



Gifford Park's Pride

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

October 2015

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

The new Gifford Park Elementary School

By Mike Caban

It's been a long hard road with many twists and turns, but thankfully the school bond passing last year assured that 17 million dollars are to be used for the construction and land acquisition for a new elementary school, here in the Gifford Park neighborhood. Those of us who have difficulty accepting no for an answer are very hopeful that Omaha Public Schools Administration and their consultants will be true to their words about exploring all options when it comes to the location where the school will be built. We have plenty of reason for concern that "group think" has already set in stone OPS's vision of the new school location without seriously considering our input, and we, the community will be relegated to decide color of halls, furnishings, and other cosmetic trivialities when they see fit to include us.

Our fear is that OPS plans to demolish the Henry W. Yates Elementary School building, on 32nd and Davenport, buying up surrounding housing stock to the west of the school, and building the new school on that footprint. Decades of experience at that location, for residents who have lived here and have witnessed the terrible and dangerous traffic problems with school buses and parents' vehicles in the morning and at end of school day, we know this location will not be the safest for the 400 + children in attendance.

The community does not want the Yates building demolished. Especially when there's a better location potentially available on 32nd and Webster St. It is now owned by Creighton, who ate up

**Next General Meeting
Thursday, November 12**

**7:00 pm
CHI Health-Creighton University
Medical Center
Morrison Seminar Room**

housing stock in the neighborhood, buying out many of the homes between Burt and California, and 32nd to 30th streets, back in the early 90s... for parking. Everyone now knows they're selling the Med Center, and all that parking area (where homes once stood.) And who knows what will replace the hospital in the future.

Some of us have approached Creighton and OPS, hoping that something could be worked out between them, so that the new school could be built at that 32nd and Webster location. Needless to say, it's been like herding cats, trying to get these two bureaucracies to talk to one another. And there are some "whisperings" that actually OPS doesn't want

Creighton to sell them the 3.3 acre parking lot on Webster St, mainly because they have committed themselves to demolishing the existing Yates building, and building the new school on that site. eliminates having to keep the existing Yates building on the books, which wasn't in their plans (budget) from the get-go.

So, we are proceeding with the assumption of 2 possible options for the new School's location:

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2015 GPNA Officers

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Opportunities – Contacts

GPNA General Meetings

Luther Larson, 616-9350

Community Bike Project

Charles Mitchell 309-0777

Community Garden/Youth Garden

Chris Foster 290-8187

Adventure Playground

Teal Gardner 402-875-1896

teal.gardner@gmail.com

Teen Market Garden

Cynthia Shuck 556-2090

dalilabush@cox.net

Gifford Park Market

Martin Janousek 558-4070

Yates Community Center

Susan Mayberger 557-2431

susan.mayberger@ops.org

Youth Soccer

Eric Purcell 719-5108

Youth Tennis

Chris Foster 290-8187

Spring Cleanup

Luther Larson 616-9350

From the President

Where has summer gone? Before we know it we will be scraping frost from the windshields and raking leaves. Hopefully you have all got a chance to head down to 33rd Street on a Friday evening to enjoy Gifford Park Market. What a great neighborhood activity that gives us all an opportunity to get to know our neighbors. Knowing your neighbors is the key to making a better community. In addition to the Market, the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association host many activities throughout the year (i.e., Easter Egg Hunt, Youth Garden, Garden Potlucks, Youth Soccer, Youth Tennis) to help foster neighbors getting out and meeting others from the area.

Even with all that GPNA offers, there are still a large number people within the boundaries of GPNA that we never see at

these events. So I am asking for your help, what kind of event/activity you would like to see the GPNA have/sponsor that you would participate in? Send your ideas to lutherlar@cox.net. If you feel like you want to be more involved in GPNA than attending/volunteering at events, we our currently looking for nominees for a few board positions. Please contact me or any current board member with your nominees.

With the events winding down for the year I would like to thank all that do so much for Gifford Park year-in and year-out. This would include the board members, event coordinators, and all the volunteers. Thanks for your help in making Gifford Park a great place to live, play and work.

