



Gifford Park's Pride

Gifford Park Neighborhood: A Great Place to Live, Work, Learn, and Play
www.giffordparkomaha.org

November 2013

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Neighborhood School

By Chris Foster

There is a renewed effort by the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA) and surrounding neighborhoods to bring back a neighborhood school to the Gifford Park neighborhood where children can walk to school and receive all the positive benefits of having a neighborhood school close by. As some of you know, in 1999 our neighborhood school, Yates Elementary at 32nd & Davenport Street, was closed by OPS because the building was too small to handle the number of children in our neighborhood. Currently of the 353 Yates attendance area children in grades K-6, 165 are assigned to Kellom School, and 188 of our children are bused to 39 different schools in the district.

With new OPS Board members and a new Superintendent developing a strategic plan for the first time in years, there is a great opportunity for OPS leadership to look at several options for making this happen. In conversations with OPS, the GPNA has floated several scenarios that could possibly work for a neighborhood school. 1. Re-open Yates (may require expansion, purchasing adjacent properties, use of nearby vacant properties); 2. Use the old Tech High School/TAC building and perhaps accommodate not only pre-K through 6th grades, it would likely be able to have pre-K through 8th grades. The old Tech High School/TAC building has lots of space, and current adult administration and staff could be relocated. 3. Build a new school (on land owned by OPS and Alegent-Creighton currently occupied by several large parking lots between 30th to 32nd St. and California to Burt St).

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**Next General Meeting
Thursday, November 14**

**Topic
GPNA Elections
Personal Safety Discussion**

**7:00 pm
Alegent Creighton Medical Center
Morrison Seminar Room**

2014 Officers, Board Nominees Announced

The GPNA Nomination Committee will present the following slate of officers and board members for the GPNA in 2014. Voting will take place at the November 14th general meeting. Please plan to attend since a quorum will be necessary for passage of this slate.

Eric Purcell-President
Ricky Green -Vice President
Luther Larsen-Treasurer
Jill Westfall-Secretary

Mark Trampe-At Large
Laura Weiss- At Large
Chris Foster-Landlord Representative
Martin Janousek-Business Representative

2013 GPNA OFFICERS

President

Eric Purcell
719-5108

Vice President

Open

Secretary

Jill Westfall
213-3105

Treasurer

Dana Carlton-Flint
346-4575

Board Members

At Large

Ricky Green 301-3936
Darryl Hutton 706-7597
Mark Trampe 332-6188

Business

Martin Janousek 558-4070

Landlord

Chris Foster 290-8187

COMMITTEES

Community Garden

Chris Foster 290-8187

Membership

Mark Trampe 332-6188

Neighborhood Market

Martin Janousek 558-4070

Newsletter

Jill Westfall 213-3105

Newsletter Distribution

Chris Foster 290-8187

Park

Roger Freeman
345-2668

Pubic Relations

Eric Purcell 719-5108

From the President

By Eric Purcell

Two-and-a-half years ago my family moved into this neighborhood. It was late Spring and all of the warm weather activities were just starting to get rolling. Each Spring, Summer and early Fall since we have enjoyed the Community Garden, Park, Soccer, Tennis, Easter Egg Hunt, Neighborhood Clean-up, Potlucks, Neighborhood Market and more. The warm weather months really are a bustling time in our neighborhood.

But as the days grow shorter and colder, our family, like most others, retreats for our winter hibernation! It's just not as easy to get out; there's certainly a lot less to do. So, following that first winter, my wife and I have tried to be intentional about continuing to connect with our friends and neighbors. Mostly, we enjoy sharing meals in our homes throughout the colder months. But as I have been thinking about our neighborhood, I'd like to invite us to consider how we could utilize some of the resources we have right here in our midst to keep the connections going.

