



# Gifford Park's Pride

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

March 2003

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

## Code & Zoning Violation Awareness: What To Look For

Property Information

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Place an "X" in any box that applies:

- Deteriorated and cracked sidewalks and driveways.
- Deteriorated porches, decks and patios.
- Stairway with three or more steps without handrails.
- Deteriorated, broken or missing siding.
- Missing shingles/roofing.
- Deteriorated overhangs, soffits and fascia.
- Deteriorated or missing gutters and downspouts.
- Cracks or holes in foundation.
- Broken or missing windows.
- Torn or missing screens.
- Broken or missing storm or entry doors.
- Deteriorated chimneys.
- Deteriorated masonry joints.
- Deteriorated or dangerous retaining walls.
- Exterior walls that lean or out-of-plumb.
- Deteriorated sheds or detached garages.
- Deteriorated fencing.
- Missing light fixtures.
- Exposed electrical wiring.
- Basement bedrooms without adequate windows.
- Hazardous electrical service entrance

Contact Info.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

The presence of any of the above conditions may signify potential problems affecting the health, safety and welfare of dwelling occupants. If observed, renters and neighbors should notify landlords and property owners of concern in

*continued on page 3*

**Next Meeting**  
**Thursday, March 6**  
**7:00 p.m.**

**Guest Speakers:**  
**Dan Burkey**  
**Lennis Pederson**

**Creighton Master Plan**

**Creighton University**  
**Medical Center**  
**Becic Dining Room**

## Free Tax Help Available Now

The site for the annual free tax assistance has been moved to the Lay Apostolate Center at St. Cecilia's Cathedral, 40<sup>th</sup> & Webster St. This makes our site even more accessible this year. Tax help will be available every **Monday** through **April 14** from **1 to 4 p.m.** and from **7 to 8:30 p.m.** and on **Saturdays** through **April 12** from **10 - 11:30 a.m.** Everyone is welcome! IRS representatives will provide free tax help for our neighborhood for the 9<sup>th</sup> year in a row. Processing of basic tax returns and electronic filing will be available again this year. No appointment is necessary; walk-in appointments only. For more information, call **551-3629**.



Note: **Raquel Ayala** has volunteered to translate for Spanish-speaking people who need help with their taxes. If you are interested or know someone who could benefit from this assistance, please call her at **345-6605** for more information.

**GPNA OFFICERS****INTERIM PRESIDENT**

Chris Foster 342-6006

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Terry Wilwerding 342-2795

**RECORDING SECRETARY**

Ron Frey 344-0757

**TREASURER**

Dana Carlton-Flint 346-4575

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS****ADVERTISING**

Dar Sweazy 345-0125

**COMMUNITY GARDEN**

Chris Foster 342-6006

**COMPLIANCE**

Leo Wilwerding 345-1433

**HISTORIAN**

Eva Swanson 345-1707

**KELLOM SCHOOL LIAISON**

Jean Peck 344-0722

**MEMBERSHIP**

Chris Foster 342-6006

**NEWSLETTER**

Sue Wilwerding 342-2795

**NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION**

Eve Randone 345-1777

**NEWSLETTER MAILING**

Mike Bacome 933-7506

**PARK**

Roger Freeman 557-2914

**PARKING VIOLATIONS**

Leo Wilwerding 345-1433

**PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Cynthia Shuck 556-2090

**TOOL LENDING**

Chris Foster 342-6006

**WATCH GROUP**

Terry Wilwerding 342-2795

**WEEDS & LITTER**

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

**WELCOMING**

Vicki Frey 344-0757

**The Interim President's Column**

In thinking about this month's column, I'm going to steal information from a newsletter article written by my good friend **Carol Haas**, president of the **Leavenworth Neighborhood Association**. Carol found the following statistics on the internet. In her article she wrote, "...the heavy emphasis on the individual by modern commercial culture has driven participation rates **below 5%** for most community activities. If that sounds low, remember a few people committed to a single course of action can achieve amazing results. Also, **80% of volunteers** began doing community work because they were **asked by a friend, family member, or a neighbor.**"

