



Gifford Park's Pride

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

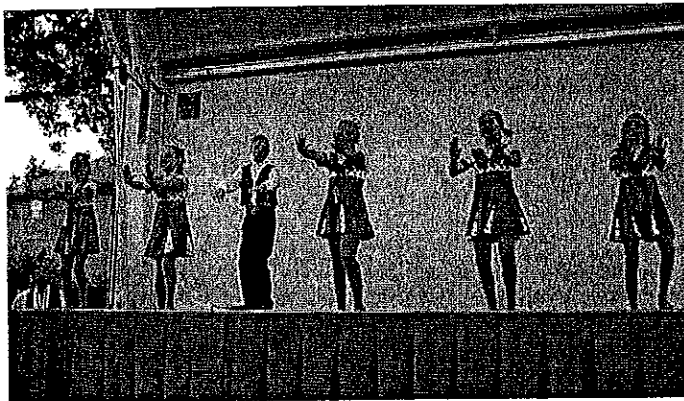
July 2002

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Show Wagon Regional Finals and Gravy Dippers Coming July 10

Mark your calendars for **Wednesday July 10** in Gifford Park for the Regional Finals of the Show Wagon Youth Talent Competition. Back by popular demand, the **Gravy Dippers** will start the evening's entertainment at 6 p.m. by performing a variety of music from jazz to classic rock. The talent competition will begin around **7:30 p.m.** Once again **Roberts Dairy** will provide free ice cream treats for everyone attending the event, so bring a blanket or chair and enjoys the shows!

The weather was just right for the district competition held June 13. About a dozen acts from all over the city displayed their talents including singing, dancing, acting and more. Many thanks to the band **Surcos** who played Latin-American folk music to begin the evening. We wish to thank **Roberts Dairy** for donating the fudge bars. Special thanks go to **Karen Madden** (Florence Community Center Supervisor) who now handles the City Show Wagon, and **Rick Weiner** who handles sound. Thanks also to judges **Brian Kokensparger** and **Jan Franks** who live in the neighborhood.



A nice-sized crowd was on hand to enjoy musical acts like the one shown in the picture above. The entertaining acts and the beautiful weather combined to make it a wonderful summer evening in the park!

Reminder: No July Meeting

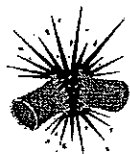
Next Meeting
Thursday, August 1

Kids Having Dawg-gone Good Time in Gifford Park

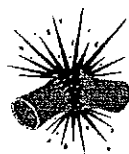
The Sun Dawg program is off to a great start this summer, thanks to supervisors **Chris Thoms**, **Nate Ruffino**, and **Kim Knauf**. Many thanks to **Tom McGinn**, **Peg Watkins**, and **Tom Lebida** with **City Parks and Recreation** for running a smooth operation here in Gifford Park. The GPNA is providing tennis racquets and balls for the kids. Also, GPNA members **Carlos** and **Maria De Estrada** paid for a community garden plot for the Sun Dawg participants to work with. Please consider stopping down at the Sun Dawg shack any weekday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. to help with activities. By the way, thanks to the City for waiving the \$10 fee!



The Gifford Park Sun Dawg kids are having a great time this summer, courtesy of the City of Omaha Parks & Recreation Department. The Sun Dawg program provides fun, safe, and supervised summer activities for Omaha youth ages 6 - 15. There are 39 Sun Dawg sites throughout the city.



Happy 4th
of July!



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WELCOMING

Vicki Frey 344-0757

The President's Column

In case you were wondering, let me make it official: summer is here! Welcome back the 90-degree temps and high humidity. I don't know about you but I sure missed them. At least I am not painting my house like I did last summer. I am like so many of you this summer in that I have a list of "honey-dos" a mile long... and I am single! Work is getting busier and busier and I know that many of you have to take the kids on full time again. I think that is why the founders of this great organization decided to not have meetings in the month of July.

The neighborhood is as good as it has ever been. The park is active with the soccer, baseball, and tennis players, people are out working in their yards, and 33rd and California is..... well.... 33rd and California.