In our small business district we have a number of places where we can continue to grow and invest in our community and relationships. Grab some friends and catch a show at the Shelterbelt Theater (<http://www.shelterbelt.org>). If you haven't been to California Taco (<http://www.californiatacosandmore.com>) in a

while, try a tostada (That's my wife's new favorite). Do a little Christmas shopping at Maud Boutique (<http://maudboutiqueomaha.com>). Step into the Community Bike Project (<http://www.communitybikeproject.org>) to get a new bike, fix the one you have or spend time with neighborhood kids working on theirs. Next time you're meeting some friends for a drink, consider the California Bar (<http://www.calibaromaha.com>), one of the oldest bars in Omaha. Play some pool or darts and have some fun!

Stop in at Selena's Market and the KNJ and get to know what they're offering. You may just find some ethnic food gems at Selena's, and if it has been a while since you've visited the KNJ, you might be pleased to see some of the changes the new manager Danny has been making.

And of course, we can't forget my new favorite Marrakech Gourmet (<http://www.marrakechgourmetomaha.com>). The food is incredible. And since it's getting colder, enjoy some hot mint tea or chai.

My hope is that we can all get creative about how we stay connected through the winter months. And we have some fantastic options right down the street to help us out!

See you in the Neighborhood!

Save-the-date!

Holiday Banquet

Thursday, December 5 6:00 p.m.
Alegent Creighton Medical Center, Becic Dining Room

Join neighbors young and old for our the GPNA's annual Holiday Banquet and a celebration of our 25th anniversary as a neighborhood association.

Must be a current GPNA member to attend.



Editor's note: If you have news of interest to the Gifford Park Neighborhood, we encourage you to submit an article for the monthly newsletter. Editorials are subject to approval by the GPNA Executive Board. Please include your contact information. Articles may be submitted by email to jill.lynn.westfall@gmail.com.

Neighborhood School

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There are many benefits to having a school near to where students live in and around Gifford Park: it is good for children, families and a stronger community; it affords more parent involvement—an absolutely vital piece to a child's success; it offers participation in before & after school programs closer to home; it is healthier physically to walk; it offers students a chance to build better relationships with neighborhood and community leaders; it weaves a “web” of neighborhood safety and ownership; there are better opportunities to partner with Gifford Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA), local businesses and institutions; and we believe students who live near their school take more pride and ownership in not only their school but also in their neighborhood.

Parent participation in school activities creates limitless opportunities for mentorship and leadership (in fact the GPNA was formed by Yates PTA board members in 1988...and until OPS closed Yates, it was the longest running active PTA in Nebraska). A neighborhood school is the lifeblood of a community.

Surrounding neighborhoods would likely benefit from adding a neighborhood school including Joslyn Castle neighborhood (Yates attendance area includes a part of their neighborhood, and OPS closed their former neighborhood school, Saunders, in the 1980's), Dundee neighborhood (could relieve Dundee School overcrowding), and other neighborhoods surrounding the Gifford Park neighborhood, including Bemis Park. Letters of support to bring back a neighborhood school in the Gifford Park neighborhood have been sent to OPS from the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association, Dundee Memorial Park Neighborhood Association, Leavenworth Neighborhood Association, and Midtown

Neighborhood Alliance.

Kellom is currently our neighborhood school – it's very unsafe for children to walk (they must cross 30th St, under I-480, 24th St, Cuming...another equally dangerous route is to walk under the Cuming St overpass with little room for error, then Hamilton, over the I-480 bridge, 30th St, 24th St.)

It is more difficult to attract homeowners and families into a neighborhood without a close neighborhood school. In order for any neighborhood to be safe, strong and vibrant, especially an inner city neighborhood, it needs to have a strong number of invested residents.

Community attention on the issue has been growing. On October 30, the Omaha World-Herald ran two articles on the issue: “Gifford Park: Neighborhood keeps school spirit alive” and “School backers want continued role for community center, too.”

