



# Gifford Park's Pride

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

September 1996

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

## Welcome College Students

Many of you may be newcomers to our area as you come to attend the fall session. We welcome you. Others, who may have lived here before, can tell you that we are a neighborhood in transition, struggling hard to further improve our area. Our aim is to make it a fine place for all of us to live. Much improvement has been seen the past few years due to the efforts of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association. Law enforcement and code enforcement are now very good. Further enhancement is underway. Homeowners take pride in their homes as will be evident by a ride through the area.

We ask that you help us by being a positive part of our neighborhood. This largely means just being a good neighbor by respecting the rights of others and obeying laws and codes. We ask that you please be careful in proper parking of cars (not on lawns, across walks and drives, or on parkings); noise should be kept to a minimum (the law states that noise is not to pass beyond lot lines); respect the property rights of others (do not trespass); keep your residence in attractive condition (no litter, lawn mowed, shrubs trimmed, beer parties with large numbers in attendance have in the past been a real nuisance). The police in the past couple of years have taken drastic action on these parties, arresting the hosts for maintaining a public nuisance and detaining many others for underage drinking.

We ask everyone living in our neighborhood be good neighbors. Please join us in this effort.



*Kids and instructors take a break from the tennis. More highlights on page 6.*

### Next Meeting

**Thursday, September 5  
7:00 P.M.**

**Guest Speaker:  
To Be Announced**

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

**FREE PARKING**

### *Historically Speaking...*

## Technical High School/ The Beginning

Before 1920 the area between Cuming and Burt Streets and 33rd and 30th was undeveloped. I wasn't there, but from stories, I envision it as mostly brush and small growth with a creek running into a larger pond where a man or boy could go fishing. The area was available and Omaha needed a new high school.

The Omaha School Board determined that there was a need for business education as well as college preparatory; so in 1912 about 500 students from Central High School moved to the High School of Commerce at 17th and Leavenworth. Classes were held in an abandoned elementary school building, temporary wooden annexes (yes, they had temporary buildings way back then) and vacant store buildings along Leavenworth Street. The first principal was L.R. Rusmisl. In 1917 he was succeeded by Dr. Dwight E. Porter who organized the school on a standard four-year high school basis. By 1920 enrollment had reached a phenomenal 4,000 and another temporary building was constructed at 20th and

*continued on page 3*



## GPNA OFFICERS

### PRESIDENT

Leo Wilwerding 345-1433

### VICE PRESIDENT

Mike Bacome 344-3233

### RECORDING SECRETARY

Barbara Remmen 341-8331

### TREASURER

Jean Peck 344-0722

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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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

### LITTER - BUSINESS DISTRICT

Rich Exline 341-4388

### MEMBERSHIP

Cynde Yates 558-6027

### NEWSLETTER

Chris Foster 342-6006

### NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

Mike Bacome 344-3233

### OFFICE

Marlene Wilwerding 345-1433

### PARK

Mike Bacome 344-3233

### PARKING VIOLATIONS

Terry Wilwerding 342-2795

### PUBLIC RELATIONS

Anne & Linda Chapman 348-0464

### TOOL LENDING

Ed Hendershot 341-0475

### WATCH GROUP

Ron Yates 558-6027

### WEEDS & LITTER

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

## Your Neighborhood Association

The Gifford Park Neighborhood Association was started about eight years ago by a group of your neighbors who decided, that without action being taken, our area was heading down the tubes. It was pointed right toward turning into a ghetto with deteriorated property, unkempt yards, junk cars everywhere, weeds and litter, and rampant crime.

Their foresight and the courage to take action are to be highly commended. It was not easy! It took lots of hard work and often times criticism to get the job done. If not for their efforts and the efforts of those who came along to help, our neighborhood would be a shambles today.

Now we are getting far better police involvement, City government cooperation and owners are taking pride in their property. Are you doing your part to make your neighborhood the best in town? Support your neighborhood association. Help out when asked! Be a good neighbor! ..

