



Gifford Park's Pride

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

May 2005

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Community Garden Season Kickoff Event To Be Held May 7

The fourth full year of planting at the Gifford Park Community Garden located at 35th & Cass St. will begin soon. To celebrate, on Saturday, May 7, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., there will be a fun event with hands-on activities for EVERYONE including birdhouse building, music, face-painting, "ask the master gardener", plant sale, free seeds, and refreshments. Also Kate O'Brien 496-8419 is planning the second annual Youth Garden Program (see page 6 in this newsletter) this spring and summer - Kate will also have registration forms available at the event. For more information on the community garden project, call Chris 342-6006, Cynthia 556-2090 or Annemarie 342-1340.

First Neighborhood Walk May 6

We need people, male or female, young or old, who care about the Gifford Park Neighborhood and want to learn what happens in our neighborhood at different times of the day and night. We need to let our presence as a group be felt. This may just make us all more aware of the activities taking place in our area. The purpose is to walk and observe our neighborhood streets in a non-confrontational manner.

Our first neighborhood walk this year will be Friday, May 6, 7 p.m. - meet at the Gifford Park baseball diamond. This is a great opportunity to meet new neighbors, get some exercise, and show your support for our neighborhood. We usually walk about 45 minutes to an hour and walk various routes to see different parts of our neighborhood. For more information, call 342-6006.

Music In The Park - 2005 Schedule

June 10

July 8

August 12



All concerts will be on the 2nd Friday of the month, 7 to 8 p.m. in Gifford Park

Next Meeting
Thursday, May 5
7:00 P.M.

Guest Speaker: Kevin Denker
Chief City Housing Code Inspector

Creighton University
Medical Center - Becic Room

Executive Board Meeting
Thursday, May 19
7:00 P.M.

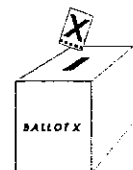
Yates Alternative School
32nd & Davenport St.

Neighborhood Group Garage Sale Set For May 14

It is time for spring cleaning and if you are like a lot of people, there is a lot of stuff cluttering up your house. On Saturday, May 14th, there will be a neighborhood-wide group garage sale. These will be individual garage sales but GPNA will put a small ad in the Omaha World-Herald. Please participate by holding a garage sale of your own or checking out your neighbor's garage sale. There is no need to sign up but Kate O'Brien will be collecting addresses for those who would like their address listed on a flyer that will be available at all the garage sale locations that contact her.

Just call 496-8419 and leave your address and the time of your garage sale.

Don't Forget To VOTE!
City General Election
Tuesday, May 10



GPNA OFFICERS**PRESIDENT**

Ron Frey 344-0757

VICE PRESIDENT

Cynthia Shuck 556-2090

RECORDING SECRETARY

Kate O'Brien 496-8419

TREASURER

Vicki Frey 344-0757

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES**ADVERTISING**

Dar Sweazy 345-0125

COMMUNITY GARDEN

Chris Foster 342-6006

COMPLIANCE

Leo Wilwerding 345-1433

HISTORIAN

Eva Swanson 345-1707

KELLOM SCHOOL LIAISON

Jean Peck 344-0722

MEMBERSHIP

Chris Foster 342-6006

NEWSLETTER

Sue Wilwerding 342-2795

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

Chris Foster 342-6006

PARK

Roger Freeman 557-2914

PARKING VIOLATIONS

Leo Wilwerding 345-1433

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Cynthia Shuck 556-2090

TOOL LENDING

Chris Foster 342-6006

WATCH GROUP

Terry Wilwerding 342-2795

WEEDS & LITTER

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

WELCOMING

Vicki Frey 344-0757

From The President . . .

What would Gifford Park neighborhood be like if there was no neighborhood association? When you strip everything away, what does the association contribute? You may be one of many who lives in the neighborhood, but has no contact with any GPNA activity. Would your life be any different if the association never existed?

At my age, I am in my prime mid-life crisis susceptibility period. Since I can't afford a Porsche, my tortured musings revolve around questions of "have we made a difference?" Maybe you don't think so. But just by virtue of the fact that you are reading this article means that the neighborhood association is affecting you. But let's consider the possibilities.

