



# Gifford Park's Pride

*Gifford Park Neighborhood: A Great Place to Live, Work, Learn and Play*

August 1999

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

## Yates Closing Leaves Students Without Ride to Kellom; Safety a Concern

Yates School PTA President Pam Decker, John Lynch, Terry Wilwerding and I met with O.P.S. Superintendent Dr. John Mackiel and three other O.P.S. representatives to discuss the closing of Yates and busing issues. The meeting was held Friday, July 23, at the TAC Building. The focus was centered on the fact that students living within 1.5 miles of Kellom School will not be provided transportation to school. Dr. Mackiel said there is nothing O.P.S. can do under the new school plan to change the situation. This means most of the kids will either have to walk or find their own transportation to Kellom since most of our neighborhood is within 1.5 miles of the school. There might be a few options for parents to choose another school for their children to attend and busing would be available for these children. However this does not include kindergarten students and there may be only a few openings for selecting another school. We believe many parents in our area do not know these facts. Dr. Mackiel said O.P.S. will be sending out information in early August letting parents know more details about the upcoming school year including assigned school, start date, safety walk date, and whether or not their children will receive transportation to school. The GPNA will also provide informational flyers soon, probably in the local businesses and some door-to-door distribution.

Children in our neighborhood walking the most direct route to Kellom must cross at five intersections with stop lights. Children would be walking during rush hour across 30<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, and Cuming streets – all busy streets. They are walking through a predominantly industrial area where there are few houses. This is **NOT** a walk through our neighborhood. There are also numerous Creighton University parking lots in that area, with cars pulling in and out across sidewalks.

The GPNA feels this is a very serious safety issue for our neighborhood children. We encourage anyone concerned about these issues to attend these upcoming meetings. First, the **O.P.S. School Board Meeting Monday August 2 at 7:30 p.m.** at the TAC Building at 3215 Cuming, second floor conference room. If anyone would like to speak, great, but there is a five minute time limit. Second, the next GPNA meeting will have **O.P.S. Board member Nancy Huston, Thursday, August 5 at 7 p.m.** For specific information on the busing plan call 557-2710, 557-4444, or find it on the web at [www.ops.org](http://www.ops.org).

*by Chris Foster*

## Next Meeting

**Thursday, August 5  
7:00 P.M.**

**Nancy Huston  
OPS Board Member  
Discussion of Issues  
Related to the Closing  
of Yates Academy**

**Police Dept. Activities Update**

**St. Joseph's Hospital  
Dining Rooms A, B, and C**

## 16th Annual National Night Out To Be Observed August 3rd

The 16th Annual **National Night Out**, a unique crime/drug prevention event sponsored by the National Association of Town Watch, has been scheduled for **Tuesday, August 3rd, 1999**. NNO is designed to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness, generate support for, and participation in, local anticrime programs, strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships, and send a message to criminals letting them know that neighborhoods are organized and are fighting back. Residents are asked to spend the evening participating in outdoor activities with neighbors and police from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., and then turning outside lights on from 8 p.m. until 10 p.m. Let's get out, turn on the lights, and show everyone in the neighborhood that Gifford Park residents will not tolerate crime in our neighborhood!

Kids: See the last page for information about the free tennis program in Gifford Park this August!



