



GIFFORD PARK'S PRIDE

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

JUNE, 1993

NEXT MEETING:

JUNE 3

7 p.m.

****St. Josephs Hospital, Dining Rooms A, B, and C****

AS ALWAYS, FREE PARKING

WHAT'S "GROWING ON" IN GIFFORD PARK?

by Diane Reuss

Have you looked around the Gifford Park neighborhood this last year? The park is beautiful, the homes are well cared for, and the whole area is much improved over just a couple of years ago. Some of the reasons are neighborhood pride and the efforts of the G.P.N.A. In fact, we are so pleased with the results that we are sponsoring a neighborhood garden walk on Sunday, June 27, 1993, from 1 to 5 p.m. Parking and informational maps provided at Duchesne parking lot, 36th and California Streets.

Come share with us some of the finest yards and gardens in the area. Cost is minimal. There will be raffle tickets for prizes. Refreshments will be served and music provided. Here's a chance to spend a delightful afternoon — bring the whole family! Maybe you'll pick up some ideas for your own yard. Please join us.

SUPER MEMBER

During the May Board Meeting we discussed the broken window at the GPNA office. It was suggested that we allow the "new board" to resolve the problem. While helping with the Saturday office cleanup, member Tom Rose asked, "How can we complain about the condition of other buildings in the area when we have an eyesore?" Tom then called Husker Glass, wrote a personal check, and had the window replaced. Members David Beckman, Chris Foster, Loren Johnson, Chuck Kilgore, Pat McVaney and Ron Yates, hearing about Tom's activities, made donations to help offset the cost. Tom, thanks for the solution.

VONDA McEACHERN RECEIVES HONOR

Congratulations to Vonda McEachern, who was recently named "Member of the Year" in the Omaha Chapter of the American Society of Women Accountants. Vonda has been a member of ASWA for three years, and currently serves as Bulletin Editor. This award was given based on attendance and overall involvement in chapter activities. Vonda has served as the Office Chairman since the opening of our GPNA office, and has been nominated for treasurer of the GPNA for the 1993-94 year. Once again, congratulations!

Congratulations to Duchesne for winning their third consecutive girls state soccer championship with a 3-0 victory last week.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

The neighborhood watch will soon begin its 4th year. Usually, the watch group walks or drives in our neighborhood area from 11 p.m. to 1 a.m. on Friday and Saturday nights. We are in radio contact with a dispatcher during these outings. Unfortunately, over the years the number of volunteers has gradually dwindled to a small core group. Due to the small numbers, we have not been able to walk during the watches, but have only been able to drive. While this is effective in keeping an eye on the neighborhood, it is not a good way to meet the people or show the presence of the watch group. We would like to get more people involved so that we can continue the walks, especially since the summer is the best and most pleasant time to walk and more of our neighbors are outdoors. Toward this purpose, we are considering modifying the hours of our walks, perhaps having a one hour walk from either 10:00-11:00, or 11:00-12:00. If you would be interested, or would have other ideas for getting more people involved, please call Ron Yates (558-4027) or any of the board members.

TOOL LENDING HOTLINE

ED: 341-0475
 JIM: 341-4695
 CHRIS: 342-6006

It's time to renew your membership!!!

**Remember, if you don't pay your dues
 you can't vote
 at the June meeting.**

SEND IN YOUR DUES TODAY!

YOUR GPNA OFFICERS AND CHAIRS

OFFICERS:

- President:** Ron Yates -- 558-6027
- Vice-President:** John Lynch -- 345-9624
- Treasurer:** Mike Caban -- 341-4722
- Recording Secretary:** Judi Caban -- 341-4722
- Corresponding Secretary:** Kathy Rose -- 341-3955

STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

- Budget & Finance: Mike Caban - 341-4722
- CDC/Incorporation: Chuck Kilgore - 341-2757
- Clean-Up: Chris Foster - 342-6006
- Courtesy: Cynde Yates - 558-6027
- Gifford Park Day: John Lynch - 345-9624
- Historian: Eva Swanson - 345-1707
- Membership: Kathy Rose - 341-3955
- Office: Vonda McEachern - 341-7346
- Pride Distribution: Ron Yates - 558-6027
- Pride Production: Brian Kokensparger - 558-3834
- Park: Mike Caban - 341-4722
- Program: John Lynch - 345-9624
- Public Relations: Jackie Lynch - 345-9624
- Social Activities: Jeanette Martin - 345-7639
and Cynde Yates - 558-6027
- Tool-Lending: Ed Hendershot - 341-0475
- VIP: Mike Caban - 341-4722
- Watch Group: Ron Yates - 558-6027
- Weeds & Litter: Leo Wilwerding - 345-1433

**GIFFORD PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Name _____ Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ Date _____

ANNUAL DUES -- \$5 (Single), \$8 (Family), \$25 (Business/Institutional)
****Please note: All new and newly-renewed memberships will expire June 1, 1994.**

If paying by check, make checks payable to GPNA
 Mail to GPNA: 3225 1/2 California St., Omaha, NE 68131

EDITORIAL SECTION

Readers are welcome to submit their letters for the Editorial Corner to any Executive Board member prior to the Executive Board meeting held the third Thursday of every month. The Executive Board has final approval for all editorials appearing in this section. Full name and address must be included on all letters submitted. The views and opinions stated are not necessarily those of GPNA or the Executive Board.

SOME PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS LEARN HARD LESSONS

by Ron and Cynde Yates

We were very disappointed in the viewpoint expressed by Mrs. Caban in her May, 1993 editorial regarding public vs. private school education. The schooling of the child of the President of the United States involves a special set of circumstances requiring particular handling. Not only is the quality of education important, the safety of both the President's child and of other children is a major consideration. We believe a private school would be better prepared to handle these special circumstances and the accompanying disruption. We believe President and Mrs. Clinton, if capable of leading the country, are quite capable of selecting the school they feel is best for their child.

When our oldest child was ready for school we sent him to public school. At that time, we had no intention of subscribing to a private school education. However, after experiencing the public school system and administration, we had no choice but to abandon the public school system. There were many problems in the public school and the culminating event was when our son and another boy, who were in the second grade, were accosted by two fourth-graders with knives. We shudder to think what may have happened had one of those boys become a bit more aggressive. This is all bad enough, but there is more.

The entire event was denied by the school principal. We discovered, through a school employee, that the event did, indeed, occur, and the boys had been suspended. Why the denial? We don't know, however, this is typical of the responses we received. Mrs. Caban is right — we are unwilling to sacrifice our children. These are not the life lessons to which we wish to expose our 7-year old child.

Mrs. Caban is also correct in stating that many parents in our area have chosen to abandon the system. We know of several families in the neighborhood who have left public school due to problems with the administration. Both Mrs. Caban and the OPS leaders should look at these problems which have driven many families away. However, since Mrs. Caban is now employed by Omaha Public Schools, it may be difficult for her to point fingers at her superiors. The opinions of Mrs. Caban have, apparently, changed over the years as she was once a major player in attempting to resolve problems and remove a public school principal.

Mrs. Caban comments in her editorial that many parents claim they are unwilling to sacrifice their kids for the good of the community. As Mrs. Caban must surely realize, our family is engaged in many community activities and the school our children attend, although not public, is, indeed, within our community.

We believe it is a parent's responsibility to provide their children with the best possible education. It is not easy for us to pay the private school tuition; however, we are willing to juggle our finances and do without in order to provide our children with a better chance.

If Mrs. Caban wishes to sacrifice her child on the altar of political correctness, she has that right, however, we do not intend to place our children in the fire!

ON THE DEFENSE OF THINGS

by Dorothy Munhall

Last month's editorial had this neighborhood buzzing. Neighbors were calling each other. Some who had rarely spoken began to talk because they were so appalled by either the author's ignorance or blindness and one-sided thinking. My own opinion is what I wish to be stated. I am also writing on behalf of those with whom I spoke. Her editorial stated that Chelsea Clinton was enrolled in private school, therefore, President Clinton abandoned us because he made several speeches for Public Schools. Any rational person would realize the impact on the other children attending the public school with the President's child. Not to mention the possibility of danger that could be caused to all in that building. The President and his family automatically become a target for all weirdos to possibly kidnap for either money or political reasons. Why should he subject other children to possible danger? A private school can provide added security and handle the Secret Service men who would regularly be with the President's child.

