



GIFFORD PARK'S PRIDE

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

MARCH, 1993

NEXT MEETING:

March 4

7 p.m.

ST. JOSEPH'S HOSPITAL -- DINING ROOMS A, B, AND C

FREE PARKING

SPRING CLEANUP COMING SOON

This has been a long, rough winter, with more than our share of snow, ice, and cold. But April is coming, and that means Spring Cleanup time for our neighborhood. In the past we have used Spring Cleanup Day to do a number of events, including neighborhood and park cleanup, recycling, membership and donation drive, collect garage sale items, and a picnic in Gifford Park. We can always use volunteers, especially people with trucks to haul. We do not have an exact date yet, but more information will be available as soon as we get it. Check for information at the GPNA office, located at 33rd and California Streets, next to J'N'J Grocery.

OFFICE EVENTS PLANNED

Two items of utmost importance are on the agenda for March:

Painting Party!

Date: March 6, 1993

Place: GPNA Office

Time: 10:00 a.m. to whenever . . .

Why: Why not?

We need lots of volunteers to help paint. The more, the merrier! Come join the fun!

Open House!

Open House will be on March 20, 1993, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Everyone is welcome to come see our new facilities. Also, there will be qualified tax personnel at the office during the Open House to assist those who need help with or have questions about their taxes. Come check out the office and take advantage of the tax help available!

TOOL LENDING HOTLINE

ED: 341-0475

JIM: 341-4695

CHRIS: 342-6006

NEW PARK COMMITTEE CHAIR NAMED

During the February 18th Executive Board Meeting, Mike Caban was named the new chair of the Park Committee. With the upcoming Spring Cleanup, Easter Egg Hunt, and Gifford Park Day, the park is going to be just as vital to our continued neighborhood revitalization as it always has been. If you have any ideas, or would like to help in any way, give Mike a call at 341-4722.

A WORD OF THANKS

The GPNA extends a heartfelt thanks to the advertisers who have either renewed, upgraded, or for the first time purchased yearly ads in our newsletter, GIFFORD PARK'S PRIDE. We are fortunate to have businesses in our community that support our efforts, and continually strive to meet the needs of this neighborhood. Show that you appreciate them by patronizing their businesses and utilizing their services. Let them know that you saw their ad in the PRIDE, and that you are proud to have them as neighbors. SUPPORT OUR LOCAL BUSINESSES!

YOUR GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

Senator John C. Lindsay
Legislative District #9
State Capitol
Lincoln, NE 68509

Subby Anzaldo
Omaha City Council, District 3
444-5525

YOUR GPNA OFFICERS

President: Ron Yates-558-6027

Vice-President: John Lynch-345-9624

Treasurer: Mike Caban-341-4722

Recording Secretary: Judi Caban-341-4722

Corresponding Secretary: Kathy Rose-341-3955

Charles R. Kilgore Jr.
Attorney At Law

**4913 Underwood
Avenue**

558-5000

*** * * * ***

Personal Injury Law
Workers' Compensation
Injury

Insurance Claims

**GIFFORD PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Date _____

ANNUAL DUES -- \$5 (Single), \$8 (Family), \$25 (Business/Institutional)
****Please note: All new and newly-renewed memberships will expire June 1, 1993.**

If paying by check, make checks payable to GPNA
Mail to GPNA: 3225 1/2 California St., Omaha, NE 68131

GIFFORD PARK REVITALIZATION PROJECT

Editor's Note: This is the GPNA's entry for the Omaha Public Schools/Omaha PTA/PTSA sponsored Neighborhood Family Project Contest. Although we did not win the contest this year, we were recognized at Benson High on February 9th for our achievements. Many thanks go to Judi Caban for writing and submitting the entry, and for the hard work she's done for neighborhood families.

Concern about the condition of Gifford Park, located between 35th Avenue and Davenport Street and 33rd and Cass Streets, was one of the primary reasons for the founding of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association in 1988. Old, unsafe playground equipment, litter and trash, overgrown weeds and shrubs, and the use of the park by prostitutes and drug and alcohol abusers, especially during the evening and night hours, all combined to reduce family and neighborhood utilization of the park to practically zero. Conditions were so bad that, in the summer of 1988, KETV aired a segment on the evening news showing some of the worst areas of the park and referring to it as "Glass Park," due to the quantity of broken glass that could be found on walkways, tennis courts, and even the playgrounds and sandboxes.

