



# Gifford Park's Pride

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

May 2004

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

## Destination Midtown Final Document Rollout Scheduled For May 12

The final document for the **Destination Midtown (DM)** master plan will be announced to the public at a press conference **May 12**. Some of you have seen and heard bits and pieces of ideas and recommendations gathered from meetings during this year-long study by HDR, the project consultant. The final document will be very comprehensive in its content and will serve as the "blueprint" for how our Midtown neighborhoods develop and function into the next 20 years and beyond. There will be some specific short-term projects identified to take action on immediately, as well as long-term projects that will need significant planning and resources. The GPNA appreciates everyone who participated in this master planning process, particularly our GPNA Board who reviewed the draft documents. We also want to thank our public and private partners (businesses, institutions, the City Planning Department, and our fellow neighborhood associations) who have made similar efforts – I can tell you first hand our DM Steering Committee partners have been committed to this master plan from the beginning and are even more committed to seeing the plan bear fruit. It's no secret we all need to stay committed; look for opportunities and work hard for good things to happen. Stay tuned for more details when the final master plan document is presented May 12.

*by Chris Foster*



*Mayor Fahey stops to chat with some of the wet (but willing) volunteers at the Spring Cleanup. See the article on page 5.*

## Next Meeting

Thursday, May 6  
7:00 P.M.

## Ice Cream Social

Candidates' Forum:  
Douglas County Commissioner -  
District 2  
Nebraska State Legislature -  
District 9

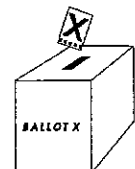
Creighton University  
Medical Center  
Morrison Seminar Room

## 2004-2005 Membership Year Begins

The membership year for the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association officially runs from June 1, 2004 through May 31, 2005, and any membership purchased now will be good through May 31, 2005. It's a new beginning for officers, executive board members and residents.

If you have been a member and supported the GPNA in the past, we appreciate your support and hope you will renew your membership. If you have not been a member, we encourage each of you to consider joining. Your membership helps pay for this newsletter, neighborhood cleanups and beautification projects, youth activities, social activities, neighborhood watch equipment, tool lending, and many other worthwhile programs. We also encourage you to become an active member by volunteering to help with any of the large variety of activities the GPNA sponsors. Please join today!

**Don't Forget To VOTE!**  
**Primary Election**  
**Tuesday, May 11**



**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

**From The President . . .**

We had some interesting discussion at our Gifford Park Executive Board Meeting that I want to share with you. We were talking about ideas for the Mayor's Grant, including a landscape plan for parks and green corridors. The question was raised, "What does this have to do with Gifford Park Neighborhood?"

That was an excellent question, and one that we must always ask. All of our plans and activities must be rooted and tied to the Gifford Park neighborhood's. As we approach a new fiscal year for the GPNA and the election of officers, I want to lay out for you what my plans are for the coming year and how they relate to our association. It is a 5-prong approach.

**Public Safety:** Many of you may have either witnessed increased police activity or read about it in the papers. After our discussions with police management, they have responded and we appreciate it. Officers have been out of their cars and in the neighborhood and arrests have been made. We intend to strengthen this partnership with our officers. We will be planning meetings in the future with officers and business owners to keep the public safety pressure up and find new strategies to make our neighborhood safe and walkable.

**Business & Economic Development:** We have a thriving business district and want to make it even better. I would like to work with our business leaders to discuss how to make the business district more attractive, how to recruit complementary businesses, how to coordinate anti-loitering strategies, how to renovate vacant properties and lots, and how to work with the city to solve parking and traffic problems.

**Home Ownership & Responsible Property Maintenance:** One of my goals is to make Gifford Park attractive as a place for homeowners. We have people of all economic and ethnic backgrounds in our neighborhood. I appreciate that diversity and want to maintain it. We have smaller homes, that if properly renovated would make great homeownership opportunities. We also have large homes that have the potential to reclaim their class and elegance. That is why I plan to strategize with Habitat for Humanity, private remodeling/redevelopment firms and real estate agents to enhance the attractiveness of owning older homes. We also have plans to be vigilant of rental properties to make sure they maintain code compliance.

