



Gifford Park's Pride

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

June 1996

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Spring Cleanup Fills 13 Dumpsters

Some things get better with age - like the Gifford Park Cleanup Crew. Once again our experienced volunteers did a bang-up job with this year's spring cleanup, held Saturday, May 25 in Gifford Park. The weather also cooperated with temperatures in the 50's and just a little drizzle in the morning. Even though it was a holiday weekend we had a very good turnout. The cleanup crew did a great job of hauling trash for neighbors; cleaning yards, parks and streets; separated recyclable items, and packing dumpsters. Volunteers enjoyed hot dogs and pop for lunch. Below is a recap of this year's cleanup:

- filled 13 dumpsters
- recycled about 25 tires
- sold \$50 in garage sale items
- sold \$168 in memberships
- collected \$180 in donations
- collected \$120 in metal and tires

It is Gifford Park's volunteers who make this cleanup successful year after year. Each of you should feel proud of your outstanding efforts. I apologize if any names were left out - everyone who helped deserves to be recognized. Worth noting were the efforts turned in by **Jason Mann** and **Ben Sweazy**. They had large capacity vehicles able to haul several normal pickup truck fulls of trash, this helped a great deal especially with tree

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Neighborhood volunteers packed 13 dumpsters here in Gifford Park during this year's Spring Cleanup.

Next Meeting

**Thursday, June 6
7:00 P.M.**

**Election of Officers
VIP Awards
...and door prizes for everyone**

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

FREE PARKING

Watch Group and VIP Awards to be Presented

Ron Yates, Harry Dirgo Top 1,000 Hours on Watch Group

At the June general meeting, members will be honored for their service to the GPNA over the past year. Watch Group awards will be presented to the following members along with total cumulative hours of neighborhood patrol since the beginning of the GPNA Watch Group Patrol:

Ron Yates	1122
Harry Dirgo	1061
Terry Wilwerding	407
Rich Exline	367
Betty Slayden	174
Greg Slayden	100
Tom Rose.....	16

Ron Yates and Harry Dirgo will be honored for their incredible accomplishment of over 1,000 hours logged! NOVA awards will also be presented in the following categories: new member, experienced member, business member and leadership. Congratulations and thanks for your continued commitment to our neighborhood.

**Total hours patrolling our
neighborhood streets by the
GPNA Watch Group to date is
5,190 hours!**



GPNA OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Ron Yates 558-6027

VICE PRESIDENT

Chris Foster 342-6006

RECORDING SECRETARY

Barbara Remmen 341-8331

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

Cynde Yates 558-6027

TREASURER

Marlene Wilwerding 345-1433

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

C.D.C.

Chuck Kilgore 341-2757

CLEAN-UP

Chris Foster 342-6006

COMPLIANCE

Leo Wilwerding 345-1433

COURTESY

Candy Bacome 344-3233

HISTORIAN

Eva Swanson 345-1707

MEMBERSHIP

Cynde Yates 558-6027

NEWSLETTER

Chris Foster 342-6006

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

Ron Yates 558-6027

OFFICE

Jean Peck 344-0722

PARK

Mike Bacome 344-3233

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Anne & Linda Chapman 348-0464

TOOL LENDING

Ed Hendershot 341-0475

WATCH GROUP

Ron Yates 558-6027



**TOOL LENDING
HOTLINE**

Tom 341-3955

Ed 341-0475

Ron 558-6027

Mowers - \$5

Rent for most tools - \$3



Nominating Committee Report

The following individuals have been selected as the proposed slate of officers of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association after a review of their qualifications per the by-laws, and their acceptance to fill each position for the 1996/1997 year:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| President | Leo Wilwerding |
| Vice-President | Mike Bacome |
| Recording Secretary | Barbara Remmen |
| Treasurer | Jean Peck |

**Election of GPNA
Officers at June
Meeting - You Must
Be a Member to Vote!**

These nominations will now go to the Association at the June meeting for a vote, please plan to attend.

