

Welcome to New Members
Elena O'Curry*
*also Corner Garden Contributor

May

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**RECORD TURNOUT FOR WATERS
LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTION**

Luther Memorial Rummage Sale
Saturday May 3,
10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Spring Fling Benefit for Waters
School
Friday May 9, 6:30 – 11:00 p.m.

Folk Dance from Cambodia
Saturday May 10, 11:00 am
Sulzer Regional Library

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 us in improving our community.

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GRO Board/Committee Chairs

Membership: Patti Huetteman (506-0795); Newsletter: June Huitt (275-3210); Public Safety: Maria Bappert (728-8127); Special Events/Fundraising: Open; Beautification: Bea Tersch (561-0794)(clean up and graffiti); Mary Conway (907-8502) (corner gardens); Urban Development: Tom Gunderson, Brad Schenkel; Budget: Ron Graziano (509-9679)

Newsletter drop points

Beans & Bagels, Rockwell & Leland
Carol's Hair Care, 2556 W. Lawrence
Brown Line Station at Rockwell

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GRO logo created by Randy Sweitzer

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www.greaterrockwell.org

Coming Up (con't from page 1)

**20th Annual Clean and Green
Saturday May 17**

Purchase plants and flowers from the

**Benefits of Locally Grown Food
Wednesday May 14, 7:00 p.m.
Sulzer Regional Library**

Join us in learning about the benefits

**The Japanese Paper Lantern
Wednesday, May 28, 2008
Sulzer Regional Library**

**May Fest
Thursday May 29 – Sunday June 1
Lincoln Square**

Jenny Mohler

This month's editor is
Sara Spitz

TIFs: Are We Getting a Fair Shake?

TIFs in our city have ballooned far beyond the program's original scope in land, money, and purpose. John Fritchey, State Representative for our 11th district, has provided this nutshell description of TIFs as they are used today:

***How does a TIF work?** Originally meant for spurring development in blighted areas, TIF funds may be used for public works or be used as subsidies for private development within a TIF district. The tax assessment base in a designated area (the TIF district) is held constant for a period of 23 years, and the "increment" of new property tax dollars (from new property development or increases of the existing property values in the area) may be used for economic development projects as determined by an unelected Community Development Commission.*

***Why the need for oversight?** The City has been so liberal in the creation of TIFs that it is now estimated that almost one-third of Chicago's total acreage is now within a TIF district, generating over \$500 million annually for projects (both good and not so good) in areas blighted (and not so blighted). Furthermore, money generated by a TIF in one neighborhood can be "ported" into another TIF somewhere else, meaning that tax dollars generated in your neighborhood, intended to benefit your neighborhood, may never be seen in your neighborhood.*

In light of the massive amounts of taxpayer money at stake, it is only common sense to think that the public should be able to readily find out how over one half-billion of their tax dollars are being spent and how much of that money is subsidizing businesses that are already very profitable without TIFs. Unfortunately, present law makes uncovering this secondary city budget harder than finding a needle in a haystack.

Representative Fritchey has introduced legislation requiring a TIF disclosure impact statement for each TIF district that would describe each TIF project, the funds raised and spent, and the effect on tax rates. All of this information would be available on a public Web site.

For a TIF primer, Representative Fritchey suggests a series of articles written by the Chicago Reader's Ben Joravsky, located at www.chicagoreader.com/tifarchive.

Jacob Playlot Clean-Up

flower beds, pick up litter, remove graffiti, dig up weeds, cut vines from

Bea Tersch

Gross Park Update

Calendar

- 1 May Day
- 5 Monday, 7:00 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 **Chicago River Day. www.chicagoriver.org**
- 11 Mothers' Day
- 13 Tuesday, 6:00 p.m. Gross Park Advisory Council. Gross Park Fieldhouse, Lawrence & Washtenaw
- 17 Saturday 10:00 a.m - noon . Clean & Green. Meet at Rockwell Crossing
10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m Manor Garden Club plant sale, Luther Memorial Church, Campbell & Wilson
Waters School International Garden Day
- 18 Sunday, 10:00 a.m. Manor Garage Sales Wilson Ave, west of the river
- 19 Monday, 7:30 p.m. Manor Garden Club. Luther Memorial Church, Campbell & Wilson
- 26 Memorial Day Holiday
- 27 Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. CAPS

Maura Sadovi

COMING UP

GRO yard and garage sales June 7 & 8

LITTLE GREEN BABY

environmentally safe products that include organic clothing, nontoxic certified toys, natural baby products, "green" household cleaners, fresh flowers, and jewelry designed by Kim. From the hangers to the gift wrap

New member _____ Renewal _____

GRO MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____ Address _____

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

Categories (circle one): Individual \$20 Family \$30 Senior (65+) \$10 Senior Family \$15 Sustaining \$50
Business \$20 Friends of GRO \$20 (living outside GRO service area)

I'm adding \$5 \$_____ 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/Welcomes Newsletter Public Safety

Streetscape/Beautification Streetscape/Greening Urban Development

Make your check payable to GRO and bring it 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