



# Gifford Park's Pride

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

July 2004

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

## Highlighters To Perform At Next "Music In The Park" July 9

Make plans to attend the second "Music in the Park" concert coming to our neighborhood this summer. The GPNA wishes to thank the **Omaha Musicians Union**, the **City of Omaha**, **US Cellular**, and **First National Bank** for the great opportunity to host this event on **July 9** (the third date will be **August 13**) – these are both on **Friday nights from 7 – 8 p.m. in Gifford Park**. The **Highlighters** will be performing vocal **Rhythm & Blues** on July 9. We plan to have refreshments on hand to add to the festivities. Bring your blankets and chairs and enjoy the show!



*The GPNA thanks The George Walker Quartet who performed Jazz and Rhythm & Blues on June 11th at Gifford Park. Thanks also to Roberts Dairy for donating the ice cream treats.*

## GPNA Continues Popular Youth Tennis Program Next Month

For the eleventh consecutive year, the **GPNA Youth Tennis Program** will be held every **Wednesday evening in August (August 4, 11, 18, 25)** at the tennis court in **Gifford Park**. Emphasis is placed on learning basic tennis strokes such as the forehand, backhand, serves, and volleys. Look for more information in the August edition of the newsletter. Registration forms will be available at **J'N'J Grocery** and **California Tacos** later in July. For more information, or if you would like to help with any or all of the sessions, call **Chris at 342-6006**.

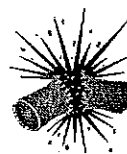
**Reminder: No July Meeting!**

**Next Meeting  
Thursday, August 5**

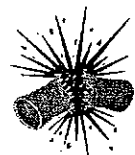
## Third Annual Neighborhood Block Party August 3

Mark your calendars and help celebrate **National Night Out** on **Tuesday evening, August 3**, at **33rd & California St.** This will be the 21st National Night Out, when neighborhoods throughout the Omaha area and nation-wide will be holding a variety of events from block parties to parades to cookouts, all with the purpose of generating support for local anti-crime programs, strengthening neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships, and sending a message to criminals that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back. **33rd Street** will be blocked off from **California** to **Cass** for the event. **EVERYONE** is welcome to participate and have a good time. It's a great opportunity to get together and show support for our neighborhood in a big way.

The GPNA is planning to have many of the same activities that were popular at last year's event - including food, ice cream, refreshments, jazz music, a parade, firetruck, classic cars, face painting, moonwalk, 3 on 3 basketball, information booths (health, safety, neighborhood), and much more. Detailed information will be available when a flyer comes out later in July. For more information, or if you would like to help, call **Ron 344-0757**, **Chris 342-6006**, or **Cynthia 556-2090**.



**Happy 4th  
of July!**



**GPNA OFFICERS****PRESIDENT**

Ron Frey 344-0757

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Cynthia Shuck 556-2090

**RECORDING SECRETARY**

Kate O'Brien 496-8419

**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 . . .**

Be on the alert! Captain **Denise Cousin** of the Northeast Police Precinct has notified us that they have been seeing a rise in burglaries recently. Apparently, a wave of burglaries started in the northwest precinct area, around Dundee, Country Club and Benson, and has been working its way east.

This is an issue where we as residents can be the eyes and ears of our officers. I don't know if you saw in the news about how one individual, who was involved in a citizen's patrol group, stopped a burglary ring single-handedly. He observed some men with a truck, and their activities looked suspicious. He called the police, they came and arrested the men and closed down the ring.

Particular areas the police department is especially watchful of is east of Saddle Creek and south of Cuming. Burglaries seem to be happening mostly in the morning, right after people go to work, particularly on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. No violence has been reported with any incident.

Most of us think that these things happen at night, or on holidays. We need to be watchful during the daytime as well. Don't be nosy, but be a good, watchful neighbor. If you hear unusual noises, or see unusual things, take the time to check it out. By seeing something, and calling 911, you might become a neighborhood hero and stop a crime syndicate. You may wish to participate in a citizens patrol at a time convenient for you. Let me know if you are interested.

That reminds me of a story about my own experience with burglary. We lived in an apartment in Southern California with a big picture window to the street, years ago. We made a quick ice cream run to the mall before it closed. When we returned home, I noticed the door was ajar. I didn't remember leaving the door open, so I was afraid that there still might be someone inside. We went next door and asked our neighbors if they heard anything, because someone broke into our apartment. My neighbor wanted to help me check it out. But first, he got his Western style, "6-shooter" pistol! He stuck it in the back of his pants and said, "Let's go." I was more afraid of him than of what might be in our apartment! As it turned out, only our small TV, microwave and a typewriter were taken (and some of my jeans and sweaters).

