



Gifford Park's Pride

Gifford Park Neighborhood: A Great Place to Live, Work, Learn and Play

September 1995

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Garage Sales! Garage Sales!

Have you had a garage sale lately? Ever? Well here's your chance. The Gifford Park Neighborhood Association is going to sponsor "Area Wide" garage sales on **Saturday, September 16th**. On that day, everyone in the neighborhood can have a sale with the Association paying for the advertising. With many locations selling, much larger numbers of potential customers will be brought into the area.

Having a garage sale is a great way to get rid of lots of things you haven't used for years but hated to throw away. And the amount of money that can be made is surprising. If you don't think you have enough for your own sale, pair up with a neighbor. It can be a lot of fun and very rewarding.

If you are interested in participating, call **Leo Wilwerding** at **345-1433**. He is coordinating the listing for advertising and can offer suggestions on how to run your sale.

On the day of the sale, flyers will be distributed showing all locations. It is important to call and arrange to have yours included plus getting filled in on all the details. Do it now! Think what you can do with all that money - plus gain lots of storage room!

HAVE FUN...MAKE \$...CALL LEO, 345-1433.

Do You Have The COURAGE To Call?

Abandoned Cars/Junk Cars	444-5782
Vehicles Parked on Lawn	444-5379
Gang Unit-Omaha Police Dept.	444-6920
Narcotics-Omaha Police Dept.	444-5681
Code Enforcement/Deteriorated Bldgs. ...	444-5371
Crime or Vandalism	911
Mayor's Action Office	444-5555
Weeds/Litter	444-5910
Yard Litter (furniture, etc.)	444-7481

Believe it...your call makes a difference!

Next Meeting

**Thursday, September 7th
7:00 P.M.**

**St. Joseph's Hospital
Dining Rooms A, B, & C**

FREE PARKING

From The Heart...

Officer Jimmy Wilson, Jr.

by Ron Yates, GPNA President

Ron's article also appeared in the editorial section of the August 28th edition of the Omaha World Herald.

Three generations of public service ended Sunday, August 20th at 8:02 p.m. There will not be a fourth generation. Officer Jimmy Wilson, Jr.'s killers never allowed this young man the chance to start a family. The members of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association are unable to express the degree of anger, fear and sadness that we feel. To Officer Wilson's immediate family we wish to express our sorrow and sadness. To his extended family, the law enforcement community, and their supporters, we wish



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Ron Yates 558-6027

WEEDS & LITTER

Leo Wilwerding 345-1433



Gifford Park Participates in Celebrate Trees Program

KETV and the Papio-Missouri River NRD have awarded the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association a Celebrate Trees grant for \$1,000 for tree planting. This should allow us to purchase seventeen trees. A reminder for anyone who has had or will have one of these trees planted on your property - please take care of them. With the very hot and dry summer here in 1995, give extra care to your young trees. Trees enhance character to your property and neighborhood.



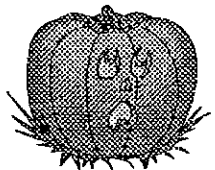
Mini-Cleanup of Cuming Street Scheduled for September

As you may have seen in the July newsletter, the GPNA did a mini-cleanup in the Business District around 33rd & California Streets in June. About a dozen members of the GPNA spent for an hour and a half cleaning streets and sidewalks. Now we are planning another mini-cleanup for the Cuming Street area on Sunday, September 10th. We will start at 36th and Cuming at 8 a.m. and head east along Cuming Street. The more volunteers we have the quicker we can get the job done - probably in just an hour or two! Please call Chris Foster (342-6006) or Ron Yates (558-6027) for more information.



Halloween Party Plans Being Formulated

The GPNA and Yates School are working on plans for a Halloween Party for neighborhood kids on Halloween night. Volunteers are always needed. Contact Betty Slayden at Yates School (344-7895) or Cynde Yates (558-6027) for details.



Buy River City Roundup Buttons From Yates PTA

Yates School PTA is selling River City Roundup buttons. The cost is \$2 per button and Yates PTA will keep 75 cents of each button sold. The cost is the same wherever you buy your button so please consider helping the PTA with this small fund-raiser. If you would like to buy some buttons please call Betty Slayden, Yates PTA President at 553-3311 or you may call the school at 344-7895. Thanks for your support of our kids.

