



# Gifford Park's Pride

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

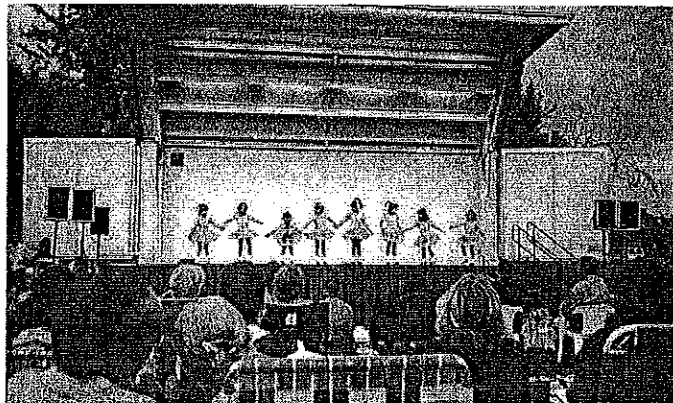
August 2001

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

## Sun Dawgs, Show Wagon Prove To Be Great Summer Events

As usual, the Sun Dawg shack in Gifford Park was the place to be for fun summer activities. **Chris Thoms, Allison Easterling, and Paul Williams** did a great job with the kids this year. One of the highlights of the past month was a Sun Dawgs picnic at Elmwood Park on July 25th. JN'J' Grocery's **Loren Johnson** donated 125 hot dogs for the event.

Another great crowd was on hand for the Show Wagon's second visit to Gifford Park this summer. The regional finals were held at the park on July 11th. The evening's weather was perfect, and the crowd was treated to a variety of fine performances. **Chase Thornburg & The Choke** and **Noelle Thornburg** provided musical entertainment prior to the Show Wagon. **Hiland-Roberts Dairy** donated 400 ice cream treats that were distributed to those in attendance. Thanks to City of Omaha employees **Cis Carlson, Mark Caughey, and Rick Weiner** for doing an outstanding job in handling all the many details involved in staging the shows.



## Next Meeting

Thursday, August 2  
7:00 P.M.

## Guest Speaker:

**Jim Vokal**  
District 3  
City Council Representative

St. Joseph Hospital  
Becic Dining Room

## "Dusk Til Dawn - Leave Your Lights On" Theme Of National Night Out

The 18th annual **National Night Out** will be held on **Tuesday, August 7**. The purpose of National Night Out is to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness, generate support for, and participate in, local anti-crime efforts, strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships, and send a message to criminals that neighborhoods are organized and are fighting back. In keeping with this year's theme, neighbors are asked to keep their porch lights on from dusk until dawn. This theme serves as a reminder that maintaining a well-lit neighborhood by leaving outdoor lights on all night is one of the simplest, yet effective, means of deterring crime, and it's relatively inexpensive. For example, if you leave a 175 watt bulb on for 10 hours a night for 30 nights, the cost would be \$3.61 - about 12 cents a night! Plan on getting out the evening of August 7, and visit with your neighbors. At dusk, turn your lights on all night long and keep leaving them on all night long every night all year long!

*Information courtesy of the OPD Community Resource Center Newsletter*

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**WEEDS & LITTER**

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

**KELLOM SCHOOL LIAISON**

Dana Carlton 346-4575

**The President's Column**

Well I think we can officially say that the "Dog Days of Summer" are here. Of course, I had to pick the hottest time of the year to scrape, prime, and paint my house. A man has a lot of time to think when he is painting his house, and this month you all will be the benefactors of my newfound time. As I am working on my house, I can not help but think about one of the GPNA's guiding principles: The Broken Window Theory. There are many versions of this theory; I will share mine.

A group of people, your basic trouble makers (you may have seen them on 33<sup>rd</sup> & California), are driving down Cass Street one day doing what trouble makers do... looking for trouble. As they drive down the street they see a house with a badly broken window. One troublemaker says to the other troublemaker, "Hey man, this neighborhood looks pretty run down, we can really cause some trouble here". So, they do. This group of troublemakers goes and tells all their friends about their new hang out. One thing leads to another and before you know it, you have droves of troublemakers in your neighborhood just "hanging out". In no time, the roof of your house becomes a landmark for the Helicopter Patrol. This little fun nightmare just started with one broken window.

Obviously, this story is exaggerated to prove a point. In reality, it usually takes some time to for this phenomenon to occur because it is never "just" a broken window. If you don't believe me, just look at 33<sup>rd</sup> and California. 90% of the properties down there are in excellent condition and are kept that way all year around. When that other 10% begins to run down a little bit, that is when we see an increase in activity. Early springtime is a prime example of this especially after a hard winter.

So, why do we talk so much about weeds and litter? Why do we talk so much about abandoned cars? Why do we discourage people using their curbs as dump yards on Monday nights? Why aren't you supposed to have 15 junk cars in your backyard? (If you don't know the answer by now, please re-read the first four paragraphs of this column). I forgot one more, why do we like to see abandoned buildings receive 4.3 million dollar face-lifts and be put to good use?

