



Gifford Park's Pride

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

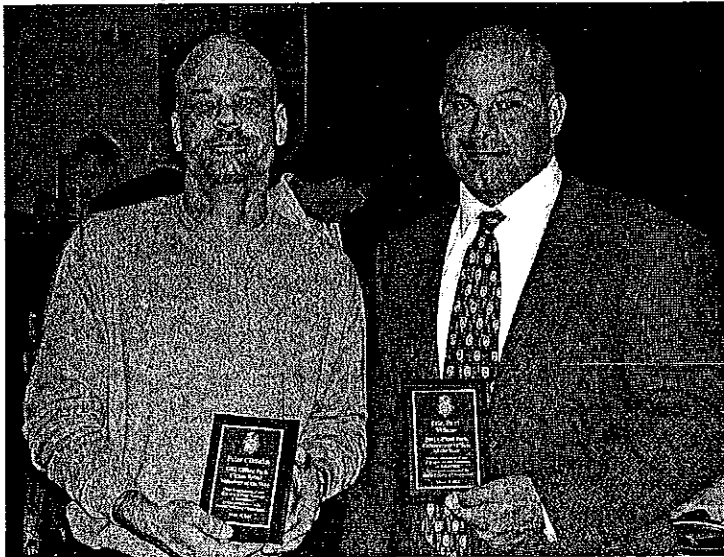
April 2002

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Cihunka, Milone Honored At Banquet

The Seventh Annual Recognition Banquet of the Omaha Coalition of Citizen Patrols and Neighborhood Watch Captains was held on March 14 at the Westside Community Education Center. The purpose of the banquet, sponsored by AAA Nebraska and the OPD Community Resource Center, is to honor citizen patrollers from each of the neighborhood associations that belong to the OCCP. Members of the various neighborhood associations not only nominate a citizen patroller from their watch group to receive the award each year, but they also choose an Omaha police officer that has gone "above and beyond" the call of duty to be of assistance in helping with neighborhood problems.

This year GPNA President **Peter Cihunka**, who is an active participant in the GPNA Watch Group, was chosen to receive the award. **Officer Paul Milone** from the Northeast Precinct was the GPNA's choice to receive the Officer of the Year Award. Both nominees received plaques from **Police Chief Don Carey**. The GPNA was well represented at the banquet; on hand to congratulate the award winners were **Vicki and Ron Frey, Harry Dirgo, Mike and Nadja Wilwerding, Terry and Sue Wilwerding**, and Officer Milone's wife **Catherine** and daughter **Isabelle**.



Peter Cihunka and Officer Paul Milone hold the plaques they received from Police Chief Don Carey at the OCCP Recognition Banquet. They were named "patroller of the year" and "officer of the year" by the GPNA.

Next Meeting

Thursday, April 4
7:00 P.M.

Guest Speaker:
State Senator Chip Maxwell

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

April 20 Is Date For Annual Spring Cleanup

This year's GPNA Spring Cleanup will be held in the Gifford Park South Parking Lot on **Saturday, April 20**, from **9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** The cleanup is open to all GPNA members and those who donate time or money to the Association.

The following items will not be accepted: concrete, yard waste, hazardous materials, paint, oil, or herbicides. Vouchers will be available for tree brush disposal through River City Recycling; these will be given on a first come, first serve basis, with large loads taking precedence over small ones. **Holy Name Church/School** is the area's tire disposal location (2901 Fontenelle Blvd.) For large loads and disposal of couches or stuffed chairs, a donation to the Association would be appreciated. As in past years, \$10.00 will be charged for each air conditioner or refrigerator brought to the cleanup.

If assistance is needed, volunteers will haul your trash for a small donation to the GPNA. If you need this service, it is very important that you call **Chris 342-6006, Peter 341-7293, or Jim 551-1344** as soon as possible before the cleanup. Plenty of volunteers are needed to help with the cleanup. If you can spare a few hours, please call the numbers listed above. You'll also be able to join or renew your GPNA membership at the cleanup. See you there!