From the Heart...Officer Jimmy Wilson, Jr.

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to say that we care about you and your work and know that you lost a brother. Members and others need to be reminded that if the slime-balls will fire at an armed police officer, they may also use us, you and me, and our children, for target practice. When these killers are brought to justice (and they will be), we hope their support group (those who provided them with vehicles, shelter and a weapon) are charged with being accessories.

While Officer Jimmy Wilson, Jr. is at the front door of Heaven, may his killers find the back door of Hell.

TOOL LENDING HOTLINE

Tom 341-3955

Ed 341-0475

Ron 558-6027

Mowers - \$5

Rent for most tools - \$3



The Shelterbelt Theater: New Players in the Neighborhood

At the July 20 GPNA Board Meeting, Eric O'Brien, who is the Marketing and PR Director of the Shelterbelt Theater Group, approached the board about supporting the Shelterbelt's application for a Class C liquor license. He feels a liquor license will draw a larger crowd to the shows and thereby improve the economic viability of the business. He pointed out that the clientele who come to the theater/entertainment house are young, educated professionals who have an interest in the arts, and that their presence would be good for the business district of the Gifford Park Neighborhood. The board approved Eric's request.



I interviewed Eric at the Shelterbelt one night, while The Main Stream Jazz Quintet rehearsed in the background. (Main Stream plays at the Shelterbelt Tuesday nights a 9:00). I asked Eric if he'd gone before the City Council yet for the license. He told me that the application is in the hands of the State Liquor Commission and that after they review it, it will be forwarded to the City Council. Eric believes it will be approved. "Chuck [Kilgore] has a lot of connections, and he's been an upstanding member in the community for a long, long time. Plus, I think I can portray myself as an upstart, young entrepreneur, which I think the City Council will find attractive. Also the fact that all of us [the Shelterbelt staff] live and work in this neighborhood and are trying to do something here that is so novel for this part of town."

Eric graduated from Creighton Prep in 1988, then went to Kansas City to attend Rockhurst College, where he studied Philosophy and Theater. In 1992 he returned to Omaha and held a variety of jobs: "I've done everything from marketing to telemarketing—in really lean times—commercial voice-over work, professional acting, and banking."

Charles R. Kilgore Jr. Attorney At Law

4913 Underwood Avenue

558-5000

Personal Injury Law
Worker's Compensation
Injury
Auto Accidents
Insurance Claims

California Bar & Pkg. 510 No. 33rd St.

Serving the Gifford Park
Community since 1937
Wayne and Peggy Hill,
Proprietors



Eric stumbled into acting purely by accident when he was at Creighton Prep, an all-boy's school. "There weren't a whole lot of chances to meet women. You see a girl at prep and the whole joint lights up. A bunch of girls were auditioning for this play, so I walked in and picked up a script." He found himself doing theater in high school. In college he continued acting because he thought it would be a nice way to meet people. "I always used it for another end." Back in Omaha, while working for a marketing firm, a friend said, "let's go audition for a play," so he did. It just sort of snowballed from there," Eric said. "Now, I find that I go for more than a month

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GPNA Tennis Program Ends With Carnival for Kids

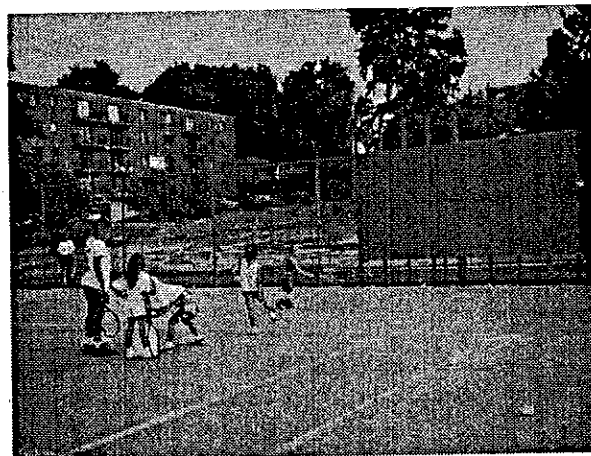
Even with threatening skies, the courts were dry for the final day of the second annual GPNA Tennis Program which combined exercise and fun for both kids and adults. The finale was a tennis carnival in Gifford Park. The tennis lessons, which were held each Wednesday in August in Gifford Park, were free for kids. The GPNA provided racquets, balls, top notch instructors, T-shirts and other prizes. Inflatable dinosaur rafts and Power Ranger items were given away as prizes at the carnival - these were donated by Alan and Marcia Baer. Sun

Dawg T-shirts were donated by the City of Omaha. We also drew names for two tennis racquets.

