



Gifford Park's Pride

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

March 2002

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

City Council Passes "Landlord School" Ordinance

At its February 26th meeting, the Omaha City Council passed a revised version of the "landlord school" ordinance proposed by District 3 Representative Jim Vokal and Councilman Garry Gerandt. The ordinance passed 6-1, with Councilman Franklin Thompson casting the lone dissenting vote.

Owners of rental or vacant property who receive four or more notices for multiple code violations in any two-year period will be required by the ordinance to attend an eight-hour seminar on housing management. If the owner has satisfactorily corrected all of the violations within the three-month period between the notice to attend and the date of the seminar, the landlord will not be required to attend. If the landlord has not corrected the violations within that time period, he or she will be required to attend the seminar or pay a fine of up to \$500 and/or face a three-month jail sentence. The original curriculum that was to be used for this seminar was the Omaha Police Department's crime-free multi-housing program (which was the topic presented by Omaha Police Officer Stacy Williams at the February GPNA general meeting). The Planning Department, however, presented its own curriculum for the seminar that placed a greater emphasis on housing-code violations. The Planning Department's outline included topics such as minimum housing standards, building codes, and the roles of inspectors and licensed tradesmen. The ordinance would allow landlords to attend either seminar or a combination of both.

Some property owners were critical of the idea of the seminar, stating that it could cause them to be unfairly labeled as "bad landlords", and that it was unnecessary, since there was already a time limit to correct code violations in place, with enforcement being the primary problem.

Due to the fact that the city has not been tracking code violations recently, it is not known with any certainty how many landlords will be affected by this new ordinance.

Next Meeting
Thursday, March 7
7:00 P.M.

Guest Speaker:
Danielle Talkington

Topic: Youth Development
In Gifford Park

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

Cleanup Coming Up Soon

The GPNA Annual Spring Cleanup will be held on **Saturday, April 20th from 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.** in Gifford Park. Compactors, which worked out very well last year, will be available again for this cleanup. With all the windy weather, there's been lots of trash blowing around, and it will soon be time to clean up yards and alleys in the neighborhood. Volunteers will be needed to help make pick-ups and load the compactors. Please consult the April newsletter for more information regarding the cleanup.

13th Annual GPNA Easter Egg Hunt



Saturday, March 30
Noon (Sharp!)
Rain or Shine
at Gifford Park
Children Ages 12 &
Under

Bring Your Easter Baskets
& Be Ready To Hunt!

GPNA OFFICERS**PRESIDENT**

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VICE PRESIDENT

Terry Wilwerding 342-2795

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Vicki Frey 344-0757

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NEWSLETTER

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Roger Freeman 557-2914

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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

WELCOMING

Vicki Frey 344-0757

The President's Column

60 degrees in February? You have got to be kidding me. Last year I don't think it got above 50 until April! How nice it is to live in Nebraska. I cannot help but catch a little early spring fever.

This is the time when we begin planning our spring and summer activities for the neighborhood association. The list of activities has already begun to mount: Gifford Park Day, Easter Egg Hunt, Baseball Clinic, Spring Clean Up, Neighborhood Walks, and on and on. We have many events that are just in the planning phase; if you are interested in helping with any of these events, please give me a call.

I would like to give a special thank you to both of our guest speakers at the February General Meeting: **Officer Stacy Williams** and **Councilman Jim Vokal**. Officer Williams spoke on Crime Free Multi-Housing (landlords call 444-6518 if you missed the meeting and want to know more), and Councilman Vokal brought us up to speed on the issue of lead contamination in the soil.

I have also had it reported to me that dog fighting has become a problem in Gifford Park. You may have seen several stories on the news about this in the last few months. The signs of a house or apartment where dog fighting is taking place: many people coming and going with or without dogs, many barking dogs, dog carcasses, and wounded dogs running loose. Evidently, when the "owners" have a dog that is too injured to fight again, they just let it go. So please keep an eye out for this type of activity. If you suspect anything, contact the **Nebraska Humane Society** or the **Omaha Police Department**.

I strongly encourage anyone who wants to know more about the GPNA or would like to become a member, to call me - I would like to hear from you (my number is 341-7293). We are always in need of fresh ideas and fresh faces. Perhaps you would be interested in: Neighborhood Walks, Landlord/Tenant Issues, Tennis Program, Youth Activities, Calling Committee, Block Captain, Watch Group, Newsletter Distribution, Beautification, Neighborhood Clean Up, or Park Clean up. Or maybe, your specialty lies in an area I did not mention here. Let me know! I am sure we can find something.

by Peter Cihunka

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.

Lead Superfund Proposal Posted

On Tuesday, February 26, the proposed cleanup of Omaha's lead-contaminated yards was officially posted in the Federal Register, which "jump-starts" the process of procuring the funding necessary to pay for the cleanup through the Superfund designation. The listing is a six page document that explains the Superfund. Currently, there are 1,222 final Superfund listings; Omaha is one of 74 sites that is waiting to be added to the list.

