

Welcome to New Members

Mark Macumber and Cassandra Firkins
Amy Dyer
Greg Smith
John & Johanna Harper
Stephanie Boelhauf

New Friends of GRO

Michelle Huie
Ryan & Krissy Kirlin
Marie Erdman
Maura Nugent

Corner Garden Contributors

Dave & Kathy Goetz
Traicho Stefanov
John & Johanna Harper
Marie Erdman
Stephanie Boelhauf
Harry Tompany

GRO Annual Potluck

&
Ravenswood Community Council
Greener Ravenswood Step by Step

See insert for details!



March
2007

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No. 3

TELL THE HOUSE ABOUT YOUR HOME

“What’s on the Agenda?”

What’s on the agenda for the March 6 GRO meeting?

- PUBLIC SAFETY—vandals and robberies in our neighborhood
- GRO POSTAL Survey—bring your results, concerns, and complaints
- GRO Potluck—planning for the March 13 event
- 7% PROPERTY TAX CAP—passed the Senate, on to the House

The 7% Expanded Homeowners Exemption is about to EXPIRE. TRAC needs your stories to take to Springfield.

Several homeowners recently testified before a Senate Committee on the 7% Property Assessment Cap bill, which contains the \$60,000 Expanded Homeowners Exemption—and our senators were moved by the stories. Many of us need the legislation to stay in our homes. We’re faced with horrible choices—such as getting health care or paying the tax bill. The message is clear: “We don’t want property taxes to force us out of our homes and communities.”

Your stories will mean so much more than some greedy property lawyer’s statistics! HELP us tell the House of Representatives what you are facing. The goal is 500 of your letters by March 15.

WRITE to us and tell us what will happen if the bill fails and you lose the 7% protection on your home. What will a significant jump in property taxes do to you?

SEND your stories, and include a PHOTOGRAPH of you in front of your home. (If you don’t have a camera, let TRAC know—they’ll take the photo for you!) HELP put real faces of homeowners on this legislation—tell the House about your home.

GRO mourns the loss of 13-year-old Lazarus Jones and expresses condolences to the family and our friends and neighbors in Albany Park.

SEND your stories to:
TRAC-Tax Reform Action Coalition
867 W. Buckingham Place
Chicago, IL 60657
or email: president@trac-il.org

HELP IS ON THE WAY

GRO attended the Lincoln Square Chamber of Commerce Membership Gathering on February 20, where the topic was “Postal Service Issues in Lincoln Square.”

The meeting featured eight representatives from the U.S. Post Office, including the Ravenswood Branch Manager Mike Fields, Customer Relations Coordinator Carmen Santiago, and Mike Armstrong, Manager of Post Office Operations for Chicago and some suburbs.

While the meeting was organized for local businesses, the message carries for our residential delivery as well.

Mr. Armstrong explained that with automation upgrades, fewer letter carriers will be required to sort the mail and 1,000 to 1,200 letter carriers will be eliminated in the Great Lakes area over the next two or three years. Because of this, there has been a freeze on hiring

“career” letter carrier positions, and “casual” carriers are being used. In addition, many senior letter carriers are opting to bid out of the Ravenswood area, thus leaving even fewer experienced carriers for our neighborhood.

Some of the late delivery we’re experiencing is also due to the shortage of carriers, absences, illness, and vacations. If a route is not covered on a particular day, then regular carriers need to finish their routes and return to pick up the remaining routes and share them with other carriers.

However, because of our problems, the Ravenswood area has been identified as one of the “hot spots” in Chicago and has been allowed to begin hiring additional career carriers, possibly as soon as March. In this regard, help is on the way.

We also talked about the problems with customer service in the Lawrence

Avenue Post Office, and Mr. Fields assured us that changes are being made—but, he reminded, if you have a complaint about service, to be sure to get that postal worker’s name.

At the March 6 GRO meeting, we will collect surveys, comments, and suggestions from residents about postal service in our neighborhood to forward to Ms. Santiago. Please go to www.GreaterRockwell.org to download a GRO Postal Survey—or simply write down your concerns and email me at President@GreaterRockwell.org.

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This month’s editor is
Tracy Bartholomew

GROnews is published by the Greater Rockwell Organization (GRO), a community group dedicated to making our neighborhood a safe and pleasant place in which to live. Tenants, homeowners, landlords, and business owners are welcome to join in improving our community.