As with last year's tennis program, the excellent volunteer instructors, most of whom are from the Gifford Park Neighborhood, made the difference. Steve Countryman, Diane Countryman, Chris Foster, Jenny Foster, Roger Freeman, Rita Hansen, Kirk Peck, H.C. Taylor and Ed Trandahl all did a great job! And Betty Slayden, Cynde Yates and Ron Yates handled administrative duties - the program wouldn't have happened without you either. Great job everyone!

Backboard in Gifford Park is Expanded

The tennis backboard in Gifford Park has just been expanded from eight feet to sixteen feet wide. This will significantly increase the ability to keep a "rally" going with the additional surface hitting area. Ed Hendershot, Tom Rose and Ron Yates erected the backboard in about an hour and a half. The materials came to only \$150 thanks to Micklin Lumber and Ideal Hardware. Micklin Lumber gave us a good deal on treated lumber. Ideal Hardware helped us out on excellent quality paint. These two businesses have been good neighbors, so stop in and tell 'em thanks.



A big thanks to Robert and Margaret Foster (grandparents of Chris Foster) - they just became the GPNA's newest members and donated the money for the backboard materials. Incidentally Robert, who was the New Hampshire state tennis champion for several years back in the 1940's, says he learned to play tennis by practicing against a backboard much like ours in Gifford Park. TRY IT OUT!

by Chris Foster



The First Baptist Church

421 Park Avenue
Omaha, Nebraska 68131
Phone (402) 345-5009

Sunday School 9:45 A.M., Worship 11:00 A.M.

Aaron J. Sciford, Sr.
Interim Pastor

Paul D. Thompson
Minister of Youth & Christian Ed.

The Shelterbelt Theater: New Players in the Neighborhood *continued from page 3*

without it and I start to get really kind of antsy, unhappy. It has really become the primary focus of my life." Eric did shows at The Firehouse, The Playhouse, The Chanticleer in Council Bluffs, and started a company called SNAP Productions. Then he became involved with The Shelterbelt.

The Shelterbelt Group started two years ago when an Omaha playwright named Scott Working wrote a two-act called *V of Geese*. Unable to find a theater to stage it, he decided to stage it himself. One day he wandered into Kilgore's Sandwich Shop and asked if he could do his play there. Scott and his actors performed on Friday and Saturday nights for two weekends, just like a band would. Chuck kept the money from food and beer, and Scott kept the money from ticket sales. The play was a great suc-

cess. Scott and his actors, who called themselves The Shelterbelt Theater Group, decided to stage another play, a series of David Mamet sketches called, in its entirety, *All Men are Whores*. That's when Eric came aboard.

When Chuck announced he was going to close the sandwich shop, The Shelterbelt approached him about managing the facility themselves. Six months ago Kilgore's closed, and The Shelterbelt opened.

The primary purpose of The Shelterbelt is to perform original plays, mainly by Omaha playwrights. To bring in alternative income, there is also jazz on Tuesdays, poetry on Wednesdays, and folk music on Thursdays.

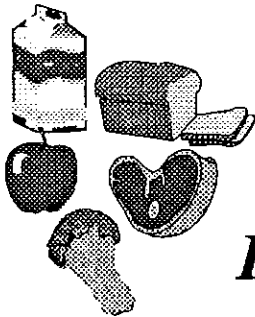
Eric's vision for the Shelterbelt is that the group perfect its craft well

enough to play throughout the region, at schools and other auditoriums.

The next production at the Shelterbelt is two one-acts, written by The Shelterbelt's sister theater group in Manhattan. The plays are called "On Angel Food" and "Condo in Vegas." They are directed by Jessica Buster and will run Fridays through Sundays from September 8-24.