Luther

Community Garden Update

Cold weather is approaching after a bountiful and wet growing season. The Gifford Park Community Garden has set the date for its fall cleanup. Join in **Saturday, October 24 from 10am-noon** at the 35th and Cass Street to help pull up withering plants and put the soil to rest for the coming winter.

(Pictured) We had great fall weather for the community garden pot luck dinner on Sunday September 20.



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 brent.lubbert@gmail.com

Building a Treehouse

By Teal Gardner

The Sallie Foster Adventure Playground has been open since May 16, 2015. We have recently embarked on our biggest project to date building a treehouse at the top of the hill. Work commenced at the end of September, and over several Saturdays we've achieved a base structure supported by electrical poles. When we are finished, there will be another level above the lower deck that will span the distance between the trees.

I was somewhat hesitant to begin this project, not because I didn't think a treehouse would be an amazing addition to the playground, rather, I was unsure about how much the youth would end up being involved with the process. A main goal of the Adventure Playground is to provide a space for children to actually create their own environment for play, and ideally for that to occur through the process of play. Would the playground have to sidestep that most important goal in order to create a structure that would require an adult-led team to build it? More positively, what would be gained from the experience of working with a group of professional builders?

If there was any trepidation remaining after several meetings with the youth to get their design ideas, and conversations with Francisco Jimenez Crisostomo of FJC Builders (the team who are leading work on the site) it was quickly dispelled on Saturday the 19th of September. Almost immediately on arriving at the playground to begin work, kids showed up and were involved, digging huge holes for the electrical poles to be placed in. Characteristic of the Adventure Playground youth, there was much sharing of work and encouragement. Huge amounts of dirt were removed from the ground, and transported up to the top of the hill by many willing hands. Then we went on to mix bag after bag of concrete, which was poured from wheelbarrows into the holes to set. Youth were involved every step of the way. Families showed up who were new to the playground. They proceeded to use all



of the space that wasn't full of wheelbarrows and concrete and posthole digging to play.

The next work day was Saturday the 3rd of October. With the help of Francisco, Luis Aguilar, Francisco Tepetzi, Diego Loera, Chris Foster, Matt Cronin and over 10 youth volunteers with a few wonderful parents, we were able to begin the platform. I was again totally thrilled that everyone could be involved with nailing in joist supports, leveling boards, drilling in screws, and moving dirt. Working with Francisco's team has provided many lessons. When it is finished, the treehouse will be a wonderful reminder of how we worked together to create something many times larger than ourselves. Hopefully the skills gained in building it will stay with everyone involved long into the future.

To be sure, the focus on the Playground has shifted during this process, away from imaginative play and toward working as a team, learning and practicing new skills, all with a shared goal in mind. Looking beyond the construction process, I have a great hope that the youth will shape the treehouse by adding elements of their choice. I won't take long for the simple platforms to begin to bear the stamp of the Adventure Playground youth. I know that the youth will construct worlds of their imagination that will transform the treehouse a thousand times over the coming years, and I can't wait to watch it happen.

The new Gifford Park Elementary School

Continued from page 1

Option 1. (Our preference) The new “Gifford Park Elementary School” is built on the 32nd and Webster Street site. The Yates building stays and is used as it is currently, as a refugee/immigrant and pre-K learning center, and ultimately becomes a community center for the neighborhood sometime in the future... (our dream.)

Option 2. OPS demolishes the existing Yates building and builds the new school at the 32nd and Davenport location.

Either way, we win, because we get the new school for our neighborhood that we’ve been fighting for all these years, but sadly with option 2 we lose a historic building that could have continued to enrich the lives of children and adults in our community for years to come, as a community center.

Sure, we have high hopes for Gifford Park, some may say unrealistic hopes... but then 26 years ago a community garden with a children’s summer gardening program was unrealistic; the mention of a neighborhood market on 33rd street would have been laughable back then; the tennis program, soccer, the block parties, the yearly cleanup campaigns, the Easter Egg hunts, the Yates/GPNA cultural events, the park beautification, the bike shop, the Holiday Banquet, one of the lowest neighborhood crime rates in the city of Omaha... all of that and more were just ‘unrealistic’ dreams in the summer of 1988. Look at us now!

