



Gifford Park's Pride

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

November 2014

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

20th Annual Halloween Haunted House

By Chris Foster

Great dry fall weather with temperatures in the 50s set the perfect atmosphere for this year's 20th Annual Gifford Park Neighborhood Halloween Haunted House event held Tuesday, October 28. Many thanks to the 3100 Chicago Street House guys and the Delta Zeta Creighton Sorority gals for their efforts and doing the lion's share of the work! Particular thanks go to Connor May and Maxine Holmes for leading their respective groups. All activities were free, they included games with prizes, cookie decorating, a popcorn popper, face painting, hot cocoa, juice, baked goods and other treats. Festivities started at 6:00pm and got scarier as the evening darkened. 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! We also had great help from GPNA folks who either volunteered and/or donated items and treats: Jan Franks and her granddaughter Brittany Rubek, Bob Hutton, Mike Caban, Jim Wilwerding and Chris Foster. Bob, Mike and Jim did watch group duties keeping an eye on safety. Thanks to our dedicated newsletter delivery folks who distributed event fliers throughout the neighborhood. Many folks commented "this year was the best ever." It seemed everyone including participants, parents and volunteers had a good time!

For photos from the Haunted House, see page 4.

**Next General Meeting
Thursday, November 13**

7:00 pm

**Alegent Creighton Medical Center
Morrison Seminar Room**

**Topic:
GPNA Officer Elections
Turner Park North Soccer Field**

Proposed Board

Officers

**President: Luther Larson
Vice President: Eric Purcell
Treasurer: Alexandra Goswami
Secretary: Jill Westfall**

Board Members

**At-Large: Andy Wessel,
Mark Trampe, Charles Mitchell,
Marie Helen Andre
Business Liaison:
Martin Janousek
Landlord Liaison: Chris Foster**



**Happy
Thanksgiving!**



2014 GPNA OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

ERIC PURCELL
402-719-5108

VICE PRESIDENT

RICKY GREEN
402-513-6286

SECRETARY

JILL WESTFALL
402-213-3105

TREASURER

LUTHER LARSEN
402-616-9350

BOARD MEMBERS

AT LARGE

Mark Trampe 332-6188
Laura Weiss 609-444-9125

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 517-5208

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Eric Purcell 719-5108

From the President

By Eric Purcell

October has been a big month in our little neighborhood! Beginning with Big Muddy Urban Farm's end of season Full Moon Feast to the 3100 Chicago Street House 20th Annual Haunted House and of course a big night of trick-or-treating on Halloween, October was full of the things that make Gifford Park great.

Another highlight for me this month is looking at the slate of board members up for election this month! What a fantastic group! Our next general meeting is a big one as we will be voting on our new board members, Andy Wessel, Marie Helen Andre, Charles Mitchell and Alexandra (Alex) Goswami. If you haven't already met them, I hope that many of you will come to the November 13th meeting to get to know these folks and welcome them to the board with a resounding "Yay" vote! I am SUPER excited for the experience and expertise that these four will bring to the GPNA board.

I have to admit, it was a bit of a nail biter this time around. About a week before the printing of this newsletter the board was sitting around my dining room table discussing what new board member options we had. Several folks had already said yes

to joining the board, but we still had a problem. Who would we nominate for president? Per our by-laws, the role of president is a one year term that can be served for two consecutive terms. Then, there must be at least one year before another term may be served. My two years are up and I'm kinda ready for a break! Our current VP, Ricky Green will not be here next year as he is moving to Durango, CO. None of our new board members felt comfortable with leading GPNA their first year on the board-which isn't how we would normally want to do it either. And there just wasn't anyone else on the board who felt they could take on the role of president at this time. ...Until, that is, Luther Larsen said, "If Alex would be the treasurer, I would be president."

Alex had already said she was open to the idea, but we had not yet asked her. So in a flurry of activity, we set out to see if she would take the job! As you can see from our slate of officers and board members, Alex said yes. And so did Luther!

In the end, I am pleased to say that this is a VERY strong board and our neighborhood is in great hands....as long as we vote them in! :)

See you in the Neighborhood,
Eric

GPNA Vision and Mission

As members of Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, we are committed to preserving and protecting our neighborhood. In the spirit of volunteerism and teamwork, and through dedication, integrity and communication with neighbors and local government officials, our goal is to help make the Gifford Park Neighborhood a great place to live, work, learn and play.

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.

