



Gifford Park's Pride

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

February 2001

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

History Book Evokes Pride, Nostalgia For Gifford Park Neighborhood

The History Of 33rd & California Plus The History Of The GPNA, an illustrated book by **Eva Swanson** in conjunction with **Chris Foster**, has proven not only to be a financial success for the Association, as it has generated over \$700 of revenue, but it has also been a critical success as evidenced by the many positive comments that Eva has received. For many, it brought back fond memories of days long past in a vital, historic neighborhood. The following is a sampling of excerpts from some of the notes she has received:

"The book is full of interesting facts and historical tidbits, and you have quite a few photos including many historical shots - particularly those from the tornado of 1913. I was impressed! You and Chris are to be commended."

Sibyl Myers, Omaha World-Herald.

"I can't tell you how much I enjoyed it. It's always great for me to learn more about Omaha and its various neighborhoods - I married a girl from Omaha and we first lived at 3024 Chicago, then moved to 3136 Chicago. This was in 1963 - 1969. I loved the neighborhood, I love history."

Ronald Marsh

"I lived in the 35th and Cass area and know many of the people mentioned in the book. I remember when the Yates mansion was about to be razed. The house was open and a bunch of us played inside - we were swinging on the chandeliers!"

Charles Petersen

"I am 91 years old and lived in the Yates Mansion from 1931-1932 while attending the Bickel School of Advertising. I met my wife on a blind date at a dance in the Mansion."

Charles Baustart

"Delighted! My roots in the neighborhood go back a long way. My great-grandparents lived at 3113 Webster. My grandparents lived next door and of course, my mother and her brothers and sisters lived there too. My uncles . . . played ball for the Storz Brewery. My mother, Helen, worked in the bakery. We all loved 'cake squares' from the bakery. My uncle, George Wachtler, now lives at Silvercrest and will be 90 years old in April."

Pat Turek (Pat ordered a book to give to her uncle for a birthday present.)

Next Meeting

Thursday, February 1
7:00 P.M.

**Guest Speakers:
Dan Malone and Randy Meyers**

**Renovation Plans for the
Former Nebraska College of
Business Building**

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

Guest Speakers to Outline Renovation Plans

At the February general meeting, **Dan Malone**, president of Investment Property Resources, Ltd. and **Randy Meyers**, architect, will be our guest speakers representing a group attempting to develop an "Assisted Living" center in the old Nebraska College of Business building located on the southern edge of the Duchesne Academy campus at 38th and California. The renovation and landscape costs are high but there are several avenues that the developers are pursuing to lower the cost. The developers feel that by taking the empty facility and converting it into a use that can serve neighbors and others with a low parking requirement and a low noise application seems to be a good fit for the facility. Come to the next meeting to find out more. Also at the beginning of the meeting, mayoral candidate **Mike Fahey** will speak about his candidacy and answer questions. Once again at the end of the meeting, there will be a drawing for free tickets to the Omaha Theater Company for Young People, courtesy of **Mary Theresa Green**. The GPNA is pleased to announce that **Omaha Police Chief Don Carey** will be the guest speaker for the **March 1** general meeting.

GPNA OFFICERS**PRESIDENT**

Chris Foster 342-6006

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Chris Foster 342-6006

WATCH GROUP

Mike Wilwerding 341-8224

WEEDS & LITTER

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

KELLOM SCHOOL LIAISON

Dana Carlton 346-4575

The President's Column

How do YOU answer the question when someone asks, "What part of town do you live in?" I usually answer with something like, "I live near 33rd & California, just west of St. Joseph's Hospital/Creighton University...". If the person I'm talking with is somewhat familiar with the area, their response is usually, "33rd & California...that's a rough area...don't you have a lot of crime problems...". I acknowledge to them that we do have our share of problems like many other neighborhoods these days. Then I spend the next few minutes trying to change the person's perception by explaining that our neighborhood is actually quite nice with a good sized park, grocery store, restaurant, laundromat, mechanics garage, gas station, bar, live theater, childcare center, nice homes, lots of families and the other assets in and around the area. Of course I'm probably not going to convince this person of our neighborhood's potential if they have an image of an unsafe neighborhood. And, frankly, many people who live in the Gifford Park area probably wonder if our neighborhood can realize its potential if many of our own residents don't FEEL SAFE walking around 33rd & California – the heart of our neighborhood.