The point of this story was that we were gone such a short time that the burglar must have been watching. When you leave your home, don't just rush off. Take a look around. Occasionally, drive around the block and go by your house again, just for a second look. The other issue is that we thought by putting a board in our sliding window track, we were secure. The burglar, however, just popped a hole in the window, reached in, rolled the board out of the track and slid the window open.

Some of the safety measures you have for your house might not be as effective as you might think. That is why the police officers of the Midwest Guardians at the Northeast Precinct are willing to give Gifford Park residents a free safety inspection of your home. I think this would be a great opportunity to let a different set of "professional eyes" give you tips on making your property more secure. If you are interested, call me, **Ron Frey**, at **344-0757**, so we can create a list of interested residents. You will then be contacted to arrange an inspection at a convenient time.

by Ron Frey

*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)

### GPNA Receives Mayor's Grant

Great news! The GPNA was awarded \$5,000 from **Mayor Fahey's Mayor's Grant** program. This was announced in a press conference in Bemis Park, Wednesday, June 30. Gifford Park worked together with Bemis Park Neighborhood Association to submit joint proposals to bring **Big Muddy Workshop** in for a study of green spaces.

This will be a continuation project for Big Muddy Workshop. Last year, they provided planning for Leavenworth and Dewey Parks on the park and boulevard system south of Turner Park. Continuing the project on the northern part of the system will give the necessary continuity to enhance the entire system. The abandoned interstate bridges over 30th Street will be taken out in the next few years. This will open up the possibility to restore a portion of Turner Park, north of Dodge Street. Planning needs to be done for that parcel of land. There is a great opportunity to spearhead the Destination Midtown recommendation of establishing green corridors along 30th Street, 33rd Street, Davenport and California Streets.

The goal is threefold. The first is to make green connections between Bemis Park, Gifford Park and Turner Park. Second is to restore the Park and Boulevard system in our neighborhood. Third is to provide a green connection between our central business district and the major employers in the area, such as Mutual of Omaha and Creighton University Medical Center. Everyone will get a chance to participate in this planning process as it unfolds this summer. Stay tuned for more details to come. We think these plans will build excitement amongst our residents and major institutional partners about the Gifford Park/Bemis Park area.

*by Ron Frey*

### Community Garden Youth Program In Full Swing

Many thanks to **Kate O'Brien** for organizing this year's **Youth Garden Program**. About 25 children participate in this 10-week (Saturday mornings) hands-on program. Things are really getting interesting with the flowers and vegetables changing everyday. Thanks to all the garden volunteers who help supervise the activities. Thanks also to **Indian Creek Nursery** for donating the wonderful plants - the children planted some in the community garden and took some home to plant. Thanks to **Micklin Lumber** for giving us a great deal on lumber for the new pergola (garden arbor) being erected on the east side - it will allow the climbing roses, donated by our local master gardener **Diane Kaye**, to finally have a place to climb.

The **Gifford Park Community Garden** is located at **35th & Cass St**. For more information on the community garden project, call **Chris 342-6006, Cynthia 556-2090, Kate 496-8419** or **Annemarie 342-1340**.



### Sun Dawgs Off To Great Start

Sun Dawgs Supervisors **Joe Wieland, Anna Curry,** and **Skyler Johnson** are heading up the Gifford Park site this year. Please consider stopping down at the Sun Dawg shack any weekday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. to help with activities. Special thanks go to **Tom Lebida** (Parks & Recreation Supervisor) for always paying close attention to our Gifford Park site. By the way, the GPNA wishes to thank the **City of Omaha, Omaha World-Herald, Alltel** and other private donors who helped keep the Sun Dawgs program and for making it possible for Gifford Park to be a full-time site - this means a lot to our neighborhood.



**Join The GPNAToday!**

### Charles R. Kilgore Jr. Attorney At Law

4913 Underwood Avenue  
558-5000

Personal Injury Law  
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## Charter GPNA Member Ruth Windorski Passes Away

On June 7, 2004, Ruth Windorski passed away unexpectedly in Blackduck, Minnesota. Ruth, along with her husband Jim, was one of the GPNA's founding members back in 1988. Ruth was born on April 22, 1941, in Bemidji, Minnesota. She graduated from Blackduck High School in 1959. Jim and Ruth were married in Blaine, Minnesota, in 1961. They moved to Omaha in 1963. The couple had 6 children - Mark, Lance, Ross, Kent, Ellen, and Karen - and 12 grandchildren. She worked at J'N'J Grocery in the 1990's and was working at Blackduck Family Foods until her passing. Several GPNA members took the time to reflect on their experiences with Ruth and what she meant to the GPNA community:

Ruth was one of the most giving, dedicated people you could ever know. Her contributions to the GPNA are remarkable. During the late 1980's and into the 1990's Ruth, along with other dedicated people, was involved in organizing and leading many of the events and activities we enjoy today. The list includes newsletter editor, treasurer, recording secretary, membership, social activities, Easter Egg hunt, garage sale, cleanups, bike rodeo, Watch Group, Show Wagon, holiday banquet, park improvements and other valuable activities. While her husband Jim was the GPNA's first president starting in 1989, Ruth's support of Jim and the GPNA made it possible for these good things to happen in our neighborhood. I personally draw strength and motivation from my early experiences with both Jim and Ruth because they challenged me in a positive way and always took the time to help, even if it wasn't convenient for them. Our thoughts are with Jim and his family.

*Chris Foster*

I first met Ruth back in the late 1970's. She was very active in the Henry W. Yates Elementary School PTA. Ruth was an integral part of a group of parents who participated in bake sales, ice cream socials, fundraisers, school programs, and the yearly carnivals at Yates. If there was something that needed to get done, she was always one of those caring parents who could be counted on to help. She served as President of the Yates PTA a couple of times, and when it looked like the PTA was about ready to fold, due to lack of parent participation, she and Jim helped keep the PTA going.

I recall fondly, during the early days of the GPNA, that our first two or three garage sales were held in Bogard's drugstore, (now California Tacos). Ruth and some helpers gathered tons of children's clothing for weeks before the sale, and they washed and neatly folded each of the hundreds of items. Several members' washing machines and dryers were working overtime for days before the garage sale. The idea was to provide funds for the GPNA, but at the same time have on hand some nice things for the children of the

neighborhood to wear. That's the Ruth I remember; always doing for others. Our thoughts are with Jim and their children.

*Mike Caban*

I received word an hour or so ago that one of my dearest friends had passed away suddenly. I'm in disbelief that our friend and one-time neighbor, Ruth Windorski, has gone. She and her husband Jim both were a great asset to this neighborhood and were one of the founding members of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association. I'm at a loss as to where to begin to say what all Ruth contributed; her participation in Yates School PTA and all its activities and her volunteer work with me in Girl Scouts as one of my most devoted leaders. Also, Jim coached my Girl Scout softball team and Ruth was always right there, keeping score, bringing treats, and doing anything she was asked to do. She was right there for me whenever I needed her for anything.

I was very sad to see Ruth and Jim go to Minnesota when they moved up there but that is where they chose to retire. I'm sure I'm not the only one in the neighborhood saddened to get the news of Ruth's passing. I know there are so many more who share my feelings. My sincerest sympathy to Ruth's family. You are in my thoughts and prayers.

*Anne "Patches" Jernigan*

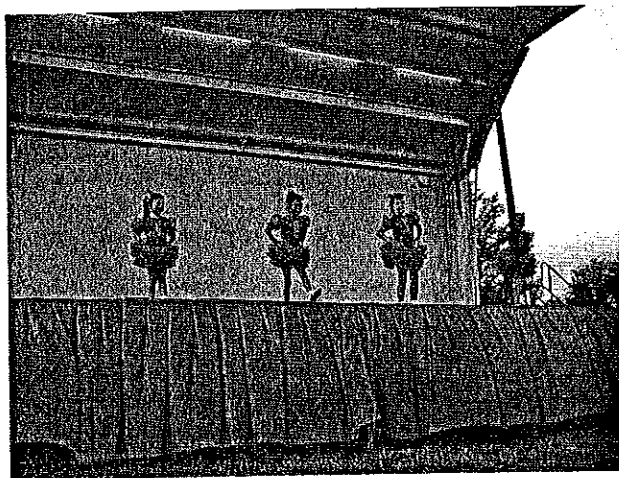
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## Show Wagon and The Gravy Dippers Entertain Gifford Park

Gifford Park again this year was fortunate to be a host site for the **Show Wagon Youth Talent Competition** Wednesday evening, June 16. The weather turned out to be perfect. About a dozen acts performed their talents including singing, dancing, acting and more. Many thanks to the **Gravy Dippers** band who played great classic rock and other music to begin the evening. We wish to thank **Loren Johnson** (owner **J'N'J Grocery**) for donating the ice cream treats, and **Jan Franks** and **Brittney Rubek** for handing out the treats. We greatly appreciate the **House of Faith Church** (33rd & Cass St.) for opening up their church restrooms for event participants. Special thanks go to **Karin Moyer** (Parks & Recreation Supervisor) who handles the City Show Wagon, and **Riek Weiner** who handles sound. Thanks also to our "local" neighborhood judges **Jan Franks**, **Mary Theresa Green**, and **Brian Kokensparger** — they had a tough job. Thanks to **Darryl Hutton** for being "Johnny-on-the-spot" to help the event run smoothly. And once again the **Wolf House** guys helped with crowd control. And of course many thanks to the **Omaha World-Herald** who helps sponsor this event year after year.