Community Bicycle Project Update

By Charles Mitchell

The Bike Project hosted the last Sunday Funday ride of the season on October 26. Nine youth and five adults came out for the ride, including four graduates of our Youth Earn-a-Bike program, one current Youth Earn-a-Bike student, and one Adult Earn-a-Bike graduate. October's ride was our sixth group ride of the season and, alas, our final Sunday Funday ride of the year. The weather was ideal and it was a perfect way for volunteers and Earn-a-Bike graduates to see all of their dedicated bike work put to good use.

The 10 mile ride started at the Bike Project and headed for the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge. After crossing into Iowa we headed north on the bike path, enjoyed the fall scenery, and stopped for a small break before heading back. Along the way, youth graduates practiced signaling and group riding etiquette while rolling smoothly along on the bikes they fixed and overhauled during Bike Project classes. Back in Omaha, we stopped again to rest and socialize while one of our adult volunteers demonstrated how to ride a bike backwards! When we made it back to the Bike Project, it was still amazingly warm so we refueled with some ice cream before everyone headed home.

While the days for temperate riding might be numbered, the Bike Project is still active during Open Shop and Youth Earn-a-Bike getting bikes ready for some invigorating winter riding and for another season of fun rides next year. Come volunteer at the Bike Project to help more people have access to bikes and all of the amazing benefits that come from bicycling! Stop by the shop or email me at charles@communitybikeproject.org to join our amazing team of volunteers.

Fall/Winter Hours

Sunday:

2-6pm – Open Shop

Wednesday:

2-5pm – Youth Shop;

5-7pm – Youth Earn-a-Bike Class

Thursday:

2-5pm – Open Shop (16+ year olds);

5-7pm – Youth Earn-a-Bike Class

Friday:

4-8pm – Open Shop

Saturday:

11am-12pm – Kids' Bike Club;

12-6pm – Open Shop



20th Annual Halloween Haunted House



Community Garden Fall Cleanup

Great fall weather provided ideal working conditions for our fall cleanup days Saturday October 18th 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”. Rose Carlson provided awesome cinnamon rolls for volunteers: Mike Caban, Maria Carlson, Jackie Foster, Paul Pellerito and his three kids (Andrew, Josie, Stella), Elijah Walsh, Emmanuel Frierson, Ethan McNeal, Jayden Story, Ricky Green, Chris Foster, Jenny Waltemath and her daughter Hannah, the Stanley’s (Justine, Witney & Junior), Elder Thompson, Elder Bug, and Maria Diaz. 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.



Restoration Exchange

Congratulations to our neighbors to the north in the Florence Boulevard/Miller Park/Minne Lusa neighborhoods for the record turnout for the annual Restoration Exchange Omaha (REO) fall home tour held on Sunday October 5. A total of 1096 folks toured eight historic homes along stately Florence Boulevard. The tour booklet is now online: <http://www.restorationexchange.org/educate/restoration-tours/>

Look forward to more information in coming newsletters about the 10th annual Restore Omaha Conference February 27 & 28, 2015 at Metro Community College South Campus. Also next year’s fall home tour will be the Hanscom Park neighborhood. Stay tuned.

A Kite Flying Festival

By Teal Gardner

On October 18th some kids & adults came together for a kites festival at Gifford Park. It was a small gathering, but hopefully will lead to more of its kind in the future. A big thanks to everyone who came out to enjoy the park and a fun activity. Look out for a second Kite Flying Festival this spring!

When Oscar asked me to help him put on a kites festival, he'd just made one. It was a piece of orange nylon fabric cut into an approximate diamond, held to dowels with clear packing tape. A longer bit of nylon attached to the end was a tail; string tied to the cross bar let him run with it. This was in August, after a Play Lab workshop that I had hosted downtown at the Bemis Center. Before leaving, he ran up to me so excited he could hardly get the words out: "I want to- could you help me- I want to make kites, with other people! Let's make it so everyone can get together and make kites like this. And then we can fly them!"

Oscar's idea, although forgotten by both of us almost instantly, was carried back to me on a gust of wind in early October. We decided to organize a kite day, and I suggested Gifford Park as a location. He made fliers with pictures of kites and the materials we'd used to make them. We advertised on Facebook and through the Community Garden email list, and on the bulletin

board at the school where I work & where Oscar is a first grader. His mom got together kite making supplies; Chris Foster helped to transport some tables into the greenspace behind the tennis courts; some families showed up; kids wandered through; and the kite festival was on. Kites were constructed with basic materials and decorated with ribbon and sharpies. Everyone was eager to make a kite, though no-one would claim to be an expert. We trial & erred our way along until every kid had a kite.