**GPNA OFFICERS****PRESIDENT**

Chris Foster 342-6006

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Brad Bogard 342-2520

**RECORDING SECRETARY**

Jean Peck 344-0722

**TREASURER**

Sandy Sauer 341-8939

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS****ADVERTISING**

Dar Sweazy 345-0125

**CLEAN-UP**

Mike Wilwerding 341-8224

**COMPLIANCE**

Leo Wilwerding 345-1433

**COURTESY**

Candy Bacome 933-7506

**GRAFFITI**

Maureen Calabro 345-7238

**HISTORIAN**

Eva Swanson 345-1707

**MEMBERSHIP**

Chris Foster 342-6006

**NEWSLETTER**

Sue Wilwerding 342-2795

**NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION**

Mike Bacome 933-7506

**PARK**

Roger Freeman 557-2914

**PARKING VIOLATIONS**

Terry Wilwerding 342-2795

**PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Leo Wilwerding 345-1433

**TOOL LENDING**

Tom Rose 932-6191

**WATCH GROUP**

Mike Wilwerding 341-8224

**WEEDS & LITTER**

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

**KELLOM SCHOOL LIAISON**

Dana Carlton 346-4575

**From the Desk of the President**

I'd like to update everyone on the GPNA's efforts to solve problems around 33<sup>rd</sup> & California - in particular, **521, 523 & 525 North 33<sup>rd</sup> Street**. There have been many complaints and problems with these properties for the past 10 years. Since 33<sup>rd</sup> and California is such a high profile location, problems here can hurt the image of the surrounding neighborhood.

The GPNA is working with the Police Department, the Metro Unit (formerly known as the Weed & Seed Unit), the Community Resource Center, the Health Department, Code Enforcement, the property owners, and property managers to solve the known problems of drugs and alcohol, litter, code violations and other negative activities. Many of the recent problems have come from individuals who do not live at these locations or even in our neighborhood. The police have made numerous arrests at these locations and we continue to ask officials to give special attention to this area. Officer Mike Paul in particular is continuing to work very aggressively.

The GPNA is sending community impact statements to property owners of problem addresses in our neighborhood. These are in the form of a letter identifying specific problems and complaints along with describing the negative impact these problems have on our neighborhood. We will also send this letter to judges and prosecutors in an attempt to enforce tougher penalties for criminals at the time of sentencing. A copy of the letter can also be sent to the Mayor, City Councilmen, Police Department, Narcotics Department, Code Enforcement and others. The message needs to get out that criminal behavior is not welcomed in our neighborhood. Everyone can help in this matter by reporting to police any criminal activity. We believe we are making steady progress with the combined efforts of everyone mentioned above. With everyone's commitment, we can make significant improvements to this problem area.

Just a brief update on summer youth activities in our neighborhood (see the article and pictures on page 4). Many thanks to **St. Joseph Hospital** for hosting a community bike rodeo in July. The Sun Dawgs are winding up another year in Gifford Park, this summer's session ends in early August. The annual youth tennis program in Gifford Park will be every Wednesday in August and the first Wednesday in September. This event is free for kids of all ages - a signed registration form must be filled out in order to participate (parents can help too).

There are a few improvements in the works to the GPNA Office. The front door has a new deadbolt lock thanks to **Bob Hutton** and J'N'J owner **Loren Johnson**. Loren bought the lock and Bob did the installation. Loren is thinking about setting up a copier and fax machine in the office which the GPNA could share with the grocery store on a minimal basis. We would like to locate a large locking filing cabinet to be used for storing GPNA documents. The office walls can use a coat of paint sometime soon - if anyone is interested in painting or if you know of a file cabinet, please call me at 342-6006.

**Roger Freeman** has accepted the job of Chairman of the Park Committee. Roger cleans up Gifford Park on a regular basis. It's a good idea for all of us to keep the park picked up - our neighborhood is lucky to have such a nice park due in large part to the efforts of past GPNA members and the City of Omaha

*Editor's note: If you have something that would be of interest to our neighborhood, we encourage you to submit an article for our monthly newsletter. Editorials must be approved by the GPNA Executive Board. Articles can be left at the GPNA Office; please include your name and phone number. Contact Sue Wilwerding (342-2795) or Chris Foster (342-6006) for information regarding the newsletter.*

**From the Desk of the President. . .**

*continued from page 2*

Parks Department. Many thanks to **Ed Aldmeyer**, **Jerry Flood**, and their staff with the City of Omaha for keeping the park mowed on a regular basis throughout this spring and summer – Keep up the good work. Please call Roger at **557-2914** if you have any special requests or complaints about the park.