The 5% participation rate is sad, but not surprising, especially when you consider the troubled and uncertain times of today and time constraints of families and people of all ages and backgrounds. Volunteering to help someone else is not a priority to many people who are having a hard time making it themselves. If you believe, as I do, that **"our community is only as strong as our weakest link"**, then we all need to dig a little deeper to help our neighbors and share our talents. I particularly challenge those who might be fortunate enough to get more involved in some way to strengthen the weaker links. As you read through this newsletter, I think you'll find many opportunities to make a difference. I honestly cannot think of a more effective way to actually make change happen in our neighborhood than through our neighborhood association, mainly because of the dedicated volunteers year after year.

My wife Sallie and I have been involved in the GPNA since 1989, soon after the organization was formed. The time spent on neighborhood projects can be hard work and not always glamorous, but it's always very meaningful and helps us grow personally. I hope some of you out there consider taking on a bigger role with the GPNA. My role as Interim President will end in June with our election of officers. I plan to be involved with our usual activities including the Community Garden, Tennis, and the upcoming Midtown Community Plan.

I encourage anyone interested in learning more about any of our many events, activities, or committees, to contact me (342-6006, [foster3413@cox.net](mailto:foster3413@cox.net)) or the dedicated volunteers listed on this page. It is healthy for any organization to develop new volunteers to keep fresh ideas and energy. I personally will spend as much time as it takes to help anyone interested in becoming more involved and I know others will share their time also.

A final thought: with local, state and Federal governments out of money and many capital improvement projects like parks and street repairs now put on hold, it really is up to the neighborhoods to do more themselves to sustain a good quality of life. Since this situation will not improve for quite some time, it's a great opportunity for us to be creative in finding ways to make the Gifford Park neighborhood an exciting place to be – it doesn't have to cost a lot of money, and besides, who else is going to do it?

by Chris Foster

P.S. After many months of effort, the Midtown Community Plan will officially begin with a planned public announcement within the next month. The Gifford Park neighborhood is part of the target area for an unprecedented master planning process that will take 12 to 18 months to complete. At the appropriate times, this project will offer us the unique opportunity to participate in planning the future of our neighborhood. Businesses, institutions, government and neighborhoods who represent this project's steering committee have already put forth a lot of time and effort. I'll keep you updated.

*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.*

## Place Game Workshop March 17

Everyone is welcome to participate in a Place Game workshop at Gifford Park, facilitated by Lively Omaha, on Monday, March 17. The workshop will start at California Tacos, 6 p.m., to learn about how the Place Game works, then the group will walk to Gifford Park to brainstorm about ideas to improve the park. From these ideas a plan will be developed to turn these ideas into reality. Some ideas to think about are playground equipment, art in the park, focal point area, outdoor shelter, walk/bike path, frisbee-golf, interpretive signage, etc. Lively Omaha has been very successful using the Place Game workshop with other neighborhoods in Omaha. Call 342-6006 or Connie Spellman ([www.livelyomaha.org](http://www.livelyomaha.org)) at 342-3458 for more information.

## Code Violations . . . *continued from page 1*

writing. For questions or information on tenant/landlord rights and responsibilities, contact the GPNA Resource Center at 532 N. 33rd Street, Omaha, Ne 68131 or call Chris Foster at 342-6006, or report your concern directly to the City of Omaha Planning Department, Code & Zoning Enforcement:

**Kevin Denker, Chief Housing Inspector**  
1819 Farnam St.  
11th Floor  
Omaha, Ne 68183  
444-5371

To expedite response time include photographs and documentation of the specific condition in question. There are many assistance programs and resources available to help elderly and disabled homeowners maintain their homes. Contact the GPNA for more information.

**Call the Mayors Action Hotline: 444-5555**  
to report any of the conditions below:

Cars parked on unpaved surfaces.  
Inoperable or unlicensed vehicles.  
Boats, campers and R.V.'s, over 20 feet in length, parked in front of the house.  
Boats, campers, truck tops not securely stored.  
Dead storage  
Commercial vehicles parked at property.  
Owners of unwanted vehicles can surrender title and vehicle ownership over to OPD by calling 444-5772. Title and signature are required upon site to have vehicle towed. This is a free service.