What is it going to take to change this image? Obviously reduced crime, cleaner streets, etc. But if we dig deeper into what makes a neighborhood truly safer, we find, especially in our neighborhood, a big source of fear is not only crime, but also a fear of being bothered by disorderly people. This is discussed in detail in an article called "Broken Windows" written by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling that appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1982. Using the now famous analogy of the "broken window" (a broken window leads to more broken windows which leads to graffiti, etc., creating an atmosphere conducive to criminal behavior), they argued that by attacking the quality-of-life crimes traditional policing has largely ignored--such as public drunkenness and aggressive panhandling—more serious crimes would be deterred. They further discuss the practice of "broken window" policing and on how to identify and combat specific sources of disorder. Thus, the authors favor more beat officers, more community self-policing, and greater police targeting of public intoxication as well as antisocial behavior. They point out that controlling disorderly behavior is the key to preventing serious crimes. A case study done in Newark, New Jersey in the mid-1970's found people assigned a high value to public order, and felt relieved and reassured when police helped them maintain that order – and thus FELT SAFER.

Furthermore, the Newark study found that if residents feel unsafe, they will modify their behavior accordingly. They will use streets less often or walk out of their way or hurry their steps to avoid confrontation. For some people this matters greatly because the neighborhood is not just "the place where they live" but it is their "home" and local attachments mean a lot.

Even though citizens can do a great deal to help make a neighborhood safer, the police are obviously a big key to order-maintenance. The point I'm trying to make with the above example is that we as a neighborhood association must define what is an acceptable level of behavior and public order on 33rd & California, and apply this to our involvement in community walks, watch group, and communication with residents, youth, landlords, businesses, city officials and police. The GPNA plans to meet with Captain Foxall, Lt. Swircinski, Sgt. Osire and U.S. Attorney Tom Monaghan at the Northeast Precinct on February 7 to discuss public safety issues. Also, Police Chief Don Carey is scheduled to be guest speaker at our March 1 general meeting. I believe we have a very good relationship with police and government officials and thus have a great opportunity to work together to create a neighborhood where we truly FEEL SAFER for 2001.

by Chris Foster

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.

Keeping The Holiday Spirit Alive Long After The Tree Is Down

During the holiday season our smiles seem a bit more genuine, our handshakes a touch heartier. We go out of our way to give special attention to those we don't see on a regular basis. But after the holidays that good will feeling seems to fade away. Wouldn't it be nice if we could spread some of that good cheer *throughout* the new year? After all, we in Gifford Park want to appear neighborly, don't we? Sometimes we miss out on some great opportunities because we don't know where to start. Here are a few suggestions:

Community: Get involved in programs that will have a positive impact on you neighborhood or city. No effort is too small.

- The upcoming Gifford Park Day celebration is a great way to showcase your ideas and talents. So get your creative juices going.
- Join in the clean-up projects held in the spring and fall.
- Offer to help out with activities such as the Easter Egg Hunt, the Tennis Program, or the Bike Rodeo.
- Attend the monthly Gifford Park general meetings.

Contributions: It doesn't always have to mean giving money. The gift of time or self can sometimes make a greater impact. Do you have a new or elderly neighbor, someone down the street who is sick, or maybe a single parent lives on your block? Take the initiative and reach out.

- Something home-baked brightens anyone's day.
- Once in awhile, help shovel snow, rake leaves, take the trash to the curb and back, move something heavy.
- Share some of the extra produce from your vegetable garden or flowerbed.
- Offer your knowledge on lawn care, car maintenance, or home repair if you know a neighbor in need.
- Jot a quick note to say 'thank you' to a neighbor who has helped you.

Always be thoughtful and considerate of those around you. And remember, the best way to have good neighbors is to be a good neighbor.

by Vicki Frey

Free Tax Help Is Here Again For the Seventh Year in a Row!



The site for the annual free tax assistance program has been moved to the **American Labor Force** building on the **northeast corner of 33rd & California St.** The new location will offer much more room and offer a better setup than the GPNA Office. Several other sites that had provided free tax help in the past are not available this year. This makes our site even more important this year. The GPNA thanks the American Labor Force for their generosity.

The hours have been expanded to **EVERY MONDAY** from **1 p.m. to 5 p.m.** through the end of the tax season (**April 16**). Everyone is welcome! IRS representatives will provide free tax help for our neighborhood. Processing of basic tax returns and electronic filing will be available again this year. Walk-in appointments are welcome, but priority will be given to those who call to schedule an appointment. For more information, or to schedule an appointment, call **551-3629** or **341-5209**.