In closing, a great friend of mine and of the GPNA, **Bob Seitzer**, passed away Saturday, July 24, at the age of 74. Bob had a spirit of community and giving like very few people I've known. Bob always thought of others first. He truly would give the shirt off his back or give away his last dollar if someone asked. He made donations to many organizations including the GPNA. Even though Bob didn't live in our neighborhood he bought annual memberships, attended meetings and donated additional money to the GPNA because he believed in the cause of the organization. I have known Bob and his family for nearly 30 years and we will miss him greatly. He had his own advertising agency called The Seitzer Group. Bob was not a rich man in terms of money, but he was very wealthy with the number and quality of friends he had, not to mention his great sense of humor. Maybe we can all use some of Bob Seitzer's community spirit to better our own community.

*by Chris Foster*

**What's Happening in the Neighborhood . . .**

Longtime GPNA member **Martha Kelly** continues to recover from a broken hip she suffered back in November. Martha has always attended neighborhood meetings and supported the neighborhood association until her accident. She was once our GPNA "Neighbor of the Month". Martha said she hopes to begin coming to meetings again soon.

Have you walked or driven by the **Hillside Court Apartments** at 31<sup>st</sup> and Davenport lately? The renovation project by owner **Larry Hoffman** is moving along quite nicely. Larry is totally remodeling 70 units along with major landscaping changes. This is a great improvement to a large area of our neighborhood.

**For City Services,  
Information, or  
Complaints  
Call:  
Mayor's Action  
Office  
444-5555**

Visit the GPNA Website at:  
[http://www.discoveromaha.com/  
community/groups/GPNA](http://www.discoveromaha.com/community/groups/GPNA)



**GIFFORD PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
532 N. 33rd Street, Omaha, NE 68131  
**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**



*(Please print clearly)*

Membership year: \_\_\_\_\_ *(Membership year runs from June 1 through May 31)*

Type of membership: Single (\$5) \_\_\_\_\_ Family (\$8) \_\_\_\_\_ Business (\$25) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of business \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last) (First)

Spouse \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last) (First)

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Home) (Work)

In case of an emergency notify: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name) (Address) (Phone No.)

May this information be included in the GPNA Neighborhood Directory? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Mike 344-3233**  
**Chris 342-6006**

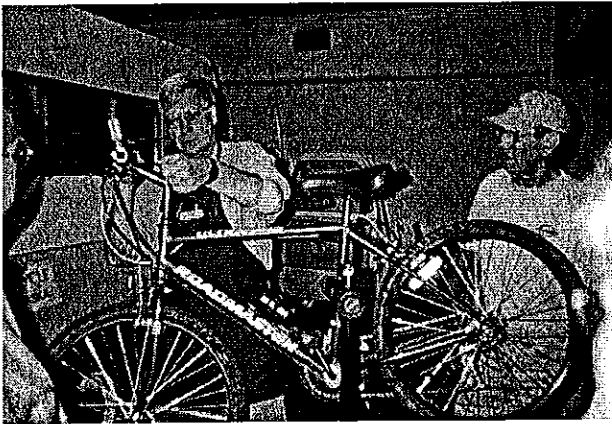
Mowers - \$5  
Rent for most tools - \$3



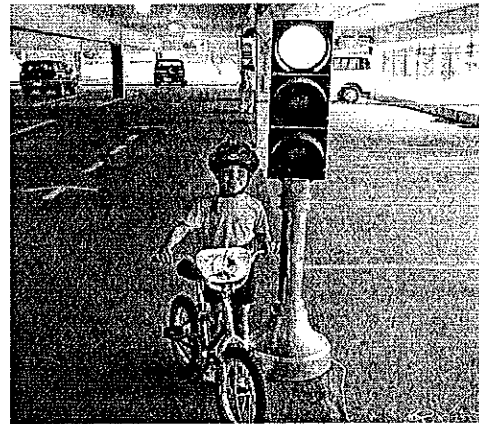
## Saint Joseph Hospital Sponsors First Annual Bike Rodeo

About 35 to 40 kids participated in a bike rodeo hosted by St. Joseph Hospital Saturday July 10<sup>th</sup> on the hospital's middle level parking lot at 30<sup>th</sup> & Burt Street. Events included a bike obstacle course where cones were set up for kids to test their riding skills. Olympia Cycle provided bike equipment maintenance and safety tips. St. Joseph Hospital sold about 60 bike helmets for just \$5 each! A big thanks to **Electric Company of Omaha** who donated \$250 and the GPNA who donated about \$70 toward five new bikes from **K-Mart** (they gave us a pretty good deal!) These bikes were raffled off to neighborhood kids. **Baker's** also donated refreshments. There was a variety of free information available for participants. There's already talk of next year's event and even some thought of having it in Gifford Park.

