



Gifford Park's Pride

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

December 2002

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Silent Night? I Don't Think So

We want the Gifford Park holiday caroling to be anything *but* silent. Come raise your voice with us as we trek our way through the neighborhood on **Friday, December 13th**. Beginning at **6 PM**, we'll meet at the corner of **33rd & California Streets**. Songbooks will be provided again this year. This is a family event, so children, *you must bring an adult with you*.

The temperature and severity of the weather will determine how long we actually sing. Afterward we'll gather at **California Tacos** for refreshments. If you can help out by bringing some goodies please call me, **Vicki Frey**, at **344-0757**. This promises to be an evening filled with fun and frivolity. Meet new neighbors, visit old friends, and revive your musical talents! It is our sincere hope that this will be one event that allows you to experience the simple joys of the season.

Next Meeting

**Thursday, December 5
7:00 P.M.**



Holiday Banquet



**Creighton University
Medical Center
Becic Dining Room**

**See Page 3 for details on
the Holiday Banquet!**

Creighton University's Master Plan Update

During GPNA's special meeting November 14, **Creighton University** discussed with area residents and community advocate groups the current campus expansion efforts planned for the next 20 years. The presentation focused mostly on the westward-expanding medical campus from 30th to 32nd Street and Webster to California Street. On the 1-5 year horizon is a new ambulatory care center (a twin to the current Cardiac Center on 30th and Webster), which will provide outpatient services for Creighton University Medical Center. Another immediate goal will be a surface parking lot covering the majority of the remaining blocks, which will alleviate the street-parking crisis at the east end of our neighborhood. **Dan Burkey**, Vice President for Administration and Finance at Creighton, assured residents the new parking lot would be separated by a "green space" and landscaped in the spirit of the adjacent Cardiac Center's parking lot. The University currently owns the majority of properties within this designated series of blocks. One major concern noted by an area resident was about Creighton insuring the safety and security of the remaining abandoned houses until the new parking lot is in place. The vacant buildings have apparently

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GPNA Holds 4th Annual Holiday Lighting Contest

Now that we've gotten past Thanksgiving, the "official" holiday season has begun! If you are planning to decorate the outside of your home with lights and/or other holiday displays, now is the time to do so. Not only will you brighten up the neighborhood, but you may also win a prize! Once again, the GPNA will hold its annual **Holiday Lighting Contest**. On the evening of **Thursday, December 19th**, a panel of judges will travel throughout the neighborhood looking for the best holiday displays. Last year, 5 prizes were awarded. Any residential location within the boundaries of the GPNA is eligible to win. Good Luck!



Happy Holidays from the GPNA!

GPNA OFFICERS**PRESIDENT**

Peter Cihunka 341-7293

VICE PRESIDENT

Terry Wilwerding 342-2795

RECORDING SECRETARY

Vicki Frey 344-0757

TREASURER

Dana Carlton 346-4576

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Dar Sweeney 345-0125

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Mike Wilwerding 341-8224

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HISTORIAN

Eva Swanson 345-1707

KELLOM SCHOOL LIAISON

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MEMBERSHIP

Chris Foster 342-6006

NEWSLETTER

She Wilwerding 342-2795

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

Mike Bacon 938-7506

PARK

Roger Freeman 557-2914

PARKING VIOLATIONS

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

"Overworked and underpaid". Never heard that one before, have you? Yeah, right! "You will get out of it what you put into it". Remember this advice from your parents growing up? Yeah, me too. "You can't have your cake and eat it too". Of these three "pearls of wisdom", perhaps this one is the most painful. Now you are probably asking yourself: "Did Peter take an early dip in the holiday eggnog?" Nope, not yet. Believe it or not, all of these overused sayings will be the focal points of my column this month.

Working these three pearls in reverse, December 31, 2002, will be my last day as President. Due to unplanned events that are taking place in my life, I must resign. This is perhaps the most difficult thing I have ever had to do; however, it would not be fair to our organization if I remained President. I am unable to give the attention this position requires. I have enjoyed every day of my 1.5 years in office. Thank you to everyone for giving me the opportunity to work for you. Please take a quick minute to look on the left-hand side of this page... all those officers and committee chair names you see in gray are the true heart and soul of this organization. They keep it going and it is because of that wonderful group of people that I can step down in good conscience.

The benefits of this job cannot be measured in concrete, tangible ways. You cannot put a dollar sign on kids having a good time or the feeling you get when you know that simply walking in the neighborhood keeps the "bad guys" away. I know that when some of you think about volunteering time to the GPNA it wears you out. You think about all the things in your life that take a very high priority: family, work, and relaxation. You need to recharge your batteries. Everyone does that differently, but I cannot begin to tell you about the natural high you get when sitting around a table with like-minded folks who have but one agenda: the betterment of your neighborhood. Or to help organize a huge neighborhood event then sit back and watch the event unfold just the way you had planned it (all the while your neighbors are having a great time). I encourage all of you to try this at least once in your life. I will tell you that this is one of the few experiences in life where you will get MORE out of it than you put into it.

Thank you again everyone. May you and your family be blessed at this special time of the year and good luck to you in the future.

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.

