



Gifford Park's Pride

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

May 1999

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Neighborhood Survey A Positive Step

On Saturday, March 20th, volunteers from the GPNA and members of the Omaha Police Department worked together to conduct a neighborhood survey about the residents' perception of crime in the area. **Deidra Andrews**, Crime Prevention Specialist from the Northeast Area Precinct, compiled the results of the survey, which was conducted primarily in the vicinity of 33rd and California St. Of the 73 individuals or households that responded, 84% felt that there was a crime problem in the neighborhood, with 42% identifying 33rd and California as the location where problems were occurring. 62% felt that the crime in the area was related to drug activities. 22% of those questioned answered yes when asked if they had been a victim of some type of crime in the last six months, and 71% answered no (7% did not answer this question).

At the April general meeting, Officer **Brian Heath** explained that these results plus the answers to the eight other questions on the survey will be used to determine how and where crime prevention efforts should be directed in the future. He noted that a particularly positive result of the survey was that 80% of those polled answered that they would be willing to assist in helping find solutions to the problems of crime in the neighborhood. He was also impressed with the number of volunteers who were willing to help with the survey. While conducting the survey, Officer Heath said that he came away from the experience feeling that there was an overall support for the neighborhood's efforts in fighting crime, such as the watch patrols, and the importance of an increased emphasis on the enforcement of laws concerning parking violations, junk cars, noisy parties, etc.. by police officers. All in all, the Northeast Precinct considered the survey experience to be very successful, and hopefully the results will support the primary goal of making Gifford Park a safer place to live.

Next Meeting

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

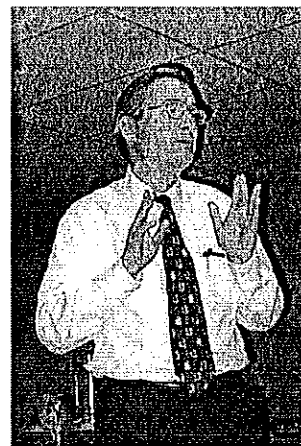
**Nomination of Officers
for 1999 - 2000**

**St. Joseph Hospital
Dining Rooms A,B, and C**

Mayor Addresses April GPNA General Meeting

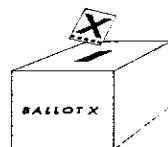
Mayor Hal Daub was the guest speaker at last month's GPNA meeting at St. Joseph Hospital. In his comments, he noted the importance of maintaining downtown Omaha as a center of community activity, and keeping the residential areas that surround downtown attractive and vibrant. He assured those present that the city was committed to keeping the Gifford Park area and other older neighborhoods safe by increasing police presence and employing other anti-crime activities. He praised the Association for its high degree of volunteerism and its newsletter. He

also described plans for development of the river corridor and redevelopment of the Livestock Exchange Building. Other topics he discussed were the city's Y2K compliance status, the school bond issue, and police staffing, and he concluded by answering questions



from the audience. Thanks for coming, Mayor!

***Don't Forget To VOTE
on the Omaha Public
School Bond Issue
Tuesday, May 11!***



GPNA OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

VICE PRESIDENT

Chris Foster 342-6006

RECORDING SECRETARY

Jean Peck 344-0722

TREASURER

Sandy Saner 341-8939

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

ADVERTISING

Dar Sweazy 345-0125

CLEAN-UP

Mike Wilwerding 341-8224

COMPLIANCE

Leo Wilwerding 345-1433

COURTESY

Candy Bacome 933-7506

GRAFFITI

Maureen Calabro 345-7238

HISTORIAN

Eva Swanson 345-1707

MEMBERSHIP

Chris Foster 342-6006

NEWSLETTER

Sue Wilwerding 342-2795

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

Mike Bacome 933-7506

PARK

Mike Bacome 933-7506

PARKING VIOLATIONS

Terry Wilwerding 342-2795

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Anne & Linda Chapman 348-0464

TOOL LENDING

Tom Rose 932-6191

WATCH GROUP

Mike Wilwerding 341-8224

WEEDS & LITTER

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

YATES ACADEMY LIAISON

Dana Carlton 346-4575

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 Sue Wilwerding (342-2795) or Chris Foster (342-6006) for information regarding the newsletter.