## Neighborhood Project Needs Videos, Photos

At a recent GPNA meeting, the idea of compiling a visual history of GPNA was raised. I agreed to collect and put together video segments taken at GPNA events. As space permits, it might also be interesting to include pictures of the Gifford Park area institutions of the past. If you have video or pictures that you would like to have included, please call me at **551-1344**. As I tend to go to bed early, please call before 9:00 PM. I can accept video in VHS or VHS-C, Beta, 8mm or Hi-8 format. It would be very helpful if you would include information with your video about who is in the video, what the event was, when it took place, etc. Similar information about pictures should also be provided. All video's and pictures will be returned after being copied. Also, as I am just beginning to learn about putting together video, if someone out there has experience in this area and would like to provide assistance please let me know. If the project turns out well, copies of the resulting tape will be made available to interested members at minimal cost.

by Jim Wilwerding

## Neighborhood Tool Lending Hotline



Mowers  
Garden Tools  
Hedge Clippers  
Many Other Tools



Tom 341-3955

Ed 341-0475

Ron 558-6027

Rakes  
Shovels  
Saws  
Ladders



Mowers - \$5 Rent for most tools - \$3

### Historically Speaking...Tech High *continued from page 1*

Leavenworth. However, before this building could be occupied the wooden structure caught fire and was demolished.

Meanwhile, the Omaha School Board began negotiations for the purchase of the property at 33rd and Cuming. A Bond Issue provided the needed money for the construction of a building to be called Technical High School. From a story in the Omaha Daily Bee of April 3, 1922, comes this description: "A building as massive and imposing as any of those that rose when Aladdin rubbed his magic lamp is being pushed toward completion."

"Already,—the walls are up to the second story. As the sight-seer comes up the Cuming hill he is struck by the vastness of the project. Behind the concrete walls towers the red-painted steel frame of the school auditorium, four stories tall. Reaching the top of the hill, one looks down into the excavation for the boiler room, 50 feet deep."

"The building sprawls over two blocks of land, in five wings. It stretches 600 feet long and about 300 feet wide. There will be eight acres of floor space. When it is completed in September, 1923, it will have cost taxpayers \$3,500,000 according to the official estimate."

"This splendid high school building will belong to the people of Omaha, but there will be a mortgage on it, bonds one day to be paid off by taxes. That is why some of those who go out and look the structure over can't decide whether to point with pride or view with alarm."

In the Sunday Omaha World-Herald, May 13, 1923, they said that Technical High was the most complete and well planned technical school in the United States. The new school opened on October 15, 1923, with nearly 2,400 pupils. By 1940 enrollment had reached 3,684. The building was touted as the first air conditioned building in Omaha. Unfortunately, the air conditioning system was not efficient and it eventually disintegrated and was abandoned.

The auditorium in the new school proved to be a fine site for famous and not-so-famous artists. John Philip Sousa and his marching band appeared in October 1928. Cornelia Ottis Skinner made her first high school appearance at Tech in January of 1930. In November of 1926 the Metropolitan Opera Company of New York gave a performance. Other greats to perform at the school auditorium were Helen Hayes and Douglas Fairbanks Jr.

(To be continued next month)

by Eva Swanson

## 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



## Lawn Mowing Service

Call Rich: 341-4388

(8 a.m. to 6 p.m.)





Maureen Calabro is our 'Landlord of the Month'.

## Landlord of the Month

This month's featured landlord is **Maureen Calabro**, who owns the house at 3419 California. Maureen bought this house about one year ago, and has done a great job of painting and fixing up. The flower beds and flower arrangements have added a great deal to the appearance of the house. Maureen says that she likes the neighborhood and would eventually like to buy more property.

Congratulations to Maureen Calabro, GPNA 'Landlord of the Month'.

If you would like to nominate someone for 'Landlord of the Month', please call me at 342-2795 or drop me a note.

*by Terry Wilwerding*

## NOTICE

WOULD YOU LIKE TO ADVERTISE  
IN THE GIFFORD PARK PRIDE?