Drug Victim Initiative Program Announced

The U.S. Attorney's Office has announced a new "Drug Victim Initiative" to notify neighborhood residents of federal drug indictments of individuals living in their neighborhood. The Initiative was established for several reasons: 1) To identify & notify neighborhood residents of prosecution efforts 2) To enhance community involvement to remove drug dealers off the streets 3) To provide an avenue for neighborhood residents to voice their concerns and be heard. This is a statewide initiative.

There are two criteria that have to be met in order for a case to be considered a drug victim case: The drug arrest/activity has to occur in a neighborhood and at least one of the conspirators has to live in that neighborhood. Once a case has been identified as a drug victim case, three notification flyers will be sent to the neighbors of the offender (in approximately a two-block radius if possible). The notification flyers will be sent 1) upon federal indictment of a neighborhood resident 2) upon conviction of the offender 3) upon sentencing of the offender. The GPNA also requested to be informed of a pending federal case involving anyone within the boundaries of the Association. We are then free to disseminate the information to additional residents. For more information on this program, call **221-4774 ext. 3131**.

What's Happening In The Neighborhood . . .

The Omaha Police Public Information Office has begun a program called "OPD E-News" to share information with neighborhood and business leaders in the community. The program is available to anyone interested in receiving press releases and other information via e-mail. All you have to do is register on-line by going to www.opd.ci.omaha.ne.us and click on the "E-News" icon.

California Tacos is taking over the old "Spot" building next to the current location at **529 N. 33rd Street**. **Brad Bogard** and his talented crew including **Ross Windorski** and Brad's brothers **Max** and **Rye Bogard** have made steady progress renovating the building. The new floor is being constructed two feet above the existing floor to match the height of the current restaurant floor. The brick walls will be left to maintain the old character of the building. Glass block has already been installed in the two south windows. He expects to open the added space in the next couple of months.

Indian Creek Nursery planted most of the shrubs and about half of the trees in Gifford Park during the late fall before the bitterly cold weather of December hit. **Scott Farrington** says he expects to plant the remaining 40 or so trees in the spring. He said the water from melting snow has definitely helped ground moisture content.

Dana Carlton, GPNA treasurer, reports that there have been 12 new memberships last month and \$70 has been collected from donations. She would also like to remind members who purchase items for the Association that they must turn in a receipt to be reimbursed. If you collect money for the Association, she asks that you not deduct your expenses from the money taken in - turn in all the money and she will reimburse you for your expenses. This is necessary for accounting purposes.

"Handy Hands" Available For Gifford Park Community

Have you ever known someone (maybe yourself) who lives on a limited income? For someone who lives on a fixed income, even the smallest unexpected expense can be impossible to pay, or will mean having to go without other necessities. This is especially true in the area of small household maintenance and repairs which can be costly. Not only is it financially difficult for people to pay for such work, but often such people are physically unable to do repairs for themselves. **Handy Hands** was started by **Mosaic Community** (a local faith community) to help meet the financial and physical needs of those in the community who, due to their current situation, are unable to get small maintenance jobs or repairs done around their homes on their own. **Handy Hands** provides individuals in need with volunteers to assist them at no cost. If you are in need of assistance with small home repairs, or know someone who is, let us serve you. Contact **Ellen Rapier** at 933-6672 or Ellen@mosaiccommunity.com for assistance.



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)

E-mail Address: _____

Can we contact you for help on any of the following items? (please circle areas of interest).

- | | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Cleanup/Beautification | Tennis Program | Block Captain | Tool Lending |
| Membership | Youth Activities | History | Newsletter |
| Neighborhood Walks | Park | Merchants | Newsletter Distribution |
| Social Activities | Tree Planting | Watch Group | Meeting Program |
| Landlord/Tenant Issues | Calling Committee | Public Relations | School Liaison |

Don't Forget . . .



Omaha's Municipal Code requires all sidewalks to be shoveled within 24 hours after a snowstorm. Walks left unshoveled may be cleared by City crews at the expense of the property owner. For more information, or if you have a comment or complaint, please call the **Street Maintenance Office** at 444-4919 (24 hour line).

For City Services,
Information, or
Complaints

Call:

Mayor's Action Office

444-5555