



# Gifford Park's Pride

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

July 2000

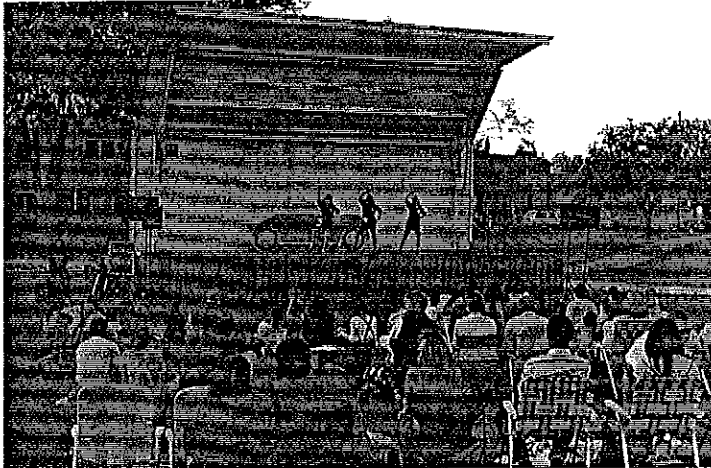
A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

## Show Wagon 2000 Makes Stop In Gifford Park

Gifford Park was host to **Show Wagon 2000**, a youth talent competition, on Tuesday evening, June 20. **Roberts Dairy**, our good neighbors near 30<sup>th</sup> & Cuming, donated 288 fudge bars for the event. After rain the night before, the weather dried up nicely, allowing the Show Wagon audience to sit on blankets, lawn chairs, and even the grass on the northeast part of the park.

A total of 18 Show Wagon acts came from all over the city, with many local performers from the Gifford Park neighborhood. The talent included singing, tap dancing, ballet, jazz, gymnastics, and other acts. Three judges had a difficult decision picking the winners. Two of the judges, **Brian Kokensparger** and **Kevin Lawler**, live in our neighborhood. **Chris Nelson** was the third judge. Thanks to all those who participated – your talent and hard work was enjoyed by all.

Many thanks to **Cis Carlson**, City of Omaha Parks & Recreation, for organizing and heading up the Show Wagon program, and giving Gifford Park the opportunity to host this special event. Cis has done Show Wagon for the past 10 years and also from 1968-71. Thanks also to **Rick Weiner** who handled the sound, and **Jeff Painter** who helped with the setup. Many thanks to **Mike Flagg** and **Mollie Batten** with Roberts Dairy for providing the ice cream treats. Also helping from the GPNA were **Peter Cihunka**, **Sherry Sutton**, **Jim Wilwerding**, **Brad Bogard** and **Raquel Ayala**. Gifford Park is also a host site for the regional finals to be held **Monday, July 17 at 7:30 p.m.**— hope to see you there!



**[ Reminder: No July Meeting! ]**

**Next Meeting  
Thursday, August 3**

## Historically Speaking... The Polio Epidemic

"Polio" - the very mention of the word sent horrific fear into the hearts of parents in America, especially in the 1950's. Mothers dreaded to hear, "Mamma, I can't move my leg." There was no known cure until 1961, although Doctors Jonas Salk and Albert Sabin had been working on vaccines since 1951.

Poliomyelitis, or "polio" for short, became known in America in the early 1900s. The cause was unknown and people blamed cats, immigrants, New Yorkers, and filth. They killed the cats, washed the streets, and posted signs saying, "New Yorkers keep out." Nothing helped. Around 1916 about 27,000 people came down with it and 6,000 died. Many of the survivors were kept in overcrowded nursing homes out of sight.

In 1921 in Maine, a man named Franklin D. Roosevelt enjoyed sailing on the Hudson River. Although tired, he kept going sailing until August 11, 1921 when his right knee became weak. After August 12, 1921, FDR never walked alone again. He was 39 years old. He spent seven years trying to regain the use of his legs. He went to Warm Springs, Georgia, where he got some relief in the warm waters. He liked this area and bought the resort. In future years Warm Springs became the mecca for sufferers from all over the

