



Gifford Park's Pride

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

June 2003

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

GPNA Receives Two Local Grants

Many thanks to the **City of Omaha** and the **Omaha Community Foundation** for providing funding for improvements in Gifford Park. Specifically, the GPNA applied for and received \$4,600 from the Mayor's Neighborhood Grant Program for 8 park benches, and \$2,400 from the Omaha Community Foundation for 2 more park benches, the "Music in the Park" program, and our annual fall cleanup (including the pumpkin patch).

The GPNA asked for this funding to help keep Gifford Park a place where people can enjoy everything the park has to offer. As part of the grant requests, we are asking for your help in maintaining the park in these tough times with the city budget crunch. Since park upkeep is taking a big hit, the GPNA plans to start an "adopt-a-park" commitment which involves volunteers picking up litter on a regular basis and performing other park improvements. Besides litter pickup, we need your help with painting the old playground equipment, painting line games on the old basketball blacktop, painting and extending the tennis backboard, and weeding around trees and shrubs. These tasks can all be done, and can even be fun to do – please call **342-6006** if you are interested in helping with any of these projects this summer.

Besides GPNA volunteers, there are a few key people who helped make these grants possible: **Pat Slaven** (Park Planner), **Jerry Flood** (Park Maintenance Supt.), **Connie Spellman** (Lively Omaha), and those individuals who reviewed the grants.

2003-2004 Membership Season Begins

The membership year for the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association officially runs from June 1, 2003 through May 31, 2004, and any membership purchased now will be good through May 31, 2004. It's a new beginning for officers, executive board members, and residents. It is truly exciting to have new people volunteer to help. We will have new officers to give the organization a great start this year. Your membership helps pay for this newsletter and many other worthwhile programs that the organization sponsors. Please join the GPNA today!

For Information on the Destination Midtown Master Plan, See the President's Column - Page 2

Next Meeting

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

**Guest Speaker -
Master Gardener - Douglas
County Extension Office**

**Presentation of Creighton
Master Plan**

Election Of Officers

**Creighton University
Medical Center
Dining Rooms A, B, and C**

[Note: No July Meeting!]



**Proudly Fly The Flag on
Flag Day - June 14**



Show Wagon Returns To Park

Gifford Park will again be a host site for two Show Wagon Youth Talent Competitions this summer (Districts - **June 17**, Regionals - **July 22**). The Show Wagon program is a competition for youth ages 1-18 to show off their talents on stage, whether it be singing, dancing, playing musical instruments, juggling, magic tricks or in a variety of other acts. Mark your calendars and come out on both dates to enjoy an evening of music, dance and other talents at Gifford Park. The **Gravy Dippers** band will perform again this year from 6 to 7 p.m. before the first Show Wagon event, which starts at 7:30 p.m. on June 17. We also plan to have free ice cream treats in the park. Bring your blankets and chairs and enjoy the show!

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**

Dan Sweeney 345-0125

COMMUNITY GARDEN

Chris Foster 342-6006

COMPLIANCE

Terry Wilwerding 345-1433

HISTORIAN

Eve Swanson 345-1707

KELTOM 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 Basome 933-7506

PARK

Roger Freeman 557-2914

PARKING VIOLATIONS

Leo Wilwerding 345-1433

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Cynthia Shuck 356-2090

TOOL LENDING

Chris Foster 342-6006

WATCH GROUP

Terry Wilwerding 342-2795

WEEDS & LITTER

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

WELCOMING

Vicki Frey 344-0757

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.

The Interim President's Column

By now most of you should be familiar with the name "Destination Midtown". The GPNA has provided information about this master planning project since late last year and now there will be opportunities for you to participate. EVERYONE interested is encouraged to attend a meeting **Tuesday, June 10, 7 to 9 p.m. at Duchesne Academy, 3601 Burt St.**; enter through the main entrance on the north.