From the Desk of the President

Well, it certainly was a very busy April, starting out with the Mayor's visit to our meeting, then the Easter Egg Hunt, then the Spring Cleanup. We also had income tax help available at the office on a number of dates. Though I don't even know all of the volunteers who helped out with these activities, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a few people who were the keys in the success of these activities.

Shelly Rose agreed to be the chairperson for the Easter Egg Hunt this year, and was very successful in contacting merchants and soliciting donations of candy and trinkets for the children, as well as organizing the event. With the assistance of numerous volunteers the morning of the hunt, we successfully got the park cleaned up and the candy in place. Judging by the number of children participating and their evident enthusiasm, the event must be considered a success, especially considering that rain threatened to wash out the event most of the morning. I do know that the children were 100 percent effective in finding all of the candy. Even the Easter Bunny showed up. Thanks, Shelly, for your hard work.

Two weeks prior to the cleanup, Mike Wilwerding, Chris Foster, and myself went around the neighborhood picking up old tires. It is remarkable how many tires are abandoned in the neighborhood. It seems a large number of them come from renters, given the tires' locations. By the end of the day, we hauled about 125 tires to the site in South Omaha. Thanks Mike, Chris, and Keep Omaha Beautiful, who arranged for free disposal of the tires at the South Omaha site. Interestingly enough, on the day of the cleanup, we found an additional 15 tires or so.

Despite forecasts of inclement weather, the day of the cleanup dawned bright and partly cloudy. This year's chairman, Mike Wilwerding, was onsite bright and early. Even though we started out with three dumpsters, we seemed to have them almost instantly full, and for most of the day had a line of cars and trucks waiting to dump their cargoes, pending the arrival of the next empty dumpster. By the end of the day, we filled 12 dumpsters, in addition to 7 or 8 heaping pickup truck loads of scrap metal. If we had quicker access to dumpsters, I suspect we could have easily filled 3 or 4 more, as many of the volunteers were stuck in the line waiting for the next dumpster, and I imagine that many of the people hauling their own trash were discouraged from making return trips because of the line. Though we didn't have quite as much interest in the accompanying garage sale as I had hoped, we did raise a fair amount of money for the Association's savings account. It was gratifying to see the large number of volunteers who show up every year to help out, as well as a few new faces. Special thanks go to Candy Bacome, who spent the whole day keeping traffic in line, handing out literature, and directing folks to the tent for membership enrollments, renewals, and contributions. Good job of organizing, Mike. And thanks to the many volunteers who actually make the project a success.

You might have noticed how frequently the word "volunteers" appeared in the above paragraphs. As we have no paid positions in the Association, all of the work we accomplish is done by volunteers. In the many organizations in which I have taken part, the success or failure of those organizations revolved around

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From the Desk of the President

continued from page 2

attracting and retaining enthusiastic volunteers. Judging from the success of our many programs throughout the year, I think we would have to consider our Association to be successful. I considered publishing a list of the volunteers who took part in the Easter Egg Hunt and Spring Cleanup, and found that the list would have run to somewhere between 40 and 50 names. So even though your name may not be listed here, understand that your willingness to participate is much appreciated, and recognized as an integral part of our success.

We do not have a guest speaker scheduled for the May meeting. At that meeting we will be hearing from the Nominating Committee, which I understand has a roster of candidates. As always, we will also take nominations, if any, from the floor. The elections will then be held at the June meeting. We will also talk about any problems in the area at the May meeting, as well as any other topics of interest to the members. If you feel that the Association should get involved in a particular activity, feel free to come forward.

Have you walked or driven along 33rd Street lately? The success of the extra effort by the Omaha Police Department is apparent in the lack of loiterers, the reduction in the number of unlicensed vehicles, and the absence of (sometimes-hostile) crowds in yards that previously were in evidence. Many thanks to the officers and command of the Northeast Precinct for making the commitment of resources needed to solve the problem. Speaking of solving the problem, one of the problem addresses on Webster just east of 33rd has been vacant, and boarded up, pending renovation. I spoke to a landlord of another property on the corner of 33rd and Webster, who had evicted troublesome tenants, refurbished the property, and was looking for new renters, with an eye towards avoiding the past problems. The house west of 33rd and Webster, around which we had considerable trouble last summer, is vacant and for sale. It looks like we are well on our way towards reversing the trend of crime and property deterioration in that area. Needless to say, we have had no recurrence of the shootouts in the area that we suffered in February.