*If so, Call 558-6027*

## 6TH ANNUAL METRO AREA PAINT "DROP & SWAP"

Saturday, September 21, 1996  
10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Rain or Shine

### Locations:

**DOUGLAS COUNTY GARAGE**  
156th Street & West Maple Road  
(Enter from 156th St.)



**AKSARBEN**  
Lot #2 (Enter off of 72nd St.)



**BELLEVUE PUBLIC WORKS SITE  
ON CEDAR ISLAND RD.**  
(5 blocks South of Chandler Road)

**4441 GIFFORD ROAD**  
Council Bluffs

### PURPOSE OF "DROP & SWAP"

Keep paint out of landfills, Community use,  
Paint Toxicity & awareness, Environmentally Hazardous

### WHAT CAN BE RECYCLED?

Oil & Latex paint

### DO NOT BRING THE FOLLOWING:

Cleaners, Automobile fluids, Paint thinners & stains, Personal care products, Pesticides & herbicides, Batteries

## California Tacos & More

*Homemade Mexican Food*

**342-0212**

33rd & California Street

Dine In or Carry Out

*Now Open New Summer Hours!!!*

Sun - Thur: 11 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Fri - Sat: 11 a.m. - 2 a.m.



California  
Tacos  
&  
More

### City Solutions...Where to Call

Problem .....	Call .....	Agency/Department
Abandoned/junked cars .....	444-5782 .....	Vehicle Impound Lot
Animal bites .....	444-7578 .....	Humane Society
Barking dogs, sick, injured or stray animals .....	444-7800 .....	Humane Society
Broken or obstructed sidewalk .....	444-5266 .....	Sidewalk Division
City Services complaints or information .....	444-5555 .....	Mayor's Action Office
Crime or Vandalism .....	444-5600 .....	Police Division
Empty buildings, vacant houses, occupied dilapidated houses .....	444-5371 .....	Planning
Garbage not picked up .....	444-5238 .....	Solid Waste
Gas leaks, waterline breaks, fire hydrants .....	554-7777 .....	M.U.D.
Handicap parking stickers .....	444-6080 .....	County Clerk
Hedges/tree limbs blocking view of traffic .....	444-5925 .....	Forestry Division
Holes, debris or litter in the street .....	444-4919 .....	Street Maintenance
Improperly licensed vehicles .....	444-5888 .....	Police Department or
.....	444-5555 .....	Mayor's Action Office
Neighborhood Watch Program .....	444-5772 .....	Police Department
Rats, raw garbage, etc. ....	444-7481 .....	Douglas County Health
Street construction, problems/complaints .....	444-5220 .....	Construction Engineer
Tenant/landlord discrimination issues .....	444-5055 .....	Human Relations
Tenant/landlord legal issues .....	444-1060 .....	Legal Aid Society
TDD (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf) .....	444-5034 .....	
Trailers/Cars parked on front lawn .....	444-5350 .....	Permits & Inspections
Youth Intervention Unit (gang hotline) .....	444-6920 .....	
Zoning enforcement .....	444-5364 .....	Permits & Inspections

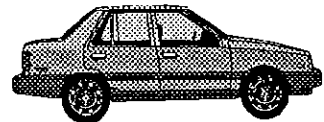


# J'N'J GROCERY STORE

*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**

## Gifford Park Tennis Program Highlights



*Kimmy Nasr received the 'Sportsmanship Award' for the girls..*



*James Hansen received the 'Sportsmanship Award' for the boys.*



*Tiffany Slayden received the award for 'Most Improved' player.*

The final session of the third annual GPNA Tennis Program landed on the first day of school for many kids, but that didn't dampen the spirits of the 26 youngsters who turned out for both fun and exercise. The free tennis lessons, which were held each Wednesday in August in Gifford Park, were run by the following volunteer instructors: Diane Countryman, Chris Foster, Jackie Foster, Jenny Foster, Willie Foster, Roger Freeman, Ron Frey, Kirk Peck, Chris Seitzer, Dante Simone and Ed Trandahl. Additional help was provided by Vicki Frey, John Lynch and Susan Mayberger. Again this year special thanks goes to Betty Slayden and Cynde Yates for handling registration check-in each week. Also a big thanks goes to Alan and Marcia Baer, Carol Hodges and the City of Omaha, and the GPNA for donating T-shirts, candy and other fun prizes - the kids loved them.