*continued on page 6*

**GPNA OFFICERS****PRESIDENT**

Chris Foster 342-6006

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Peter Cihunka 341-7293

**RECORDING SECRETARY**

Vicki Frey 344-0757

**TREASURER**

Dana Carlton 346-4575

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS****ADVERTISING**

Dar Swazy 345-0125

**CLEAN-UP**

Mike Wilwerding 341-8224

**COMPLIANCE**

Leo Wilwerding 345-1433

**COURTESY**

Candy Bacome 933-7506

**HISTORIAN**

Eva Swanson 345-1707

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Chris Foster 342-6006

**NEWSLETTER**

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**PARK**

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**PARKING VIOLATIONS**

Terry Wilwerding 342-2795

**PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Leo Wilwerding 345-1433

**TOOL LENDING**

Chris Foster 342-6006

**WATCH GROUP**

Mike Wilwerding 341-8224

**WEEDS & LITTER**

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

**KELLOM SCHOOL LIAISON**

Dana Carlton 346-4575

**The President's Column**

Let me get everyone updated on current events. We are continuing to research the possibility of hiring an off-duty police officer to patrol the 33<sup>rd</sup> & California area. There are significant issues with liability and the latitude an off-duty officer has to enforce laws effectively. We are working with Chief Carey regarding policy on this matter. Right now our most effective deterrent to crime is participation in our neighborhood walks and reporting criminal activity. I strongly encourage everyone to join our walk group. Call **Peter (341-7293)**, **Mark (341-8939)** or **Chris (342-6006)** to find out more.

Our new Vice President **Peter Cihunka** has volunteered to take on a Gifford Park Day event, which will probably be held in September. This event will need many volunteers so we encourage anyone interested in helping or with ideas to call Peter at **341-7293**. As mentioned in the June newsletter, we are planning a fall planting of trees and shrubs in Gifford Park as part of the planting grant the GPNA received from the **Nebraska State Arboretum** and **Omaha World - Herald Branching Out Program**. Also, we still need block captains for the Neighborhood Maintenance program. The program is easy to administer and provides a form to document problems on your block that in turn helps the whole neighborhood. Please contact **Betsy Noble (344-3802)** for information on this valuable program. Last but not least, come down to Gifford Park, **Monday, July 17 at 7:30 p.m.** to see the regional finals of Show Wagon 2000.

I am excited about the coming year for the GPNA for a couple of reasons. First, we have three new board members who have already made an impact with good ideas for our neighborhood. Secondly, we have the strength and experience of our current committee chairpersons and former officers. The key to a healthy organization is to continually develop new people. Our challenge with a volunteer organization like ours is to provide incentives for people to take on leadership roles. The most important motivator for me is the fact that the GPNA has always had tremendous support from our volunteers for neighborhood activities. I hope that knowing this will encourage more new people to consider becoming active in the GPNA. For more information, call any of the phone numbers listed on this page.

by Chris Foster

**TOOL LENDING HOTLINE**

Mike 933-7506

Chris 342-6006

Mowers - \$5

Rent for most tools - \$3

**Tool Lending Program is Nine Years Old**

The Gifford Park Neighborhood Tool Lending Program has been in operation for nine years, and is off to a fast start this year. Its goal is simple: provide people in our neighborhood the opportunity to rent tools for a nominal fee (mainly to cover maintenance costs). Everyone can benefit – you **DO NOT** have to be a GPNA member to take advantage of this program. Many people in our area have no space to store tools or do not have access to certain tools. The neighborhood itself benefits when people use the tools to take care of their home and property.

Ladders, rakes, shovels, saws and garden tools are some of the tools available with the program. Lawnmowers have been the most popular to rent at \$5. Many thanks go to **Bob Hutton** and **Mike Bacome** for maintenance of mowers at little or no cost. The GPNA is always looking for additional tools or mowers that anyone would like to donate for tool lending. For information on renting tools and mowers, call **Chris 342-6006** or **Mike 933-7506**.