Heroes and Role Models...A Father's Day Message

When I was growing up I wanted to be just like Mickey Mantle. Like a million other boys of my generation I wanted to be like that Yankee Doodle Dandy-Jimmy Cagney too, and Roy Rogers, and Sugar Ray Robinson, and JFK, and Martin Luther King Jr. All good guys, but not a one was Puerto Rican, like me. As I grew older other heroes joined that exclusive club. People like Sammy Davis Jr., Mohammed Ali, and most recently Jimmy Carter. And still, not one Puerto Rican in the bunch.

It wasn't until my two older children came along that I realized, kids need heroes who look like they do. Men and women they can relate to, and who live out a child's fantasies in a positive way. But there comes a time when a child reaches a certain age, when he or she begins to see that heroes are just as human as anyone else. They have weaknesses, and bad habits, and they screw up sometimes, and one by one those childhood heroes seem to tumble from their pedestals.

Once this reality shatters that thin veil of innocence, the need for heroes seems to fade, and the true role models in their lives begin to emerge. That's when a child needs, not Superman, or Wonder woman, but real flesh and blood people to guide them.

I am one of those very fortunate individuals whom, when this time came for me, I didn't have to look very far. To my surprise I found that my greatest hero of all time, looks and speaks and laughs and cries just like me. He isn't tall and muscle bound. He isn't a rich celebrity, or a Super Star.

He's a small thin man who only has an eighth grade education, and who didn't even know the English language when he immigrated to El Barrio of New York City, back in 1942. No other man alive compares to this small giant. No other man ever will. And for as long as I live, no matter how successful, or how many laurels, or degrees, or riches, or fame, or glory I may achieve, I'll never ever come close to the heights this man has climbed. In my eyes, this seventy-five year old Puerto Rican gentleman whips'em all.

Thanks Dad. You are not only my all time hero, but your son's greatest role model too. If every kid in America had a father who loved and sacrificed for them as much as you did for me, the young people of this country wouldn't need gangs, and drug pushers, and gun toting criminals to fill that void in their lives.

To you, and all those fathers like you, Happy Father's Day.

by Mike Caban

Spring Cleanup Report

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brush. Thanks to Cynde Yates and Shelly DeBoer for managing the membership/information table with a smile all day long. Thanks also to Baker Rents for donating a canopy to keep us dry. These are just a few examples of why our cleanups run efficiently - it's our people:

Debbie Anderson	Sallie Foster	Tom Rose
Candy Bacome	Ed Hendershot	Betty Slayden
Mike Bacome	Tim Hendershot	Greg Slayden
Charles Burke	Mark Holzafel	Randy Sloan
Mike Caban	Virginia Hutton	Ben Sweazy
Lloyd Canfield	Bob Hutton	Dallas Sweazy
Summer Daniels	Brian Kokensparger	Martina Trotter
Shelly DeBoer	Jim Kyler	Jim Wilwerding
Harry Dirgo	John Lynch	Leo Wilwerding
Billy Dooly	Jason Mann	Steve Wilwerding
Rich Exline	Susan Moreau	Terry Wilwerding
Sterling Fears	Henry Morgan	Jim Windorski
Roger Freeman	Quynh Nguyen	Cynde Yates
Chris Foster	Barbara Remmen	Ron Yates

The GPNA also thanks the following businesses and institutions for their help. Please support them because they support our neighborhood.

7-Eleven - Chan Laurent

Baker Rents - Pat Glass, Brian Glass

California Bar - Wayne & Peg Hill

City of Omaha - Mayor Hal Daub, Ed Aldmeyer,
Bill Hudson and staff, Subby Anzaldo

Creighton University - Fred Salzinger, Loretta Zuck

Douglas County House Arrest - Lt. Stangel

J'N'J - Loren Johnson

Keep Omaha Beautiful - Cindy Smilley

St. Joseph's Hospital - Gary Honts, Rodney Hay,
Ann Novotny, Jo Miller

Western Auto - Greg Wisgerhof

A special thanks to Mayor Hal Daub, Ed Aldmeyer and their staffs with the City of Omaha and Cindy Smilley and her staff with Keep Omaha Beautiful (KOB) for their continued support of the Spring Cleanup program. The GPNA appreciates your hard work and organization with this effort especially considering the size of the entire project. We hope the cleanup will be able to continue at this level for years to come.

