



Gifford Park's Pride

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

January 2005

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

GPNA Announces 2004 Neighbor Of The Year: Betty Slayden

One of the strengths of our neighborhood association is the many events and activities we have held since the beginning of the GPNA in 1988. Getting people together for work projects as well as fun activities is one of the key ingredients to a strong, sustainable community. That is why the GPNA chose **Betty Slayden** as our "Neighbor of the Year" for 2004. The award was presented to Betty at the GPNA's 16th Annual Holiday Banquet hosted by Creighton University Medical Center on December 2. Betty's family, including husband **Greg**, daughters **Tyffaney** and **Kayleen**, and sons **Billy** and **Jacob** all shared in her award.

As many of you already know, Betty has been volunteering for many of our events and activities for the past 15 years. Betty is dependable, committed, and enthusiastic when it comes to volunteering with the GPNA. She helps out with event organizing, setup, cleanup, and brainstorming on how to make them better.

Early on, Betty said **Judi Caban** was her mentor and inspired Betty to become involved with Yates Elementary School PTA and the GPNA. In the early and mid-1990's Betty was PTA President and also a Girl Scout leader. Since then she has encouraged her children to volunteer. Amazingly, since the Slaydens moved away from the Gifford Park neighborhood 8 years ago, their involvement has increased with more and larger GPNA events - Betty and her family are one of the reasons why these events are successful, and the Gifford Park neighborhood just wouldn't be the same without their help year in and year out.

After Betty accepted her award at the banquet, her daughter **Tyffaney** spoke about her mother, especially about the positive experiences the family gained and of spending quality time together though volunteering. At the end, **Tyffaney** issued a challenge to everyone: "Try to volunteer at least 12 hours a year...because no matter where you come from, volunteering helps everyone." Even though Betty and her family do not physically live in our neighborhood, their hearts are still in Gifford Park. Congratulations from all of us in the GPNA, and good luck in 2005!

by Chris Foster

Note: No January Meeting!

Next Meeting
Thursday, February 3
7:00 P.M.

Creighton University
Medical Center
Morrison Seminar Room

Executive Board Meeting
Thursday, January 20
7:00 P.M.

Yates Alternative School
32nd & Davenport St.



GPNA President Ron Frey led neighbors in singing traditional Christmas songs throughout the Gifford Park area during the Holiday Caroling Party. For the story and a related article, see pages 3 and 4.



Martin Luther King
Day
January 17

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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 . . .

Lately I've been reading Greek and Roman history, which has been different than the Near Eastern history I'm more accustomed to. At this point my 16-year-old rolls his eyes. That is the ultimate admission that his dad isn't cool. But he knows that already.

In Egypt, Assyria, or Babylon, kings build empires and boast about their exploits in self-aggrandizing style. Certainly Greece and Rome did their share of empire building, but "Rome wasn't built in a day." I've found more interest in their earlier history. What was different was the emphasis, not on individual charisma, but on collective strength.

One of the great Greek statesmen, Pericles, discussed the "Athenian way of life."

"...ours is a constitution which does not imitate those of others, but rather sets them an example. Its name – because power rests not with a few but with the majority – is Democracy..."

"We do not consider that debate impedes action, but rather that to go into action without previous briefing does so. We are the better men in this too, that we, who run the risks, are the same men who calculate them..."

"Wealth we consider an opportunity for service, not an occasion for boasting, and poverty no disgrace to confess, unless we are failing to do anything about it. Among us, the same people manage both private and public business..."

Reading these quotes made me think of our diverse neighborhood, because that is where true democracy is at work. Certainly we can vote in elections, but that is the action of a republic, not a democracy. It is really at the neighborhood level, where ordinary people like you and me can act to make a difference. We have invested in this neighborhood and the decisions we make affect it as a whole. As Tip O'Neil said, "All politics is local."

Our goal at Gifford Park is to implement plans that enhance neighborhood appearance, neighborliness, economic development and the value of property. It would be a mistake to think that the neighborhood is a forum for a self-appointed dictator to take over. Our tradition is always to be on the lookout for the "next generation of leadership," to cultivate new involvement and new ideas. But it does take your effort.

We don't have all the answers. To be successful requires your interest, expertise, and involvement. You might be thinking, "I'm not involved because I don't want to be a bother, or impede progress." Pericles made a great statement, "...we alone call the man who keeps out of all of this, not inoffensive, but ineffective..." That is such a great statement, because it reflects that so much more is accomplished when there are more to share the responsibility.