**Beautification & Green Stewardship:** Gifford Park is the heart of our neighborhood. Most of our activities occur there. In the past, several thousands of dollars in grants have been obtained to plant trees and replace park benches. The Community Garden has added a new dimension to our green effort. These efforts are ongoing. In the future, the abandoned interstate bridges will be taken out at Davenport St. Originally, this was part of Turner Park. We would like to see its park status restored. Wouldn't it be nice to have a tree-lined Davenport Street that would create a visual connection to Gifford Park? Wouldn't it be beautiful to have a tree-lined street connection between Bemis Park and Gifford Park? From Mutual of Omaha and Creighton University Medical Center to our Business District? These tree-lined streets could really "wreath" our neighborhood with beauty and enhance the redevelopment we are looking for.

*continued on page 3*

*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 GPNA Is Now On The Net!**  
Visit [www.Giffordpark.org](http://www.Giffordpark.org)

## From The President . . . *continued from page 2*

**Positive Neighborhood Activities:** Activities are what makes a place a neighborhood, rather than simply a place to live. This is where you get to know your neighbors, and feel like you are participating in something worthwhile. Activities have always been the heart of our Association. That will continue.

What do these goals have to do with Gifford Park? They are goals to transform a neighborhood, build on our strengths and improve our shortcomings. We already know that this is a great place to live, but wouldn't it be great if it got even better?

*by Ron Frey*

## Summer Programs For Area Youth Starting Soon

Once again, **Gifford Park** will be a full-day site for the City of Omaha's popular **Sun Dawgs** program. This program offers youth ages 6-15 a fun summer by providing a wide variety of playground programs such as crafts, games, sport events, swimming, special events, field trips, and evening family events. This year the program will run from **June 14th** through **August 6th**. Activities are scheduled **Mondays** through **Fridays** from **10 a.m.** to **4 p.m.** The **Sun Dawgs Summer Kickoff** is set for **Tuesday, June 1st**, at **Rosenblatt Stadium** between **4:30 - 6:30 p.m.** The cost is **FREE!** Look for more information about the Sun Dawgs program in the June newsletter.

The GPNA wishes to thank the **City of Omaha** and all of the private contributors for keeping this valuable youth program in our parks and community centers. Parents are always welcome to assist with supervision during activities. The purple and yellow Sun Dawg shack is located in the west end of Gifford Park.

The **National Youth Sports Program** will be held at **Creighton University** from **June 7th - July 9th**. This free program is for young people ages 10-16 whose parent(s) or guardian(s) meet Department of Health and Human Services income guidelines. The program is sports-based and includes basketball, softball, golf, volleyball, swimming, and education on drug awareness, nutrition, health, math, and science. **May 8th** is the first day to apply for the program: **9 a.m.** for returning participants and **1 p.m.** for new applicants.

Free physicals (required) will be given at the **Kiewit Fitness Center**. A Parent Night Orientation program at the Kiewit Fitness Center will be held on **June 1st** for accepted applicants. For information about this exciting educational program, call **280-2848**.

## New Code For House Numbers

The City of Omaha recently changed its building codes. These new codes affect all structures in the Gifford Park area. One of these codes relates to proper address identification. It reads as follows:

**303.3 Premises identification.** Buildings shall have approved address numbers placed in a position to be plainly legible and visible from the street or road fronting the property. These numbers shall contrast with their background. Address numbers shall be Arabic numerals or alphabet letters. Numbers shall be a minimum of 4 inches (102 mm) high with a minimum stroke width of 0.5 inches (12.7 mm).

Many homes in the Gifford Park area have either unreadable addresses or none at all. This creates problems; having readable addresses is very important in emergency situations such as fire, rescue squad, or police calls as well as for delivery services.

The GPNA advises that residents should work toward correcting inadequate numbering. Please review your particular situation and install proper numbering if necessary. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated, and who knows - attention to this situation could save your life in an emergency!

**CALIFORNIA BAR**  
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**Nascar Racing Sundays**  
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**449-9138**