Next steps for our effort are to continue talking with OPS Board members, OPS administration and the community to discuss the challenges and opportunities for returning a quality neighborhood school to the Gifford Park neighborhood. We plan to organize a community meeting in the near future to more thoroughly educate and update people on this effort, and have open discussion and feedback – we will keep everyone posted on this. We also plan to speak and present information at future OPS Board meeting(s). Thanks for everyone's support so far, stay tuned!

For more information on this effort, please contact:

Chris Foster (GPNA Board member): 402-290-8187, foster3413@cox.net

Marque Snow (OPS Board member): 605-675-9251, marque.snow@ops.org

Sara Howard (Nebraska State Senator): 402-699-5514; saraehoward@gmail.com

Community Bicycle Project Pumpkin Carving

On October 25th the Community Bike Project hosted a Pumpkin Carving Extravaganza. Omaha bike shops were invited to submit a bike-themed jack-o-lantern. These pumpkins were displayed and voted on during the event. Olympia Cycle won with their bike-part adorned pumpkin. During the extravaganza, pumpkins were provided (thanks to the GPNA and Mic & Jane Whelan) for everyone to carve. Many neighborhood youth and families came down to carve, paint, and decorate their own pumpkins. At the end of the night, the lanterns were brought down to Gifford Park, lit, and displayed during the Jack-O-Lantern Jam. We had a lot of fun putting on the event, and were very pleased with the participation from bike shops across Omaha. It was a great opportunity to introduce new people to the Gifford Park neighborhood and the Bike Project. Thanks to everyone who made the event a success!



News and Notes

Soccer Goals

Gifford Park Neighborhood Association was recently awarded a \$750 matching grant from Midtown Neighborhood Alliance toward soccer goals for our park! Thank you MNA!! Be looking for goals (semi-permanent) to be installed next Spring!

Heartland 2050 Neighborhood Workshop

Please join your neighbors on November 7 from 6:00-8:30pm at Lewis and Clark Middle School to offer your input on a long range strategic plan for the Midtown area, including Gifford Park.

We need your input on the challenges and opportunities we face as a growing metropolitan area. This workshop will focus on identifying development opportunities and public transportation alternatives along Dodge Street between Dundee and Midtown Crossing. We want to hear from you about important issues in your community, such as education, health, walkable neighborhoods, and more.

Maud Boutique wins "Community Gem" Award

By Lynn Mills

Maud Boutique won the Community Gem Award from Nebraska Retail Federation in October. My husband and I went to Lincoln to receive the award at a banquet ceremony where we had a wonderful time. Living for 25 years and owning a business in the area since August 2012, I've become more aware of my neighbors and how wonderful they are. This summer I had set up a table from the shop at the Neighborhood Market. I met with neighbors and made wonderful connections with people who are invested in the area. I'm proud to be a part of that. If you haven't been in Maud Boutique, I would encourage you to come in and say hello. You can also check out the new window art that Jenny Waltemath painted, it looks amazing.

I have started carrying a new line of clothing and accessories from a Fair Trade Company. You can find out more about that company on Maud's Facebook page. I'm also getting some great fall and winter vintage items in: 1940's ladies suits, fur stoles, coats, some great winter hats and lovely dresses in larger sizes.

The soul Kitschn Gallery will have a new art



showing starting November 9th. The Hour of Dawn, classical and abstract calligraphy by Jenny Waltemath. The opening reception will run from 2 to 5pm with a live demonstration by the artist. The show runs until November 24th. In December, artist Tana Quincy will have work on display. More details of that show to come.

I'm offering a neighborhood discount through November. When you come in say you read this article and receive 20% off your purchase.