You don't want to be ineffective, do you? We have such potential for collective strength. I think we can set the standard for other neighborhoods to follow. But we need you!

by Ron Frey

Christmas Caroling In Our Neighborhood? My, How Times Have Changed

Back in the early 1990's, the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association was a young organization comprised mainly of a core group of activists with a "fix it or die trying" attitude. At the time the problems of the neighborhood seemed insurmountable. On weekend nights when it was Chris Foster's and my turn to ride together as part of the GPNA Watch Group, I remember we'd fantasize about what we'd like to see in our community. I always enjoyed riding with Chris because he was one of the younger members, and so very optimistic. Nothing was impossible in his eyes. That enthusiasm is contagious.

We would talk about how cool it would be to have a community center, and we'd devise all kinds of plans for when they shut down Yates Elementary; how we'd lobby the city to make a community center out of the school. We'd talk about creating a community garden out of some vacant lots, and organizing different activities for the children of the neighborhood. Then, reality would hit... a drug deal in front of an apartment house on 33rd Street, right in the open.

How can we even dream of doing half of these wonderful things? It was kind of depressing, because there were so many obstacles to overcome in order for these dreams to come to fruition. Back then, our priority was to rid our neighborhood of the criminal element that was attempting to establish a foothold in our little piece of America. I'll never forget how overcome with emotion we all were on the day of our first neighborhood cleanup, when we heard the news that the night before, a little girl was murdered and her body was found behind that same apartment building. Noemi Lily; her name is embedded in my memory forever. And that incident created another fantasy, another dream... one day, a fountain in the park, in the shape of an Easter lily, Noemi's lily, as a memorial to that little girl.

My, how times have changed. Last night, right after supper my doorbell rang. It was Chris Foster. I opened the door and on the sidewalk below stood over a dozen of my friends and neighbors singing "We Wish You a Merry Christmas".

Imagine that... Christmas caroling in our neighborhood.

Imagine that... a community garden in our neighborhood.

Imagine that... a tennis program and other other great activities for the children in our neighborhood.

Imagine that... all the work by so many people over the years had paid off.

Imagine that... DREAMS DO COME TRUE

With a little help from our friends.

I personally want to salute all our Gifford Park Neighborhood Association members, past and present. May 2005 bring us more wonderful miracles.

by Mike Caban

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2004 Holiday Banquet Highlights

The 16th Annual GPNA Holiday Banquet was held on Thursday, December 2, at Creighton University Medical Center. Approximately 120 members and guests attended. The menu consisted of turkey with all the trimmings, and it was delicious as usual. After dinner, a slide show highlighting the GPNA's events and activities of the past year was presented. Chris Foster then presented Betty Slayden with the 2004 "Neighbor Of The Year" award. Master of Ceremonies and GPNA president Ron Frey then ended the evening with a drawing for a variety of door prizes.

Many thanks are in order for the wonderful evening. First, to Creighton University Medical Center for hosting the event and to Ed Finan for acting as coordinator for the hospital. Rodney Hay prepared the smoked and fried turkey, and it was fabulous as usual. Thanks to Sodexo for preparing and serving the meal. In recognition for all that CUMC does for the Association, the GPNA made a donation to the hospital's food drive. Thanks also to Subby & Janice Anzaldo and City Councilman Jim Vokal & his wife Liz for the door prizes that they donated. And finally, a big thanks to Ron & Vicki Frey and Chris & Sallie Foster for organizing the event and for the beautiful decorations. It was a great evening!



Family time at the Holiday Banquet: The Huttons (top) and the Slaydens (bottom)

Holiday Caroling Fun For All

Nearly 40 Gifford Park area residents got together on Thursday evening, December 16, to do some holiday caroling around the neighborhood. The weather was great for the event - temperatures in the 30's and a light wind made for a pleasant, hour-long stroll with plenty of great Christmas carols to sing along the way. The neighbors whose houses the group stopped at (Jim & Vera Horton, Mike Caban, Wendall & Alicia Stanley, the Barfieds, and Roger & Sandy Freeman) seemed to enjoy and appreciate this old tradition (although the group sounded pretty good, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir probably doesn't need to worry too much!) Afterwards, the carolers met back at California Tacos & More to warm up with hot apple cider and holiday treats. Thanks to Eric & Annemarie Noll and Ron & Vicki Frey for organizing this activity and everyone who brought the treats for the evening. Thanks also to Brad Bogard for the use of the back room at California Tacos to gather after the caroling. What a great way to spread holiday cheer!