The revitalization of Gifford Park is one of the stated goals of the GPNA, and in the past 4 years much has been accomplished in our ongoing commitment to reclaim the park, turning it from a dangerous, embarrassing eyesore into a true resource for area families — from children to senior citizens.

The GPNA Park Committee, the first standing committee formed by our organization meets and works with representatives of the Omaha Parks and Recreation Department to formulate and discuss an ongoing, long-term Park Improvement Plan. Some of the results of this collaboration include the removal of old playground equipment and the installation of new equipment, renovation of the softball area and of walkways, installation of new benches, trash cans, picnic tables and grills, the repair of a long inoperative drinking fountain, and the installation of additional lighting. At our suggestion, the Park Department has also removed a large area of overgrown shrubs, where discarded condoms and hypodermic syringes had been found.

Another area in with GPNA intervention has brought improvement is in reducing the use of the park at night for illegal activities. Cooperation with the Omaha Police Department has brought about much stricter enforcement of the posted park closing hours. GPNA members whose property adjoin the park report observed illegal activity to the police, as does the GPNA Watch Group, a GPNA committee whose members regularly patrol our neighborhood on weekend nights. The Association has also persuaded the owner of an apartment building to install safety lighting on his property adjacent to the park parking lot, which is located in a cul-de-sac that was very dark and hard to see from the street.

One of the first organized activities of the newly founded Gifford Park Neighborhood Association was a Park Cleanup Day, held in the early fall of 1988. GPNA members and their families spent an entire day picking up trash, sweeping up glass, and removing weeds and brush.

This activity has been repeated each spring and fall for 4 years, and has been expanded by including a neighborhood picnic, recycling information, and by providing dumpsters for neighborhood residents to use. (Altogether, we've filled 93!) We also do a "mini" cleanup each year just before Yates School students use the park for their annual Fun Day, and GPNA members act quickly to remove any graffiti which appears in the park. These activities promote neighborhood pride and respect for park property, especially among neighborhood children, who are encouraged to participate. We have observed a marked decline in littering and vandalism in the park over the past 4 years.

In addition to the Cleanups, the GPNA has encouraged and promoted utilization of the park by sponsoring several annual family-oriented activities. Our Halloween Pumpkin Give-Away is held in the park, where each fall for 4 years the GPNA has distributed a truck-load of free pumpkins to neighborhood children. The park is also the site of the GPNA Easter Egg Hunt, where children ages 1 through 12 search for eggs, candy, and prizes and visit with the Easter Bunny. At the fourth of these free-of-charge events, in the spring of 1992, we counted 77 children and their families! Both of these activities are scheduled to be repeated in 1993.

(continued on next page)

Want to Advertise in the Gifford Park Pride?

For information contact:
Mike Caban
422-4343 weekdays
341-4722 evenings

HAPPY BIRTHDAY KELLY!!

Dad, Jackie,
Shannon and Corey



GIFFORD PARK REVITALIZATION PROJECT (continued)

At our first Gifford Park Day Celebration in August of 1992, activities included a free pancake breakfast, family softball games, a pot-luck picnic lunch, a live music concert, and organized games for children and adults. Although no formal count was taken, a reasonable estimate of participants in all the events would be around 75-100. Planning has already begun for the second Gifford Park Day, which will be held on July 24, 1993.

We are especially pleased that the improvement in Gifford Park has been recognized by people and organizations from "outside" the neighborhood. In 1990, after discussions with the GPNA, the Central Omaha Pony Baseball League added Gifford Park to their list of scheduled locations for practices and games. The GPNA also sponsors a Pony League team. At the urging of the GPNA and City Councilman Subby Anzaldo, the Omaha Parks and Recreation Department has used Gifford Park for some of their Show Wagon programs for the past two years, and in August of 1992, Gifford Park was selected as the site of the city-wide kick-off for the National Night Out program.

The GPNA is proud of the progress and outcomes that have resulted from our Park Revitalization Project thus far, and it continues to be one of our organization's highest priorities. As to the observable and measurable outcomes — all one needs to do is visit Gifford Park on any warm spring or summer evening and observe mothers chatting as their children enjoy our new, glass-free playground, senior citizens strolling and relaxing without fear, college students playing frisbee and tennis, and families rooting for their child's baseball team, to realize how far we've come. From "Glass Park" to the site of city-wide events in 4 years of cooperative community effort. We hope you'll agree that the transformation of our neighborhood park is the Familyness concept in action!