19th Annual Halloween Haunted House/Block Party

A brisk wind added to this year's Halloween haunted "mood" as neighborhood children and families enjoyed this year's 19th Annual Gifford Park Neighborhood Halloween Haunted House(s) event held Monday evening October 28th. This year we called it a "block party" since we partnered with Creighton sororities Delta Zeta and Theta Phi Alpha, the Creighton fraternity Sigma Phi Epsilon, and the 3100 Chicago House residents to have two haunted houses, several "treat" stations, and face-painting. All activities were free. Things started at 5:00 PM and got scarier as the evening darkened. To repeat what we described last year, the event was a Fantastic, Fun, Freaky, Frightful, Festive, Fall, Food-Filled event for the neighborhood. The sororities did a ton of

baking donating lots of Halloween cookies and cupcakes. They guided kids through the house to keep everyone in line! They also arranged a visit from the Fire Department where kids toured a fire truck! Many thanks to the sorority and fraternity volunteers lead by Ellie Mata, Alex Demasi, Danny Enright, Kiley Eccker, LJ Lipari, Ben Jurgeson and Tim Switzer. We also had great help from GPNA folks who either volunteered and/or donated items and treats: Jan Franks and her granddaughter Brittany Rubek, Betty Slayden and her daughters Tyffaney Reichert and Kayleen Tran, Lois Baumhover, Tyronda Pierce, Bob Hutton, Darryl Hutton, Chris & Sallie Foster, Mike Caban and Jim Wilwerding. Bob, Mike and Jim did watch group duties keeping an eye on safety. We appreciate the Police for providing extra attention in our area. Thanks also to No Frills and Walgreens for their donations. Thanks again for everyone's help!



Community Garden Fall Cleanup

By Chris Foster

Great fall weather provided ideal working conditions for our fall cleanup days Saturday October 19th & 26th in the community garden. Volunteers cleared plants from their family plots and youth garden plots, weeded, mulched, moved compost piles, organized plant cages/fencing, and completed other tasks in preparation for “putting the garden to bed”. We provided coffee and snacks for volunteers. Again this year thanks to Bob Hutton for “winterizing” our water supplies and backflow preventer in the community garden - this ensures water lines are free of water and pipes won’t break. Contact Mike Caban (402-341-4722, caban3321@cox.net) for garden plot information, and Chris Foster (402-290-8187, foster3413@cox.net) for any other community garden questions.

Thanks to Ricky Green for hosting our Gifford Park Community Garden display booth at Food Day Omaha Sunday, October 20 at Aksarben Village. Big Muddy Urban Farm also hosted a booth nearby. The event promotes greater awareness in Omaha around our food systems, hunger issues, agricultural practices and healthy eating options.



Gifford Park Home to Chicken “Ranch”

By Martin Janousek

Bicyclists stop along 33rd street to take a second look, walkers stop, laugh, then scratch their heads and children watch with amazement. Those are but some of the reactions people have had over the summer when they've noticed chickens strutting around the fenced lot on the corner of 33rd and Webster looking for bugs. If there's one thing people don't expect in the neighborhood are chickens on the corner of 33rd and Webster. Over the years, when someone would talk about the activities on any corner in the neighborhood, mentioning chickens would have definitely been the last thing to come to mind.

This past summer, Brandon and Megan Sperry who live across the street from the lot, had an idea and along with our local Big Muddy Urban Farmers partnered to establish what some people may humorously call a chicken ranch.....a legal chicken ranch of 20 chickens. However, it wasn't easy at first. Brandon and Megan spent time researching the city codes, talking with neighbors, and making numerous trips down to the city. Then finally, early this summer they got the required permits and the chickens had a home. Brandon, along with the help of friends, constructed the coop and fence as the chickens grew. The plan is to raise these chickens for their eggs which will be part of the Big Muddy Urban Farms - CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program. Big Muddy Urban Farm has been a vendor in the Gifford Park Neighborhood Market for the last couple summers. They also farm in other empty lots around the neighborhood.

Now for some people this may be a shock to have chickens in the neighborhood. However, at one time people were encouraged to raise chickens in their back yards as shown in this advertisement from the early 1900's. Raising chickens has become more and more popular over the years in many cities for a variety of reasons. Health and buying local are but a couple of them.