Neighborhood Builders Announces 2005 Leadership Sessions

Neighborhood Builders will be holding its 9th annual Leadership Sessions each Saturday in February (5th, 12th, 19th, and 26th) from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Creighton University Medical Center Becic Dining Room. Topics include Building on Neighborhood Assets, Utilizing Community Resources, Planning & Effective Management, and Neighborhood Problem Solving. Neighborhood Builders is a joint community effort led by the Neighborhood Center, United Way, UNO, various neighborhood associations, businesses, and private citizens. The goal of this program is to help build stronger, healthier neighborhoods by assisting in developing positive leadership. Registration is on a first-come, first-serve basis. Applications are available at The Neighborhood Center, 115 South 49th Avenue, or you may contact Mark Simmons at 561-7575 to register or to obtain more information.

Free Tax Help Available Again This Year

For the 11th year in a row, the GPNA will provide free tax assistance for neighborhood residents. At the present time, plans are being made to locate the site in the Lay Apostolate Center at St. Cecilia's Cathedral again this year, but please consult the February newsletter for the exact location and times for the sessions. The sessions will begin in February and continue through the end of the tax season in April. For any questions, or for more information, call 551-3629.

2004 Holiday Lighting Contest Winners

As each year passes, it seems Gifford Park neighborhood residents are "getting into" the holidays more and more by putting up bigger and better holiday lighting displays. This year, there was a wide variety of decorations -traditional and icicle lights, inflatable santas and snowmen, illuminated figures, and twirling Christmas trees. With so many unique and beautiful displays, it was difficult to choose the winners for this year's contest - that's why 14 different residents were chosen to receive a prize. The following are the 2004 winners:

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 315 N. 31 St. | 3330 California St. |
| 3036 Cass St. | 3405 California St. |
| 132 N. 35th Ave. | 3408 California St. |
| 142 N. 36th St. | 3413 California St. |
| 137 N. 37th St. | 621 N. 36th St. |
| 3702 Cass St. | 715 N.36th St. |

Displays were judged on the evening of December 16th. The GPNA would like to thank Neil Liberty and Chris Foster for taking the time to travel throughout the neighborhood and perform the difficult task of choosing the winners. The prizes were gift certificates to California Tacos & More courtesy of owner Brad Bogard. Thanks to all members of the neighborhood, who by participating in the contest, helped to make the area bright and beautiful for the holidays!

The GPNA Is Now On The Net!
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8:00 AM - 10:00 PM Sunday



What's Happening In The Neighborhood . . .

Many thanks to **Bob Hutton, Darryl Hutton, Roger Freeman, Justin Brown** and **Chris Foster** for putting up holiday lights this season in the business district and Gifford Park. Thanks also to the local business owners for the "extra" electricity needed to have them on during the holiday season. And PLEASE...someone remind us (when the weather is warm) to install hooks on some of the business district buildings so next holiday season we can easily attach the lights (instead of our current method: DUCK TAPE).

The **19th Annual Cathedral Flower Festival**, co-sponsored by **Lauritzen Gardens**, will be held **Saturday January 29th** from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and **Sunday, January 30**, from 1 to 4 p.m. at **St. Cecilia's Cathedral, 701 North 30th St.** Besides the breathtaking floral exhibits, a variety of musicians and vocalists will perform as well. Admission is free. It's a great way to sample a bit of spring in the middle of winter!

Kellom School is saving box tops for education (which can be found on **General Mills** and **Betty Crocker** products). Any help in collecting these box tops would be appreciated. They can be taken or sent to the school (**1311 N. 24th St. 68102**) or contact **Jan Franks (345-5765)** for a pick-up. Thanks!

If you are a boy and have completed 5th grade or are 11 years old, come check out what Boy Scouting is all about. Learn skills for the future now. Troop meetings are on **Tuesday nights** from 7 - 9 p.m. Call Scout Master **Jim Detwiler (932-1907)** or leave a message for a call back.

According to **Lennis Pederson** from **Creighton University**, more than likely before school is out in May, **Hawkins Construction** will be building the bridge over Burt Street to Highway 75 from Cuming Street. During this construction, there will be times when pedestrian travel along Burt Street will need to be re-routed. Planning includes exploring the rental or construction of a covered walkway, and signage to direct pedestrians to Cuming Street or to the north side of Burt Street. Mr. Pederson is requesting conversation to develop re-routing plans. If you would like to be involved in this conversation, please contact **Cynthia Shuck (556-2090)** so she can give your name and number to Mr. Pederson. The first meeting will be sometime in late January.



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 (\$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 |

Snow Removal Rules

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 snowstorm. 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).