



Gifford Park's Pride

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

March 2001

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Proposed Assisted Living Center: The Facts As We Know Them

Many of you are aware of recent discussion regarding the proposed conversion of the Nebraska College of Business building located on the Duchesne Campus at 36th & California. The goal of the developers, California Housing L.L.C. (three Omaha individuals), would be to retrofit the property to accommodate 55 one-bedroom efficiency apartments to service the elderly. The developers say the projected need for senior facilities is very high over the next 15 years. The licensure for the facility would be for "Assisted Living" which accommodates seniors who are in need of some assistance with daily living such as supervision of medications and possible bathing. Housekeeping, meals, and utilities will be provided under the assisted living format. There will be a 24-hour, 7-day a week nursing staff present in the building as well as an activities director, housekeeping, and dietary staff. All 55 units would be Medicaid eligible. Operations would be regulated by the State of Nebraska.

The developers will go before the Omaha Planning Board March 7 to request a "Conditional Use Permit" to operate an "Assisted Living" facility. They are asking for GPNA support for this project. The project developer and the project architect gave a presentation at our February general GPNA meeting. One of the developers and his attorney were invited to the February 15 GPNA board meeting to answer questions and concerns raised. They have also presented their plan to the Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association. If the Planning Board approves the project, it would then go before the City Council for approval within a month or so of the Planning Board meeting. The developers said renovation could start as soon as July if the approval process goes well. Construction would take roughly six to eight months to complete.

It is anticipated that the cost of this project will be approximately \$3.5 million. Almost the entire building needs to be renovated, particularly the major mechanical systems, such as heating, cooling, and electrical. A new roof, windows, and elevators are needed. Sprinklers will have to be installed for fire safety and all of the plumbing facilities and ingress and egress hallways will have to comply with the American Disabilities Act (ADA). Duchesne plans to sell only the building and will maintain ownership of the land.

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Next Meeting

Thursday, March 1
7:00 P.M.

Guest Speaker:
Donald Carey
Omaha Police Chief

Meet the District 3
City Council Candidates

Discussion and Vote On
Proposed Assisted
Living Center

St. Joseph Hospital
Becic Dining Room

12th Annual GPNA Easter Egg Hunt



Saturday, April 14th
Noon (Sharp!)
Rain or Shine
at Gifford Park
Children Ages 12 &
Under

Bring Your Easter Baskets
& Be Ready To Hunt!

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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

This winter season has obviously been one of the roughest weatherwise that we have experienced in a number of years, especially compared to the last few. Not only have we had above average snowfall and ice, but the extreme cold, particularly in December, is making this a winter to remember. With spring just around the corner, I for one would like to focus our thoughts toward the many activities and events of spring and summer. We certainly need everyone's help and ideas as we plan for our annual events including the Easter Egg Hunt in April, Tennis Blitz and Bike Rodeo in May, Neighborhood Cleanup and Sun Dawgs Youth program in June. We are excited to announce Gifford Park Day planned for May 5. These are all fun events most of which can involve the whole family. I'm sure additional activities will spring up too.

Besides the many good things nicer weather brings to our neighborhood, other activities come also. It's a great time for neighbors to get together to do fix-up projects, gardens, spring cleanup and just meeting in the park or on the street corner. Of course what we don't want to see is some of the criminal behavior that also seems to come with warmer weather. The GPNA met twice in February with police and other law enforcement officials at the Northeast Precinct to try to develop a strategy to reduce and prevent criminal activity before it gets out of control. We met with U.S. Attorney **Tom Monaghan**, **Ann Camp** with the U.S. Attorney's Office, **JoAnne Singleton** with Weed & Seed, **Captain Pitmon Foxall**, **Lt. Swircinski**, **Sgt. Kathy Cook**, **Sgt. Adam Kyle** with the Narcotics Unit, **Sgt. Steve Osire**, and other officers. I believe some progress was made, but it will take more work by everyone. It's no surprise that law enforcement resources seem inadequate for the amount of crime in our city, especially in the northeast precinct. The GPNA is asking everyone to participate in our neighborhood walks, which will begin soon with warmer weather. We plan to have them more frequently and do more walking in different parts of the neighborhood. Bring a friend or neighbor to help show support for our area. The GPNA is very committed to improving public safety in the Gifford Park neighborhood. We need your participation. These walks are probably the most effective thing you can do to show your support.