GPNA OFFICERS**PRESIDENT**

Peter Cihunka 341-7293

VICE PRESIDENT

Jerry Wilverding 342-2795

RECORDING SECRETARY

Vicki Bray 344-0757

TREASURER

Dana Carlton-Elm 346-4575

COMMITTEE CHAIRS**ADVERTISING**

Dor Sweazy 345-0126

CLEANUP

Mike Wilverding 341-8224

COMMUNITY GARDEN

Chris Foster 342-6006

COMPLAINTS

Leo Wilverding 345-1433

HISTORIAN

Eva Swanson 345-1707

KELLOM SCHOOL ALIAS

Jean Peck 344-0722

MEMBERSHIP

Chris Foster 342-6006

NEWSLETTER

Sue Wilverding 342-2795

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

Mike Bacome 933-7506

PARK

Roger Breeman 557-2914

PARKING VIOLATIONS

Jerry Wilverding 342-2795

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Leo Wilverding 345-1433

TOOL LENDING

Chris Foster 342-6006

WATCH GROUP

Mike Wilverding 341-8224

WEEDS & LITTER

Jim Wilverding 551-1344

WELCOMING

Vicki Bray 344-0757

The President's Column

Springtime is officially upon us (please never mind the fact that the low tonight is supposed to be 18 degrees). I was warned when I took this position that spring is when it starts to get busy.... and they were not kidding! We have a lot of goings on around the neighborhood. The Spring Cleanup will be a big event like it always is. The Cleanup is an excellent opportunity to say "hi" to old members I lost contact with over the winter, and to welcome new members to the group. The City donates the compactors to us, so if you have any thing that needs to be thrown out, please read the article on page 1 for more details on the Cleanup. And, yes we pick up at the curb! Volunteers are always needed and welcome.

I also had the opportunity to attend a monumental meeting (monumental as far as Gifford Park is concerned). A meeting was held at St. Joseph's Hospital (see article below) to discuss potential neighborhood improvement for the business district. Attendees of this meeting included all our major business partners from the area: Creighton, St. Joseph Hospital, Mutual of Omaha, J & J Grocery, Boys and Girls Town, representatives from both the Mayor's office and City Council, and representatives from other neighborhood associations (I am sorry if I forgot anybody). This was the first step in what will hopefully be a series of steps towards improving the way of life for the people who live in and around Gifford Park. Good job, Chris Foster!

Springtime also brings with it an increase in negative activity in the neighborhood. Please keep an eye out for your neighbor and their property. If we start watching each other's backs now, we will save ourselves from many headaches in the weeks to come. Also keep an eye out for this year's Neighborhood Walk schedule.

In the weeks to come, you will see many different activities posted in the newsletter. I invite all of you to volunteer for an event this spring and summer. I think you will find it be both fun and rewarding. I look forward to seeing and hearing from all of you!

by Peter Cihunka

Main Street Program Topic Of Meeting

On March 20 the GPNA hosted a meeting at St. Joseph's Hospital to discuss neighborhood improvement with the focus on revitalization of our business district using the Main Street Program model. We had a very good turnout including most of the "stakeholders" impacting the future of our neighborhood. Representatives included property and business owners from the 33rd & California business district, major surrounding businesses and institutions, city government, GPNA board members, and other surrounding neighborhood association presidents.

The purpose of the meeting was to get the stakeholders together to ask for a commitment to continue with future participation in working together to improve our neighborhood. Information was presented on the Main Street Program and how it has worked in other cities to revitalize local business districts and strengthen neighborhoods. Economic statistics from the census data were also presented to show the potential that our area has for future business development. The group also discussed some initial ideas about parking and other improvements in the 33rd & California area. We plan to have another meeting within the next month to discuss more specific projects and direction. The GPNA thanks everyone who attended this first meeting.

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

Growing For Market Seminar Series

There are three more dates in the **Growing For Market Seminar Series** organized by **City Sprouts** and other organizations: **Organic Gardening Skills and Practices Parts I and II** will be held on **April 6 & 13**, and **Financing Your Market Garden** will be held **April 20**. The seminars will be held from **9 a.m. - noon** at the **Urban League of Nebraska Family Resource Center** at **3040 Lake St.** and the cost is **\$5** per seminar. For more information, call **Nancy** (City Sprouts) at **451-7054** or **Paul** (Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society) at **869-2288**.