## GPNA Loses Charter Member

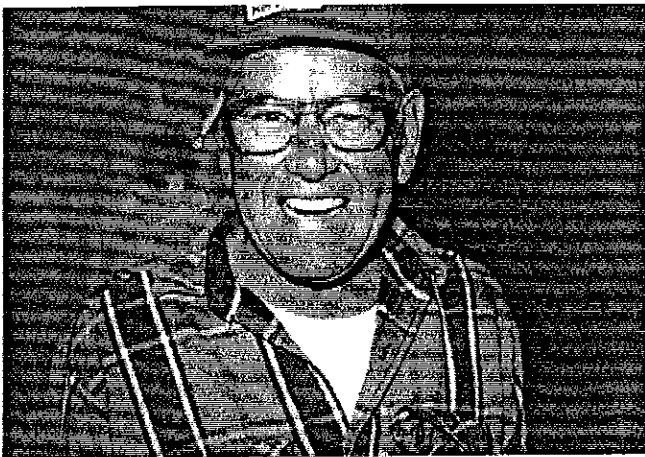
The GPNA lost one of its original members and developers, **Ed Hendershot**, who died on June 23 at the age of 74. Ed lived at 422 N. 34<sup>th</sup> Street for the past 12 years, just to the north of the Gifford Park tennis courts. Ed, along with his wife Farol, were very active with many events as the neighborhood association began in late 1988. These events included garage sales, the tool lending program, park projects, Halloween pumpkins for kids, neighborhood cleanups and other events. During cleanups in Gifford Park, the Hendershots always opened up their home for use of the bathroom, phone, tools, tables, chairs, coffee, a grill, and anything else needed. The Hendershot children and grandchildren have always been big helpers with neighborhood cleanups.

Ed was born and raised in Omaha and attended Tech High School. Ed and Farol were married 53 years before Farol passed away a few years ago. Ed was a carpenter by trade and worked for most construction companies in the area including Kiewit, Hawkins, and Vrana. His hobbies included fishing, hunting, gardening, and wood-working. Ed was very straight-forward and not afraid to tell it like it was.

Ed is survived by sons James (Butch) and Tim, both of Omaha; son and daughter-in-law Daniel and Gina of Las Vegas, NV; daughter Cheryl Svendgard of Omaha; 12 grandchildren; 5 great-grandchildren; sisters Rita Morgan and Audrey Lausten, both of Omaha.

Ed, the GPNA and the Gifford Park neighborhood will miss you – we will try to continue what you helped start.

*by Chris Foster*



*Ed Hendershot, who passed away last month, was a friend to many people in the neighborhood. Ed was one of the original members of the GPNA and volunteered to help with many activities during his membership in the organization.*

## How About A New Logo?

It has been suggested to the GPNA Executive Board that we consider creating a new logo that can be used on our correspondence, newsletters, shirts, hats, etc. originating from the GPNA. We want a logo that identifies the character and symbolizes the mission of the GPNA and our neighborhood. The current logo and slogan can be found at the top of page 1 (masthead). Now we need your ideas! Join us at our next general meeting, to be held **August 3**, and give us your thoughts. We will continue collecting all entries until the August meeting, at which time we'll put all the logo ideas to a vote. (We would like to receive entries by **August 1**).

All entries can be sent to GPNA, 532 N. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, Omaha, NE 68131. So put on your thinking caps and send us your best artwork and message statement. The winning entry will receive a \$25 gift certificate to California Tacos. Call 342-6006 or 341-7293 if you have questions.

## Charles R. Kilgore Jr. Attorney At Law

4913 Underwood Avenue

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## Meet the GPNA Officers For 2000 - 2001

The GPNA is fortunate that four fine individuals have volunteered to be officers for the coming year. Our president, **Chris Foster**, is the only incumbent, and just like James Brown, he's the hardest working man (not in show business) but in the Gifford Park area. Chris, who is 38 and married to Sallie, moved into the neighborhood in 1986 and got involved initially with the GPNA in 1989. Chris' real job is as the Technical Support Manager for Kiewit Construction Company, where he has worked for 17 years. His interests and hobbies include biking, hiking, and just about any sport. Chris likes the diversity and active nature of the Gifford Park neighborhood - never a dull moment! His goal for the organization is to help the neighborhood reach its full potential.

Vice President **Peter Cihunka**, 31, moved into the neighborhood in April of 1998 and lives here with his fiance Sherry. He is employed at West Teleservices as a Project Manager. He graduated from UNO with a degree in secondary education. His primary focus will be to increase the enrollment and awareness of the GPNA, and help make the Gifford Park area a safer place to live. Peter's interests include golf, cooking (he actually likes to cook!) and community activities, as evidenced by his participation in the CONAN group (see page 7) and the neighborhood walks.