Besides the activities mentioned above, we have an interesting program for our March meeting. **Police Chief Don Carey** will be our guest speaker. With the upcoming primary (April 3) and general election (May 15) we thought it would be appropriate to give everyone a chance to meet the candidates for City Council District 3. Each candidate that attends will be given a couple of minutes to present their ideas and vision. The meeting will finish with discussion and a vote on the proposed Assisted Living Center (renovation of the Nebraska College of Business building on the Duchesne Campus at 36th & California). There has been much debate on this proposal. There is a lot more information about this matter in this newsletter.

In closing, I want to mention a few other items about our neighborhood that the GPNA is keeping an interest in. The GPNA has pursued the Main Street program (presented at the January meeting) in an effort to get training and network with other associations on revitalization efforts for our neighborhood. We have had a few discussions with Creighton University regarding their master plan and its impact on our neighborhood, but nothing solid at this point - we are in the process of scheduling a meeting with Creighton soon. The property manager of 521 & 523 N. 33rd Street indicated the property is for sale - any takers? And finally, recently on two separate occasions (at Neighborhood Builders and the Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association meeting) **Mayor Hal Daub** talked about the idea of closing the underpass at 33rd & Cuming St. The GPNA has talked about this idea for years to help with public safety issues on 33rd & California. At this time I'm still trying to find out if this could happen.

by Chris Foster

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.

Assisted Living Center . . .

continued from page 1

As discussed at the February meeting, if the project is approved, the owners anticipate hiring a highly qualified professional management team. Once the management company is selected, the neighborhood associations will be immediately notified. There would be criteria for admittance and sustaining occupancy in this facility. That criteria would have a minimum age requirement to make certain the building is senior as well as a certain level of care to insure that there would not be undesirable profiles in the building. A representative of the GPNA and the Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association would be welcome to visit with the management team and review the criteria to make certain that it is what everyone expects as a standard for this facility. The developers would be willing to make it a requirement of the "Conditional Use Permit" that this criteria will not change without notice being sent to the owners and anyone else who would like to be notified. Hopefully, this would provide a built-in check against the tenant profile deteriorating because of a changed definition of who may come in for services.

Any of the following individuals can be contacted if there are questions about this project: **Dan Malone**, president of **Investment Property Resources**, 334-5232; **Jim Lang**, the attorney for the project, 330-1900; **Randy Meyer** the architect on the project, 391-1823. Additionally, Dan Malone has invited anyone from our neighborhood or any other neighborhood that would like to meet at the St. Joseph Tower Apartments on the corner of 10th and Dorcas on Monday, March 5, 2001, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Investment Property Resources was also the coordinating company for the conversion of this facility which was completed in December 2000. He will show the main common area of that converted building and also take questions in the chapel area from anyone who has not been able to attend any of the neighborhood association meetings and would like to have some additional information.

It is very important to become informed about this proposed "Assisted Living" Center. You are encouraged to visit the St. Joseph Tower Apartments on the corner of 10th & Dorcas and ask questions. You should ask yourself: Would this be a benefit to our neighborhood? Would it have no effect or would it have a negative impact? What are the long-term issues if the business fails? The GPNA Board will create a letter of support that will be voted on by GPNA members at our next GPNA meeting, March 1. This letter will include some specific criteria for our support. The vote will be for or against this letter of support. We plan to have copies of this letter and brief discussion on this matter at the meeting.

Free Tax Help Is Here Again For the Seventh Year in a Row!



The site for the annual free tax assistance program has been moved to the **American Labor Force** building on the **northeast corner of 33rd & California St.** The new location will offer much more room and offer a better setup than the GPNA Office. The G.O.C.A sites in north and south Omaha, which had provided free tax help in the past, are not available this year. This makes our site even more important this year. The GPNA thanks the American Labor Force for their generosity.

The hours have been expanded to **EVERY MONDAY** from **1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.** through the end of the tax season (**April 16**). Everyone is welcome! IRS representatives are providing free tax help for our neighborhood. Processing of basic tax returns and electronic filing are available again this year. Walk-in appointments are welcome, or you can schedule an appointment. For more information, or to schedule an appointment, call **551-3629**.

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

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



Charles R. Kilgore Jr. Attorney At Law

4913 Underwood Avenue
558-5000

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

¿Se Habla Espanol?