Congratulations to three kids who received trophies for very special achievement this year. "Sportsmanship Awards" were earned by **Kimmy Nasr**, 10, and **James Hansen**, 8. **Tiffany Slayden**, 11, earned the "Most Improved Player Award". Thanks to all the kids and parents who participated. Don't forget to practice - see you next year!

### Fall and Winter Tennis Coming Soon

Fresh off the GPNA Tennis Program comes a great opportunity to practice more tennis this fall and winter. Tennis lessons offered by **Tennis Our Way** for beginner and intermediate players will run **September 18 through October 25**, on Wednesdays and Fridays, from **4:30-5:30**, at the tennis courts near **College of St. Mary's** (to the west of Ak-sar-ben). Other locations may be added so call for details. The cost is \$15, but scholarships are available. Winter tennis lessons will be offered in November and December at **Hanscom Park Indoor Tennis Center** for \$35. Call **551-9670** or **342-6006** for information.

### A Letter from an Observer

*Editors's note: Bob Seitzer is a member of the GPNA. He came to watch a tennis lesson one evening and wrote this letter to the neighborhood association.*

What impressed me most about the GPNA Tennis Program was not just the teaching of the rudiments of the tennis to little boys and girls (by very capable volunteers, incidentally) although that was impressive. But, hopefully, what the instructors did will go beyond the Gifford Park tennis courts and may give the youngsters a slight "push" to get on the right path.

What we desperately need across this country, as anyone who reads the awful headlines and views the terrifying things that are happening not in just New York or Chicago or Los Angeles, but right here in Omaha, are thousands of programs where concerned citizens such as yourselves, with no or minimum help from a government agency, give of themselves, their time and sometimes their money to show youngsters and their parents that someone is interested, someone cares.

My hat's off to all who took part.

*by Bob Seitzer*

## The Easter Sunday Tornado of 1913

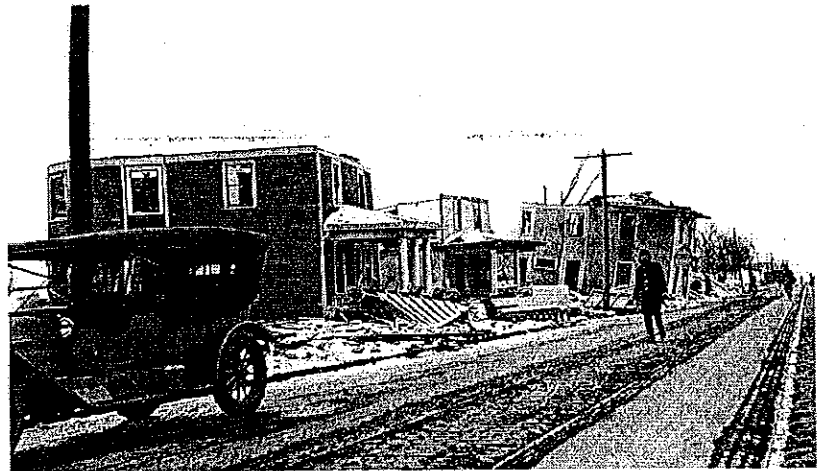
Many may remember the devastating 1975 tornado. It tore a path of devastation from about 92nd and Q Streets to 70th and Maple Streets. Due however to excellent warning, only 3 people died. Much more serious in loss of life was the 1913 tornado which hit our neighborhood. Over 100 people died and 600 homes destroyed as the storm spanned from Yutan, Nebraska into Iowa. The western edge of Omaha was 42nd Street and the path was from 42nd and Center northeastward until crossing the river at Carter Lake.