*by Peter Cihunka*



**TOOL  
LENDING  
HOTLINE**

*Mike 933-7506  
Chris 342-6006*

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



**Twenty Five Years 1976 - 2001**

**A.V. Sorensen Library & Recreation Center  
Silver Anniversary Celebration**



**Wednesday, August 8th 6 - 8 PM**

Ice Cream Social  
Rededication & Tree Planting  
South Lawn & Community Room Activities

## Editorial Corner

*A copy of this letter was sent to Jim Vokal and all the other city council members by the author. An edited version appeared in the Public Pulse section of the Sunday World-Herald on July 22.*

On July 11, 2001, the Landmark's Heritage Preservation Commission listened to proposed architectural changes for the Foxley building on Duchesne's campus. These changes were presented by the California Development Company that is purchasing the building from Duchesne to convert it to a 55 unit assisted living facility. It should be noted the Omaha Planning Board previously voted to support this conversion as an acceptable usage of the building. However, the Omaha Planning Board deferred to the Landmark's Heritage Preservation Commission to address the question of "architectural changes" to the building and the impact of these changes on the historical nature of the neighborhood. In order for a proposal to pass, this commission requires a 5-vote majority. 6 of 7 members were present at this meeting. The vote was 4 to 2 in favor. I commend member Randall Hayes for sticking to the issue presented and agreeing that the architectural changes proposed were consistent with the neighborhood and would not have a negative impact to the historical integrity of the neighborhood. However, 2 members veered from the architectural question at hand and chose to vote against the proposal on the grounds that no economic impact study on property values was done. Even though the Omaha Planning Board and a majority of both the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA) and Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association (JCNA) members support this project, a small contingent of neighbors on 38<sup>th</sup> street between Davenport and Burt were able to halt this project temporarily. They indicated they are opposed to the proposed usage of this building. That was not the question before the Landmark's Heritage Preservation Commission and had already received the support of the Omaha Planning Board. I am disappointed in this vote and the Landmark's Heritage Preservation Commission going beyond its scope on this issue. I hope when this is presented to the Omaha City Council you will support Duchesne, the California Development Company, and the majority of GPNA and JCNA members in allowing this project to move forward. Duchesne has invested much in our diverse neighborhood, and should be commended for this decision of responsible stewardship consistent with its mission and values. The proposed architectural changes to the building will enhance the Duchesne campus and add to the beauty of our neighborhood. What a wonderful opportunity to have an intergenerational campus with the elderly and students celebrating life. If historical preservation is truly the main concern, then I say let's preserve one of the most important parts of our neighborhood - our people. The opportunity for the elderly in this neighborhood to be able to choose this alternative living setting if or when they no longer can remain independent in their own home would be a welcome option. Historical preservation of neighborhoods is not just about buildings. It is about the wonderful people who make the environment what it is. They are the very fabric of a "living history". Let's not short change our elderly who have made this great neighborhood what it is today. Support this assisted living facility in "our backyard".

*by Kathleen Wilwerding*

## August Neighborhood Walk Schedule

The neighborhood walks this month will be held on August 10th and 24th. Walks are scheduled for Friday evenings at 8:00 p.m. and will start at the Gifford Park baseball diamond. Enjoy a leisurely summer stroll through this beautiful area, get acquainted with other walkers, and show others that you're interested in your neighborhood. For further information or questions, call Peter at 341-7293.

## So What's New?

The GPNA's effort to plant a community garden on vacant lots on 34th & Cass Street is great, but its nothing new! According to the **Omaha World-Herald** dated April 10, 1924, fourteen children ages 4 through 11 planted a garden of both vegetables and flowers on two vacant lots on the corner of 37th and Cass. The children, pupils of Yates and Saunders schools, said they were planting pansies, onions, beets, and popcorn. A 4-year old said she was going to plant "silver bells, an' cockle shells, an' pretty maids, all in a row." They were pictured carrying rakes, spades, hoes, shovels, forks, and a broom. There is no record as to the looks of the garden at the end of the season, but we hope it all turned out well!

*by Eva Swanson*

*(from a clipping provided by Bernie Anderson)*

P.S. If you are interested in participating in this year's community garden, call Annmarie 342-1340 or Chris 342-6006.

**For City Services, Information, or  
Complaints**

**Call:  
Mayor's Action  
Office  
444-5555**



# 8th Annual Gifford Park Free Tennis Program



**For:** Youth (all ages)

**Dates:** August 1, 8, 15, 22, 29  
(Wednesdays)

**Time:** 6 - 7 p.m.

**Where:** Gifford Park Tennis Courts  
(33rd & Cass St.)



The Gifford Park Neighborhood Association is offering **FREE Tennis Lessons** and will provide tennis racquets, balls and instructors for each lesson. Parents are welcome to help.

**To be enrolled, YOU MUST complete the form shown below and bring with you to the tennis lessons.** There is limited space available so call the phone number listed below for information on enrollment for the tennis program.

**Call 342-6006**

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**Registration/Permission Form** - Bring this form (completely filled out) with you to the tennis lessons to be enrolled.

Youth's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street: \_\_\_\_\_ Street: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian Phone: home: \_\_\_\_\_ work: \_\_\_\_\_

As the parent or legal guardian of the child named above, I hereby give my full consent and approval for my child to participate as a member of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Youth Program.

I understand that there are certain risks of injury inherent in the practice and play of this sport, as well as related activities incidental to my child's participation, and I am willing to assume these risks on behalf of my child. I hereby certify that my child is fully capable of participating in this sport and that my child is healthy and has no physical or mental disabilities or infirmities that would restrict full participation in these activities, except as listed below.

I hereby waive, release and hold harmless the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Youth Program, and the City of Omaha, Nebraska, its Officers, coaches, sponsors, supervisors and representatives for any injury that may be suffered by my child in the normal course of participation in this sport and the activities incidental thereto, whether the result of negligence or any other cause. Furthermore, I give consent to any necessary medical treatment in case of emergency.

**Signature of Parent/Guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_