You may have heard about the Mayor's Neighborhood Grants? Local neighborhood organizations are eligible to receive up to \$5000 in grant money to help beautify, clean up, or improve public safety in their area. I think we have managed to put together a grant application that will touch on all of these things and more. Over the next few months, you will see some noticeable changes in your neighborhood. Of course, we will need your help to make it all a reality.

The last thing I would like to call to your attention is an effort the Board is making to focus on key issues within our 'hood. Every month, one committee will write an article for the newsletter, the goal being to hopefully educate us and inspire us to take action. We are all responsible for our neighborhood.

I want to keep it short and sweet this month. Please enjoy your July and I hope you have/had a great Independence Day. I feel like it is somehow more significant this year than in years past.

by Peter Cihunka

2002 Neighborhoods USA Conference

Sometimes it's nice to know that there are neighborhoods like ours all across the United States. There are also people in those neighborhoods who are committed to doing what they can to preserve and improve where they live. This spring I had the opportunity to go to the 2002 Neighborhoods USA (NUSA) Conference in Houston, Texas. This trip was made possible through a grant graciously provided by **Holy Name Housing**. The conference brought people from all over the nation together to network and attend workshops on community issues and to see what Houston citizens have been doing in their communities.

I toured a near-downtown neighborhood called Eastwood, where the homes had their origin prior to World War I, just like Gifford Park. Many of the homes that formerly had been rental property or dilapidated housing had been purchased, renovated and resold to new homeowners. It was interesting to see how the community members had pulled together in their commitment to preserve their neighborhood. As a result, many had developed very close relationships.

Some of the topics of seminars that I attended included: finding funding through grant writing, reaching out to Hispanic communities, mapping out the strengths and weaknesses of your community as a decision making tool for projects, and leveraging your resources to benefit your community.

It was interesting to meet so many different people from so many places. Birmingham, Alabama alone had over 250 people attend! **Norita Collar, Bridget**

continued on page 7



TOOL LENDING HOTLINE

**Mike 933-7506
Chris 342-6006**

**Mowers - \$5
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Community Garden Update

The tool shed is up! "With a little help from my friends..." and a \$600 material donation from **Micklin Lumber**, we had an old-fashioned barn raising at the community garden on June 1 & 2. We built a 10 ft x 16 ft tool shed to store garden tools and supplies. A roof shelter was added to the south side of the shed for weather protection. The project was hard work but I think everyone involved had a good experience doing the project by ourselves. I cannot say enough about the great efforts by GPNA volunteers **Bob Hutton, Darryl Hutton, Eric Noll, Jim Wilwerding** and **Terry Wilwerding**. The project also would not have happened without the expertise of **Dean Headley** and **Nick Benjamin** who helped with early design and planning issues and compiling a material list. **Mark Martin**, General Manager with Micklin Lumber, has been a real pleasure to work with and added valuable input during the planning. Thanks also to **Scott Farrington** with **Indian Creek Nursery** for donating sand to help prepare the shed site. Educational information and information on upcoming neighborhood events and activities will be available on an outside wall for anyone to read (plans are to mount a display case for information and flyers to take).

To date, 18 garden plots have been spoken for. There are two plot sizes available to rent: a 5' x 8' is \$8/year, and a 5' x 15' is \$15/year. We require each plot owner to follow basic common sense guidelines and organic gardening practices. Besides the individual plots, we are planting some different "theme" gardens (herb, butterfly, children's, etc.) to make it interesting and everyone is welcome to walk onto the community garden site to see what is going on. If you are interested in being part of this project or if you would like to donate plants, tools, or any garden-related items, please call 342-6006 or 342-0213 for more information. Also, we are thinking of having a garage sale in the next month to raise a few bucks for the community garden – let us know if you have items you are interested in donating.

by Chris Foster



Looking to Buy or Sell Your House?



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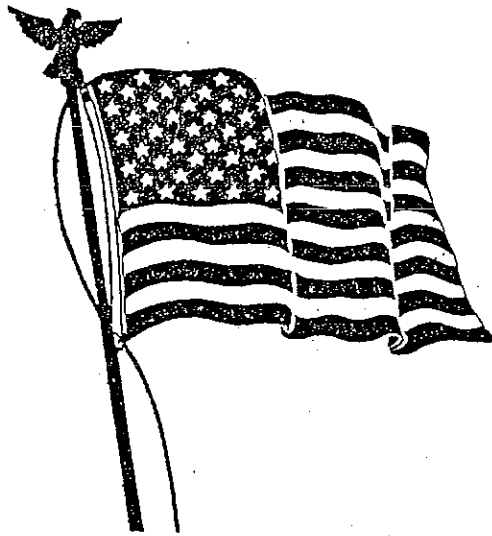
Do You Know the Etiquette for the U.S. Flag?