Uncle Sam Expects You To Keep Hens and Raise Chickens



Two Hens in the Back Yard for Each Person in the House Will Keep a Family In Fresh Eggs

EVEN the smallest back yard has room for a flock large enough to supply the house with eggs. The cost of maintaining such a flock is small. Table and kitchen waste provide much of the feed for the hens. They require little attention—only a few minutes a day.

An interested child, old enough to take a little responsibility, can care for a few fowls as well as a grown person.

Every back yard in the United States should contribute its share to a bumper crop of poultry and eggs in 1918.

**In Time of Peace a Profitable Recreation
In Time of War a Patriotic Duty**

For information about methods of Back-Yard Poultry Keeping suited to your location and conditions, write

Your State Agricultural College
or
The United States Department of Agriculture
Washington, D. C.

This Space Donated by the Publisher

At last count there are approximately 52 chickens scattered around the Gifford Park neighborhood in private backyards. We probably have more chickens than any neighborhood in the metro area.

If you have a chance to stop by 33rd and Webster when Brandon and Megan are out tending to the chickens please introduce yourself and say “Hi” to the chickens. It's great to see such positive things happen in the neighborhood. I encourage more young people to embrace the neighborhood and continue to make it a special place in the Omaha. Great job! Brandon, Megan and the Big Muddy Urban Farmers.

Urban Bird and Nature Society



Come learn about the Omaha Christmas Bird Count, where the summer birds migrate, and winter birding in New York Central Park.

The newly founded Urban Bird and Nature Society will be hosting the second in a series of Urban Birding seminars at the UNO Student Center on Saturday, December 7th from 9 am to noon. The cost is only \$12 per person or \$20 per couple. Email theurbanbirdandnaturesociety@cox.net for details or call UBNS Founder, Diana Failla at 402-651-5779. Come join us. Call or email to reserve your seat now! All ages welcome.

Urbanisation is the necessary result of the population expansion that our species is experiencing at an unprecedented level. It is estimated that by the year 2050, seventy five percent of mankind will be living in cities.

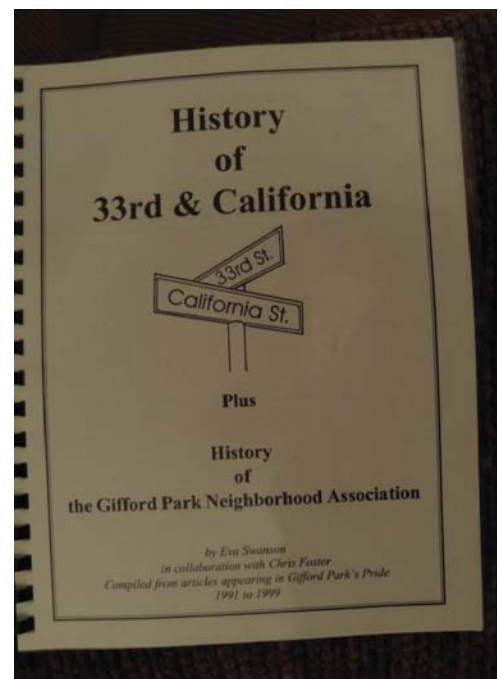
In many of our minds, there is a sharp distinction between urban and countryside. Within our sprawling cities there is birdlife and wildlife to be found, sometimes in surprising abundance. We just have to look up, open our eyes and listen, and it will make itself known to us. We can learn how to appreciate the nature on our doorsteps no matter where we live and in what environment.

The Urban Bird and Nature Society is birding with a city twist. It's what the Urban Bird is all about.

History Books For Sale

We have just printed another batch of our history books, "History of 33rd & California plus History of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association (1988-2000)," written by our GPNA Historian Eva Swanson. The books are about 35 pages of interesting facts and stories including color and black & white photos. We are selling them for \$10 each – a bargain! All money goes toward the GPNA.