Officers

Les Kniskern
President@GreaterRockwell.org
773-339-5915
Chuck Woodring
VP@GreaterRockwell.org
773-418-1822
Tom Kosinski
2VP@GreaterRockwell.org
773-463-7608
Bea Tersch
Secretary@GreaterRockwell.org
773-561-0794
Ron and Lois Graziano
Treasurer@GreaterRockwell.org
773-509-9679

GRO Board /Committee Chairs
Membership: Patti Huetteman 506-0795; *Newsletter:* June Huitt 275-3210; *Public Safety:* Maria Bappert 728-8127; DAC Liaison Sara Spitz 275-7786; *Special Events / Fundraising:* Kristen Jahnke 847-372-6234; *Beautification:* BJ Tersch 561-0794 (clean up and graffiti); Mary Conway 907-8502 (corner gardens); *Urban Development:* TBA; *Budget:* Ron Graziano 509-9679

Newsletter drop points
Beans & Bagels, Rockwell & Leland
Carol’s Hair Care, 2556 W. Lawrence
Brown Line Station at Rockwell

Address correspondence to:
Newsletter@GreaterRockwell.org or
GROnews
P.O. Box 25561
Chicago IL 60625-0561

Newsletter staff
Editors: Tracy Bartholomew, June Huitt, and Sara Spitz
Proofreader: Melanie Parenti
Distributors: Tracy Bartholomew, Abbey Botkin, Michael Buckwalter, Gertrude Buhler, Ottilia Burany, Joyce Dall, Mark Dawson, Tom Donnelly, Holly Gerberding, Diane Gregart, Patti Huetteman, Tom Kosinski, Mak & Associates, Nina Sandlin, Eric Sinclair, Carol Vitale, Marianne Werner, and Chuck Woodring

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Printing by Printed Impressions
4432 N. Kedzie, Chicago IL 60625
773-604-8585

Visit our website and sign up for
GROnews e-mail alerts at:
www.GreaterRockwell.org

Current Eats

Shovel That Snow!

With all the snow and ice that we have been getting this year, it may be helpful for residents and homeowners to review the Chicago Snow and Ice Ordinance. Removing ice and snow in a timely fashion makes sure that we can all get around safely. When clearing your sidewalks, don't forget street and alley crossings, and if they need help, your neighbor's sidewalk, too.

Chicago Snow and Ice Ordinance (10-8-180): Every owner, lessee, tenant, occupant or other person having charge of any building or lot of ground in the city abutting upon any public way or public place shall remove the snow and ice from the sidewalk in front of such building or lot of ground. If the sidewalk is of greater width than five feet, it shall not be necessary for such person to remove snow and ice from the same for a space wider than five feet. In case the snow and ice on the sidewalk shall be frozen so hard that it cannot be removed without injury to the pavement, the person having charge of any building or lot of ground as aforesaid shall, within the time specified, cause the sidewalk abutting on the said premises to be strewn with ashes, sand, sawdust, or some similar suitable material, and shall, as soon thereafter as the weather shall permit, thoroughly clean said sidewalk. The snow which falls or accumulates during the day (excepting Sundays) before four p.m. shall be removed within three hours after the same has fallen or accumulated. The snow which falls or accumulates on Sunday or after four p.m. and during the night on other days shall be removed before ten a.m.

CULINARY ART AT PIZZA ART CAFE

With all the buzz surrounding the flurry of new restaurant openings, it's easy to overlook established eateries in our community. Some have experienced a rebirth in recent years. Pizza Art Cafe is a prime example of this culinary renaissance. Originally conceived as a Bosnian lunch buffet, restaurant owner and chef Jasmin Bekto brought in a wood-burning brick oven, built with his own hands, over a year ago, with the intention of creating Neapolitan-style pizzas. Our area is blessed with several establishments specializing in excellent thin crust pizza creations, and Pizza Art Cafe deserves to be on this list.

