



Gifford Park's Pride

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

April 2004

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

April 24 is Date For Spring Cleanup

The annual GPNA Spring Cleanup will be held on Saturday, April 24, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Gifford Park. Trash compactors will again be available for this cleanup. We also have recycling, park cleanup, food, and a membership drive at this event. Now that the snow has melted, it's easy to see all the litter and other debris that has accumulated over the winter. The nicer weather makes it easier to clean up yards, alleys and homes in the neighborhood.

Appliances and tires will be accepted at this cleanup. Vouchers will be available on cleanup day only (while the supply lasts) for yardwaste items (including tree brush and logs) to be taken to River City Recycling (6404 South 60th St.) We plan to distribute a flyer with more details in the coming weeks.

Volunteers will be needed to help make pick-ups and load compactors. Contact Ron 344-0757, Chris 342-6006, Jim 551-1344, or Terry 342-2795, if you would like to volunteer, need help with hauling, or want more information.

Meeting Proves To Be Fruitful

One of the greatest strengths of the Gifford Park Neighborhood is close proximity to our larger institutional neighbors. We appreciate their involvement with us. Many of our residents are employees of these institutions.

As officers of the neighborhood, we believe that Gifford Park needs to start a master planning process of our own in order to be in control of the future of our neighborhood and anticipate both our needs as well as the needs of our neighbors. In anticipation of this planning process, neighborhood leaders Ron Frey, Cynthia Shuck, Chris Foster, and Richard White met with officials from Creighton University, Boystown National Research Hospital, Creighton University Medical Center, Omaha City Planning Department, and the Nebraska Department of Roads.

Our hope was that by meeting together it would open dialogue with these neighborhood partners for discussion of some long term planning. Part of being a good neighbor is trying to envision their needs as well as our own. As we look at the future, we realize that further institutional growth into Gifford Park could be a real possibility. It is not as if there is any concrete plan right now. This process involves examining

continued on page 3

Next Meeting

Thursday, April 1
7:00 P.M.

Guest Speaker:
Stu Dornan
Douglas County Attorney

Creighton University
Medical Center
Dining Rooms A,B, & C

Next GPNA Executive Meeting

Thursday, April 22nd
(Note Date Change)
7:00 P.M.

Discussion Topic:
Code Enforcement

Yates School
3260 Davenport St.

All Are Invited To Attend

15th Annual GPNA Easter Egg Hunt



Saturday, April 10
Noon (Sharp!)
Rain or Shine
at Gifford Park
Children Ages 12
& Under

Bring Your Easter Baskets
& Be Ready To Hunt!

GPNA OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Ron Frey 344-0757

VICE PRESIDENT

Cynthia Shuck 556-2090

RECORDING SECRETARY

Eve Randone 345-1777

TREASURER

Vicki Frey 344-0757

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

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

Chris Foster 342-6006

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

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.

From The President . . .

Perception is *not* reality! We could probably sit down together over a cup of coffee and list a whole pageful of negative perceptions about the Gifford Park neighborhood. But we know we are not the negative place those images portray. We are active and vigilant, with neighbor watching out for neighbor. As an association, we organize family activities and work to build a positive image for the neighborhood. The more people I come to know, the more I realize what a great place Gifford Park is! So perception is *not* reality.

Perception *is* reality, however! The image people see of Gifford Park is what they take home with them. When you go through the neighborhood, try to look at it as an outsider. These are the perceptions that we have to try to manage. That is where we have to take pride in our neighborhood and be responsible—even if others are not!

As you look at your block, is there trash strewn along the curb or sidewalk? That's a perception that we can manage! We received a suggestion that I thought was great. On the first Saturday of each month, when you hear the sirens sound, why not take a tour of your block with a plastic bag and pick up trash? Get others on your block involved. It's a good time to chat with your neighbors.

Public safety is also something that we have been concerned about. I want to thank **Captain Cousin** of the Northeast Precinct for speaking at our last meeting. I had an extensive follow-up discussion with Captain Cousin and then with **Police Chief Warren** and **Deputy Chief Thorson**. They are very aware of our concerns for public safety and for Gifford Park's image.

We asked them for the opportunity to get to know our officers. We asked that police officers periodically get out of their cars and walk the business district and the neighborhood. In the near future we plan to meet again with the precinct and develop some of these concepts. You could be seeing officers visit some of our meetings. We appreciate their willingness to respond to our needs as a neighborhood.

Finally, the condition of properties in our neighborhood needs to improve. Many of us as homeowners are working hard to renovate our homes. I appreciate that. Some of the landlords are not nearly as concerned about their properties. We will be discussing code enforcement at our next executive board meeting at Yates School. If you would like to be a part of addressing code and property issues, please come join us. We hope to put together a task force that can work on developing some concrete strategies.

Together, we can alter perception and align it with reality!

by Ron Frey

Northeast Precinct Home Safety Checks Available

The **Brotherhood of the Midwest Guardians** (Omaha Police Officers) will be sponsoring home safety checks for residents of the Northeast Precinct (42nd St. east to the river, and Dodge St. north to the county line) during the month of April. The home safety checks are by appointment only and require one week's advance notice. If you are interested in this free opportunity to have your home evaluated from a safety standpoint, please call **Ron Frey (344-0757)** to arrange for an appointment.

Neighborhood Meeting . . .

continued from page 1

possible growth scenarios to prevent any healthy institution from being "boxed in," but to examine possibilities other than growing into the neighborhood. Some alternatives proposed at the meeting included changes to the interstate exit system along 30th Street.