If anyone has any neighborhood memorabilia or history items (pictures, videos, books, awards, articles, other items) please contact Chris Foster (402-290-8187 or foster3413@cox.net). The GPNA has collected and inherited items over the years and we would like to better organize some of the neighborhood and GPNA history that tells quite a rich, interesting and on-going story. Our GPNA historian Eva Swanson did a wonderful job of capturing information into our "History Book" and two large scrapbooks. We would like to build on this good work.



NOTE: In commemoration of our 25th year, we're reprinting this short work of fiction that appeared in the July 1991 Gifford Park's Pride newsletter. While some of the places described below haven't come to pass, it's still a great look back at some of the dreams neighbors had for our neighborhood.

Wow! Would You Look At This Place...

By: Mike Caban

A few years ago I moved out of the Gifford Park area because it was falling apart at the seams. Now look at it. The house I sold for twenty thousand dollars is now worth fifty thousand. There are people actually picnicking at the park, and baseball leagues use the field almost every day of the week. What happened to all the broken glass in the park's foot paths, all the trash, and the weeds growing two foot high in every other lot? Why, even the people seem different. I walked to the grocery store and on the way there, people actually said hello with smiles on their faces. There were five bikes outside the Arctic Circle and none of them were chained up. A couple of young ladies played jump rope in front of the newly remodeled apartment buildings across the street from the California Bar, as their mothers kept an eye on them and chatted. And I couldn't believe those beautiful planters on all four corners of 33rd and California. One in front of the apartments, one in front of J'N'Js, one in front of the New Drugstore, and one in front of the New Dry Cleaners. I heard that the plants were all donated by the owner of the New Garden Shop, on the corner of 33rd and Cass streets. I stopped in for lunch at the recently opened Mexican restaurant, between the Garden Shop and the New Pet Store, and recognized the girl behind the counter as one of the kids who went to Yates Elementary

School some years back. She told me that the new Yates school on the east side of 33rd street, between Burt and Webster, across the street from TAC, opened last fall and it's one of these new Learning Centers, where all the new innovative teaching concepts are used, and that everyone one in town wants to send their kids to it. She told me not to miss going to see the new Zorinski Community Center where the old Yates School used to be. She said they have Literacy classes, and parenting classes, and there's a Daycare and a Pre-school, and arts and craft workshops, and other programs for the elderly. She said Mutual of Omaha, Creighton University, and Boys Town Institute donated all the equipment for the Computer Center, and that volunteers help local young people improve their chances of getting good jobs. She said she's a senior in high school now, and she volunteers at the Community Center as a math tutor for elementary age kids in the neighborhood, and that Creighton University students also tutor high school dropouts in their G.E.D. program at one of the fraternity houses in the area. She was apparently very proud of her neighborhood, and with good reason. "What in the world happened here?" I asked. And you know what she told me?

"IT ALL BEGAN WITH THE GIFFORD PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION..."

...today's fiction can be tomorrow's fact.



Grow in Gifford Park

What a difference a year makes! Below are before and after photos of the new plantings in Gifford Park at the corner of 33rd and Cass Street. Last fall, volunteers planted the triangle in roses and bushes. This year, the flowers have grown and now surround the park's cyclist statue with color.



The most haunted house in the neighborhood...

Neil and Mary Liberty's home may not actually be haunted, but it has one of the most elaborate Halloween displays in the neighborhood.





Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
 PO Box 31462
 Omaha, NE 68131



Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Membership Application

The GPNA Membership year runs from January 1 to December 31.

Type of Membership: Single (\$10.00) Family (\$15.00) Business (\$25.00)

Today's Date: _____

Name (person 1): _____ Email: _____

Name (person 2): _____ Email: _____

Name (person 3): _____ Email: _____

Name (person 4): _____ Email: _____

Name (person 5): _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Volunteer Opportunities! I'm interested in helping with....

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanup/Beautification | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Delivery | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Easter Egg Hunt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Block Captain | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Spring Cleanup |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Planting | <input type="checkbox"/> Fall Cleanup |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landlord/Tenant Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Watch Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Walks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Liason | <input type="checkbox"/> Call Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Banquet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tool Lending | | | |