Volunteers from the **Pottawattamie County Sheriff's Department** and the **Omaha Fire Department** assisted St. Joseph staff. Volunteers included **Carol McCormick, Larry Thorsen, Rick Burroughs, Alvin Kobes, Patrice Pittman, Bob Pavelka, Sherri Jett, Brian Jones, Jeff Koontz, John Murphy, Jean Peck, Chris Foster, Sue Wilwerding, and Terry Wilwerding.** (Photos by Chris Foster and Sue Wilwerding)



*The first station at the rodeo was a stop for a safety inspection. Larry Thorsen from Olympia Cycle at 40th and Hamilton makes some adjustments to a participant's bike. He was also available to answer questions concerning repair and maintenance.*



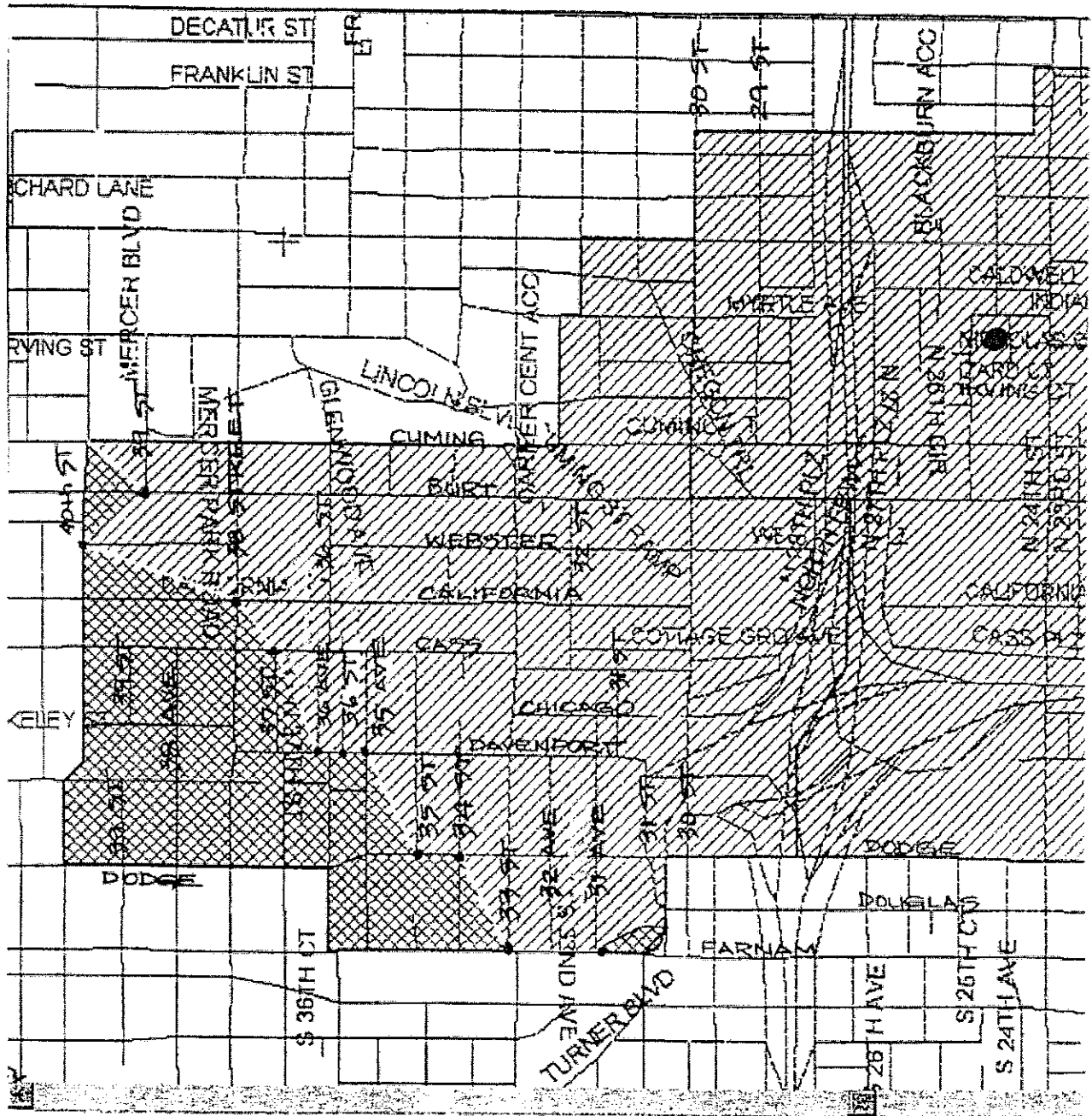
*Dillon Burroughs, 6, pauses a moment at the mini traffic light. A variety of safety issues were addressed at the rodeo when the kids visited the various stations. Thanks to the many volunteers who helped with this event.*