There is a large area of land that extends south from the interstate off-ramp to Dodge Street. If the exit and on-ramps were altered, there could be a great deal of available space for institutional expansion along the east side of 30th Street rather than the west encroachment into our neighborhood. These proposals were discussed at length during the meeting. One idea that seemed most feasible would be removing the US 75 exit onto 30th Street and relocating it to Cuming Street. That would free up some land immediately south of the exit. (Note: The I-480 exit onto 30th Street will be moving south, next to the I-480 on-ramp, according to Dept. of Roads plans).

We also discussed a list of resolutions recently passed by the neighborhood. These resolutions (which you may view on our website: www.giffordpark.org) serve as the starting point for our master planning process. The purpose of these resolutions is to firmly state our intent to retain the residential character of our neighborhood, to build a stable foundation of "predictability," and to promote the growth of residential home ownership. People aren't willing to buy a home in Gifford Park if they are in fear that their property may be encroached upon by future institutional growth.

Some of our resolutions are framed as general statements, while others are more specifically directed. Our intent is not to polarize our relationships with our institutional neighbors, but rather to create a starting point for mutual discussion and planning. I believe we accomplished that at this meeting; discussion was honest, probing, and focused on our mutual interdependence. I appreciate our institutional neighbors' commitment to Gifford Park and hope to continue to have a fruitful planning process with them in the future.

by Ron Frey

Salute To Safety - Expo 2004

Saturday, April 24

10am-4pm

Westroads Mall

Free Tax Help Available Now

The site for the annual free tax assistance is the Lay Apostolate Center at St. Cecilia's Cathedral, 40th & Webster St. Tax help will be available **Mondays 1 to 4 p.m., Thursdays 6 to 8 p.m. and Saturdays 10 to 11:30 a.m.** though the tax season. Everyone is welcome! IRS representatives will provide free tax help for our neighborhood for the 10th year in a row. Processing of basic tax returns and electronic filing will be available. No appointment is necessary; walk-in appointments only. Please call Jackie at 551-3629 for more information.

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 880-6225 for more information.



Destination Midtown Update

The **Destination Midtown (DM)** project is in the final month of review toward creating the final master plan document, scheduled for completion in May. The steering committee is currently reviewing the last draft – Parks, Open Space and General Programs. Included in this draft are recommendations for developing a landscaping plan, especially tree-planting, on three specific streets: California Street from 30th Street to Saddle Creek, Davenport from 30th to 38th Street, and 33rd Street from Dodge to Cuming. Although these streets function to move traffic, their character is no different than many of our other local streets. The idea is to enhance these key streets to become "green" links that would better connect our business district with the surrounding neighborhoods, businesses and institutions. The GPNA will be very involved with developing these landscaping and streetscaping plans.

Of course implementing this plan will be challenging. This is why some of the DM steering committee members recently visited Portland, Oregon in late March to learn how this city has implemented their master plan. Specifically regarding neighborhood issues, members of the steering committee met with City staff from Portland's Planning, Redevelopment and Community Development Corporation to see how they have been successful.

Two factors are crucial to real improvement in our neighborhoods: more effective law and code enforcement and the creation of a not-for-profit Midtown Development Corporation to provide resources and support to implement the redevelopment programs.

by Chris Foster

What's Happening In The Neighborhood . . .

On **March 30**, **Creighton University** will be hosting an informational forum to discuss the pros and cons of the proposed campus' master plan to expand. Keynote speakers will be **Lennis Pederson**, Associate Vice President for Administration and Director of Facilities Management and **Dan Burkey**, Vice President for Administration and Finance. The forum will be from **5:30 – 6:30 p.m.** at the **Neighborhood Center, 115 South 49th Ave.** For questions, call **561-7583**. Call **Sue Abou-Nasr** at **561-7581** or email sabounasr@mail.unomaha.edu if you are planning to attend. Refreshments will be provided.

Congratulations to **Jarred & Eve Randone** on the birth of their new baby girl **Elianna**. She was born March 12 weighing 8 lbs 8 oz and 21" long. Jarred & Eve have been active members of the GPNA for the last several years.

We are preparing for the third full year of planting at the **Gifford Park Community Garden** located at **3416 Cass St.** Tentatively we are planning a season kickoff event on **Saturday, May 1**, at the garden. Also **Kate O'Brien 496-8419** is planning a youth gardening program this spring and summer. For more information on the community garden project, call **Chris 342-6006**, **Cynthia 556-2090** or **Annemarie 342-1340**.

Omaha by Design will hold a community meeting to discuss Civic Omaha on **March 31**. Here is your chance to be heard and give your ideas on this important process. The meeting will be held at the **Scott Conference Center, 6450 Pine Street, from 6:30-8:30 p.m.**, admission is **FREE**. For more information on Omaha by Design, please visit www.livelyomaha.org or call **342-3458**.

The GPNA would like to extend its sincere condolences to the family of **Justin Nealon**, who was killed in a car-pedestrian accident last month. Justin was the nephew of long-time GPNA members **Jim and Kathleen Wilwerding**, and the Nealon family lived for many years near the Gifford Park area.

Just a reminder - yardwaste collection will resume the week of **April 5 - 9**. There is no limit to the amount of properly prepared yardwaste that will be collected. Leave 2 feet of space between yardwaste and garbage containers.



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 (\$9) _____ 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 |

Show Wagon Date Set

The Show Wagon will once again be making a stop in **Gifford Park** this summer. The talent competition for youth ages 1-18 has been scheduled for **Wednesday, June 16th**, at **7:30 p.m.** in **Gifford Park**. For more information or for entry forms, call **Karin Moyer**, Show Wagon Director, at **444-5164** or email her at kmoyer@ci.omaha.ne.us.

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