Our new recording secretary, **Vicki Frey**, moved into the Gifford Park neighborhood in August of 1995 with her husband, Ron, and son Erik. Vicki left her job as a book-keeper to home school Erik, who is entering the 7th grade. She enjoys reading, entertaining, crafts, and home remodeling and improvement. It sounds as though she's devoting a lot of time in pursuit of the last interest, because the Freys have spent the last five years making extensive interior improvements to their home, such as remodeling the kitchen and doing plumbing and electrical work. The thing that Vicki likes the most about Gifford Park is how friendly the people are. "We've met several people on and around our block that we now call friends. We are glad to call the Gifford Park neighborhood our home."

Treasurer **Dana Carlton** moved from Arizona to Nebraska in 1989 and to the neighborhood in August of 1998. She joined the GPNA before she even closed on her house! Dana has a degree from UNO and UNL in Interior Design and works as an interior decorator for The Designers (which used to be located at 39th and Dodge). She enjoys gardening, music, and artistic-related hobbies, and has a Westie named Jasper. Dana has served for two years as the Kellom/Yates liaison, and in that role she initiated the pen-pal program between the pupils and GPNA members. She is also the GPNA's representative to the Adopt-A-School Program.

Chris, Peter, Vicki, and Dana: thank you for donating your time, talent, energy, and leadership to the GPNA!

by Sue Wilwerding

## Laura Watson Dalton Scholarship Fund Established

A scholarship fund has been established in memory of **Laura Watson Dalton**, who was murdered in Iowa City in March of 1999. Laura's parents, **Jim and Jean Watson**, have lived in the Gifford Park neighborhood for 24 years. In an effort to keep her legacy and spirit alive, the Laura Watson Dalton Scholarship for Paramedic Training at Methodist College was established. Laura had recently achieved her dream of becoming a paramedic and her family and friends want to help someone like her become a paramedic also. The GPNA has made a donation to the scholarship fund, and plans to dedicate a tree in her memory when the Gifford Park landscape improvement project begins. If anyone is interested in making a contribution to this fund, please send it to:

**The Laura Watson Dalton Scholarship Fund**  
c/o Diane Watson  
900 Farnam St. #805  
Omaha, NE 68102

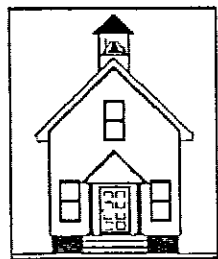
Laura's family members wish to express their gratitude to the neighbors of the Gifford Park area for their care and concern during this difficult time, and they ask that you continue to remember them in your prayers.

## Sun Dawgs 2000 Report

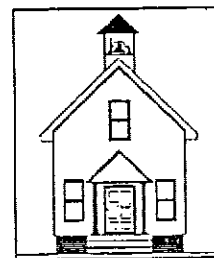
If you have been near Gifford Park lately you've probably noticed a variety of activities going on with the Sun Dawgs Summer Youth program. This year we again have two very good supervisors running the activities, **Paul Williams** and **Nichol Novacek**. The program's hours are from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Monday through Friday, now until August 3. Many thanks to **Peg Wadkins**, **Tom McGinn** and **Tom Lebida** with City Parks and Recreation. GPNA's own **Jan Franks** helps with the program on a regular basis. Stop down to the Sun Dawg shack and see what's going on.



*A portable rock climbing wall was brought into Gifford Park one day in June for Sun Dawg participants to enjoy.*