Which brings up a project that we all can work on. I had a discussion with one property owner the day of the cleanup, and he mentioned some of the adverse comments that he had heard from real estate agents

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Charles R. Kilgore Jr. Attorney At Law

4913 Underwood Avenue

558-5000

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

The GPNA thanks



Jackie Foster
and
Pat Prochaska



for their generous donation of time
and talent to the Free Tax Help Program

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

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



Duchesne Academy Update

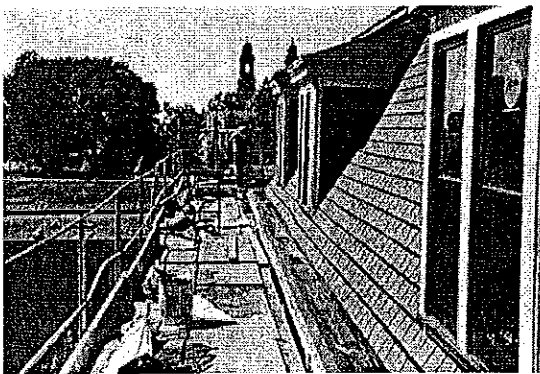
You may have noticed, in recent years, the many renovations and additions taking place both inside and outside the walls of Duchesne Academy that are evidence of the school's commitment to staying in the Gifford Park community and making it more beautiful. One major renovation the school needed in order to avoid irreparable damage to the inside was to replace its 65 year-old roof. The oldest section of the Academy's roof (the north side) has been replaced along with installation of new windows.

Other visible improvements on the outside of Duchesne Academy include the addition of a regulation-size soccer field, new tennis courts, an outdoor amphitheater, fencing around the campus, additional outdoor lighting and landscaping. The landscaping beautifications have included the installation of new sprinkler systems, planting new shrubbery and perennials, erecting new signage for the school, pouring a new driveway at the front entrance, and replacing some existing sidewalks on the north side of the campus. On the inside, improvements include the replacement of the flooring, lighting system, and window treatments in the auditorium and an addition of a new art gallery that attracts the work of local artists and displays student art shows.

The newest addition to the campus is the Duchesne Preschool. On January 11 of this year 15 adorable three, four, and five year-old boys and girls became a part of the Duchesne community. Duchesne once housed an elementary school until it closed in 1972. The preschool is now run in the same building the elementary school used to be in, the Regan building. The preschool children add a diverse dimension of youth to the Duchesne campus that it once had long ago.

The academy (high school) has a present enrollment of 225 students and has accepted 77 students for the freshman class that will start in the fall. 60 seniors will graduate this May.

For 118 years, Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart has educated the young women of Omaha on the same twelve acres of land between Burt, California, 36th and 38th Streets. Duchesne is proud of its historic buildings and of the neighborhood that houses them. Duchesne is here to stay!



The most recent improvement to the Duchesne campus was the replacement of the 65 year-old roof. A "raise the roof" fund drive was held to finance the project.

California Tacos & More

Homemade Mexican Food

342-0212

33rd & California Street
Dine In or Carry Out

Open Every Day
Mon - Thur: 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.

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

Sun: Noon - 8 p.m.



SIXTH ANNUAL



FARMERS MARKET

SATURDAYS

MAY 8 - OCTOBER 16
8 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.

OLD MARKET • 11TH & JACKSON STREETS

WEDNESDAYS

JULY 7 - SEPTEMBER 15
5 P.M. - 8 P.M.

OLD MARKET • 11TH & HOWARD STREETS

Featuring locally grown fresh produce, flowers, herbs, baked goods, crafts and more!

Sponsored by: **McKillican Chiropractic** **The New Mix 96.1**
Security National Bank **The Reader**

Special thanks to Old Omaha Association/Mercer Management and Allright Parking, Omaha Inc.