Easter Sunday was early in 1913, falling on March 23. The day was pleasantly warm when storm clouds began to gather about 5 p.m. The tornado struck with great suddenness and fury. It crossed our neighborhood, striking Joslyn Castle, wrecking the 38th and California to Chicago area, almost annihilating the hillside from 36th to 38th and Cass, tearing off the north end of Duchesne Academy, sweeping down through Bemis Park, while smashing all the houses on Cuming Street from 33rd to 35th. It then passed 28th and Parker, and 24th and Lake. It was at 24th & Lake that more than 30 people were killed as brick buildings were smashed and several burned with victims inside.

With no warning sirens and well before the advent of radio, there was no way to alert people of the tornado's approach. Persons living only a few blocks from the path of the storm were in some cases unaware for hours of the destruction that had occurred. Following its passing, temperatures dropped quickly and it began to rain and then snow, further increasing the distress of those affected. Debris from the tornado was found as far as 75 miles away in Iowa. The accompanying pictures were taken by Carl Balbach who lived at 39th and Nicholas.

*by Leo Wilwerding*

*The top photo is Burt Street between 35th and 36th. The second photo is looking west on Cuming Street at 34th. The third photo is Duchesne on the southwest corner of 36th & Burt. The bottom photo is looking toward 38th Street...notice the pile of coal on the right.*



## What's Happening in the Neighborhood...

Everyone is encouraged to attend the September general meeting at **St. Joseph's Hospital, Thursday, September 5, at 7 p.m.** As always there will be plenty of refreshments. The guest speaker is to be announced.

The annual **Fall Cleanup** date has been set for **Saturday, October 26, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Gifford Park.** As in the past this cleanup is for GPNA members or people who volunteer to help. Activities planned are neighborhood and park cleanup, dumpsters in Gifford Park, membership and donation drive, recycling, garage sale items, park picnic and Halloween pumpkin patch. More details will be available in next month's newsletter. For information, call **Terry (342-2795), Leo (345-1433), Chris (342-6006), or Ron (558-6027).**

With the "frightening" success of last year's event, the **Pi Kappa Alpha (PKA) Fraternity** and the GPNA are planning the second annual Halloween

**Haunted House.** More details will be available in next month's newsletter.

Thanks to **Rich Exline** for painting over graffiti on the tennis backboard in Gifford Park. Rich finished the job just in time for the last tennis lesson held August 28 as part of the Gifford Park Tennis Program. **Jerry Flood** and **Gene Dinkel** from the **City of Omaha Park Maintenance Department** gave us the green paint. We also appreciate the efforts of Jerry and his staff for keeping Gifford Park mowed and trimmed on a regular basis this summer - we know your department is very busy this time of year. Good job guys.


With school now in session, please be extra careful when driving. Our neighborhood has alot of foot traffic to go along with alot of vehicle traffic. Be a defensive driver and think **SAFETY** at all times.

**Boy Scout Troop 125** from **Yates Elementary School** is looking for boys (and


parents too) to become involved in scouting. Call **Mark LeFlore (431-9272)** or **Rich Exline (341-4388)** for information.

In July, the GPNA Watch Group Bike Patrol and the **Omaha Police Bike Patrol** rode together on a Saturday night with a total seven bikers. The bike patrol covered much of the neighborhood in a short period. The ride was particularly smooth over the area east of 33rd Street where street paving has been completed. Anyone interested in joining items: small headlight, reflectors and helmet. Contact GPNA Watch Group Chair **Ron Yates at 558-6027** for information.

The GPNA recently donated two "older" computers to **Yates Elementary School.** Yates can receive a small credit from these toward the purchase of new computer equipment.



**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 \_\_\_\_\_

**NEEDED:**

**HELP WITH NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION**

The GPNA is looking for anyone, any age, interested in delivering newsletters in the Gifford Park Neighborhood.

**Call 344-3233**