Editor's note regarding errors in May issue: The address in the Ron Yates editorial article about a loud party at 3320 California Street should have read 3330 California Street. Also the correct voting day was obviously not May 7, but should have read May 14.

What's Happening in the Neighborhood...

You won't want to miss the June general meeting at St. Joseph's Hospital, Thursday, June 6, at 7 p.m. We will have the election of officers, VIP and Watch Group awards, committee reports and prizes for everyone donated by St. Joseph's Hospital.

During the Cleanup Omaha program GPNA members Ron, Vicki and Eric Fry, Terry Wilwerding, Ron Short and Chris Foster volunteered at the Aksarben recycling site Saturday, May 11. Keep Omaha Beautiful was very appreciative for their help.

On May 3-4 Boy Scout Troop 125 from Yates School sold \$242 worth of hot dogs at 10 cents each - you do the math, that's a lot of hot dogs!. The event took place at 33rd & California St. and the purpose was to raise money for camping supplies.

The City of Omaha is again having the Sun Dawg summer fun program for kids ages 3-17 (and parents too) from June through August. Activities include sports, games, reading, arts and crafts, computers, the Playground of Champions and more. Gifford Park already has the purple and yellow shack set up. For more information, stop by the Sun Dawgs Shack, or call 444-4FUN.

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Mini-Cleanup Targets Business District

Saturday morning, May 4, GPNA members spent a couple of hours cleaning the business district (33rd & California Streets). Volunteers swept streets, picked up trash, cut trees and grass, and painted graffiti. Many thanks to the following people who helped:

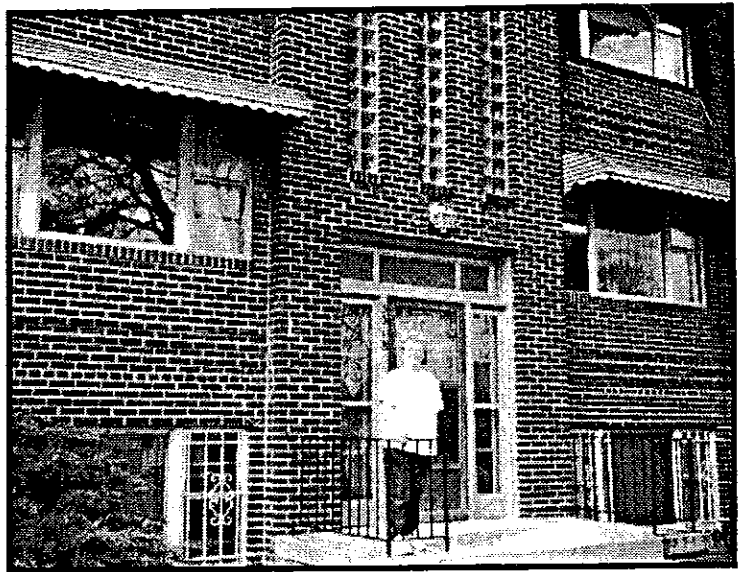
Candy Bacome	Chris Foster
Mike Bacome	Shannon Moreau
Ben Caban	Tom Rose
Mike Caban	Betty Slayden
Anne Chapman	Greg Slayden
Linda Chapman	Brendan Wiechert
Marchus Chester	Debbie Wiechert
Leonard Clark	Cynde Yates
Harry Dirgo	Ron Yates
Roger Freeman	

This is the third mini-cleanup we have had since last summer. We feel they are very effective because we spend a minimal amount of time targeting a small area of our neighborhood. Let us know if you are interested in doing a mini-cleanup on your block.