The restaurant takes its name to heart—pieces of eclectic art line the walls, and an equally inspired mix of dance tunes will fill your ears as you fill your belly with offerings from both sides of the Adriatic Sea—Italy and Bosnia are both represented here. Our server recommended we begin with the mixed platter, featuring fat slabs of Greek feta and meats that Mr. Bekto smokes on-site. Another standout is Jasmin's Bruchette—fresh tomatoes, cheese, and garlic perched on homemade pita bread. (Side note: We challenge you to find a better value. The bruchette and a cup of warming, hearty white bean soup make a satisfying winter meal and set you back only \$6.45.) When ordering one of two risotto dishes offered, don't be alarmed when you're served rice as opposed to "traditional" risotto pasta. This dish has a rich flavor and, in the case of Risotto agli Scampi, is served with tons of plump shrimp.

But the pizza is the star here. Pizza Funghi, studded with mushrooms and cloaked in cheese, is a work of art in its simplicity. Desserts sometimes include cakes, but the crepes are always featured and with good reason. Homemade and filled with seductive melted chocolate, these tender crepes are perfect for sharing, but you'll want a serving (or two!!!) for yourself.

Service was swift and attentive, despite a room full of patrons (we visited during crunch time—Valentine's Day). Pizza Art Cafe is located at 4658 N. Rockwell and is BYOB. Closed Monday, open for dinner Tuesday–Sunday, plus lunch on weekends. All items available for take out. Call 773-539-0645 and ask to be put on their e-mail list to receive a weekly message detailing their specials.

A C

Maximize value with "the local guy."
Call me for a free market analysis.

Chuck Woodring 773-418-1822
Agent
Chuck@saffronrealtygroup.com



**GRO NIGHT OUT
is taking a break in
March.**

**See you at the GRO
Potluck on March 13!**

**AllStar Carpet Care LLC
in GRO area for 15 years**

**773.728.7705
847.420.4111 (cell)**

March Calendar

- 5 Monday, 7 p.m. Horner Park Advisory Council. Horner Park Fieldhouse, Montrose & California
- 6 **Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. GRO Monthly Meeting.** Luther Memorial Church, Campbell & Wilson
- 10 Saturday, 10 a.m. Greener Ravenswood Step-by-Step. Welles Park Fieldhouse, 2333 W. Sunnyside Ave. See insert for details.
- 11 Sunday. Daylight saving time begins
- 13 **Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. GRO Spring Potluck.** Luther Memorial Church, Campbell & Wilson. **See insert for details.**
Tuesday, 6 p.m. Gross Park Advisory Council. Gross Park Fieldhouse, Lawrence & Washtenaw
- 15 Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Lincoln Square Idol. DANK Haus, 4740 N. Western Ave.
- 17 Saturday. St. Patrick's Day
- 19 Monday, 7:30 p.m. Manor Garden Club. Horner Park, 2741 W. Montrose Ave.
- 21 Wednesday, 7 p.m. Ravenswood Garden Club. Sulzer Library, 4445 N. Lincoln Ave.
Vernal Equinox—Spring is here!
- 24 Saturday, 10-11:30 a.m. Waters School Open House, 4540 N. Campbell Ave.
- 26 **Monday, 7 p.m. GRO Night Out.** Tagine, 4749 N. Rockwell Ave.
- 27 Tuesday, 6 p.m. Ravenswood Community Council Annual Raven Awards Dinner, DANK Haus, 4740 N. Western Ave. Call (773) 784-0400 for more information.
7 p.m. 19th District CAPS Beat Meeting. Kindred Hospital, Rockwell & Montrose, top oor meeting room

New member _____ Renewal _____

GRO MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____ Address _____

Home Tel. _____ Work Tel. _____ E-mail _____ Occupation _____

Categories (circle one): Individual \$20 Family \$30 Senior \$10 Senior Family \$15 Sustaining \$50

Business \$50 Friends of GRO \$20 (living outside GRO service area)

I'm adding \$5 or \$_____ for the Corner Gardens

I would like to see GRO address the following issues:

I would like to participate in the following committees (please circle):

Fundraising/Special Events Member Services/Welcome Newsletter Public Safety

Streetscape/Beautifcation Streetscape/Greening Urban Development

Make your check payable to GRO and bring it to a meeting, drop it off at Ruff Haus Pets, 4652 N. Rockwell (just north of the el tracks), or mail it to GRO Membership. P.O. Box 25561, Chicago IL 60625-0561