A new safe school in the right location, with the right staff and resources, for our children and the future of our community, is very possible.



21st Annual Haunted House

Where:

*****New Location!!!**
35th & Davenport St.

FREE!

When:

Thursday
October 29th
6:00 to 8:00pm



*hosted by the Phi Delta Theta Fraternity,
Delta Zeta Sorority & Gifford Park Neighborhood Association*

All Neighborhood Children and Parents are Welcome to
Stop by for Refreshments and other Fun Festivities!



Treehouse Construction at Sallie Foster Adventure Playground



Final Gifford Park Neighborhood Market of 2015 Season



Playground and Park Clean-up

On behalf of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, a big THANK YOU to Operation Playground leader Maria Devlin & husband Rory and Maria's mom Patty Doyle for leading another Playground/ Park cleanup Saturday September 5, and providing a great healthy lunch for volunteers, and tremendous family support of Gifford Park! Thanks Joy Doll for helping with a GREAT show of support from all the volunteers from the Creighton Occupational Therapy Department - we appreciate so many of you coming out to help on a hot day! We got a lot of work done, especially on the 33rd Street flower beds. Thanks to the City of Omaha Parks Department for dropping off a big load of mulch and hauling away the yard waste!



CERTIFIED ORIGINAL

SHELTERBELT THEATRE

3225 California St. • www.shelterbelt.org
boxoffice@shelterbelt.org • 402.341.2757

Hey, fellow Gifford Park residents!

COME SEE US!



See our current production, *THE SINGULARITY* by Crystal Jackson, for only \$10 if you call or email us your reservation for a Thursday or Sunday performance through October 25 and mention this ad. How cool is that?

THE SINGULARITY is a quirky/funny/creepy/sci-fi dark comedy. Astrid wants to get pregnant, but she's missing one very vital ingredient...so she improvises with a box of dark matter. And it works. She knows something wants out, but she's not sure what that something is! *THE SINGULARITY* asks: What happened before the Big Bang? When they cut your arm off, do you get to keep it? And what's that whistling noise?

(8pm on Thursdays • 6pm on Sunday, except for October 25, which is at 2pm.)

Full Cycle Supper

In its third instalment, The Community Bike Shop hosted 30 riders to a fun, four-mile bicycle tour of Big Muddy Urban Farm plots. Riders enjoyed farm-fresh courses at each site prepared by the talented chefs of Kitchen Table, Chad Lebo of Cure, Ted and Wally's and Tim Maides of Twisted Cork. The alignment was just right for a good evening of riding, as well as a spectacular viewing of a lunar eclipse. Next chance to join in on the ride will be in the Spring.



Apple Trees Planted in Gifford Park

Fallen Fruit, a Los Angeles based art collective, teamed up with the Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, Big Muddy Urban Farm and the Kent Bellows Mentoring program to plant a network of apple trees in a north to south designed Urban Fruit Trails system. Two trees, a Liberty and Cortland Apple, were planted on the west side of the tennis courts in Gifford Park. The trees were planted thanks to the help of many neighbors, from soccer players to youth gardeners. The trees are for public enjoyment and can be picked by anyone passing by.



Did you know that the Creighton Print Center (which generously prints our monthly newsletter) is open to the public? Contact them for any of your printing needs:

Full color digital printing
Brochures and flyers
Presentations and reports
Direct mailers, postcards

Newsletters
Business cards
Large format posters, signs
Books and programs

Creighton Print Center
<http://printcenter.creighton.edu>

Xerox Corporation
Murphy Building
701 North 20th Street
Omaha, NE 68178

creightonprintcenter@xerox.com
tel 402.280.2515
fax 402.280.2370





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"/> Neighborhood Watch | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanup/Beautification | <input type="checkbox"/> Landlord/Tenant Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Distribution | <input type="checkbox"/> Tool Lending |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Memberships | <input type="checkbox"/> School Liason | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Planting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Easter Egg Hunt | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Market | <input type="checkbox"/> School Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Garden |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Walks | <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer | |

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