But there was one thing missing... Not a breath of wind blew on October 18. It was least windy fall day I have ever experienced in Omaha; where the leaves of the cottonwood trees hung strangely still, and the plastic flagging I'd hung as decorations stood immobile stretched between two trees. All of the adults laughed, how could it be that kite day was windless? But we helped the kids make their kites from plastic bags, newspapers and dowels, and the kids ran and launched them, the kites took off behind the speeding runners, and everyone was panting and laughing by the end.

It was fun to use the park as a spot to host a community event, which brought together neighbors as well as people from out of Gifford Park. I am convinced that facilitating activities for kids is a fantastic way to build community, and look forward to using the park space for more events of this kind. Hope to see you!



Iowa/Nebraska IN the Neighborhood Conference “Celebrating Strong Empowered Neighborhoods”

On Friday, Oct. 10 and Saturday, Oct. 11, 155 individuals attended the First Iowa/Nebraska IN the Neighborhood Conference at the South Omaha Campus of Metro Community College which presented programs, solutions and experiences to help neighborhood leaders and residents find solutions in their own community. On Friday attendees were able to go on unique tours in both Omaha and Council Bluffs that gave them the opportunity to see the Gifford Park and Dahlman Neighborhoods, outstanding murals around the city, historic neighborhoods in Council Bluffs and a bike tour through downtown Omaha. NUSA (Neighborhoods USA) representatives took a tour of our Gifford Park Neighborhood with tour stops at the community garden, chicken ranch, Big Muddy Urban Farm, Shelterbelt/SNAP Theatre, Community Bicycle Shop, Maud Boutique, Gifford Park and ended with delicious lunch and conversation at Marrakech Restaurant. Saturday brought opening remarks from Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert and Council Bluffs Mayor Matt Walsh. Mayor Stothert recognized the Gifford Park Pride’s Gold Award for neighborhood newsletters. A Luncheon Keynote Speaker, Gus Newport, a nationally renowned community activist who encourages neighborhood planning from the “bottom up, not top-down.” Gus answered many questions for local neighborhoods who want to be in the know on national solutions. Plans are being made now to continue the event next year by combining it with the Restore Omaha tour the first weekend of October.



Around the Neighborhood



Every Tuesday Jim Kyler, Roger Freeman and Bob & Virginia Hutton volunteer to organize and distribute free fruit and vegetables from Whole Foods as an outreach from “Food Not Bombs” in Gifford Park.

Remembering Dan Begley

By Erin Grace

His light was on before we rose and it was on when we went to bed. Dan Begley's home on Webster Street was our neighborhood lighthouse. When I saw the glow from the TV or the retired mailman on his front stoop, I knew all was right with the world. The comfort came not only in knowing that Mr. Begley was always around.

It came in the news he always brought, in the connections he made, in the easy-going, friendly way he had with people. But the light has been out, the porch has stood empty and if Mr. Begley is keeping watch, it's from much farther away than across the street. Our dear neighbor died Oct. 17 after his big heart finally gave out. He was 77.

The wake service and funeral were lovely, very Irish and - son Danny had joked - only missing campaign signs by the altar. If you didn't know Mr. Begley, you could easily pick out his yard. It would be the one planted with the names of Democrats. He was an ardent Irish Catholic Democrat and once gave my children a prized possession - a framed photograph of JFK.

We only knew Mr. Begley for four years, but it felt like forever, which was the kind of effect he had on people. He met my husband first on move-in night. The rented truck had gotten stuck in the interminable winter of 2009-10 and Mr. Begley had come to the rescue with a plank of wood and a few cold ones.

That began a friendship that taught us a lot about the neighborhood. He was a walking Omaha history book, offering an interesting take on the antics and heroics of the past. He could delineate many family trees and tell you how people were connected. He rooted me to my own past: "Grace?" he said when we first met. "As in 3416 Hawthorne?" That's where my dad's family had grown up. Mr. Begley had delivered mail there.

He rooted us to Gifford Park, a neighborhood that was like a hidden secret. He introduced us



to fellow neighbors and I discovered the wonderfully rich roots of families that go way back, like the Viponds and the Wilwerdings. Mr. Begley was not an original Gifford Parkian. He was born and raised in south Omaha, attended St. Agnes grade school and took streetcars across town to Sacred Heart High School in north Omaha. He was in Army and served in Germany. He had 45-year career with the U.S. Postal Service. He retired in 2001.