Landlord of the Month...

Mrs. Irene Kazakevicius

Although the Gifford Park Neighborhood definitely has some rental property that could be improved, we also have a number of excellent landlords who own outstanding properties. The first one to be recognized is Mrs. Irene Kazakevicius, who owns the apartment at 3518 California St. Rather than trying to pronounce her formidable last name, most people refer to her simply as "Mrs. K." Mrs. K. came to the U.S. in 1950 from Lithuania under very difficult circumstances. At one time she owned a considerable amount of property but now only has the apartment building at 3518 California Street. If you drive by you will notice that the property is very well kept, with everything neat, clean and proper. Mrs. K. says this allows her to have much better renters and make more from the property, and she wonders why other landlords have not discovered this. She says that she wishes she had bought more property around the neighborhood a few years ago (we wish she had also). In conclusion, we would like



Mrs. Irene Kazakevicius, pictured here in front of her apartment building at 3518 California St., is our 'Landlord of the Month'.

to say Thanks and Congratulations to Mrs. Irene Kazakevicius, Gifford Park Landlord of the Month.

by Terry Wilwerding

The Variety Store on 33rd Street

Yes, that is what it was called. It sat on the west side of 33rd Street just south of the grocery store... then the Hinky Dinky. A Jewish couple by the name of Cohen ran it. And very well.

They immediately responded when a customer came in the door. With an unflinching courtesy and a desire to please. If they did not have the item you were looking for, they always offered to order it and have it in the next day or two.

In the 1940's, there was a good deal more bigotry than there is today, despite nostalgic talk of how neighborly people used to be. Unfounded rumors flew about every group. Catholics didn't go inside Protestant churches and vice versa. Minority business people of whatever nationality were looked at somewhat askance, whether they be the roving produce man, the iceman, the baking people, the shoe shop proprietor or the Cohens at the Variety Store. Others seemed to be a little jealous of their success. Jewish people in general were probably held at arms length more than most. One persistence rumor was that the Jewish community would stake a Jewish person to starting a business 5 times, before writing them off as a bad cause. This proved

to be a totally unfounded though persistent rumor. It probable gave us a good excuse to explain away their hard won success!

The store had an amazing variety of items for sale. Housewives, sewing supplies, hardware, stick on soles and heels for shoes, beauty supplies, figurines, model airplanes, candy, perhaps a few little drugs like aspirin, to name but a few. It was an interesting place to visit. And in those days when the motto was that "children are to be seen and not heard," (Lord how often I heard that one!) kids got lots of assignments to "Go to the store." People didn't shop in large amounts like today. Possibly because many didn't have cars or if they did, didn't drive them much. In any event, at least daily it seemed, children were sent to pick up a loaf of bread, 4 bananas, a small box of cheese... and stop at the Variety Store and pick up a spool of number 3 white thread. Or even get 50 pounds of ice from the ice house on 33rd and Cass.

Despite seeing and talking to the Cohens on a regular basis, the conversation was always superficial though friendly. I don't think I ever found out if they had any children. None were ever in evidence of such.

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EDITORIAL CORNER

The views and opinions stated are not necessarily those of the GPNA or the Executive Board.

This letter is in reaction to Ron Yates' "Response of 911 Call." I am Operator #32 and I have taken serious offense to his unfounded statements and false accusations; especially the statement that "I should choose another career." It is my personal opinion that until Mr. Yates has observed the activity at the 911 Center on a warm and busy Saturday night, he should keep his ignorant statements to himself.

It is Police Department policy that non-emergency calls such as parties, loud music, littering and the like are to be dispatched only after emergency police calls that have either property damage or danger to citizens are completed. Between the hours of 11:00 p.m. April 20, 1996 and 2:00 a.m. April 21, 1996, some of the emergency calls handled by 911 included a burglary in progress, an assault just occurred, shots fired in area, sexual assault just occurred, over twenty disturbances and a possible personal injury collision.