Comments about the cleanup can be made by the public for about the next 60 days; they must be made in writing and be postmarked on or before April 29th. Four copies of the comments must be provided. For more information concerning the commentary process, call the **Superfund Hotline, (800) 424-9346**. The listing posted on the Federal Register can be viewed at the Midlands section of **Omaha.com**.

City Council Approves Plans For Assisted Living Facility

The proposed assisted living facility at the Foxley Building at 37th and California Street came before the Omaha City Council on Tuesday February 12. Opponents of the center from the West Central Development Council continued to suggest the development would erode property values in the area, and claimed they had been given inadequate opportunities to comment on the development and offer constructive suggestions for making the development acceptable to them. Duchesne Head of School Sheila Haggas contradicted this by quoting a letter sent to the group offering to meet with them at their convenience to discuss their concerns, an offer they did not act upon.

Steve Laughlin, who lives on 38th Street, spoke about the many benefits of the facility in the neighborhood, and Chris Foster and Leo Wilwerding, GPNA members, further commented on the many positive aspects of the development and the support that the facility had received from both the Gifford Park and Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Associations.

Councilman Jim Vokal moved that a decision be postponed to a future meeting of the Council in order to allow the opposing group to meet with the developers and Duchesne to discuss their concerns and suggestions, but that motion failed for lack of a second. When called to a vote, the Council unanimously approved the special use permit that was required for the project.

After the meeting, some GPNA members expressed the feeling that they were looking forward to the beginning of the remodeling work there, and the opportunities for social activities, employment and occupancy for neighborhood residents when the facility opens. According to a Duchesne official, work should begin soon on the project.

SNAP! Presents "Splendor"

SNAP! Productions is pleased to present "Splendor", March 7 - 31, at 3225 California St. The award-winning musical is set in the small East Texas town of Splendor, and deals with gossip - the favorite pastime of its citizens. Curtain times are 8 p.m. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, and 6 p.m. on Sundays. Reservations may be made by calling 341-2757 or on the SNAP! website: www.snapproductions.com. Tickets are \$15 for general admission, \$10 for students, senior citizens, and TAG members.

Free Tax Help Is Here Again For The Eighth Year In A Row!



The site for the annual free tax assistance program has been moved this year to **Yates Alternative School, 3260 Davenport St.** The hours have been expanded to **EVERY MONDAY** from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. through the end of the tax season (**April 15**). Everyone is welcome! IRS representatives will provide free tax help for our neighborhood. Processing of basic tax returns and electronic filing will be available again this year. Walk-ins are welcome - no appointment is necessary. For more information, call 551-3629.

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

Want to
Advertise in
the Gifford
Park Pride?

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345-0125

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

Serving the Gifford Park
Community since 1937
Peggy Hill,
Proprietor



Charles R. Kilgore Jr. Attorney At Law

4913 Underwood Avenue
558-5000

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

Neighbor Of The Month: Roger Freeman

The following letter was sent to the GPNA from Vera and Jim Horton, Gifford Park area residents for 51 years:

We thought through the GPNA newsletter would be a good way to make all the residents and people who use Gifford Park aware of the wonderful volunteer job Roger Freeman has been doing. Before the snow, every Sunday you could see him with his rake and trash sacks cleaning up the park. When he is finished you see no broken glass or litter. He never brags or complains, just gives you a friendly greeting and big smile. We want to give you a big pat on the back, Roger, and thanks a bunch.

The letter above speaks volumes about what being a great neighbor is all about. There is more about **Roger Freeman** and his wife **Sandy** that I wish to share. Roger grew up in Boston before joining the Air Force in 1953. He was stationed at Rheimmain Air Force Base in Frankfurt, Germany during the Korean War (84th Air Rescue Unit Detachment to the 60th Troop Carrier Wing). Roger moved to Omaha from New York City thirty-five years ago because he was tired of the big cities. That's when he met Sandy, who owned the current house they live in at 3317 Cass St. Roger and Sandy have two sons and one daughter. Their children went to Yates School. One of their sons is an Omaha Police officer and their other son lives in Seattle and works as an attorney. Their daughter is a nurse and lives in Omaha. Roger has worked for the Omaha Public Schools for 26 years and is currently a Special Education Supervisor. Sandy has worked for the Omaha Public Schools for 24 years and is a Secretary in the Human Resource/ Administration Department.

Besides being chairman of the GPNA Park Committee and keeping the park picked up, Roger frequently walks the neighborhood picking up aluminum cans and trash. His route includes from roughly 30th to 36th from Farnam to Burt. He obviously sees and talks to a lot of people and knows when something is out of place. Roger is a great mentor for younger people in our neighborhood. He has a great sense of humor, yet he also has a way of encouraging and even challenging others to do better especially in the area of litter cleanup. He sometimes pays kids a few bucks to pick up litter in the neighborhood. Roger says he first started picking up the park in the late 1980's when the late Jack Atkins used to do this duty. He and Sandy also have brought many stray animals to the Humane Society. You've seen Roger involved with other GPNA activities including the spring and fall cleanups, tennis program, newsletter delivery and helping to take down the park holiday lights this year. His hobbies include tennis, racquetball, handball, hockey and photography. Believe it or not, Roger is 69 years old – he says he exercises 1 to 2 hours three times a week and drinks lots of water to stay healthy.