When I called to set up the interview for this article, the woman on the other end of the telephone spoke in Spanish. This shouldn't have surprised me. After all, it was the *Consulado de Mexico* (Mexican Consulate), I was trying to reach. I was just unprepared to have "a little bit of Mexico" right here in Gifford Park. Fortunately for me, the woman was bilingual.

The **Mexican Consulate**, our newest neighbor, is located at **3552 Dodge Street**. They have officially opened for business after several months of remodeling the former Bradley Flower Shop. Headed by **Consulate Chief Jose Luis Cuevas** and his staff of eight employees, they serve as a type of small embassy for Mexican nationals. This means people of Mexican descent now have a direct link to the Mexican government. They can visit the consulate to obtain official documents such as birth certificates, marriage licenses, or other identification information that may be on record in Mexico.

Americans wishing to visit Mexico can also benefit from the consulate's international connections. Various tourism requirements can be found out ahead of time so that documentation may be handled prior to the trip, ensuring a smoother visit. Business contacts can be made through the consulate staff to help area companies explore the possibility of working with Mexican companies.

"The hardest thing is getting the word out. (We want people to know) where we are and what we do," said Mr. Cuevas, sitting behind his desk in a freshly painted, newly furnished office. "We serve Nebraska, Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota. It's a large area. But we are slowly making (progress)." This is Mr. Cuevas' thirteenth assignment as a Mexican government official, so he was no stranger to the bureaucratic headaches he would encounter in establishing this consulate. There were questions concerning the location of the facility, various dealings back and forth with the Mexican and the US governments, requirements for a complete budget plan including furnishings and supplies, and finally changes in the administration in Mexico which would eventually call for a new budget altogether. "It is a lot of work and we are still working on it," Mr. Cuevas said.

The location was selected with an eye toward expansion. As you enter the building, you find yourself in a large waiting area filled with tables and chairs. The day I visited, there were 15-20 people in the lobby. The staff greets you from a long counter positioned midway through the building. Administrative offices follow behind the counter, in the rear of the establishment. Bits of Mexican décor are scattered throughout. There are plans to perhaps renovate the entire second floor into a Mexican cultural center. No doubt they will have room to accommodate the growing Mexican immigrant population of Omaha.

So if you, or someone you know, would like to experience "a little bit of Mexico" right here in the neighborhood, stop by the consulate Monday through Friday, 8am. to 1pm., and say "Hola".

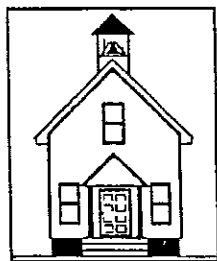
by Vicki Frey

Shelterbelt Theatre News

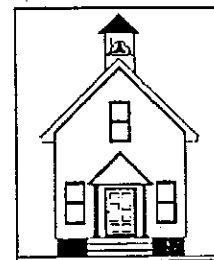
The **Shelterbelt Theatre** is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to producing new original works by artists both local and from around the world. For the past seven and a half years, the Shelterbelt Theatre has operated out of the **3225 1/2 building on California St.**, one storefront down from California Taco. In November of 2000, both the Shelterbelt Theatre and SNAP! Productions, another local theatre organization, committed to forge a cooperative relationship in which both organizations would share the use of the current Shelterbelt space. This would financially and artistically benefit both organizations by allowing them to share financial responsibilities as well as pool their creative talents. To accommodate both groups, the theatre has begun its extensive renovation process which includes adding new plumbing and electrical systems, seat and stage rearrangement, the addition of a new lobby and box office, and renovations of the lower level of the building for use as rehearsal space and actor commons area. They are dedicated to producing quality theatrical productions that will enhance the cultural promise of the neighborhood. They are in desperate need of a licensed plumber and general contractor who would be willing to donate some time in supervising the construction process to ensure local codes are met. Contact **Don Nguyen** at **681-9786** or **391-2414** for more information.

Don't forget to vote!