Public Law 344, passed by the 94th Congress, is known as the Federal Flag Code. It is the guide for all handling and displaying of the United States flag. The code does not impose penalties for the misuse of the flag. That is left up to the individual states.

Since the tragedy of September 11th, Americans have increasingly been flying the American flag. Because of this, and since the 4th of July is not far away, the VFW has provided us with the following information.

The rules for proper display and use of the United States Flag, as established by generally accepted custom and by Public Law 94-344, were approved by Congress and signed by the President of the United States.

- It is the universal custom to display the U.S. flag only from sunrise to sunset on buildings and on stationary flagstaffs in the open. However, when a patriotic effect is desired, the flag may be displayed twenty-four hours a day if properly illuminated during the hours of darkness.
- The flag should not be displayed on days when the weather is inclement, unless it is an all-weather flag.
- The flag should be displayed daily on or near the main administration building of every public institution.
- The flag should be displayed in or near every polling place on election days.
- The flag should be displayed during school days in or near every schoolhouse.
- When carried at the front of a parade with other flags, the U.S. flag should always be to the marching right of the other flags, or to the front and center of the flag line.
- When displayed on a float in a parade, the flag should be mounted on a staff or, if displayed flat, it should be so suspended that its folds fall free, as though the flag were staffed.
- The flag should not be draped over the hood, top, sides or back of a vehicle, or of a railroad train, or a boat. When the flag is displayed on a car, the staff should be fixed firmly to the chassis, or clamped to the right fender.
- During the ceremony of raising and lowering the flag, or when the flag is passing by in a parade, all persons present except those in uniform should face the flag and stand at attention with their right hand over their heart. Those present in uniform should render the military salute. When not in uniform, men should remove their hat with their right hand and hold it at their left shoulder, their hand being over their heart. These same rules apply during the Pledge of Allegiance and the



playing of the national anthem.

- When flags of two or more nations are displayed, they should be approximately equal in size, and flown from separate staffs of the same height.
- When a number of flags of states or cities are grouped and displayed from staffs with the U.S. flag, the latter should be at the center and highest point of the group.
- The flag should not be dipped to any person or thing. Regimental colors, state, city or organizational flags are dipped as a mark of honor. There is one exception to this: U.S. Navy vessels, upon receiving a salute by the dipping of the flag from a vessel registered by a nation which is formally recognized by the U.S., must return the compliment dip for dip.
- Do not display the flag upside down, except as a signal of dire distress in instances of extreme danger to life or property.
- Do not let the flag touch anything beneath it, such as the ground, floor, water or merchandise.
- The flag should be a distinctive feature of a ceremony for unveiling a statue or monument, but should never be used as the cover for the object.
- On Memorial Day, the flag should be displayed at half-staff until noon only, then raised to the top of the staff.
- By order of the U.S. President, the flag shall be flown at half-staff upon the death of principal figures of the U.S. government, or a national crisis.
- When displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall, the stars should be at the top and to the observer's left.
- The flag should never be used as drapery. It should always be allowed to fall free. Bunting should be used for decorations.
- When used on a speaker's platform, the flag should be above and behind the speaker.
- When displayed from a staff in a church or public auditorium, the flag should hold the position of superior prominence, and to the clergy or speaker's right as he or she faces the audience.
- When the flag is so badly torn, soiled or faded that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, the flag should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning. A torn flag may be mended, or if soiled, it may be washed or dry cleaned.
- Any rule or custom pertaining to the display of the U.S. flag may be changed or repealed, or additional rules may be prescribed only by the President of the U.S., acting as Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. Any such change shall be set forth in a Presidential Proclamation.