We must start with the activities. Other neighborhoods may be known for other things, but Gifford Park has a reputation for having community activities: Easter Egg Hunt, Haunted House, Holiday Banquet, National Night Out, Music in the Park, Summer Tennis Program, etc. I've had several people tell me that they love to come to the Holiday Banquet. Many children take part in our youth activities. Although many children and adults have enjoyed these events, you might never have participated, but you may have seen a child coming home from Gifford Park swinging a tennis racket for the very first time.

What about cleaning up the neighborhood? Every spring and fall, Gifford Park neighborhood sponsors trash compactors for people to bring trash that normal collectors won't accept. It's fascinating to watch a compactor chew up couch after couch, and still have room for more! The city representative for the citywide spring cleanup told me that Gifford Park's last cleanup had much greater participation than any of the other locations. You may never have hauled anything to a cleanup, but your neighbor's property might be cleaner as a result of getting rid of that junk furniture from the front porch.

What about gardening and green spaces? We have received grants to plant trees along city streets and to build a gateway at an entrance to our neighborhood. The community garden association has created a beautifully landscaped space near 34th and Cass for gardening. The youth gardening club will be cultivating raised beds, and gardeners will be sponsor potlucks to share the fruits of their labors. You may not have a green thumb, but you may start to notice more beautiful streets.

What about public safety and community services? Certainly we have had no effect there, right? Gifford Park holds a seat on the Northeast Precinct Advisory Council to advise the precinct captain of important issues in our neighborhood. We are in contact with city officials and try to keep abreast of issues that affect our neighborhood. Members of our association have been working with neighborhood business owners to create a business watch at 33rd & California. Maybe you don't notice the work that's been done, but what would our neighborhood be like if we weren't working behind the scenes?

We have accomplished a lot, and people have noticed. Gifford Park was awarded the Omaha Community Development Award for being a catalyst in community revitalization for 2005. This honor isn't awarded for a single event. This is an achievement of all the work that has been done from the very beginning: the early visionaries, each president, every officer, each and every volunteer. It truly takes a village to raise a neighborhood. I would like to express my thanks to the foundation and paradigms built by those who previously have given leadership and direction to this neighborhood.

continued on page 3

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 President . . .

continued from page 2

Looking to the future, will we be up to the task? Many empires have collapsed shortly after reaching their zenith. I'm not saying we've peaked. But every volunteer organization has to realize that it has the potential to become extinct quickly. I was talking with someone who lives in another neighborhood association that once was active and is not any longer. She said that 3 key families moved out of the area and the association just fell apart.

Are we 3 families away from collapse? I don't think so, but recruiting people to be involved is a struggle. I once was part of a small congregation that was having a difficult time recruiting people to help with the children. So one week I announced that we would no longer have any activities for children. Within a matter of minutes, I had all the volunteers I needed. That is not the best way to recruit volunteers, but it raises an interesting point: people are willing to let others do things for them, until they see a personal need to take responsibility.

I am complimented by the fact that many of you are content with what we are doing, to the point that you are not involved. But let me urge you: you have a personal stake in what happens in your neighborhood. Your involvement is what will make the difference.

by Ron Frey

Summer Programs Are Great Opportunity For Area Youth

Gifford Park will once again be a full-day site for the City of Omaha Parks & Recreation **Sun Dawgs** program. This program offers youth ages 6-15 a fun summer by providing a wide variety of playground programs... crafts, games, sport events, swimming, special events, field trips and evening family events. The program runs from **June 13 – August 4**. Activities are Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Sun Dawgs Summer Sign-up is set for **May 31** at **Elmwood Park** between **6 to 8 p.m.** Cost is **FREE!** The GPNA wishes to thank the **City of Omaha** and all of the private contributors for keeping this valuable youth program in our parks and community centers. Parents are always welcome to assist with supervision during activities. The purple and yellow Sun Dawg shack is located in the west end of Gifford Park.

Creighton University will once again sponsor the **National Youth Sports Program**, a free sports-based educational program for needy youth ages 10-16. The program runs from **June 6 - July 9**. Parent Information Night is **June 2nd**, at **7 p.m.** in the **Kiewit Fitness Center** on campus. For more information, call **280-1752**.