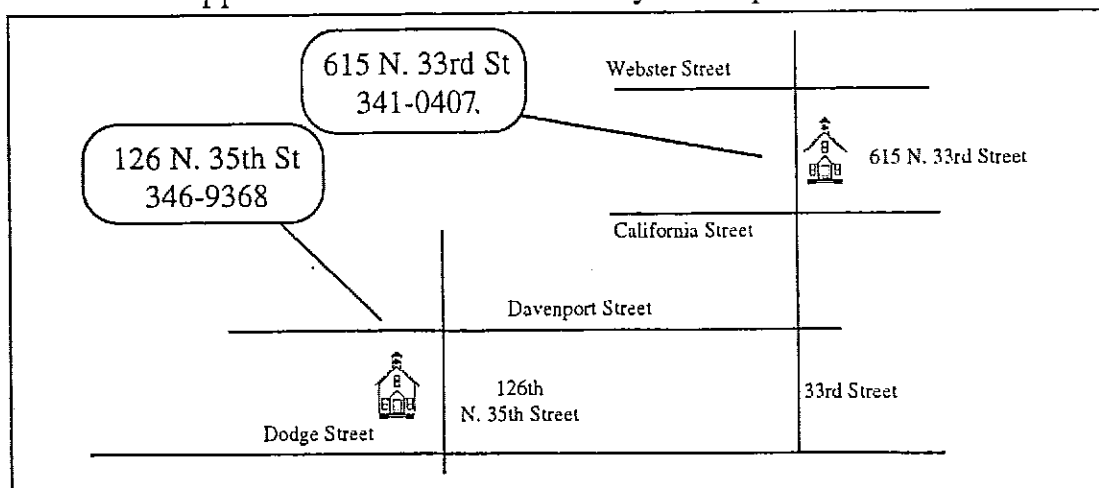
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- \* Client transportation to these schools: Kellom, Walnut Hill, Field Club, Dundee, Harrison, King Primary
- \* Saturday care at our corporate site

Appointments are not necessary so drop in for a visit



## Historically Speaking...The Polio Epidemic

*continued from page 1*

country. FDR's theory was "Get up and go—don't pay attention to it." We know this principle enabled him to become president of the United States during a very crucial time in our history. The news media honored his philosophy and never took pictures of FDR in any compromising situation. Everyone knew he had polio, but we didn't dwell on it.

Meanwhile, in 1933 there were 5,000 new cases; in 1948, 27,000 new cases; in 1950, 33,000 new cases; and in 1952, 59,000 new cases. Care for these people required iron lungs, nurses, hospitals and money to finance it all. FDR turned over Warm Springs to the cause, and his friend, Basil O'Connor, helped raise money. O'Connor began a new approach in 1938 called the "March of Dimes." Money was sent directly to the White House. Balls were held, dinners were given, and scientists tried various vaccines with no success. School children all over the country participated in the drive for money. In Hollywood many famous personalities from Mickey Mouse to Mickey Rooney rallied to the cause.

During WW II polio became a front within the front as it broke out in the military. How it was spread was still a mystery. Sister Elizabeth Kenney from Australia proposed physical therapy together with hot packs for the victims. The worst time of the year for the disease was summer. Can you imagine the heat without air conditioning?

In 1949, polio was epidemic. Clean hands, clean houses, and clean water supplies were all advocated, but the malady did not abate. Black people as well as white people were stricken, but many black people were turned away from hospitals, especially in the South. For them, Tuskegee Institute was sometimes their only hope. Mothers of victims volunteered uncountable hours to help their children, many of whom ended up with braces. Children were not allowed to play with their friends in the month of August, and the swimming pools and beaches were nearly empty. I remember a good playmate on 34th Street. Phyllis contracted polio and died after only a couple of days. You can bet my parents and other parents on the block were scared.

By 1951, Doctors Salk and Sabin were working independently on a vaccine; Salk with killed viruses and Sabin with live viruses. Salk had determined that there were three viruses and tried a vaccine on some children, but there were questions about its safety. Sabin was against it. In 1954 there were more field trials and in 1955 mass distribution by needle began. A tragic thing happened. One lab (Cutter) produced a faulty vaccine and many contracted polio from it and died. Salk was distraught, but continued advocating his belief in his vaccine. 1958 and 1959 were again bad years, but by 1961 the vaccine was endorsed by the U.S. and administered wholesale across the nation and over the world. Distribution sites (the vaccine was now given by mouth, sometimes on a sugar cube) were set up everywhere—schools, auditoriums, churches, and hospitals. I can remember standing in line with my folks at the old Webster Street school to receive the vaccine.

Polio has now been eradicated in the U.S., but continues to plague many parts of the world. We still meet people who are confined to wheel chairs, walk with a limp, have lung problems and other weaknesses. These folks have suffered from the scourge of polio. Thankfully, we do not have to fear this for our children today. They can play together all summer long, they can swim as much as they want, and there are no longer wards in our hospitals with row upon row of iron lungs creating their eerie sound of misery. Let us hope and pray that other maladies plaguing our land will be conquered soon.