Mr. Begley and his late wife, Mary Kay, raised four boys in their home on Webster Street: Brian, Mark, Danny and Jim. They were longtime members of the Cathedral parish. And both were politically involved. Dan Begley had a more behind-the-scenes role as a major supporter - driving candidates around, introducing them to the south Omaha Democratic political machine and otherwise attending their rallies and fundraisers. Mary Kay Begley was elected to the Metropolitan Utilities District board and held her seat for 21 years. Their son, Jim Begley, is now on the M.U.D. board. Mr. Begley cared for his wife in the midst of his own cancer. She died in 2010.

We moved in shortly thereafter. Mr. Begley was a regular presence on our porch, in our back yard, in our home. He came to our kids' birthday parties. He watched my sick child so I could run the others to school. He caught our ever-escaping dog. And he always lugged our garbage cans to

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Remembering Dan Begley

continued from page 8

the back and fished our paper from the curb to place it right in front of our door. He loved being in the know - and we had fun dishing about Omaha politics. But he didn't like bad news and he wasn't a gossip. "Tell me something good," he'd say.

He was hopeful. He was hospitable. He was part of what made Webster Street our home. Mr. Begley was tickled - and heartened by all the good things happening in our neighborhood. When we were driving back from voting in the May primary, I pointed out our friendly, neighborhood chickens on 33rd and Webster and he smiled and said now he'd seen everything. He was thrilled by the garden, the market and all the ways in which Gifford Park veterans and newcomers alike were stitching the neighborhood together.

His light may be out on Webster Street but Mr. Begley shines on in the friendliness of strangers and goodness of others.


Big Muddy Urban Farm Named to "Good Food Org Guide"

The James Beard Foundation and Food Tank have included six Nebraska organizations in the first annual "Good Food Org Guide" including Gifford Park's own Big Muddy Urban Farm. The Guide highlights nonprofit organizations that are doing exemplary work in the United States in the areas of food and agriculture, nutrition and health, hunger and obesity, and food justice. The organizations selected spotlight efforts focused on community building and engagement, advocacy, and service.

These groups include organizations who combat childhood obesity; prevent food waste; educate consumers on healthy, nutritious food choices; create networks of social entrepreneurs; highlight solutions for restoring the health of people and the planet; inspire and educate individuals to cook more of their own food; and protect public health, human health, and the environment.

Congratulations to Big Muddy Urban Farm for the honor. We're proud to have you in the neighborhood!

City Solutions

Animal Bites	444-7578		
Barking Dogs (sick, injured, or stray animals)	444-7800		
Cars (abandoned or junked)	444-5782		Gas leaks, waterline breaks,
Cars/Trailers parked on front lawn	444-5350		fire hydrants
City Services (complaints or information)	444-5555		Handicap Parking Stickers
Crime or Vandalism	444-5600		Hedges, tree limbs blocking view/traffic
Empty buildings, Houses (vacant or dilapidated)	444-5371		Neighborhood Watch Program
Gang Hotline (Youth intervention)	444-6920		Rats, raw garbage, etc.
Garbage not picked up	444-5238		Street Construction
Garbage/Litter violations	444-5910		(problems or complaints)
			Tenant/landlord discrimination issues
			Zoning Enforcement



Gifford Park Neighborhood Watch Group volunteers Mike Caban and Jim Wilwerding keeping eyes and ears open during the 20th Annual Haunted House held Tuesday night October 28 at the 3100 Chicago Street House. The new magnetic vehicle signs look sharp!

Save the Date!

Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

HOLIDAY BANQUET

**Wednesday, December 10
6:00 pm**

**Creighton University
Medical Center
Becic Dining Room**

Gifford Park Neighborhood School

There is not much new to report until we see if voters in the Omaha Public Schools district approve a \$421 million bond issue on the November 4th ballot. The OPS board voted unanimously to put the bond issue on the November ballot to pay for school construction projects, including building upgrades and new schools. If the bond issue passes there is a line item in the current proposed OPS facility plan to build a new elementary school in our neighborhood, the location yet to be determined.

As you probably 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 children K-6th grade in the Yates attendance area, 165 are assigned to Kellom School and 188 are bused to 39 different schools in the district. Letters of support to bring back a neighborhood school have been sent to OPS from the Gifford Park NA, Joslyn Castle NA, Dundee Memorial Park NA, Bemis Park NA, Leavenworth NA, Midtown Neighborhood Alliance, Councilman Chris Jerram, First Presbyterian Church, and residents.