As far as the neighborhood families who have removed their children from the neighborhood school, into either private or alternative public schools, no, we have not abandoned the neighborhood. Many are very active, not thinking twice when a community activity calls them away from work or home to help out. But wouldn't the readers agree that maybe the system has abandoned these families? In the last three years, I alone can name five or six middle class families that left that school for the same or similar reasons.

EDITORIAL SECTION (continued)**ANDROCLES AT OPS**by *CAPT. L. B. Beck (USNR) (Ret.)*

With regard to last month's Editorial, no one questions Mrs. Caban's sincere desire to improve the quality of public schools, but her solution, high in idealism and weak in substance, is open for debate. Neither can I share her loss of respect for Bill Clinton, since I did not respect him before the election and think even less of him now. I already knew you never, ever trust a draft dodger! It may be politically incorrect in the new White House administration, but I have some AMERICAN ideals regarding public school that I'd like to air with editorial liberty.

That diversity is a plus is not disputed! The fact that the public school system addresses the problems in society by lowering the academic and moral standards of all to accommodate the lowest level in society (at a higher cost to taxpayers), should be disputed loud and long. We have a rapidly growing class that stubbornly resists all opportunities for self-improvement, sees crime as socially justified, a criminal justice system where judicial activism allows criminals to go free and a welfare policy that encourages dependency while broadening its political base. Outcome Based Education, which results in voluntary segregation, is a shining example under the guise of cultural advancement. The obsession to emphasize individual "cultures" has created dividing lines in neighborhoods everywhere. Special interest groups have taken priority over how and what our children are taught as family values disintegrate.

The American dream was to be the best you can be. The social and economic resources for every American are already in place and have been for years. A prime example is the G.I. Bill. Public school spends too much time bowing to special interest concerns and separating cultures. Why is it UN-AMERICAN to unite people as

AMERICANS? That teachers, better trained and better qualified than ever before, must relegate the time they have in class, pandering to special interest and multi-cultural studies, often in direct conflict with religious beliefs, is a travesty. It is a social program that denigrates the education and opportunity of all children. The old adage, "United we stand, divided we fall" has stood the test of time and history.

If we really want to improve society, public schools must give students the educational tools they need to compete in a world market, bring basic values back into the classroom and teach every student to take responsibility for their actions and pride in their achievements. Unite them as Americans, instead of dividing them into social criteria. The mandate of a public education should be to educate, not to imprint on our children a failed agenda for social reform.

Editorial space is limited and the issue complex. It is naive to criticize parents unwilling to "sacrifice their kids of the good of the community." We need to stop making excuses and rewarding a dependant population that keeps growing through misguided efforts at social reform. We need to work toward a society that values AMERICA and the AMERICAN dream to be the best you can be. Until public school incorporates the values that once made AMERICA strong and raises standards to promote achievement rather than "outcome," public education will continue to fall short.

Lastly, it is not my intention to discredit Mrs. Caban. She is tireless and generous in her efforts to improve the quality of education at Yates School. However, I believe the public school system is failing in its attempt to educate in favor of enforced socialism and a prime example of more symbolism over substance. The Lion of OPS asks us to throw our children into their den with the thorn of Outcome Based Education deep in their paw.

ANOTHER VIEWPOINTby *Terry Wilwerding*

Judi Caban wrote an interesting and thoughtful article in the last GPNA newsletter about the President sending his daughter to a private school. I know that Judi has been very involved for many years with the PTA and other organizations at Yates School. I am a product of St. Cecilia's, and have been involved with the school board and other organizations at that school for some time, and I thought that some response of Judi's article was in order.

My first observation is that private education is too diverse to categorize in any way. Besides the Catholic schools, there are non-denominational private schools, and even home schooling, which is surprisingly popular, could be called private. All of these forms of education are possible, however, because of the most basic principle of the United States, which is freedom.

