



GIFFORD PARK'S PRIDE

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

JANUARY, 1992

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Member:**
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345-2476

**At Large Board
Member:**
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342-0869

**At Large Board
Member:**
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345-1433

NEXT MEETING:

JANUARY 2

7 p.m.

**ST. JOSEPH'S HOSPITAL
SEMINAR ROOM**

FREE PARKING

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES REPORT

by Kathy Rose, Social Activities Chairman

Our third annual Holiday Banquet was held and sponsored by St. Joseph's Hospital. Subby Anzaldo was the guest speaker, and St. Joseph's Hospital was presented the first Neighbor of the Year Award, which will become an annual award.

The Holiday Sharing Project touched eleven families this year.

The winners of the third annual Lighting Contest are:

Merlin and Virginia McRoberts — 1st Place

Jerry Rieger — 2nd Place

Lorrie and Wally Doss — 3rd Place

Thanks to all who entered!

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SUPPORT OUR AREA BUSINESSES

by Mike Caban, Budget and Finance

As most of you know, in November the Executive Board approved a proposal to sell business advertising in the *Pride*. I was appointed to research and draft a formula that would be simple to implement and at the same time promote good will and cooperation between our Association, the business community in the area, and the residents of the Gifford Park Neighborhood.

We are all aware of the difficult economic times of today, and in a community like ours, we need to support one another in every way we can. I encourage everyone who reads the *Pride* to make it a point to support those who support us. We need the merchants in this area, and they need us, whether they advertise in the *Pride* or not, show them we want them to do well. Shop at our local businesses. Tell them with your patronage that you appreciate having them close by.

We have been through hard times before, and have risen to meet each challenge. Together we can show how a small community as ours can rally, and overcome any and all adversities. Anyone who would like to place an advertisement can contact me at 341-4722.

SNOW REMOVAL REMINDERS

from a pamphlet published by the City of Omaha

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. We need your cooperation to keep your sidewalks passable for children and others.

It is also against City law to shovel snow off private property into an alley or street.

If you have a comment or complaint, please call the Street Maintenance Office at 444-4919 (24 hour line).

DID YOU KNOW?

from the OPS Drug Free Schools Project

Did you know that . . .

- . 26% of fourth graders and 42 % of sixth graders have already used alcohol?

- . the highest risk for a child's first use of illegal drugs BEGINS at age 12?

- . there is a strong correlation between youth using alcohol and other drugs and youth violence, gangs, and sexual promiscuity?

There is a way for parents to take charge again and to cooperate with other parents to reshape the harmful environments our children face today. It's FREE — but effective! It works! It's the Safe Homes Program, which is a positive prevention program for parents, developed by parents, to support parents. The Safe Homes Program provides a means to know where our children are, who they are with, and that supervision is being provided.

A Safe Homes Workshop is being co-sponsored by PRIDE-Omaha, Omaha Council of PTA/PTSA's, and the Omaha Public Schools.

Register today to participate.

For more information, call PRIDE-Omaha at 397-3309.

TREASURER'S REPORT

By Mike Caban

Balance on 10/31/91	\$2,122.72
Tool Lending Committee	6.00
Donations	1.00
Football Raffle	301.00
Personal Ads -- GPNA Pride	<u>20.00</u>
Total Income	\$328.00
New Bank Checks	13.65
Kinko's -- Banquet Programs	15.00
Stamps	65.83
Regal Awards -- Plaque	<u>46.20</u>
Total Expenditures	\$140.68
Balance on 11/30/91	\$2,310.04

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

from a news release provided by the American Cancer Society

Volunteers are needed to help in the American Cancer Society's Spring Crusade. Your contribution of time, no matter how little or how much, determines the success of the April Crusade.

If you can help us, please call Cheryl Olsberg at 393-7742. Thank you.

Recycle *your* Christmas Tree



HELP OUR ENVIRONMENT

<u>WHEN?</u>	<u>WHERE?</u>	<u>HOW?</u>
<p>December 28th & 29th</p> <p>January 4th & 5th</p> <p>Hours: 10 AM to 4 PM</p>	<p>Tranquility Park Ak-Sar-Ben Fontenelle Park Trendwood Park Springlake Park Ralston City Hall Wehrspann Lake</p>	<p>Please remove everything from your tree except the needles! Wire, tree stands, plastic bags, nails, and ornaments can damage the chippers!</p>
<p>Volunteers will help you unload your tree during the hours listed above.</p>	<p>Old Sarpy County Landfill Ta-Ha-Zouika Park, Elkhorn</p> <p>For more details, call the Recycling Hotline at 444-4500</p>	<p>If you deliver your tree during hours when there is no one there to assist, please toss it up on the pile and leave room to get into the site.</p>

A joint project of local government, civic groups, and private business.