Eric views The Shelterbelt as a way to give something back to the community, and the neighborhood. "You know all the old clichés about self-expression and positive social change, but in a way, they're really true. 'Cause this is my way to present a take on life that maybe folks don't get a chance to see."

by Shannon Moreau

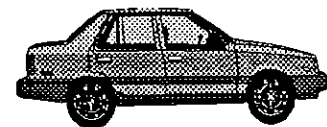


J'N'J GROCERY STORE

*Fresh Meats -- Fresh Produce
Friendly Service*

3301 California Street -- 422-1058

WE DELIVER!



7:00 AM - 10:00 PM Monday thru Thursday

7:00 AM - 11:00 PM Friday thru Saturday

8:00 AM - 10:00 PM Sunday

Historically Speaking...A Family Affair

For the Siracusano's it was a family affair in the 33rd and California business district from about 1912 to 1973. Both Mr. and Mrs. Joe Siracusano were born in Sicily but met and married in Omaha. Joseph was a shoemaker by trade and Lucia was a baker. In Sicily Lucia mixed her bread at home, baked it in the village ovens and sold it to the store. Joe and Lucia never returned to their home-land believing that they had made their mark as Americans and this land is where they should stay.

In Omaha, Joseph set up his shoe repair shop, Eagle Shoe Shop, at 3222 1/2 California with an apartment in the rear for the family. There were five children: Carl, an artist; Al, the barber; Sam and Jim,

the bakers; and their sister, Virginia, who helped in the bakery until she moved to Minneapolis.

Sam and Jim learned the baking trade at Technical High School and, together with their mother, opened the bakery on the south side of California at 3225. It was called the Nebraska Bakery. Sam and Jim would come to work at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning seven days a week to make the day's Vienne bread, their specialty; pan bread; sweet rolls; cake; and more. Mrs. Siracusano ran the store in the front part of the building. Al also attended Tech High and studied barbering. He had his own shop on 33rd street.

Meanwhile Joseph repaired shoes, and even made custom shoes for certain patrons. Business was good since nearly everyone at that time had their shoes repaired many times. On the side, Joe invested in real estate, buying the Melrose apartments and other duplexes in the area.

When World War II came, Sam and Jim went to war and Mrs. Siracusano kept the bakery going by buying her baked goods from Ortman Baking Co. When the boys came home from the war they expanded the bakery into the adjoining building and renamed the store, "Master Pastry Shoppe." They continued baking until early 1973 when they decided it was time to help their dad with his properties.

Mrs. Siracusano died in 1967 and Mr. Siracusano died in 1973. They had either 14 or 17 grandchildren. Their legacy to the 33rd and California business district is their example of hard, honest, and determined work. They started with nothing but determination, and made success of their lives and that of their family members.

(Note: The Siracusano's no longer own property in this area.)

by Eva Swanson

Membership Update

Here is the current membership count:


- 41 Single Memberships
- 50 Family Memberships
- 12 Business Memberships

Below is a list of new members and renewals recently received for the 1995-1996 membership year:

- Duchesne Academy*
- Norman Swanson*
- Ruth Beckman*
- Jean Peck*
- Anne and Linda Chapman*
- Paul Mileris*
- Word Data Corp.*
- Deborah and Robert Headen, Jr.*
- James and Julie Nguyen*
- Les and Mary Morgensen*
- Robert and Margaret Foster*

Remember your membership is a show of support of the GPNA. Please join today.

by Cynde Yates



GIFFORD PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

532 N. 33rd Street, Omaha, NE 68131

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Please print clearly)

Membership year: _____ *(Membership year runs from June 1 through May 31)*

Type of membership: Single (\$5) _____ Family (\$8) _____ Business (\$25) _____

Name of business _____

Name _____ (Last) _____ (First)

Spouse _____ (Last) _____ (First)

Address _____ (Street) _____ (City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip)

Telephone Number: _____ (Home) _____ (Work)

In case of an emergency notify: _____ (Name) _____ (Address) _____ (Phone No.)

May this information be included in the GPNA Neighborhood Directory? Yes _____ No _____

Signature _____ Date _____