GOD'S LITTLE CHILDREN'S CHILDCARE II

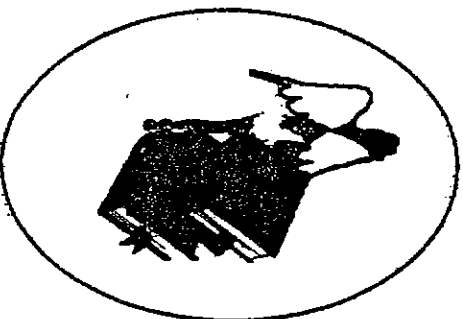
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Closed on Sunday

A Look At The Weeds & Litter Committee

From the sayings of Marx (Groucho) : "I would never consider joining a club that would accept members like me". I suppose this expresses a couple of thoughts. We want to associate with people better, in some sense, than we are. It might also be interpreted as meaning that we want to be the least among the members of the group. Sadly, numerous residents in our neighborhood seem to live by this saying.

As you may know, the neighborhood association has a number of committees dealing with code and law enforcement. We report dilapidated property, junk and unlicensed cars, parking violations, weeds and litter, and code violations, including multiple occupants in single-family houses. The Watch Group also turns in loud parties, under-age drinking, public drinking, and other disturbances. These activities generally stir up resentment and controversy among those who are reported. Neighbors sometimes expect others to meet higher standards than they themselves live up to. The purpose of the committees is not to stir up trouble, but rather to try to enforce uniform standards among all neighbors. The city has laws, codes and regulations dealing with the matters reviewed, but problems are rarely identified by the city offices responsible. If we want the rules enforced, we have to identify and turn in the problems.

President Pete thought it would be a good idea to include a series of articles detailing the various committees and providing an overview of what the rules are, and what kinds of problems we're looking for. He asked me to start out the series.

I am the chairman (and so far only member) of the Weeds and Litter Committee. This is probably fitting, since I was once turned in for litter in my back yard. I was in the middle of a project, and had left ladders, construction materials, and debris in my yard. So I know how it feels to get the dreaded letter. I also understand how, seeing something every day, you can get comfortable with the level of stuff left lying around. But I dutifully cleaned it up, and have stayed out of trouble ever since. But I digress.

I tour the neighborhood periodically, looking for weeds over 18 inches tall, trees and bushes obstructing sidewalks, and various forms of litter. Usually the problem items I see are car parts (often tires), old appliances and furniture, piles of brush, vegetation, or leaves, sometimes construction material (concrete or lumber) or trash. In general, I'm looking for stuff lying around that makes the property and the neighborhood look run down. We want to improve our neighborhood, right?

Usually, during a tour, I can find 30 to 40 problem addresses. Some of these carry over from one month to the next, but usually there are new problems. A tour usually takes an hour or two, and preparing and mailing the list another half-hour or so. I sometimes wonder if this is time well-spent, then I stop to think what the neighborhood would be like if I didn't do it. And I conclude that it is very well-spent time.

continued

Weeds and Litter. . . *continued*

Just driving around, I'm sure there are problems I don't see. If you know of longstanding problems at a particular address, you may call the Parks & Recreation Department directly at **444-5900**, or you may call me at **551-1344** for inclusion on the next list. The time span from turning in a list to enforcement action can be two months or more. So if you call me, and nothing seems to be happening, please don't think I'm ignoring you. It takes a while. Also, if any members would like to participate in this activity, let me know. I'm always willing to expand the committee.

by Jim Wilwerding

Nebraska Child Restraint Law Changes July 20

Effective July 20, 2002, all children under six years of age must ride in a child restraint system that is appropriate for their size, age, and weight. Possible restraint systems include rear-facing child safety seats, forward facing child safety seats (often called Convertible or Toddler seats) and booster seats. Any seat used to secure a child must meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and also must be used correctly.

Booster seats are a step between "toddler" seats and vehicle seat belt use. The bodies of small children do not fit into vehicle seat belts properly, causing the lap belt to ride up onto the soft abdominal area and the shoulder belt to cut up into the neck and chin. Both positions can cause very serious injury and even death in a crash. Booster seats simply raise a child up so that the lap belt crosses the strong hip bones and allows for the shoulder belt to fall across the center of the chest correctly.