EDITORIAL CORNER

Readers are welcome to submit their letters for the Editorial Corner to any Executive Board member prior to the Executive Board meeting held the third Thursday of every month. The Executive Board has final approval for all editorials appearing in this section. Full name and address must be included on all letters submitted. The views and opinions stated are not necessarily those of GPNA or the Executive Board.

TO BASKETBALL OR NOT TO BASKETBALL COURT

by Mike Caban

THAT, my friends, neighbors, and fellow GPNA members, is the question, and has been for quite some time now. Emotions run deep on both sides of this issue, and such was the case at the November GPNA membership meeting.

A brief historical overview (PLEASE KEEP IN MIND, "HISTORY" IS TAINTED WITH THE BIAS OF THE HISTORIAN. I have no difficulty declaring my bias, but first, I will relate as much unbiased truth as I am able in an attempt to inform you, in the event you don't already know):

The controversy revolves around the future of the basketball court in Gifford Park. Should we ask the city to remove the basketball court? Or should we live with it? Before you decide one way or the other, there is more.

Two points of view prevail:

* **FOR REMOVAL** - Some of us (*myself included*) believe it should be removed, because of the problems it attracts. Examples are: drug and alcohol abuse in the park, profanity, sexual harassment, physical intimidation, and littering. Grown men relieving their bladders in areas where children play. A general disregard for people and property by groups of young adult males who dominate the use of the court for most of the Spring, Summer, and Fall of the year.

* **OPPOSED TO REMOVAL** - Others believe the park is for everyone, and removing the basketball court denies a portion of the citizenry access to the park. The opposition believes we should concentrate on accessibility to Gifford Park, not closing it to a segment of our society. They feel removing the court will not solve the problem, but shift it elsewhere. They assert (*and I tend to agree*), there is not enough for young people to do in our neighborhood. Removal then, denies our children the use of the court for their physical activities.

I have tried to be objective up to this point, and if I haven't, I'm sure I will hear about it. However, this is an editorial.

I must admit, at one time, I too thought the basketball court should remain. I also believed (*at one time*), that a woman's place was in the home. One matures, though, and with experience comes awareness of the realities of life in today's world. I saw the error of my ways, and changed my views on the role of women in society.

I can appreciate the noble, albeit naive idealism of those in favor of keeping the basketball court in the park, yet there is a looming reality they must face, at one time or another. Our children, those who are allowed to play in the park, are exposed to language and behavior not conducive of a healthy, safe, and wholesome environment to enjoy the delights of childhood.

A significant number of parents in our neighborhood have expressed their concerns to me, on several occasions. Mothers are afraid to take their children to the park.

Adolescents don't usually have an opportunity to play basketball while those adult males occupy the court. I have seen it. I have also witnessed adolescents, while waiting to play, begin to emulate undesirable behavior of the older males.

Fear, antisocial behavior, negative role models, this is the reality I speak of. Okay for pool halls, perhaps, but not for a park where children play.

The following suggestions were offered at the November meeting: That hours and rules be posted on the court; that neighborhood adult supervision be present during daylight hours; that we ask the police to increase patrols through the park. All good suggestions, and in a utopian setting, perhaps effective and desirable methods of resolving the problem. Unfortunately the reality is that we couldn't muster adequate adult supervision to control the situation. Chances are that rules and hours posted by the basketball court will be ignored, or vandalized. The reality is that our police department is stretched to its limits with "REAL" life and death issues.

As I see it, there is justified precedence for removal of the basketball court. Mr. Robert Armstrong, OHA director, for instance, has been lauded nationally for his effective method of improving conditions in the Omaha Housing Projects, by expelling drug and violent crime offenders from subsidized housing. Where they go from there, is of no concern to OHA.

Some years ago there were basketball courts in Bemis Park, and they had problems. The courts were removed, and now Bemis Park has Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart concerts. Apparently, our good neighbors to the north placed a higher priority on the concerns of their own community above those of the basketball players. There are basketball courts throughout the city, and as close as the A.V. Sorrensen Community Center.

Personally, when it comes to the health and safety of our community, I prefer to put our children, all children first. There are too many problems, (way beyond my ability to solve) as far as curbing adult behavior is concerned. We need a realistic approach. We must focus our attention on ways to benefit those we can do something for: our children.

The new playground equipment the Parks Department is scheduled to install this year, to replace the old ones, coupled with the removal of the basketball court, (AND THIS IS KEY), will breathe new life into our park. Perhaps then, the families of THIS neighborhood will feel free to take their children to Gifford Park, without concern for their personal health and safety.