For more information, call 345-5401

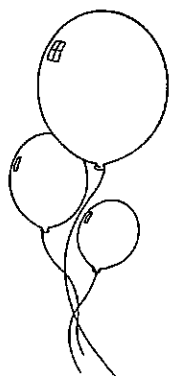
Children's World Learning Centers

Newest Location

126 North 35th Street

Children's World Offers:

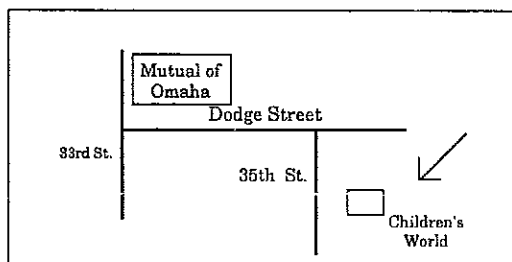
- * Quality childcare for children ages 6 weeks thru 12 yrs.
 - * Developmentally appropriate activities
 - * Safe, state approved transportation
 - * USDA approved food program to include meals and snacks
- Spaces are limited, so enroll now!



Drop in for a visit or call

346-9368

for an appointment.



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

Easter Egg Hunt Draws 140 Kids

The 10th Annual GPNA Easter Egg Hunt had a very good turnout despite the damp conditions from rain the night before. A total of 140 neighborhood kids gathered in Gifford Park Saturday, April 3rd, at high noon. Neighborhood volunteers first cleaned up the park at about 10:00 a.m. Shortly after that candy was placed throughout the east half of the park. Kids were divided into the following age groups: 4 & under, 5-6, 7-9 and 10-12 years old.

Shelly Rose once again did a great job of collecting donations and organizing candy. There is little doubt that this year had the most candy of any of the past events. Special recognition goes to **Loren Johnson** of **J'N'J Grocery** for his generous donations as always. And of course GPNA's own Easter Bunny, **JoAnne Askevics**, passed out candy and eggs to many youngsters...even on her birthday! Thanks to all the volunteers and businesses who helped with this year's Easter Egg Hunt:

Shelly, Katie & Charlie Rose
 JoAnne Askevics
 Summer Beck
 Bob & Virginia Hutton
 Mike & Candy Bacome
 Brad Bogard
 Jim & Kathleen Wilwerding
 Kirk & Jean Peck
 Mike & Nadja Wilwerding
 Chris & Sallie Foster
 Leo & Marlene Wilwerding
 Harry Dirgo
 Terry, Sue, & Julie Wilwerding
 Jackie & Jenny Foster
 Mike Miller
 Ron & Eric Frey
 Paul Farrand

J'N'J Grocery
 California Tacos
 Chuck Kilgore
 Baker's Grocery
 Yates Academy
 16th St. Furniture and
 Appliance
 Albertson's Grocery
 Walgreen's

*Photos on pages 6 and 7
 by Terry Wilwerding*



The Easter Bunny delivers some pre-hunt candy to a couple of neighborhood children. Over 400 dollars of candy and donations were contributed to this year's event.



A successful hunt participant displays his Easter basket full of goodies. Volunteers noted that overall the children were well-behaved and courteous. A fun time was had by all!



A group of 5 and 6 year-olds get ready to hunt for Easter candy. Thanks to Jean Peck for making the age range signs for the different areas of the park.



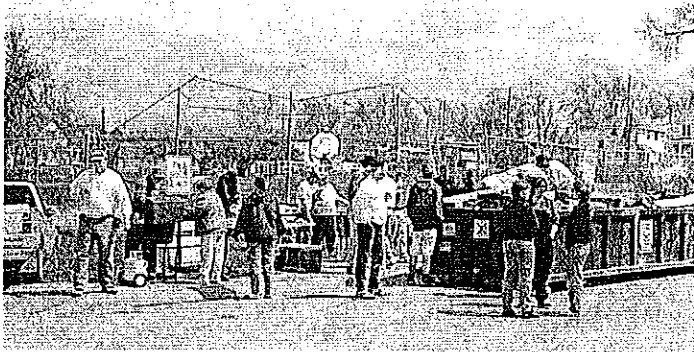
Shelly Rose and Chris Foster take a break from the activity to pose for a picture. Both Shelly and Chris played key roles in making this year's hunt a big success.

1999 Spring Cleanup a Big Success!!!

As you all recall in past years, the weather has been somewhat uncooperative when it comes to the GPNA Spring Cleanup. However, this year Mother Nature decided to shine on our efforts! The final numbers for all of our efforts: a whopping 12 dumpsters, a collection of approximately \$400 in memberships and donations, and a pick-up of over 100 tires. Unfortunately, the "garage sale" of donated items was not as successful as we had hoped it would be, but every little bit helps.