Children typically need to ride in booster seats until they weigh about 80 pounds and are about eight years of age. For more information, contact **Laura Osborne** at **896-0454, ext. 450**, or **losborne@safenebraska.org**. Information is also available at **www.SafeKids.org**.

Reprinted from the OPD Community Resource Center Newsletter

Neighborhoods USA Conference . . .

Continued from page 2

Hadley, and Steve Scarpello from the city of Omaha attended with me along with about half a dozen others from Omaha who came from different neighborhoods in Omaha.

One of the interesting things was that each city represented brought souvenir pins to trade with people from other cities. I collected pins from 24 different cities. Those pins represented interaction with people from all over. It was an experience that will help me in the future.

It would be great if someone from Gifford Park could experience this conference each year. Next year's conference is in Chattanooga, Tennessee. That would be an experience that we could build on to help Gifford Park achieve great things in the future!

by Ron Frey

Police Report News

To make a non-emergency crime report, please call 444-4877. The Telephone Report Squad is available from 6 a.m. to 2 a.m., seven days a week.

You can now order accident reports on line, eliminating the need to travel downtown or to an assembly to request the report. Requesting parties should have their reports within 96 hours from the time of the accident. For more information, go to www.opd.ci.omaha.ne.us and click on "What's New At The OPD". *(Information courtesy of the OPD Community Resource Center Newsletter)*

California Tacos & More

Homemade Mexican Food

342-0212

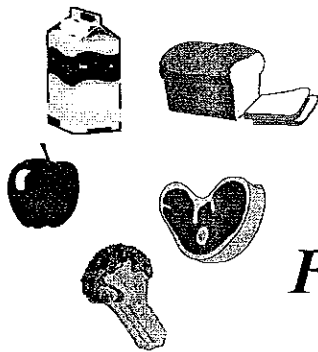
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Election Of Officers Held At June Meeting

At the June GPNA general meeting, the slate of officers for 2002-2003 chosen by the Nominating Committee was presented to the membership for a vote. The following members were elected unanimously: President - **Peter Cihunka**, Vice-President - **Terry Wilwerding**, Recording Secretary - **Ron Frey**, and Treasurer - **Dana Carlton-Flint**. The GPNA would like to thank **Vicki Frey** for serving as recording secretary for the last two years. Congratulations to this year's officers, and best wishes for a successful tenure!

Have Fun On The 4th Of July, But Remember . . .

. . . All fireworks are *still illegal* within Omaha's city limits, including sparklers. The penalty can be as stiff as \$500 and /or jail time. These laws exist because of the number of injuries, fires, and deaths from fireworks in the past. They are particularly dangerous this year because of the dry conditions we've been experiencing. Most injuries are caused by firecrackers, Roman candles, bottle rockets, and sparklers. Most injuries occur to children and young adults, ranging from infants to 19 years of age. Second-degree burns remain the leading type of injury, with eyes being the most injured part of the body. This 4th of July, you can still enjoy fireworks, but do so by attending a public fireworks display put on by professionals. (Information courtesy of the OPD Community Resource Center Newsletter.)

Tennis Program Starts In August

The 9th Annual GPNA Youth Tennis Program will be held every Wednesday evening in August. Look for registration forms at **J'N'J Grocery** or **California Tacos** later in July. For more information, or if you would like to help with any or all sessions, call **Chris** at **342-6006**.

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OPD Reveals Plans For Neighborhood

Representatives from the GPNA met with **Captain Thomas Warren** and other officers from the Northeast Precinct on Wednesday, June 26. Captain Warren indicated that there will be an increased police presence in the neighborhood for the next several months. Officers will be conducting a survey of our neighborhood to identify the most pressing problem areas, and there will be increased enforcement of ordinances and vehicle laws. Please think about the areas you feel are most problematic, and welcome the officers conducting this survey.

Neighborhood Walk Schedule For July

Join us as we tour our neighborhood on these beautiful summer evenings. The walks will begin at **8 p.m.** at the locations listed below:

July 5: Duchesne Academy
Parking Lot
36th & California

July 19: Community Garden
34th & Cass

If you have any questions, please call **Peter** at **341-7293**

**Join or Renew Your
GPNA Membership
Today!**

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

444-5555



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 |