Sandy was born in Omaha. She went to grade school at Field Club School and attended high school at Central. She was a violinist at Central and likes to play the piano today. Sandy enjoys doing things

with their 6 grandchildren. Roger says Sandy is an excellent cook and baker. It is also quite apparent that Sandy does ALL the work so that Roger can play – I don't think Roger would argue with this fact!

We are very lucky to have great neighbors like Roger and Sandy Freeman who are so dedicated to the Gifford Park neighborhood year after year.

by Chris Foster



P.S. Vera and Jim's letter also contained the following message: *We also appreciate all the work the GPNA officers and workers do all year. Without you, our neighborhood would never be as great as it is. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.*

Looking to Buy or Sell Your House?



Call a realtor that lives and knows
your neighborhood.

Matt Mancuso
740-6929

Century 21 Wear
391-5912

Your Neighborhood Realtor

Call for a free market analysis of your home. I can value, sell and buy you a new home. For any of your real estate needs feel free to call me.
Matt 740-6929/345-8611

City Tow Policies Explained

Recent changes in tow lot operations will enhance the police department's capability to tow vehicles. As little towing has been done in recent years, it might be helpful to review the various circumstances that may result in a vehicle being towed.

Unlicensed or improperly licensed vehicles may be towed from either public or private property, unless they are stored in enclosed buildings. As a reminder, owners are required to license their vehicles in Nebraska within thirty days of moving into the state, with exceptions for students and military personnel. Vehicles obviously not in running condition, whether licensed or unlicensed, may also be towed unless they are in enclosed buildings. Vehicles parked on public property must be moved at least once every 48 hours, or they may be towed. Large vehicles, such as RV's, semi tractors or other large trucks or trailers, may be parked on public streets no more than one hour. Vehicles parked in "No Parking" zones or in the park after closing hours may be towed. Vehicles parked on unpaved surfaces, such as yards, may be towed. As sidewalks are considered public property, vehicles parked blocking sidewalks may be towed.

Unfortunately, we see a large number of violations such as those mentioned. Perhaps many occur because owners are unaware of the laws. To avoid the unpleasantness and cost associated with retrieving towed vehicles, we would encourage owners to comply with applicable laws.

California Tacos & More

Homemade Mexican Food

342-0212

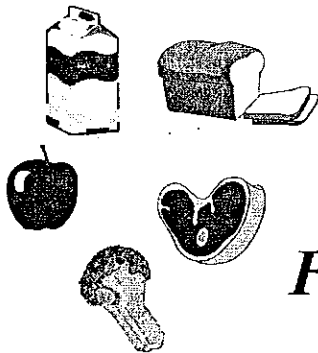
33rd & California Street

Dine In or Carry Out

Hours:

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

Closed Sunday



J'N'J GROCERY STORE

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

What's Happening In The Neighborhood . . .

Thanks to City Councilman **Jim Vokal** for speaking at our last GPNA meeting about the lead Superfund issue and many other current issues affecting our neighborhood. Also congratulations to Jim on his recent engagement to **Liz Perry**.

Thanks to **Jean Peck** for distributing and collecting the Pen Pal letters through Kellom Elementry School. Thanks also to those who are participating by writing letters.

The GPNA would like to welcome the new captain of the Northeast Precinct: **Captain Thomas Warren**. We look forward to working with Captain Warren in the future. We wish **Captain Pitman Foxall** all the best in his new position at the Northwest Precinct. Thank you, Captain Foxall, for all your work for our neighborhood!

Please keep **Officer Mike Paul** in your thoughts and prayers as he has become very ill. Mike was our GPNA Neighbor of the Year a few years ago because of the tremendous work he demonstrated in fighting crime in our neighborhood.

We are glad to report that longtime GPNA member and resident **Vera Horton** had successful surgery in early February and is at home doing much better. Please keep Vera, her husband **Jim** and their family in your thoughts and prayers as she recovers.

Several large cottonwoods in the west end of Gifford Park are marked to be removed due to safety reasons because of the compromised structural integrity of the trees. The City says they will be removed between now and the end of the summer. We will work with the Parks Department on planting replacement trees.

The next **Citizen Academy** begins on **April 4, 2002**. Applications are available at the Crossroads or Police Headquarters. Enrollment is on a first come, first serve basis. Several GPNA members have participated in this program in the past. Questions can be directed to Training Specialist, **Jan Preston, 444-4116**.



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 |

Free CPR Classes Available

Free CPR training will be offered by the American Heart Association and is open to everyone age 8 and above. The class will take place on **Saturday, April 6, at Nebraska Methodist College, 8501 West Dodge Road**. There will be a new class starting every two hours beginning at **8 a.m.** and running until **6 p.m.** For more information, call **546-6337**.

Join the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Today!