by Chris Foster



## Habitat For Humanity Builds Home in Neighborhood

Seeing new home construction in this neighborhood is somewhat of an unusual sight, but that is exactly what is happening at 708 North 33rd Street. **Habitat for Humanity**, in conjunction with **Mutual of Omaha** and **St. Cecilia's Cathedral Parish**, is building a new home for **June Fritz**, who is a single mother of two. Selected out of nearly 160 applicants to receive the house, Fritz was surprised not only to be chosen to get the house, but also to know that Mutual of Omaha, her former employer for 12 years, donated \$50,000 for the construction of the 1350 sq.ft. house, and members of her own parish, St. Cecilia's, were helping her build it.

Habitat for Humanity's mission is "building homes and building them through our community spirit and material resources." Since 1976, the organization has built more than 50,000 houses with families throughout the United States. According to **Nancy Hemesath**, executive director of Habitat for Humanity, they do not "give away houses" - instead, the organization sells houses at no profit with no interest charged on 25 to 30-year mortgages. The homeowners and volunteers build the houses under trained supervision, and individuals, corporations, faith groups, and others provide financial support. Volunteers do all the construction work on the house except for those projects that require a licensed professional, such as electrical, heating, and plumbing work. Selections of potential homeowners are based on need. They must be low-income, have reasonably good credit, a willingness to work 350 hours on the house, and the ability to pay with a regular source of income.

Volunteers began working on the house June 5, spending Saturdays and some Sundays hammering nails and putting up walls. The home should be completed by mid-August. GPNA members **Mike Wilwerding** and **Marc Talkington** were among the many volunteers at the site. (Information for this article was provided courtesy of **Lisa Schulte** from *The Catholic Voice*.)



**Historically Speaking . . .**

**Ronald Reagan's Boots**

GPNA newspaper readers might have noticed the Omaha connection during the state funeral of former president **Ronald Reagan**, but did you know, there is also a Gifford Park connection? According to the **Omaha World-Herald** and TV accounts, the boots that were placed backward in the stirrups of the riderless horse were made by the 79-year old **Dehner Boot Company** of Omaha.

The Dehner Company, headed by **C.C. Dehner**, moved to Omaha from Wichita, Kansas, in 1929. During the 30's, Dehner lived at 142 North 34th St. His daughter and son-in-law, **Gladys** and **Harold Ketzler**, with son **Donovan** and daughter **Janne** (now deceased), lived on North 34th Street and on North 31st Street between Davenport and Dodge until 1938 when they moved to J.E. George Blvd. Both Donovan and Janne attended Henry Yates Elementary School. Mrs. Ketzler was the leader of a Camp Fire Girls group from Yates school. Janne and I were the same age and shared many Camp Fire activities. Mrs. Ketzler had many interesting ideas for young girls and we had a fun time at their home.

Harold Ketzler was head of the Dehner business until 1971 when Donovan Ketzler took over. Since 1991, Harold's grandson, Jeff, has been CEO. They make high quality hand-made custom boots for equestrians and motorcyclists. They had made boots for Reagan since about 1946. Other celebrity customers have included **Jackie Onassis**, **Dwight Eisenhower**, and **George Patton**. They also make boots for NASA, Aggie Boots for Texas A & M, and the "SAC Boot" worn by Thunderbird and test pilots. Omaha mounted police have also worn Dehner boots. A 1998 article in the **New Horizons** newspaper stated that Dehners turns out about 12,000 pairs of boots a year. Not bad for a firm with roots in Gifford Park!

*by Eva Swanson*

**Ruth Windorski. . . continued from page 4**

Prior to moving to Blackduck, Ruth and Jim Windorski lived at 528 N 32<sup>nd</sup> Street and were very active in organizing the GPNA and were well respected by members and non-members of the area. With the recent unexpected passing of Ruth, we lost a very good friend. No matter how busy or occupied she was, it would not stop her from giving a smile or a few words. We watched the family grow as the years went by. As their children grew to maturity, the Windorskis always had a soft spot in their heart for the other children of the area. As members of this organization, I truly believe we all have a soft spot in our hearts to extend our sympathy to the family.