We could debate the merits of public versus private education endlessly, but many books have been written on this subject with no resolution. The fact is that public and private education are different, each with their own advantages and disadvantages.

As I read Judi's editorial, a number of observations

struck me. She mentioned the lack of involvement of rich and influential people with the public schools. As I see it, the major problem with public AND private schools is that there is an overall lack of parental involvement, regardless of the parent's economic class. For whatever reason, schools are often being asked to take the place of the family these days. Besides being babysitters, schools are supposed to provide the ethical and cultural background that was traditionally provided by the family. Many students receive no support or encouragement in their education. It is no wonder that it has become more difficult to provide a traditional academic education. I would again stress that this is as much of a problem in private schools as it is in the public ones.

I realize that this is a fairly heavy discussion for a neighborhood newsletter; the question is what can be done about the problem. The answer is analogous to the GPNA. Our neighborhood has improved through the interest and efforts of many people. It could improve much more if more people got involved. The same situation applies to our schools, public and private. And it applies whether you live in the Gifford Park neighborhood or the White House.



GPNA GARDEN WALK

SUNDAY, JUNE 27, 1993

1:00 - 5:00 P.M.

\$3.00 Per Person

Refreshment Stands

Raffle Tickets for Great Prizes

Parking and Informational Maps
Provided at Duchesne Parking Lot
36th and California Streets

GREAT THINGS ARE "GROWING ON"
IN THE GIFFORD PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

JOIN US IN THE FUN!

Sponsored By:
Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

WHO TO CALL WITH NEIGHBORHOOD PROBLEMS OR FOR GENERAL INFORMATION

Holes, debris, or litter in street	Street Maintenance (444-4919)
Street/Stop Sign down or missing	Traffic Maintenance (444-5160)
Garbage not picked up. Info on newspaper pickup	Solid Waste (444-5238) or Watts Truck Line (592-7310)
Weeds over 18" or litter	Weed and Litter (444-5910)
Broken or obstructed sidewalk	Sidewalk Division (444-5283)
Street light out or electrical wires down	OPPD (554-1900)
Gas leaking, waterline breaks, or fire hydrants	MUD (554-7777)
Abandoned cars	Vehicle Impound Division (444-5782)
Crime or vandalism	Police Division (444-5600)
Neighborhood Watch Program	Community Serv. Police Div. (444-5772)
Rats, yard litter, open refrigerator/freezer in yard	Douglas County Health Dept. — 444-7481/444-7482
Trailers or cars parked on front lawns	Permits and Inspections (444-5350)
Problems with empty buildings, vacant houses, deteriorated garages, occupied dilapidated houses	Code Enforcement Div. (444-5371)
Handyman Program (seniors and handicapped)	Housing Dept. (444-5219)
Suspected drug activity -- Crimestoppers	Narcotics Division OPD (444-5681)
Snow removal	Street Maintenance (444-4919)
Hedges or tree limbs blocking view of traffic	Forestry Division (444-5925)
Sick, injured, strayed, or dead animals	Humane Society (571-0501)
Problems with city parks, pools, golf courses or recreation centers	Parks and Recreation Dept. (444-5900)
City sewer stopped up	Sewer Maintenance (444-5332)
Creighton University student concerns	Stephanie Wernig (280-2718) or Jana Martin (280-1784)
Improperly licensed vehicles	Police Division (444-5888)
In need of "No Parking" or other signs	Traffic Engineering Division (444-5250)
Handicap parking stickers	City Clerk (444-5556)
Cox cable TV complaints	City Council (444-5520)
Police Division North Sector	Captain (444-5648)
Complaints against Police Division	Patrol (444-5888)
Street construction problems or complaints	Construction Engineer (444-5220)
Community Services	United Way (444-6666)
County Information	Douglas County (444-7000)
State Ombudsman (Information)	Toll Free (1-800-742-7690)
Federal Information	Local number (221-3353)
Major city events or attractions	Tourism/Convention Bureau (444-4660)
Yates Elementary School	(978-7183)
Council member, District 3	Subby Anzaldo (444-5525)

For information about city services or complaints, call Mayor's Action Line, 444-5555