession, as a student, teacher, collaborator, volunteer and mentor. Searl, Principal at Searl Lamaster Howe Architects and Searl Blossfeld Interior Design touched on changes she has witnessed in the profession through her practices and also her thoughts on the current status of women in the profession.

CWA would like to welcome new members for 2008:

**Gail Cavanagh**, Solomon Cordwell Buenz  
**Kirstyn Freiberg**, The Environments Group  
**Sue Jagodzinski**, Harley Ellis Devereaux  
**Katherine Michaud**, URBANWorks, Ltd.

**Rachel Branagan** won an internal design competition at Lucien Lagrange Architects. She designed a kinetic art sculpture (incorporating green initiatives) which was built for Greater North Michigan Avenue Association's "Tulip Days on the Magnificent Mile". The public art will be on display April 16, 2008 until May 31, 2008.

**Deirdre Colgan** was recently awarded a Research and Development Grant by the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts. The proposal was to investigate the current state of the Eileen Gray house; E.1027 built in 1929 in France. In 1998, Dutch architect Herman Hertzberger brought the neglected state of the house to the awareness of the architectural community through the ArchiNed blog and since then a restoration has been supposedly underway. When they discovered that the original architect had walked away after six years of work, citing irreconcilable differences with the official French state architect, Deirdre and her brother Jim Colgan, a producer for New York public radio, decided to go and investigate. The results of their trip to Roquebrune-Cap Martin in February 2008 to research the issue generated enough material to make a radio documentary. Their work will be aired on Studio 360, a PRI affiliate, out of New York.

**Susan King**, Harley Ellis Devereaux Principal, was selected by i4design magazine for their second annual "Suite Sixteen." The annual award recognizes sixteen Midwestern established stars and rising talents for their innovative thinking and design talents. King, AIA, LEED AP, was chosen for her sustainable design savvy that merges socially responsible design with an offbeat, exciting finesse. That style is evident in her recent AIA winner, Wentworth Commons, an affordable housing complex in the Roseland neighborhood of Chicago. The building showcases King's ability to creatively maximize resources that result in innovative and efficient buildings. The four-story, 51-unit building is the first multi-unit residential building to receive any type of LEED certification in Chicago, the State of Illinois and the entire Midwest.

Please submit all news to Mindy at [mviamentes@muller2.com](mailto:mviamentes@muller2.com) for inclusion in the next edition of the Muse.