We had a significant representation of volunteers who helped to make short work. These dedicated individuals unselfishly volunteered their time on a Saturday to help make our neighborhood a nicer place to live, a neighborhood to take pride in. Several volunteers used their own vehicles to drive around and pick up trash from neighbors that were unable to bring it to the park. A big thanks goes out to all the volunteers contributing to this year's cleanup: Billy Dooly, Roger Freeman, Jim Kyler, Ben & Dallas Sweazy, Bob & Virginia Hutton, Mike & Candy Bacome, Jim & Kathleen Wilwerding, Ron Yates, Kirk & Jean Peck, David Smith & Suzanne Winkler, Mike & Nadja Wilwerding, Rich Exline, Chris & Sallie Foster, Leo & Marlene Wilwerding, Harry Dirgo, Lloyd Canfield, Joan Wilwerding, and Terry, Sue & Steve Wilwerding.

We would especially like to thank the **City of Omaha** and **Keep Omaha Beautiful** for supplying the dumpsters. A special thanks to **J'N'J Grocery** and the **California Bar** for providing food and drink for the volunteers. Last but not least, thank you to all those who helped spread the word about the cleanup by delivering the fliers around the neighborhood.



(Above) Gifford Park was a flurry of activity during the cleanup. A big thank-you goes to Mike Wilwerding (shown on the left) for serving as chairman for the event.

(Below) The "tent ladies", Candy Bacome, Marlene Wilwerding, and Kathleen Wilwerding were a tremendous help in keeping the vehicle line moving, answering questions, accepting donations, and signing up new members.



(Left) Manning the grill in order to feed the hungry "troops" were Loren Johnson and Leo Wilwerding. Hot dogs were provided by J'N'J Grocery and pop was donated by the California Bar. A good number of volunteers made the work go a little easier (the nice spring weather helped also). Thanks to all who volunteered - see you in the fall!

(Right) Making a special "guest appearance" at this year's spring cleanup was Rich Exline. Here, Rich helps Ron Yates unload one of the many pickup trucks full of trash. At times the line of vehicles waiting to unload stretched past Davenport Street.



From the Desk of the President ... continued from page 3

about our neighborhood. He thought that some kind of PR campaign with neighborhood businesses might be a good idea, to try to inject some facts into the negative feelings that some people have about our area. While that is probably an idea we will pursue, I think we all can find opportunities to provide positive comments to people who might think that we are living in an area of terrible crime and urban decay, especially when we might be talking to people who would consider buying property and living here. I continue to be convinced that we are seeing continual improvement of property and residents, and I think that we have amply demonstrated that we have the means to solve problems when they occur. With the continued cooperation of the city government and the Omaha Police Department, I am optimistic that improvements will continue.

When discussing the problems we had, I like to point out that the problems were being caused by fewer than twenty people, many of whom did not live in our area. These people were coming here to do business, or make contact with others who were coming here to do business. I understand that most of these people have been successfully discouraged from continuing to do business here. As a counterbalance to the troublemakers, we have at least 100 families living in the area who feel strongly enough about the neighborhood in a positive sense to be members of the Association, and to be actively involved in making the neighborhood a better place to live. I know we've had a few people leave, citing the problems we had as the reason for leaving. I am sorry they left. I plan to stay. I know there are lots of other residents who feel the same way I do.

Hope to see you at the meeting.

by Jim Wilwerding

What's Happening in the Neighborhood ...

Gifford Park will be one of several sites for a free 1 1/2 hour tennis lesson on **Saturday, May 15th**, from **1:00 - 2:30 p.m.** This lesson will be for kids who want to learn the basics of how to play tennis. Racquets and balls will be provided. Call **342-6006** for details. Also, if you have any tennis racquets that you would like to donate to the Gifford Park tennis program, call **342-6006**.


President **Jim Wilwerding** announced that the GPNA has received a \$500 grant from the Omaha Community Foundation. The money from this grant will be used to pay for the dumpsters at the fall cleanup.

The April 23rd edition of *The Creightonian*, the student newspaper at Creighton University, included an article featuring **California Tacos and More** and its owner **Brad Bogard**. In the article, Brad gave a brief history of the building, discussed the decor, and described how the concept of the restaurant evolved. The article stated that "California Tacos and More ... may be a little off the beaten track, but well worth the while."

**For City Services,
Information, or
Complaints
Call:
Mayor's Action Office
444-5555**



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 _____