HDR architects and several design consultants will facilitate this meeting. The purpose is to identify specific issues and characteristics about our neighborhoods, both positive and negative. Issues will include crime, safety, transportation, greenspace, business districts, housing stock, building design, schools, parks, zoning, code enforcement, law enforcement, absentee landlords, and other issues. During the next week, we will distribute a flyer to everyone in our neighborhood. The flyer will include information about the meeting so people can come prepared to provide input.

Beyond the June 10 meeting, there will be design workshops for the public and targeted audiences as the project continues this summer and fall. The goal is to have the final master plan document done by next spring. We as a neighborhood need to think about what we want our neighborhood to be, and I think it would be beneficial for those interested to meet a couple times prior to the design workshops later this summer. The GPNA will work with HDR on how best to approach our individual neighborhood plans.

My sincere hope is that we can see real improvement in code enforcement, law enforcement and attitude of people toward our neighborhood. Wouldn't it be nice if we could raise the expectation level for acceptable behavior? I have lived in this neighborhood since 1986 and I frankly am disappointed at the lack of respect and just plain bad behavior that too many individuals have toward others. As hard as many of you have worked to maintain a good quality of life for our area, it can be very discouraging at times when bad behavior of a few can affect so many. But it doesn't have to be that way if each one of us works toward a higher standard...maybe your attitude will rub off on others.

On a final note, thanks again for everyone's continued support of the GPNA while I have served as interim president the past 6 months. I want to thank the other officers for their commitment to serving: **Terry Wilwerding**, Vice-President; **Ron Frey**, Recording Secretary; and **Dana Carlton-Flint**, Treasurer; your efforts are greatly appreciated! And I cannot say enough about our newsletter editor **Sue Wilwerding**, who continues to do an outstanding job for the GPNA – thank you! Looking ahead, we have a new slate of officers coming on board at our next GPNA meeting. Show your support and enthusiasm toward our new officers and their ideas as they get ready to serve in new roles for the best neighborhood association in the city. See you around!

by Chris Foster

Election of Officers at June General Meeting

The GPNA Nominating Committee will place the following slate of candidates in nomination for election as officers for 2003 - 2004:

President: Ron Frey

Vice-President: Cynthia Shuck

Recording Secretary: Eve Randone

Treasurer: Vicki Frey

The election will be held at the general meeting on June 5th. Only current GPNA members are eligible to vote.

Creighton Update

Gardeners and farmers everywhere delight in the recent rainstorms sweeping through the area, but they continue to slow removal progress for Creighton University as the campus expands westward from 30th to 32nd Street between Webster and California Streets. Tree removal is nearly complete and the last house intended for removal is scheduled for demolition in June of this year. Short-term plans are to acquire a land survey and begin design for grading and seeding the area. As you may recall, the implementation of Creighton's master plan for our area was somewhat expedited due to security issues with the existing housing stock on the block causing earlier-than-expected demolition.

The master plan as presented to us in previous drafts, is to have parking east of 32nd Street between California Street and Burt Street with Webster Street incorporated into the parking lot. Generous pedestrian pathways, landscaping and campus border identification fortunately grace the design plans. In the weeks to come, the neighborhood will be given an opportunity to view the new plans—please take advantage of this opportunity!

Special thanks to **Lennis Pederson**, Creighton's Associate Vice President for Administration and Facilities Management Director who contributed to this article and continues to keep us abreast on development and issues pertaining to our neighborhood. If anyone has concern about Creighton's work on the site please contact me, 556-2090. We will pass along the information to Creighton and address it together.

by Cynthia Shuck

Community Garden Update

The **Gifford Park Community Garden**, located at 3416 Cass St., hosted a demonstration on how to build a compost bin on May 3. GPNA members **Eric Noll** and **Carlos DeEstrada** did a great job of building the bin. This demo was part of our season kickoff to introduce the project to neighborhood residents and to sign people up to rent garden plots. We also had an organic gardening expert visit the garden on May 17 to answer our questions. Special thanks to **Gordon Karre** for donating a tiller and of course **Bob Hutton** for getting it running – it works great! To date we have 20 plots rented. Please call **Chris 342-6006**, **Annemarie 342-1340** or **Cynthia 556-2090** for more information.