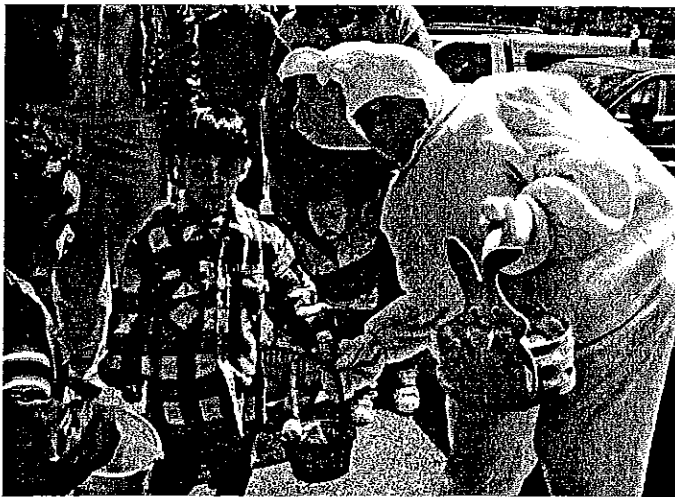
**Charles R. Kilgore Jr.**  
**Attorney At Law**  
**4913 Underwood Avenue**  
**558-5000**

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

## Lots Of Smiles, Candy At Annual Easter Egg Hunt

Once again we had great fun for the **15th Annual GPNA Easter Egg Hunt** held in Gifford Park Saturday, April 10 at noon. Before "hiding" the candy, volunteers helped cleanup the park at 10 a.m. We had cool but dry weather for the event. As is always the case, out of the hundreds of pieces of candy, it took a matter of a few minutes for the kids to pick the park clean of goodies.

There were many volunteers and donors helping to make this event a success, but we want to recognize a few who put forth a special effort. **Jan Franks** and her grandchildren **Brittney** and **Zach Rubik** organized the donated candy. **Betty Slayden** and her family donated candy and helped with setup. The **Wolf House** not only donated several boxes of treats, but also helped clean up the park for the hunt. The **PKA Fraternity** brought a good-sized crew to help clean up the park and for crowd control – they were the "muscle" we needed to control the kids! **Candy Bacome** played this year's Easter Bunny and gave out treats to youngsters. Others who made generous donations were **Loren Johnson (J'N'J Grocery)**, **Chuck Kilgore**, **Brad Bogard (California Tacos)**, **Lilly Estes (California Bar)**, **Hy-Vee**, **Osc**, **Target**, **Baker's**, **Albertson's**, **Walgreen's** and the **GPNA**. We also appreciate the **Omaha World-Herald** for doing a big story on the event in the Sunday paper the next day.



*Top left: The Easter Bunny (Candy Bacome) distributes some pre-hunt goodies to the children who were anxiously waiting for the festivities to begin. Top right: It's hard to be patient when there's a lot of candy at stake, but these youngsters were well-behaved as they waited for the official start to the hunt. Bottom left: It doesn't take long for the park to fill with eager "hunters" as they search for the hundreds of pieces of candy that were scattered by the volunteers. Bottom right: This young man was all smiles as he reached for a chocolate Easter egg. A large number of children were on hand for this annual event, which is one of the most popular activities sponsored by the GPNA..*

## Despite Weather, Cleanup Still A Success

Over the years, our neighborhood has been fortunate to have descent weather for most of our outdoor events. However, this year's **Spring Cleanup**, held Saturday April 24 in Gifford Park, was cool, very wet and windy – just ask GPNA President **Ron Frey**, who gets our MVP award for a great effort. There were many great efforts on this day, too many to report, but the GPNA appreciates all the volunteers' commitments to making this a very successful event. Volunteer **Colin Andersen** saved the day by providing us with a 12'x20' shelter. Other highlights - we filled 3 trash compactors, collected over 30 tires, recycled roughly 2-3 tons of metal, and collected over \$400 in memberships and donations. **Rodney Hay** provided great barbecue beef and beans for volunteers, and **Kate O'Brien, Cynthia Shuck, Kathleen Wilwerding & Vicki Frey** kept everything organized at the "cleanup headquarters" table. **Mike Caban** kept mugs filled with hot coffee. The **Wolf House** donated snacks and helped with the cleanup, **J'N'J Grocery** provided hot dogs, and the **California Bar** donated pop. The group **Leadership Omaha** provided "Midtown Maniac" T-shirts and gloves to about 20 fifth-graders (from **Kellom Elementary School**) who helped clean up the park and business district – **Mayor Fahey** also stopped by to show his appreciation. The **Northeast Precinct** provided an officer and cruiser. Many thanks to the **City of Omaha** for continuing this very important program. Great effort by all!

by Chris Foster



Although it often rained hard during the cleanup, there was nearly a steady stream of traffic into the parking lot to take advantage of the free compactors. Thanks to all the volunteers who braved the nasty weather to help clean up the neighborhood.