**Call the Weeds & Litter Hotline: 444-5910**  
to report outdoor storage of materials, appliances, furniture, etc.

*by Cynthia Shuck*

## 14th Annual GPNA Easter Egg Hunt



Saturday, April 19  
Noon (Sharp!)  
Rain or Shine  
at Gifford Park  
Children Ages 12 &  
Under

**Bring Your Easter Baskets  
& Be Ready To Hunt!**

Para servicios,  
informacion o quejas  
llame a la oficina del  
alcalde  
444-5555

Want to Advertise in  
the Gifford Park  
Pride?  
call  
345-0125

## Lilly's California Bar 510 No. 33rd St.

Serving the Gifford Park  
Community since 1937  
Lilly Estes,  
Proprietor



## Charles R. Kilgore Jr. Attorney At Law

4913 Underwood Avenue  
558-5000

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

## Questions And Answers About Lead Poisoning

### What is lead poisoning?

Lead poisoning occurs when a child or adult breathes in or swallows lead particles.

It can permanently damage a person's health. The sad thing is it is almost entirely preventable.

Children ages 6 and under are at greatest risk because their brain and thinking skills are still developing. Lead poisoning can lessen a child's intelligence, slow his developmental growth and has been linked to juvenile delinquency. It can permanently shortchange your child's potential.

Except in life-threatening cases where there is severe poisoning, there are few obvious symptoms of lead poisoning. The only way you can find out if your child is being poisoned is through a blood test.

### What is a blood test?

There are two types of blood tests. In the first, a nurse pricks the child's finger and squeezes blood into a tube. In the second, a nurse draws blood from a vein with a needle. If your child has a test result of 10 or above, health officials will help you figure out ways to reduce the risk to your child. Some research indicates that levels below 10 also are damaging, but federal officials have not changed their standards.

### Where can I get my child tested?

Your doctor or medical clinic can do it. Medicaid will pay for it and most health insurance will pay for it. If neither of these is an option for you, the **Douglas County Health Department**, in some cases, will test children for free. The county's phone number is: **444-7825**.

### If I have my child tested once, is that enough?

No. Lead poisoning can occur anytime. Your child should be tested once a year through age 6.

### Could my child be at risk?

Lead exists everywhere. It's in brass keys, it's in some faucet fixtures and water pipes, it's in soil and in some household paint. People who work in automotive repair may bring lead dust home on their clothes, which can put their children at risk.

The greatest problem is caused by deteriorating household paint. Lead paint was banned in 1978, so homes built before then may contain it. Those homes built before 1950 are especially likely to contain it. If the paint is kept in good condition, it's generally not a problem. But you should not sand or scrape your paint without finding out whether it contains lead. If you have an old home, the lead paint is most likely to be on porch floors, doorways, kitchens and windows. Lead generally wasn't used everywhere, because it was expensive. It was used in high traffic areas because it was durable.

The second most likely place to find lead is in the soil. Omaha has a bigger problem with lead-contaminated soil than many cities, according to federal officials, because industrial air pollution caused large amounts of lead to settle in Omaha yards.

### How can I find out if I have lead in my yard or home?

Experts can test your yard by taking soil samples. In your home, they can take dust samples, or aim a type of X-ray gun at your wall and take a lead reading. The X-ray gun can see through several layers of paint.

The federal government will be doing extensive testing in Omaha this year. If you'd like to have your yard or home tested, you can have federal officials do it for free. You'll be getting a letter about this in the next several weeks.

### Where can I get more information?

The **Douglas County Health Department**, 444-7825 or **Lead Safe Omaha Coalition**, 451-3730, will be happy to answer your questions. They also have brochures they can send you.