Another Successful Spring Cleanup

How many times can you say what a great job everyone did for our spring cleanup on April 26 in Gifford Park? We filled 4 trash compactors, collected over 100 tires, 7 tons of metal, and over \$500 in memberships and donations. **Rodney Hay** provided great barbecue beef and beans for volunteers, **Vickie Frey** and **Sue Wilwerding** kept everything organized at the "cleanup headquarters" table, and the following people also made this another successful cleanup: **Bob, Virginia & Darryl Hutton; Ben & Austin Sweazy; Jim Kyler, Leo Wilwerding, Steve Brady, Billy Dooly, Mike Wilwerding, Lloyd Canfield, Jim Wilwerding, Mike & Candy Bacome, Terry Wilwerding, Cynthia Shuck, Loren Johnson, Chris Foster, Lilly Estes, the City of Omaha, and Keep Omaha Beautiful.**



Mayor Mike Fahey dropped by the "Headquarters" tent in Gifford Park to check on the progress of the cleanup and to pose for a picture with Sue Wilwerding and Vicki Frey.

City of Omaha Parks & Recreation Sun Dawg Summer Fun Youth Program

Monday - Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Beginning June 9 - July 31
This program is free! 9th Summer of
Fun, Fun, Fun!

**arts & crafts, music & drama, games
& sports, climbing wall & water tag,
and special event field trips**

**The Gifford
Park Sun
Dawg Shack
is the "cool"
place to be
this summer!**



What's Happening In The Neighborhood . . .

AMVETS in conjunction with VFW District 10 is sponsoring a bike safety rodeo on **Saturday, June 14** (rain date: June 15). at the VA Medical Center Parking Lot - North section. Free bike inspections by the Bike Rack, Olympia Cycle, and The Bike Way will begin at **9:00 a.m.** with the program following at **10:00 a.m.** Other activities for the children include fingerprint, photo, and DNA identification.

Thanks to **Stan Baumann** from Prospect Hill Cemetery for his video and presentation about the history of the cemetery at last month's GPNA meeting.

We are very sad to report that longtime GPNA member **Martha Gail Kelly** passed away Sunday, May 25. She was 93 years old. She used to come to every meeting until her health prevented her from attending. She lived at 3315 Davenport from 1955 to 2001, until she was 91 years old. She also was our "Neighbor of the Month" a few years ago. Her great support of the neighborhood will always be remembered. Memorials can be made to the GPNA or First Baptist Church in her memory.

If you get a chance to stop by **J'N'J Grocery**, take a look inside at the many improvements store owner **Loren Johnson** has made, including a new floor, more aisles and better organization.

Please continue to keep **Tom Bogard** in your thoughts as he is very ill. Tom is **California Tacos** owner **Brad Bogard's** father. Also, please keep **Mike & Candy Bacome** in your thoughts. Candy has been battling a severe ankle injury for the last several months and her mother recently had a stroke and Candy has been taking care of her.

The GPNA would like to remind neighbors to please pick up after your dog, because its "business" can be a serious health risk. Contrary to popular belief, dog feces are not an ideal fertilizer for yards and gardens as it attracts maggots and flies as well as promotes the spread of roundworm and other intestinal parasites to other neighborhood dogs. Children too are at risk for contracting the common parasite tapeworm if exposed to affected stool. Please—as Spike Lee once put it, "do the right thing"—carry with you plastic bags to collect stool, double bag, and dispose of properly in garbage cans. If conditions in this regard deteriorate, the Humane Society can respond with greater presence in the neighborhood to curtail unleashed and unlicensed dogs and cats.



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 |



**TOOL
 LENDING
 HOTLINE**



*Mike 933-7506
 Chris 342-6006*

Mowers - \$5
 Rent for most tools - \$3



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