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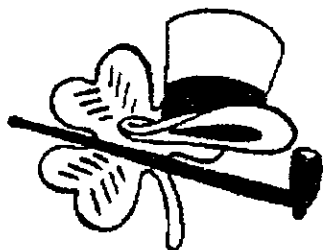
**\$2 OFF ANY MEDIUM OR
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ARTS AND CRAFT SALE AT ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL

Saint Joseph Hospital is hosting an Arts and Craft sale on Friday, April 2, 1993, from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The sale will be in the Seminar Room. More than 20 tables of Arts and Crafts will be available to employees and the public. The craft vendors are our own employees of Saint Joseph Hospital, Creighton University, Boys Town National Research Hospital and Heartland. There will be a wide variety of arts and crafts available, including handcrafted projects such as needlework, woodworking, sewing, painting, jewelry, clay, weaving, floral, pottery, and etc. Please stop by and you might find some gift ideas for Easter, Mother's Day, Graduation, 4th of July, and etc.



Happy
Saint
Patrick's Day

From The Lynch Family

**California Bar & Pkg.
510 N. 33rd. Street**

Serving the Gifford Park
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3301 California Street - 422-1058

WE DELIVER!

8 AM-10:00 PM - Monday Through Saturday

8 AM-9 PM - Sunday

WILDLIFE FLOURISHING IN GIFFORD PARK

The zoo is not the only area to observe wildlife. My small yard is taking on zoo-like characteristics. My six year old informs me that Dinohyus, the "Terrible Pig," roamed this area only 15 million years ago. I've wondered if Dinohyus would be any less demanding that our present array of tenant animals.

Our situation began innocently. While moving in, small animal droppings were discovered on the back porch. Being novice "city dwellers," we decided this was a sign of rats. After much panic and imagination, we set out to rid our property of the rats, only to discover we had five squirrels that also call this property home. Feeling both stupid and guilty, we made retribution to the squirrels by leaving out some tidbits. Soon they all had names.

It wasn't long before the birds began to watch the squirrels and we began to leave seed out. The year went from autumn to winter, and the appetites of our tenants increased as the temperature decreased. In "Song of Myself," Whitman wrote, "I think that I could turn and live with animals. They are so placid and self contained." It's a peaceful thought, but the wildlife that have taken to my yard are neither peaceful nor self contained!

We are NOT early risers, but THEY are! The cheeky little buggers that can fly arrange themselves

to make calls at my bedroom window as soon as daylight appears. The squirrels pound the fence to attract my attention should I try to linger in bed. My children have always bided by a single, unyielding house rule: Avoid your mother until she has had her first cup of coffee. They understand this and honor this regulation. However, the back-yard zoo does not and sees nothing sacred in allowing me my routine. I try to elude them, make my way to the kitchen silently, but they have animal instincts and know the minute I'm on my feet.

I bring up the injustice of this good-deed-gone-awry because now there is a 30 pound opossum at my back door! A slow moving target, this possum is too huge to scurry but saunters past me with a look of indulgent superiority! His size has given us cause to check the yard before allowing our five pound dog outside.

I feel a certain responsibility to this native Nebraskan since it was I who inadvertently lured his coming into daylight with tidbits. To my husband, the possum is an "I thought you learned your lesson" after hand-fed raccoons caused havoc in our Connecticut kitchen. His method of opossum exorcism is to stand in the yard and bark at them, but this is becoming an embarrassment for me and difficult to explain to people passing by.

If anyone has a solution to either the possum or my husband's barking antics, please address them to the GPNA, but, please, no recipes!

COMING IN APRIL . . .

APRIL MEETING TO BE HELD AT NEW CARDIAC CENTER

Our April 1 meeting will be held at Creighton's new Cardiac Center, immediately following an open house and tour of the building. All Gifford Park neighborhood residents, including those who were former residents of the 30th and Webster area, are encouraged to attend.

EVENTS IN PLANNING STAGES FOR APRIL

Please watch for two events coming up in April:

- 1.) Spring Cleanup will be held sometime in April (see article in this issue).
- 2.) The Annual Easter Egg Hunt will take place on the Saturday before Easter, April 10th.

Watch for the dates and times for these events
in your April newsletter,
or call Ron Yates (558-6027) for more information.