I do not take unjust criticism lightly; in fact, it is written in our Mission Statement, "To provide quality emergency services that are responsive to the needs of the community." I sincerely adhere to this statement, and work to provide the best service I can to the citizens of Omaha.

Mr. Yates does not have the knowledge or training to provide such a statement. I demand a written apology for his unfair and unfounded comments.

by Russell J. Albin, Operator #32.

On May 6, 1996, your Editor received a faxed message from 911 Operator #32 who was offended by an ignorant taxpayer.

It may be interesting for Operator #32 to know that:

- Ron Yates has visited the 911 center on several occasions and believes that he has some knowledge on how it functions.
- Ron Yates was a member of the Chief's Steering Committee on Community Policing.
- Ron Yates has attended the Citizens' Police Academy.
- Ron Yates received Citizen Patrol training.
- Ron Yates has done several ride alongs with the Omaha Police Department.
- Ron Yates went to Portland, Oregon on behalf of O.P.D. (a great personal experience) to observe police procedures.
- Ron Yates has received awards for Neighborhood Night Out.
- Ron Yates was instrumental in the GPNA receiving the Omaha Health and Safety Award.
- Ron Yates has over 2,000 hours of service to his community.

Ron Yates may be stupid (for committing all this time), but not ignorant. Wouldn't Pride Omaha, Mothers Against Drunk Drivers and the parents who have lost children in accidents be surprised to know that Minors in Possession and reports of individuals driving drunk are non-emergency calls?

Now, let's deal with the apology Operator #32 demands. When I review the tapes or transcripts of my call to 911 and find my statements to be incorrect, not only will I be surprised, but glad to apologize. I do, however, apologize for the comedy club remark, Operator #32 — you are not funny.

by Ron Yates

The Variety Store

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The Variety Store was a valuable asset to the neighborhood. But alas, one day a sign was posted, "Close Out Sale." Upon asking Mr. Cohen the reason, he said that at age 55, (my best guess), he and his wife had made their "Fortune" and were retiring. He was going to be an inventor and was just then working on a framework to be mounted under autos. It's purpose was to stop the car under icy conditions by being lowered to the street where special cleats would take hold.

Obviously, the idea didn't take hold. but the Cohens sold out. I often have wondered what happened to them. They and their "Variety Store" were sorely missed by the people in the neighborhood.

by Leo Wilwerding

Neighborhood Notes...

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The GPNA wishes to thank the City of Omaha for painting over graffiti in Gifford Park, specifically the tennis backboard and benches. Also we want to thank them for the recent street-cleaning operation in our area.

We also want to thank the Omaha Police Department for their efforts recently in the surveillance of the 33rd & California Street area - ticketing people for a wide variety of violations including improper vehicle registration or insurance, speeding, loud mufflers, loud music and others. We hope this operation will be repeated again soon since it is well understood that more serious crimes will occur if people think they can get away with the minor violations.

Editor's note:

If you have something that would be of interest to our neighborhood, we encourage you to submit an article for our monthly newsletter. Editorials must be approved by the GPNA Executive Board. Articles can be left at the GPNA Office; please include your name and phone number. Contact Chris Foster at 342-6006 for information regarding the newsletter.

Have You Renewed Your Membership?

We are at the beginning of a new membership year. We have received many new memberships, including several during our annual spring cleanup, but many members have not yet renewed. I urge you to send in your membership as soon as possible. The cost is minimal - \$8 for family; \$5 for an individual and \$25 for a business. If you

participated in the cleanup, you know that the cleanup alone is worth the cost of a membership. Many other programs are also supported by your membership dollars. All the programs are aimed at improving the neighborhood — **our neighborhood**. Please take a moment now to send in your 1996-1997 membership and show your support.

Thank you to all those members who paid at the cleanup and those who mailed in their renewals. I would like to thank Shelly DeBoer and Chris Foster for all their help manning the membership table during the cleanup. Your help was appreciated.

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 _____