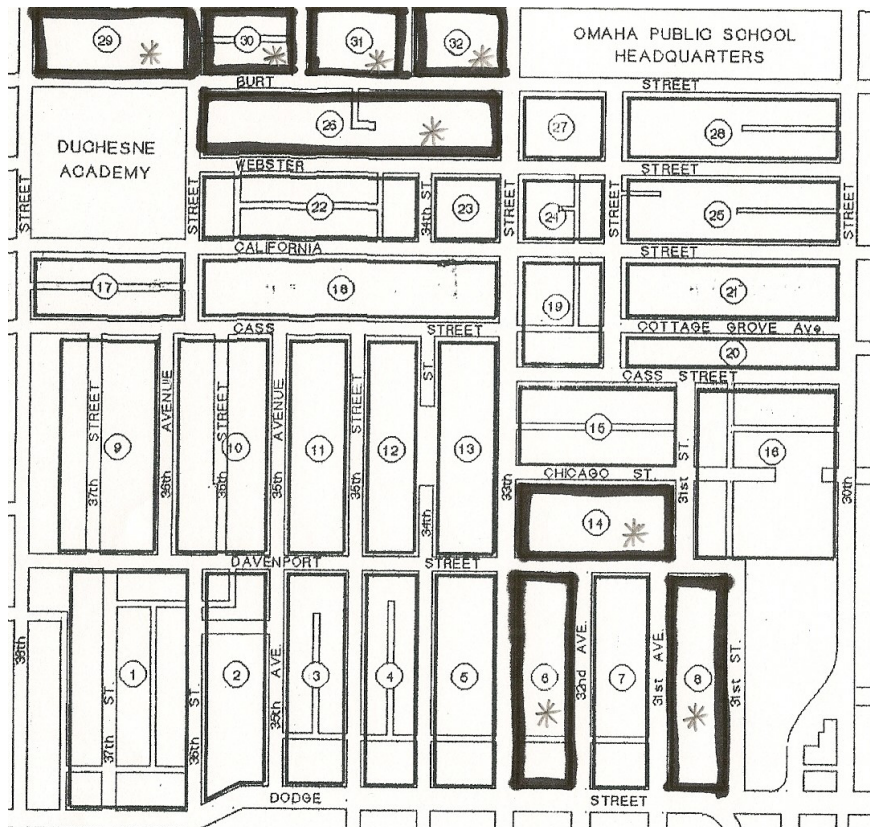
Newsletter carriers wanted!

The GPNA wishes to thank the following dedicated people who volunteer their time to deliver our neighborhood newsletter and event fliers throughout the GPNA boundaries. Some of these folks have been delivering for over 20 years!

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Cynthia Shuck | Chris Foster | Richard White & Clarinda |
| Kirk & Jean Peck | Jim Wilwerding | Karpov |
| Rod & Dana Carlton-Flint | John & Jackie Lynch | Terry Wilwerding |
| Paul Ferrand & Julie Kalkowski | Roger Freeman | Brandon & Megan Sperry |
| Justin & Sandy Brown | Brian & Karen Kokensparger | Paul Mileris |
| Eric Purcell | Bob Hutton | Wendell & Allysa Stanley family |
| Jim Kyler | Mark Shively | (label & mail out) |

A top priority of the GPNA is communication of information to all residents (neighborhood association members and non-members), and complimentary contacts (including nearby neighborhood associations, businesses, institutions, and government officials). During odd-numbered months (January, March, May...) volunteers hand-deliver the newsletter door-to-door. During even-numbered months (April, June...) the Wendell & Allysa Stanley family label and mail out the newsletter to GPNA members and complimentary contacts.

Below is a map of blocks where we need help delivering newsletters. The blocks we need help with have a dark outline and are marked with an (*) astrisk. The job is easy and only every other month (except for an occasional special event flier), and it's good exercise and a great way to get more familiar with the neighborhood. If you would like to help or for more information, please contact Chris Foster 402-290-8187, foster3413@cox.net.





Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
 PO Box 31462
 Omaha, NE 68131

Place
 Stamp
 Here

**Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
 Membership Application**

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

Type of membership: Single (\$10) Family (\$15) Business (\$25)
 Today's Date: _____

Business Name (if applicable): _____

Business Phone (if applicable): _____

Name (1): _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____
 Name (2): _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____
 Name (3): _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____
 Name (4): _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____
 Name (5): _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Call committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Banquet | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Distribution | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanup/Beautification | <input type="checkbox"/> Landlord/Tenant Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> School Liason | <input type="checkbox"/> Tool Lending |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Memberships | <input type="checkbox"/> School Achivities | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Planting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Easter Egg Hunt | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Walks | <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Garden |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Watch | <input type="checkbox"/> Teen Garden | |

Return completed form along with check or money order to:
 Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, PO Box 31462, Omaha, NE 68131.