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District 2**

ad paid for by Julie Kalkowski

## Community Garden Youth Program Starts May 22

The Gifford Park Community Garden Summer Youth Program will be held on Saturday mornings from May 22 to July 31. The sessions will last from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and will be held at the Community Garden, 3416 Cass St. Children ages 7 and older are welcome; younger children are also welcome, but they need to be accompanied by an adult. The program is free for all participants. For more information, call 496-8419. The following is a schedule of activities:

**May 22** The FUN Begins

**May 29** Begin Planting, Bug Talk (Dennis Ferraro)?

**June 5** Photography Class

**June 12** Worm Farm Fun

**June 19** Native American Gardening

**June 26** Stone art, Tree Walk (Justin Evertson)?

**July 3** No meeting

**July 10** Salsa Party

**July 17** Bird Spying, (Audubon speaker "Backyard Birds")?

**July 24** Sun Art

**July 31** Final party

Community garden participants are preparing for the third full year of planting. For more information on the community garden project, call Chris 342-6006, Cynthia 556-2090, or Annemarie 342-1340.



**SATURDAYS**

May 1 - October 9  
8:00 am - 12:30 pm

**WEDNESDAYS**

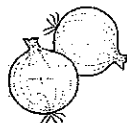
June 9 - September 22  
3:00 - 7:00 pm

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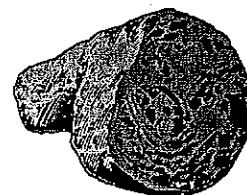
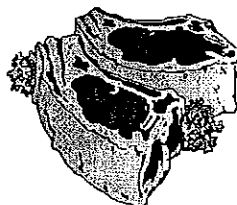
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Happy Mother's Day!

## Paint-A-Thon Seeking Homeowner Applications

Applications are now available for the 16th annual **Brush Up Nebraska Paint-A-Thon**. The Paint-A-Thon is designed to help homeowners who are over 62 or permanently disabled at any age, and who live in Douglas or Sarpy Counties. Since the program's inception, volunteer teams have painted 1,710 homes. The goal for 2004 is to paint 110 homes with the help of over 4,000 volunteers.

Applicants must meet financial guidelines listed on the official application. An independent Selection Committee made up of professionals from housing and human services identifies the homeowners who are qualified and who will have their homes painted at no cost. Volunteers paint the outside of selected homes in August of each year; the 2004 Paint Day is **August 21**. Applications are available at any **Wells Fargo Bank** or by calling the **First Call For Help** at 444-6666 between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Applications will be available through **June 4**, with selected homeowners being notified by **July 30**.

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**7:00 AM - 11:00 PM Friday thru Saturday**

**8:00 AM - 10:00 PM Sunday**

## What's Happening In The Neighborhood . . .

Many thanks to IRS volunteers **Jackie Foster, Pat Prochaska, Dennis Clay, and Sharen Rotolo**, who provided free tax help in our neighborhood again this year. St. Cecilia's Cathedral was this year's site. They processed over 150 returns this year, most electronically filed. This is the tenth year for this popular neighborhood tax assistance program.

A big thanks goes to longtime GPNA members **Herbert and Lois Baumhover** for donating about 35 cute stuffed animals, which the GPNA in turn donated to the Open Door Mission just before Easter. This kind gift was very much appreciated by **Pastor Charles Kent**, who actually lives in our neighborhood.

The **Show Wagon** will once again be making a stop in our neighborhood 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**, email her at [kmoyer@ci.omaha.ne.us](mailto:kmoyer@ci.omaha.ne.us), or download [ci.omaha.ne.us/parks](http://ci.omaha.ne.us/parks).

The election of GPNA officers for 2004-2005 will take place at the June general meeting. The Nominating Committee will announce the slate of officers at the May general meeting. The GPNA sincerely thanks the dedicated individuals who have served as board members during this past year and made the commitment to volunteer their time and talents for the betterment of the Gifford Park neighborhood.

## Weeds...How Tall Is Too Tall?

City of Omaha code states that weeds (or any vegetation) cannot be over 18" tall. The following steps can be taken if this code is violated:

- A complaint can be filed by anyone
- A City Inspector will send the property owner a 10 day notice to cut the weeds
- If the owner does not respond, the address is put on a mowing list
- Property will be mowed and the owner will be charged according to the size of job



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