**The City Primary is
April 3**



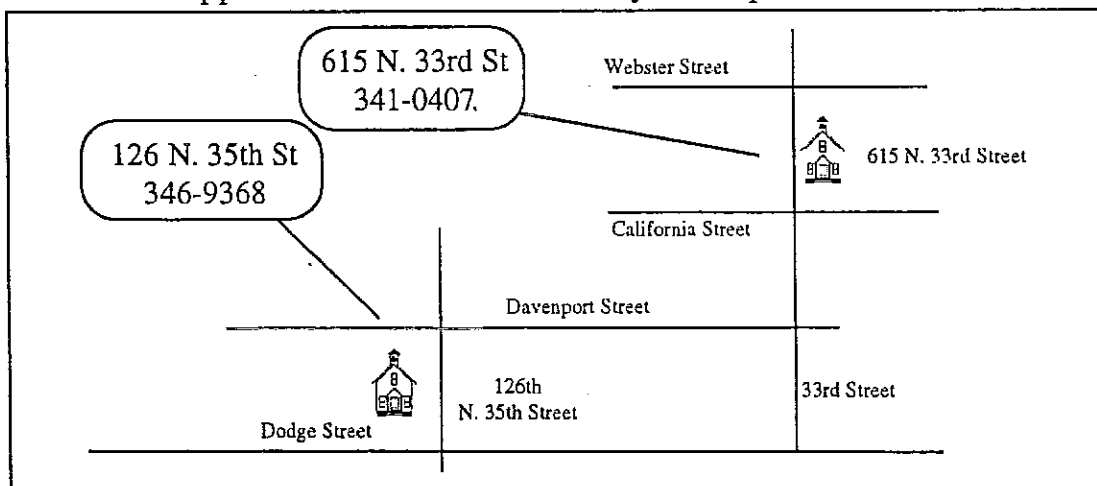
NEBRASKA CHILDCARE CENTERS*



Nebraska Childcare Centers offer:

- * Quality childcare for children ages 6 weeks thru 12 years
- * Developmentally Appropriate Activities
- * Safe, State approved transportation
- * U.S.D.A. approved food program including meals and snacks
- * 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



HOUSING QUESTIONS? CALL..... FAIR HOUSING

(Questions/Complaints Regarding Tenant Rights and Housing Discrimination)

Fair Housing Center of Nebraska	934-6675
2522 North 24th St., Omaha, NE 68110	
Nebraska Legal Services	348-1060
500 South 18th St. Omaha, NE 68102	
Nebraska Department of Banking and Finance	(402)471-2171
1200 N St., Suite 311, Lincoln, NE 68508	
Nebraska Department of Insurance	(402)471-2201
941 O St., Suite 400, Lincoln, NE 68508	
Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission	595-2028
1313 Farnam-on-the-Mall, Omaha, NE 68102	
Nebraska Real Estate Commission	(402)471-2004
1200 N St., Suite 400, Lincoln, NE 68508	
Omaha Human Relations Department	444-5055
1819 Farnam St. Suite 502, Omaha NE 68183	
U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development	492-3109
10909 Mill Valley Road, Omaha, NE 68154	

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

(Section 8 Housing, Accessibility modifications, Special Needs Housing)

Bellevue Housing Authority (Subsidized Rental Housing)	734-5448
8214 Armstrong Circle, Bellevue, NE 68147	
Douglas County Housing Authority (Subsidized Rental Housing)	444-6203
5404 North 107th Plaza, Omaha, NE 68134	
Family Housing Advisory Services (Homesearch, Special Needs Housing & Housing counseling)	
Central Office: 2416 Lake St. Omaha, NE 68111.....	934-7921
South Office: 4733 South 24th St., Omaha, NE 68107.....	546-1013
Holy Name Housing Corporation (Homeownership)	453-6100
3014 North 45th St., Omaha, NE 68104	
League of Human Dignity (Accessibility Modifications)	595-1256
5513 Center St., Omaha, NE 68106	
Omaha Housing Authority (Subsidized Rental Housing)	444-6900
540 South 27th St. Omaha, NE 68105	
Omaha 100, Inc. (Homeownership)	342-3773
2416 Lake St., Omaha, NE 68111	
South Omaha Affordable Housing Corporation (Homeownership)	342-3242
1704 South 20th St., Omaha, NE 68108	

This listing was compiled and distributed by the Mayor's Fair Housing Advisory Group in
cooperation with the City of Omaha Human Relations Department

TEAMWORK: The Secret To Success

In February, I attended the Neighborhood Builders workshops at St. Joseph Hospital. Since they were free to the public, I wasn't sure what to expect, but I actually came away inspired about community service.