Community Garden Receives Grant

The Gifford Park Community Garden project, located at 3416 Cass St., received a \$5,000 grant from the **Jonquil Earth Education Fund** established by the **Dominicans of St. Catharine, Kentucky**. The Jonquil Fund provides grants to projects which promote earth literacy, ecologically sensitive spirituality, earth healing and sustainable living. The grant money will go toward educational material, information signage, compost bin material, arts & crafts supplies, and other items focussed on education. We want to thank **City Sprouts** for their continued support of our garden project. We especially want to thank **Sister Joan Miriam Glaser, Sister Pascalla Noonan** and the Jonquil Fund Committee for their very generous donation. Call 342-6006 or 342-1340 for more information on the Community Garden.

*The Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
requests your presence at the*

14th Annual Holiday Banquet

*to be held
at 7 p.m. on December 5th
at Creighton University Medical Center
601 N. 30th Street
in the glassed-in (Becic) dining room
south of the cafeteria.*

*Creighton University Medical Center graciously
demonstrates its support of the
GPNA by hosting this annual event
for members.*

*There is no cost - you just need
to be a GPNA member.*

*Please bring a canned good item which will be
donated to a local charitable agency*



Creighton
UNIVERSITY
Medical Center

Group Looks To Nurture Omaha's Future Leaders

Next Generation Omaha is an organization whose mission is to help Omaha better engage, retain, and give voice to its young professionals through collaboration between Omaha's current and future leadership. On **Wednesday, December 4th** from 7 - 9 p.m., it will be sponsoring a **"Thoughts on Omaha"** focus group at the **American Red Cross - Heartland Chapter, 2912 South 80th Ave.** The Next Generation Omaha focus group is where individuals can talk about Omaha, and where they can voice their honest opinion about what there is to like about Omaha, what's missing, what could be better, and more. The group aims to stimulate discussion through the participation of bright, committed citizens at these focus groups to help move towards making positive change for Omaha. For more information, call **Jason Lauritsen, 651-4148**, or visit their website at www.NextGenerationOmaha.com.

Creighton Master Plan . . .

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attracted the unwanted attention of squatters and illicit drug dealing (if anyone observes this kind of activity, please call 911).

Another safety issue that was brought up concerned the dangerous pedestrian traffic crossing over 30th Street at non-traffic light intersections. This issue was brought up several years ago when Creighton's former administration was headed by Fr. Morrison and still remains unaddressed.

On the boards for the 10-20 year master planning range are a semi-enclosed parking structure, and two-and-three story apartment-style campus housing complexes. The architectural style for the proposed new buildings will be an eclectic combination of old and new campus architecture with an emphasis on playful, pedestrian-scaled buildings. Lets all hope for architecture with a capital A. Creighton has promised to keep the neighborhood involved in the development process as it continues to grow into our neighborhood.

by Cynthia Shuck

Mercury "Roundup" Held In Omaha

The Nebraska Health and Human Services System is sponsoring a **"mercury roundup"** in the Omaha area, which will run through **March 15, 2003**. The purpose of the roundup is to get mercury out of people's homes because it is dangerous, and to prevent it from entering the environment through improper disposal. People can turn in their household mercury-containing **thermometers** for recycling at the Douglas-Sarpy County Extension Office. Thermostats, switches, button batteries, fluorescent light tubes, liquid mercury, or any other mercury-containing devices will **NOT** be accepted. The extension office is at **8015 Center Street** and is open from **8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

What's Happening In The Neighborhood . . .

On Monday, December 2nd, at 7:00 p.m., the Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association will host its second annual Tree Lighting Ceremony at Joslyn Castle, located at 39th and Davenport St. A large Christmas tree will be set up outside the front entrance to the Castle and at 7:05 p.m. the tree lights will be turned on as visitors sing Christmas carols. Neighborhood churches and schools including St. Barnabas Church, Duchesne Academy, choirs from the St. Cecilia's Schola Cantorum and Calvary Baptist Church will all perform inside the Castle throughout the evening. There will be craft tables where children can make Victorian decorations and Santa Claus will be strolling through the Castle handing out candy. Donations for needy students and their families from Yates School will be accepted at the door. Items most needed include toilet paper, laundry soap, toothpaste and toothbrushes, bar soap, deodorant, grocery store gift cards, and board & card games.

Longtime GPNA member and 1999's "Neighbor Of The Year" Harry Dirgo is doing very well after recent surgeries in early November. He continues to be active with our Neighborhood Watch Group and is always walking around our neighborhood keeping an eye on things, particularly at 33rd & California. We're glad you're doing well, Harry!

Have you noticed the new chain-linked fence put up behind the Shelterbelt Theater building? Chuck Kilgore, owner of the building and property, had the fence put up to stop some of the traffic and problems that occur in the vacant lots. Nice job Chuck, it's a big help.

The GPNA wishes to thank Mayor Mike Fahey for being our guest speaker at our November 7 general meeting. We had a good crowd and tough questions, especially during the tough economic times that we are currently experiencing.

GPNA President Peter Cihunka was able to get a grant for surveillance equipment to improve public safety in our neighborhood. We have the equipment and would like to install it at 33rd & California. If anyone is interested in helping, please call 341-7293.

Just a reminder - there will be no GPNA board meeting in December.



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 |

Don't Forget . . .

Don't let 2002 slip away without joining the GPNA. Just fill out the form on the left and send it in with the appropriate dues (single - \$5, family - \$8, business - \$25) or bring it with you to the holiday banquet if you've pre-registered. The GPNA has sponsored many great activities this past year - be part of the action in 2003 and join one of the most active neighborhood associations in the city!

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