*by Eva Swanson*

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

A suggestion was made about improving the lighting around the 33<sup>rd</sup> & California Street business district to help with public safety. Like most good ideas, the person who thinks up the idea gets to do the work to make it happen. Thanks to **Ron Yates** and his legwork, the City plans to upgrade existing 100-watt bulbs to 200-watt very soon. Ron has also asked OPPD to look at additional lighting if necessary.

Let's all wish **Bob Hutton** a speedy recovery. While helping a friend, Bob dropped a heavy piece of iron on his foot, cracking it in three places. He's expected to be on crutches for six weeks. Bob and wife **Virginia** are very active members of the GPNA, especially in our neighborhood walk group.

The GPNA is planning to reinstate the V.I.P. (Volunteer Incentive Program). This program was done several years ago as a way to recognize the efforts of neighborhood volunteers. Points will be awarded for participation in neighborhood events and duties. GPNA merchandise and awards can be earned based on points. Criteria and the point system tracking parameters are being worked out. We plan to begin the V.I.P. within the next month.

The GPNA plans to place about 200 American flags in high visibility areas of the neighborhood to celebrate the 4th of July. This is the first year for this project, and comments and ideas concerning this effort would be welcomed.

## A Word About CONAN

You're probably thinking, "Oh no, another bad Arnold movie." What I am referring to has nothing to do with bad acting (sorry all you Arnold fans). In this case, CONAN is an acronym for Central Omaha Neighborhood Association Network. About one and half months ago, representatives from Gifford Park, Leavenworth, Ford Birthsite, and Field Club neighborhood associations held a meeting. In talking with these other associations, we came to a couple of conclusions: Central Omaha neighborhoods face similar challenges and we all want our neighborhoods to be safe for our families. We also realized that individually we have all accomplished a great many things; just imagine what we could accomplish if we all worked together! So far, our efforts have centered on patrolling and trying to get the police to pay more attention to problem areas. CONAN is still in its "infancy"; however, the thought of what 5 or 6 associations working together could accomplish is exciting. I will continue to update you on the progress CONAN is making and how it will benefit Gifford Park both in the newsletter and at our monthly meetings. In the meantime, if you have questions, or would like to get involved, please give me a call at 341-7293.

by Peter Cihunka

## California Tacos & More

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**342-0212**

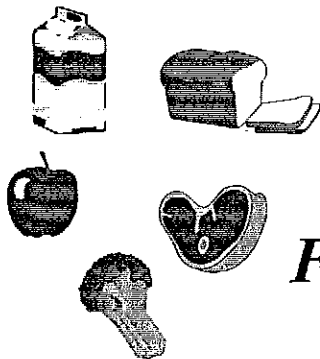
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**8:00 AM - 10:00 PM Sunday**



## Neighbor Of The Month . . . . . Tim Johnson

If you've been in the neighborhood during the last 10 years, you have surely seen **Tim Johnson**. Tim mows lawns, paints houses, and does other handy work in the Gifford Park neighborhood. He gets a lot of business knocking on doors of property where the lawn is in dire need of cutting, especially rental property. This adds up to about 100 lawns per month during the spring and summer. Keep in mind these jobs tend to be lawns nobody else wants to do, and the pay is usually below what is deserved. Tim even uses the Gifford Park Tool Lending program when his mower breaks down. Tim does his best to keep our neighborhood looking good.

Tim is 41 years old, single, and was born in Omaha. Most of his family lives in Omaha including his cousin, **Kevin Mitchell**, who also mows lawns in the neighborhood. Tim ran track at Monroe Junior High and then played football and wrestled at Benson High. Tim's hobbies include basketball, weightlifting, and staying in shape. He says the people, especially the children, make this neighborhood a great place. He has a very positive attitude, which he says comes from his strong Christian belief. If you need the grass cut or other handy work, Tim can be reached at 342-4159 or 345-1981.



"Neighbor Of The Month" Tim Johnson prepares to mow one of the many lawns he takes care of in the Gifford Park area.



## Happy Fourth of July!



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

## GPNA Tennis Program Set For August

Get ready for the 7th annual youth tennis lessons in Gifford Park every Wednesday in August. We are considering a slightly different format for the lessons, one that would allow more rallying between kids and instructors. Look for application flyers at **J'N'J Grocery** and **California Tacos** later in July. For more information, call **Chris 342-6006**.

**For City Services,  
 Information, or  
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 Call:  
 Mayor's Action  
 Office**

**444-5555**