GPNA Annual Hunt is Egg-citing

The **13th Annual GPNA Easter Egg Hunt** brought out the best in our neighborhood again this year with pretty good weather to boot. Nearly **200** neighborhood children and a large number of adults gathered in **Gifford Park** Saturday, **March 30, 2002** at noon. Volunteers spent an hour or longer picking up trash in the park and "hiding" candy just before the kids filled their Easter baskets. As in the past, children were divided into the following age groups: **4 and under, 5-6, 7-9, 10-12 years old**.

Special recognition and thanks go to **Heather Nelson** who was in charge of collecting donations and organizing candy. Thanks to **Candy Bacome** who played the Easter Bunny once again this year. The GPNA had many generous donations that made this a special day for children and adults, thanks to **J'N'J Grocery, California Tacos, Chuck Kilgore, Wolf House** and **HY-VEE Grocery**. The great turnout of volunteers who showed up to help was greatly appreciated!

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, or to schedule an appointment, call **551-3629**.

Handy Hands Helping Community

The mission of **Handy Hands**, an organization that is part of **Mosaic Community**, is to provide low-cost minor repairs for homes of low-income families, particularly the elderly, disabled, and single-parent families throughout the **Omaha Metro Area**, primarily living east of **42nd St.** Nationwide **5.5 million** elderly and disabled live in substandard housing. In the **Omaha Metro area**, over **800** houses are on the verge of being condemned and will be unless repairs are made soon. **Handy Hands** is looking for people with a willingness to share their time and resources partnering together with those in need. If you can volunteer your time providing repair or family support and/or donate your tools, materials, or financial resources, or would like more information, contact **Edward Weniger, Resource Coordinator**, at **933-6672 x7** or **edward@emosaic.cc**



GPNA Easter Egg Hunt 2002: The Easter Bunny and her "fans", boys and girls eagerly awaiting the start of the hunt, and the Pi Kappa Alpha Creighton fraternity, who helped clean up the park.

What's Happening In The Neighborhood . . .

There is good news and bad news regarding trees in Gifford Park. The good news is that many large trees (mostly cottonwoods) marked with orange dots in the west end of the park are marked for pruning, NOT cut down as reported in last month's newsletter. The bad news is someone drove their car through part of the southwest part of the park knocking down three of the newly planted trees from last year's grant. The driver nearly drove his car into the building shelter. The GPNA is pursuing compensation for damages since the police did make an arrest.

Gifford Park will again be a host site for both the **Sun Dawgs Summer Youth Program** and the **Show Wagon Youth Talent Competition**. We again thank the **City of Omaha** and in particular the **Parks & Recreation Department** for their great work and commitment to supporting these important activities in Gifford Park. The GPNA extends our thanks to former City employee **Cis Carlson** for her work with bringing Show Wagon back to Gifford Park two years ago. Cis retired last year. **Karin Madden**, who works at Florence Community Center, is handling Show Wagon this year.

You probably know that **Creighton University** has been purchasing property on the block bounded by 30th to 32nd and California to Webster. Creighton is working on master plans for future development and has committed to include the GPNA in this process.

Congratulations to GPNA President **Peter Cihunka** for being selected to attend the NUSA Neighborhood's USA conference in Houston in May. Holy Name Housing is sponsoring the grants.

Community Garden Update – Information was presented at the March GPNA meeting describing the Community Garden project mission, goals and purpose. The garden property is located at **3416 Cass Street**. With spring upon us, the bulbs planted last fall are coming up along the front wall and should begin blooming soon. We plan to break ground in the next few weeks and begin planting early season vegetables and flowers. We plan to have a small grand opening event soon to introduce the project to everyone in the neighborhood. Please call **Chris Foster 342-6006** or **Annemarie Noll 342-1340** for more information.

Don't forget - the city's yardwaste collection program resumes April 1. For more information on recycling and solid waste disposal, go online: www.wasteline.org.



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 |

We Want You!

Everyone I talk to who is involved in some type of volunteer organization tells me the same thing: "We have a heck of time getting new people". GPNA, unfortunately, is no exception. We have some great people in this neighborhood who have a lot to offer. You know who you are! All you people who, when I talk to you, tell me you would love to help out then never show up. Can you spare a few hours a month? Look at it this way; in the average month, there are 720 hours. How hard would it be to give us 4 of those hours?? We are looking to "hire" for the following positions: calling committee, 12-1 shift for the neighborhood patrol, assist with any of the current committees, and possible GPNA Board positions. Serious inquiries call **Peter** at **341-7293**.