### Is anyone doing anything about the problem?

The Environmental Protection Agency is proposing a massive cleanup of Omaha yards. They'll soon be sending out 50,000 letters to homes east of 45th Street, asking people permission to test soil and homes. The EPA hopes to test

*continued on page 7*

# GOD'S LITTLE CHILDREN'S CHILDCARE II

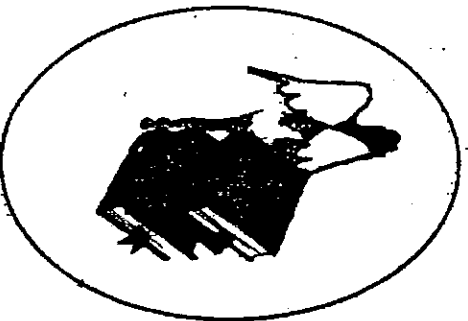
615 N 33RD STREET

Monday - Saturday 24Hours a day

WHERE LEARNING STARTS SMALL AND GROWS INTO GREATNESS

## Now Accepting Enrollment

Infants 6 weeks- 18 months  
Toddlers 18 months-3 years  
Preschool 3-5 years old  
School age 5-13 years old  
State Licensed  
USDA- Hot Meals Daily  
Title XX Accepted  
Staff trained in C.P.R. & First Aid  
Transportation Provided



We offer a program designed to promote your child's total learning through cognitive, language, physical, and social development.

We offer help with school work.

Guidance in proper work and play ethics.

Preschool Curriculum , Music, Computer experience and Much Much More.

FOR FUTURE INFORMATION

CALL

(402) 614-0232

Corporate Office

(402) 342-7494

Closed on Sunday

## GPNA 2003 Calendar Of Events

The Gifford Park Neighborhood Association is involved with organizing the following events that are planned for 2003:

Free Tax Help – during tax season  
 Place Game (for Gifford Park) – March 17  
 Place Game (for Business District) – Spring  
 Easter Egg hunt – April 19  
 Spring Cleanup – April 26  
 Baseball Clinic – Spring or Fall  
 Bike Rodeo - May  
 GPNA Officer Elections – June 5  
 Sun Dawgs – June thru July  
 Show Wagon – June (District) and July (Regional)  
 Gifford Park Day/National Night Out - August  
 Tennis Program – August  
 Music in the Park – August 31  
 Garage Sale – September  
 Fall Cleanup/Pumpkin Patch – October  
 Haunted House – October  
 Holiday Banquet – December 4  
 Holiday Caroling – December  
 Holiday Lighting - December

Other on-going activities include:

Calling Committee  
 Community Garden  
 Midtown Master Plan  
 Newsletter Distribution – odd-numbered months  
 Newsletter Mailing – even-numbered months  
 Tool Lending  
 Watch Group – Friday and Saturday nights  
 Welcoming Committee  
 Neighborhood Walks/litter pickup – every other Friday evening  
 April thru September  
 General meetings – 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month, 7 p.m. at C.U.  
 Medical Center  
 Board Meetings – 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month, 7 p.m. at California  
 Tacos

Please consider getting involved with any of the above activities; we need your help and talent to keep our neighborhood an exciting place to be. Think about a project you might be interested in helping with. To learn more about these events and activities, please call 342-6006 or any of the phone numbers listed on page 2 of the newsletter.

And, if you are not yet a member of the GPNA, this is a great time to join one of the best neighborhood organizations in the city. If you join now, your membership won't expire until June of 2004! Just fill out the form on page 8 and send it in with the appropriate dues (single - \$5, family - \$8, business - \$25).

## "Salute To Safety - Expo 2003" Planned For March

The Crossroads Mall will be the site of "Salute To Safety - Expo 2003" on **March 15th from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** Public safety is the focus and all of the law enforcement agencies and fire departments in the metropolitan area will be on hand to answer questions and show off their equipment. Neighborhood watch groups, neighborhood associations, the **Omaha Coalition of Citizen Patrols (OCCP)** and many other public safety-oriented organizations will be there with information to help make your home and family safer. Kids' activities will include fingerprinting, clowns, face painting, robotic police & fire mascots, and having a picture taken on a police motorcycle. In addition, they can star in their own safety video, KidSafe, produced by AAA Nebraska. The Expo is a fun and informative event for the whole family, so plan on attending!