*Volunteers were on hand to ride through the obstacle courses with rodeo participants. Jeff Koontz, Pottawattamie County Sheriff's Deputy, takes a break with some of the kids. Baker's Supermarkets donated treats for everyone to enjoy at the end of the course.*



*Ryan Johnson (9), Dane Nodskov (10), and Jerrin Jimerson (8) were three of the approximately 40 kids who participated in the rodeo. Ryan and Jerrin had a good reason to smile - they won two of the four free bicycles that were raffled off at the end of the morning's activities.*



- KELLOM SCHOOL
- ▨ OVER 1.5 MILES - TRANSPORTATION
- ▨▨▨ UNDER 1.5 MILES - NO TRANSPORTATION

This map above shows the Gifford Park neighborhood in relation to the location of Kellom School. The darker shaded part of the map represents the area where children can be transported to Kellom by bus free of charge. The lighter section, where many of the Gifford Park neighborhood children live, illustrates the portion of the area where transportation will not be provided.



# 6th Annual Gifford Park Free Tennis Program



*For:* Youth (all ages)

*Dates:* August 4, 11, 18, 25 and  
September 1 (Wednesdays)

*Time:* 6 - 7 p.m.

*Where:* Gifford Park Tennis Courts  
(33rd & Cass St.)



The Gifford Park Neighborhood Association is offering **FREE Tennis Lessons** and will provide tennis racquets, balls and instructors for each lesson. Parents are welcome to help.

**To be enrolled, YOU MUST complete the form shown below and bring with you to the tennis lessons.** There is limited space available so call the phone number listed below for information on enrollment for the tennis program.

**Call 342-6006**

-----  
**Registration/Permission Form** - Bring this form (completely filled out) with you to the tennis lessons to be enrolled.

Youth's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street: \_\_\_\_\_ Street: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian Phone: home: \_\_\_\_\_ work: \_\_\_\_\_

As the parent or legal guardian of the child named above, I hereby give my full consent and approval for my child to participate as a member of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association/Tennis Our Way Youth Program.

I understand that there are certain risks of injury inherent in the practice and play of this sport, as well as related activities incidental to my child's participation, and I am willing to assume these risks on behalf of my child. I hereby certify that my child is fully capable of participating in this sport and that my child is healthy and has no physical or mental disabilities or infirmities that would restrict full participation in these activities, except as listed below.

I hereby waive, release and hold harmless the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association/Tennis Our Way Youth Program, and the City of Omaha, Nebraska, its Officers, coaches, sponsors, supervisors and representatives for any injury that may be suffered by my child in the normal course of participation in this sport and the activities incidental thereto, whether the result of negligence or any other cause. Furthermore, I give consent to any necessary medical treatment in case of emergency.

**Signature of Parent/Guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_