The workshops were filled with great ideas as to how to get involved with my own neighborhood and the community at large. Most suggestions were practical, "hands-on", and simple to implement. *Even I* could do this stuff. I met volunteers from other neighborhood associations, the Mayor, various civic leaders, media personalities, and heads of committees that deal specifically with urban resources. (Being able to contact these people in the future will definitely put me a step ahead.) There were workshops that taught effective planning of my limited time and resources, ones that dealt with problem solving, and even one on leadership skills. But the topic that stood out the most for me was teamwork. No one can carry the load alone, no matter how talented he or she is. We need each other to be successful. Often, neighborhood work becomes a lifetime commitment. It goes something like this: we become involved, accept responsibilities, influence others in the community, inspire some to become involved with us, and the cycle is then repeated. That is how a neighborhood stays strong.

Take a look at your commitment level. Where are you in the above-mentioned cycle? You can make a difference. Your neighborhood is what you make it.

by Vicki Frey

California Tacos & More

Homemade Mexican Food
342-0212

33rd & California Street
Dine In or Carry Out

Hours:

Monday - Saturday: 11a.m. - 9 p.m.
Closed Sunday



J'N'J
GROCERY STORE
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3301 California Street -- 422-1058

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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

What's Happening in the Neighborhood . . .

GPNA Vice President **Peter Cihunka** has announced that **Gifford Park Day 2001** has been scheduled for **Saturday, May 5**. The purpose of Gifford Park Day is to get together with neighbors and have a good time in our historic and vibrant neighborhood. Anyone interested in helping to make this a special day can call Peter at **341-7293**.

Steady progress is being made in the expansion and renovation of **California Tacos at 33rd and California**. The new oak floor is being constructed two feet above the existing floor to match the height of the current restaurant floor. The brick walls will be left to maintain the character of the building. Glass block has already been installed in the two south windows. Owner **Brad Bogard** expects to open the added space in the next couple of months. Special thanks to Brad and his staff at California Tacos for letting the GPNA hold our executive board meetings at the restaurant since November. We hope it didn't disrupt business too much!

The GPNA wishes a speedy recovery to our historian **Eva Swanson**, who broke her wrist in late January while shoveling snow in her driveway. Speaking of Eva, her book **The History Of 33rd & California Plus The History Of The GPNA** is still a very popular item. Copies are still available; the price is \$12 for a copy (color) or \$6 (black & white). To order a copy call **345-1707**.

The Omaha Police Public Information Office has begun a program called "OPD E-News" to share information with neighborhood and business leaders in the community. The program is available to anyone interested in receiving press releases and other information via e-mail. All you have to do is register on-line by going to www.opd.ci.omaha.ne.us and click on the "E-News" icon.

Spring Cleanup Date Announced

Although it seems like winter may never end this year, believe it or not, spring is just around the corner. That means that the **GPNA Annual Spring Cleanup** will be coming up soon. Due to the fact that a different city department will be directing the neighborhood cleanups this year, cleanup dates were assigned rather than offered on a first come, first serve basis. The GPNA was assigned the date of **Saturday, June 16th**. Although this is still a long way off (past cleanups have been held in April), it's not too soon to start thinking about spring yard and housecleaning. As always, volunteers will be needed to help make pick-ups and fill the dumpsters. Look for more details about the cleanup in future editions of the newsletter.

What A Deal!

You can renew your GPNA membership **now** for 2001 - 2002, even though the membership year doesn't start until June 1. And if you're joining the GPNA as a new member, and you join in March, you'll be getting 15 months of membership for the price of 12 - an offer you can't refuse! Just fill out the application on the left and send it in along with your membership fee (or bring it with you to the next meeting) and you're an official GPNA member. If you are renewing, thanks for your support. If you are not a member, please consider joining - your membership helps pay for this newsletter, neighborhood cleanups, youth activities, and other worthwhile projects. Please join or renew your membership today!



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)

E-mail Address: _____

Can we contact you for help on any of the following items? (please circle areas of interest).

- | | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Cleanup/Beautification | Tennis Program | Block Captain | Tool Lending |
| Membership | Youth Activities | History | Newsletter |
| Neighborhood Walks | Park | Merchants | Newsletter Distribution |
| Social Activities | Tree Planting | Watch Group | Meeting Program |
| Landlord/Tenant Issues | Calling Committee | Public Relations | School Liaison |