City Recognizes GPNA's Community Development Award

On Monday evening, April 11, the GPNA received one of two **Omaha Community Development Awards** presented by **Robert Peters**, City Planning Director. The presentation was part of a program sponsored by the city to celebrate community involvement and national Community Development Week. The event took place at the newly renovated Livestock Exchange Building. **Chris Foster** accepted the award on behalf of the GPNA; approximately a dozen members of the Association were on hand to join in the celebration at the reception. This award was originally presented at the State Capitol Building by **Governor Dave Heineman** (see story in the April 2005 GPNA newsletter).



CALIFORNIA BAR
510 North 33rd St.

Come join us!
Nascar Racing Sundays
Happy Hour Weekdays
449-9138

Charles R. Kilgore Jr.
Attorney At Law
4913 Underwood Avenue
558-5000

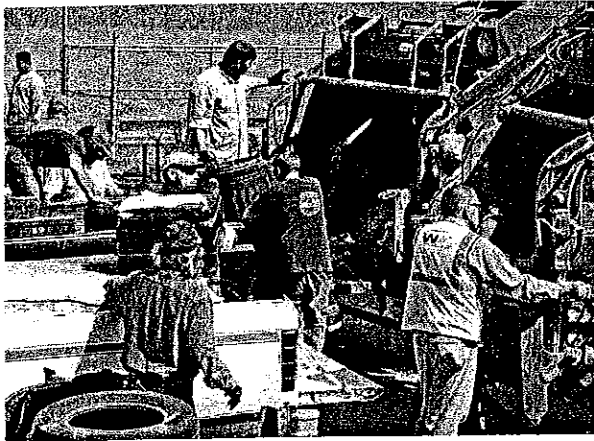
Personal Injury Law
Worker's Compensation
Injury
Auto Accidents
Insurance Claims

Spring Cleanup Recap

Remember last year's Spring Cleanup? It was cold and there was a steady rain all day. This year started out with showers but by mid-morning it was smooth sailing and temperatures rose into the 70's by early afternoon. The cleanup was held Saturday, April 16, in Gifford Park. Other highlights - we used 4 trash compactors, collected over 30 tires, recycled roughly 2-3 tons of metal, collected nearly \$650 in memberships and donations, **Rodney Hay** provided great barbecue pork, beans, and hot dogs for volunteers, **Kate O'Brien** and **Cynthia Shuck** kept everything organized at the "cleanup headquarters" table, **J'N'J Grocery** donated money toward lunch, and **California Bar** donated pop. We had good participation from neighborhood youth who helped pick up litter in the park and the business district. Northeast Precinct Police Officer **Nikki Lasater** came with her police cruiser to provide public safety education - great job with the kids! **WOWT** (Channel 6 News) aired a nice news story on our cleanup efforts as they rode along with volunteers as they picked up trash. Many thanks to the **City of Omaha** for continuing this very important program.

There were many great efforts on this day, too many to report, but the GPNA appreciates all the volunteers' commitments to make this a very successful event. This year's Cleanup MVP Award goes to 13 year-old **Ben Spahn**. He worked very hard helping to unload trucks into the compactors during much of the cleanup. I believe Ben will lead one of our cleanups someday. Great effort by all!

by Chris Foster



SATURDAYS

May 7 - October 15
8:00 am - 12:30 pm

WEDNESDAYS

June 8 - September 21
3:00 - 7:00 pm

11th & Jackson Street
www.omahafarmersmarket.org

Sponsored By:



Special Thanks To: Mercer Management and Allright Parking.

What's Happening In The Neighborhood

Many thanks to IRS volunteers **Jackie Foster**, **Mary Green**, **Dennis Clay**, **Sharon Rotolo**, **Sheryl Fitzgerald**, and others who provided free tax help in our neighborhood again this year. St. Cecilia's Cathedral was this year's site. They processed a total of over 200 returns this year, most electronically filed. This is the highest total in the 11 years they have been doing this program.