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

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

## Spring Cleanup Coming Soon

The annual Spring Cleanup date has been set for **Saturday, April 26 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.** in **Gifford Park**. Trash compactors will be available again for this cleanup. The tire collection host site is **St. Mark Church** parking lot at **3616 Spaulding St.** The appliance collection host site is **Field Club School** parking lot at **3512 Walnut St.** It's been a rough winter of late and there is lots of litter around, but it will soon be time to cleanup yards, alleys and homes in the neighborhood. Volunteers will be needed to help make pick-ups and load compactors. We also have recycling, park cleanup, food, and membership drive at this event. Please consult the April newsletter for more information regarding the cleanup.

**Lead Poisoning . . . continued from page 4**

12,000 yards and 550 homes this year. This is part of an effort on their part to figure out how big of a problem Omaha has. The Department of Housing and Urban Development has a program to replace and stabilize lead paint in homes. Because money is limited for home repair, specific requirements apply, but you may be eligible for thousands of dollars in repairs to your home.

You can get information about either of these programs at the numbers listed above.

**What else can I do to protect my children?**

Wet-mop and wet-dust your home at least once a week with a solution of water and dishwasher detergent. Pay special attention to window wells. (Dishwasher detergent contains phosphate, which attracts lead particles.)

Feed your children a balanced diet that is high in calcium and iron, which helps reduce lead absorption.

Wash your children's hands before meals. Wash their toys and pacifiers frequently.

Avoid tracking soil into the home. Have people remove shoes before coming indoors.

Try to keep your children from playing in bare dirt. Cover the ground with sod, bricks or cement.

*by Nancy Gaarder*

*Nancy is a reporter and covers the lead issue for the Omaha World-Herald*

**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 . . .

Please keep the **Bogard** family in your thoughts and prayers as **Tom Bogard** is very ill. Tom, his wife **Marian** and the Bogard family have owned property and businesses around 33<sup>rd</sup> & California for many years. As you know Tom's son **Brad** is owner of **California Tacos** restaurant.

The GPNA sends its best wishes to **Sybil Myers**, as she has been in the hospital recently. Sybil has always been very gracious to the GPNA with her neighborhood articles in the **Omaha World-Herald**.

We are sad to report longtime neighborhood resident and GPNA member **Shirley Ford** passed away February 2; she was 88 years old. Daughter **Jan Franks** said Shirley lived in the neighborhood for over 60 years and lived with the family on N. 35<sup>th</sup> Ave. Jan of course is one of the most active volunteers we have in our neighborhood.

We send our sincere condolences to **Ron Yates** and his family as Ron's mother **Sylvia McCoy** passed away Feb 1. Sylvia was a longtime GPNA member and lived near 34<sup>th</sup> & Burt Street. As you know, Ron was past GPNA President for 4 years and has contributed countless hours of volunteer work to our neighborhood.

Many thanks to City Park Planner **Pat Slaven** who was our guest speaker at the February meeting. Pat gave an excellent slideshow presentation on the "History of the Boulevard and Park System" and had many interesting pictures and information.

The **Douglas/Sarpy County Extension Office** parking lot at **8015 West Center Road** will be the site of a free pesticide collection on **Saturday, March 8**, from **8:00 a.m. to noon**. Up to 500 lbs. of pesticides can be brought to this site for disposal. Pesticides include insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, and rodenticides. These can be old or damaged, cancelled, or illegal pesticides (no questions asked).

The assisted living facility project on the **Duchesne** campus at 36<sup>th</sup> & California could start construction renovation around June if things go according to plan. The developers are now in the final financing stages as they move forward on the project.



**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 Committees | Public Relations | School Liaison          |

## Snow Removal Information

A Snow Emergency means that no vehicles may be parked on the streets where you see an Emergency Snow Route sign. Crews will plow these streets first. If cars are left parked on an Emergency Snow Route during a snow emergency, the cars will be subject to a fine and may be towed at the owner's expense. Radio and TV stations will broadcast all necessary information.

Omaha's Municipal Code requires all sidewalks to be shoveled within 24 hours after a snow-storm. Walks left unshoveled may be cleared by City crews at the expense of the property owner. For more information, or if you have a comment or complaint, please call the Street Maintenance Office at 444-4919 (24 hour line).