*Robert and Virginia Hutton*

**Reporting Nuisances**

Send a message to [www.cityofomaha.org](http://www.cityofomaha.org) and click on the Mayor's Hot Line to report nuisances.



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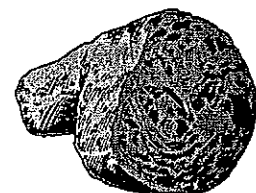
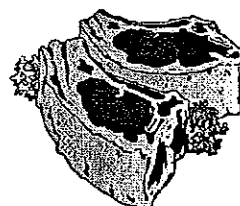
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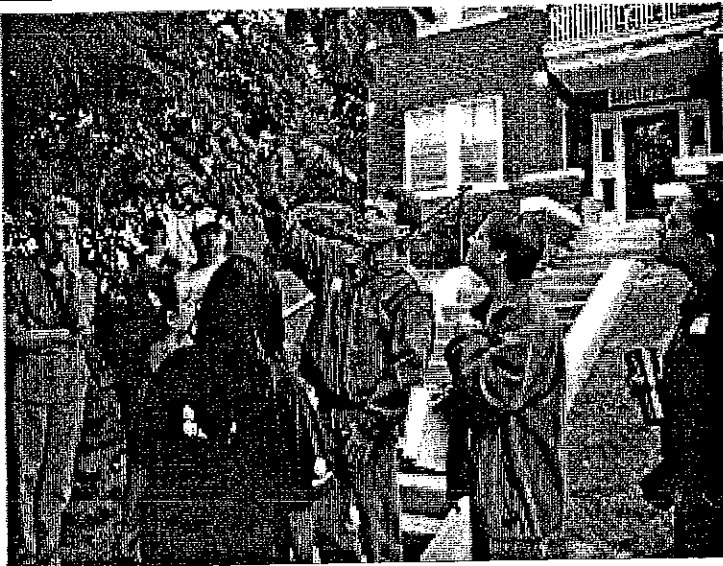
**510 North 33rd St.**

**Come join us!**

**Nascar Racing Sundays**

**Happy Hour Weekdays**

**449-9138**



Justin Evertson with the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum hosted a "tree walk" in our neighborhood on Saturday morning, June 26. A group of about 30 adults and children met at the Gifford Park Community Garden (35<sup>th</sup> & Cass St.) at 9 a.m. Justin then led them on a walk discussing trees, covering parts of Cass, Webster, and California Streets before ending in Gifford Park. He also met with some of the group at the 30<sup>th</sup> & Cass Street greenspace. Justin gave a great presentation on this very valuable topic of trees.

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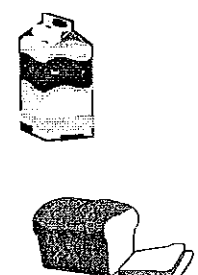
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8:00 AM - 10:00 PM Sunday

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

The following individuals were elected to serve as GPNA officers for 2004-2005 at the June general meeting: **President – Ron Frey, Vice President – Cynthia Shuck, Recording Secretary – Kate O'Brien, Treasurer – Vicki Frey.** Good luck in all your endeavors on behalf of the Association and thanks for your commitment and dedication to the GPNA!

Best wishes to GPNA members **Ben and Dar Sweazy**, who are now proud first-time grandparents. **Taylor Grant Sweazy** was born on May 4, 2004 to **Dallas and Kara Sweazy**. Dallas is Ben and Dar's son and lived in the neighborhood until he moved to Wichita, Kansas, a few years ago when he married Kara. Congratulations and we wish little Taylor well!

Please keep **Loren Johnson's** family in your thoughts as his daughter-in-law **Angela** has been very ill. Loren's son **Tracy** manages the family's other **J'N'J Grocery** store at 40th & Bedford. Tracy and Angela have 2 young children.

Many thanks to the **Omaha Community Foundation** for providing funding for several important neighborhood activities. Specifically, the GPNA received \$2,400 for our annual Fall Cleanup, the Community Garden Youth program, and additional Show Wagon entertainment.

The GPNA started an "adopt-a-park" commitment which involves volunteers picking up litter on the **3rd Saturday** of each month (now through October) at **9 a.m.** for half an hour to an hour (meeting at the baseball diamond). Help is also needed for painting various items in the park and weeding around trees and shrubs. Call **Ron 344-0757, Cynthia 556-2090, or Chris 342-6006** if you are interested in helping with any of these summer projects.

## 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**  
**P.O.Box 31462 Omaha, NE 68131-0462**  
**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          |



### TOOL LENDING HOTLINE

*Mike 933-7506*  
*Chris 342-6006*

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 444-5555**