Jack Tanner is doing better after suffering a heart attack recently. Jack and his wife **Bette** are long-time members and dedicated supporters of the GPNA. Bette helps each year with our Summer Youth Tennis program in Gifford Park.

Congratulations to the newly elected **Midtown Neighborhood Alliance (MNA)** president, **Jim Farho**. Jim is from the Blackstone Neighborhood Association. Monthly MNA meetings are scheduled for the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the **Perk Avenue Cafe**, 1107 Park Ave. Eleven area neighborhood associations are represented in this organization, which addresses issues affecting our midtown neighborhoods. The next meeting will be **May 18**. If anyone is interested in representing the GPNA in this organization, please contact **Ron Frey 344-0757** or **Chris Foster 342-6006** for more information.

continued on page 5



Happy Mother's Day!



What's Happening . . . continued from page 4

Mark your calendars for **November 5-6** for an exciting event being planned. **Restore Omaha** is a weekend conference focused on the restoration and renovation of homes in Omaha's midtown area. This event is an opportunity to provide current and prospective owners of older homes a chance to learn from local and regional craftsmen and artists. In addition, architects, engineers, contractors, designers, planners, facilities managers, building owners, and preservationists can learn about resources, skills, and knowledge necessary to preserve and maintain the area's heritage. Plans are for **Mutual of Omaha** to host the event. Stay tuned for more information.

Gifford Park will again this year be a host site for the **Show Wagon Youth Talent Competition** this summer on **Tuesday evening, June 21**. Now is a great time to think about participating in this event to show off your talent. Let's try to get our local neighborhood talent to participate in this great opportunity. Show Wagon is co-sponsored by **City of Omaha Parks & Recreation** and the **Omaha World-Herald**. Contact Show Wagon Director **Karin Moyer** at **444-5164** (or e-mail: kmoyer@ci.omaha.ne.us) if you are interested.

The membership year for the GPNA officially runs from **June 1, 2005** through **May 31, 2006**. If you have been a member and supported the GPNA in the past, we appreciate your support and hope you will renew your membership. If you have not been a member, we encourage each of you to consider joining. Your membership helps pay for this newsletter, neighborhood cleanups and beautification projects, youth activities, social activities, neighborhood watch equipment, tool lending and many other worthwhile programs. Please join the GPNA today.

California Tacos & More

Homemade Mexican Food

342-0212

33rd & California Street

Dine In or Carry Out

Hours:

Monday - Saturday: 11a.m. - 8 p.m.

Closed Sunday

California **Tacos & More**



J'N'J

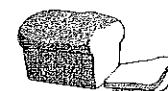
GROCERY STORE



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3301 California Street -- 422-1058

WE DELIVER!



7:00 AM - 10:00 PM Monday thru Thursday

7:00 AM - 11:00 PM Friday thru Saturday

8:00 AM - 10:00 PM Sunday



Gifford Park Youth Garden Registration Form



Child's name: _____
 School child attends: _____
 Child's age: _____ Birthdate: _____
 Parent's name: _____
 Home address: _____
 Contact phone number _____

All school age youths are invited to participate in this free program at the **Gifford Park Community Garden at 35th & Cass St.** Last year 59 kids from the neighborhood participated and this year we hope to have just as many. We will meet every other Saturday beginning **May 14th** through **August 20th** to plant our gardens, learn, and have fun. Also this year each participant will have his or her own small plot to plant what they would like to grow. To sign up either call **496-8419** and leave a message for **Kate** or drop this form off at the **Community Garden Kickoff Party May 7th**. Parents: if you could volunteer to help just one Saturday, that would help us be able to keep this program going strong.

Weeds...How Tall Is Too Tall?

City of Omaha code states that weeds (or any vegetation) cannot be over 18" tall. The following steps can be taken if this code is violated:

- A complaint can be filed by anyone
- A City Inspector will send the property owner a 10 day notice to cut the weeds
- If the owner does not respond, the address is put on a mowing list
- Property will be mowed and the owner will be charged according to the size of job



18"



GIFFORD PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

P.O.Box 31462 Omaha, NE 68131-0462

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 |



TOOL LENDING HOTLINE

Chris 342-6006

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



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