



Gifford Park's Pride

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

April 2005

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Easter Egg Hunt Fun For All

Once again we had great fun at the 16th annual GPNA Easter Egg Hunt held in Gifford Park on Saturday, March 26, at noon. Before "hiding" the candy, volunteers helped clean up the park at 10:30 a.m. The park was actually relatively clean after we finished picking up litter. We had cool temperatures in the 40's but dry weather for the event. As is always the case, out of the thousands 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 donators 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 Rubek** organized the donated candy. **Betty Slayden** and her family donated candy and helped with setup. The **PKA Fraternity** from **Creighton University** 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. **Hy-Vee** gave another nice donation of candy. Others who made generous donations were **Loren Johnson** (J'N'J Grocery), **Chuck Kilgore**, **Brad Bogard** (California Tacos), **Lilly Estes** (California Bar), **Target**, **Baker's**, **No Frills**, **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. The World-Herald estimated about 275 children participated in the event.



Next Meeting
Thursday, April 7
7:00 P.M.

Guest Speaker:
State Senator
Gwen Howard

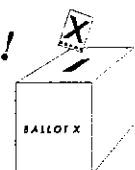
Creighton University
Medical Center
Morrison Seminar Room

GPNA Spring Cleanup Scheduled for April 16

The annual GPNA Spring Cleanup will be held on **Saturday, April 16**, from **9 a.m. to 2 p.m.** in **Gifford Park**. Trash compactors will be available again this year and will be monitored by neighborhood volunteers (NO commercial hauling!) Also during this time there will be a neighborhood & park cleanup, recycling, a membership & donation drive, a police officer and cruiser for teaching public safety, and food for the volunteers. Items **ACCEPTED** at the cleanup include furniture, appliances, metal, garage sale items, and trash. Items **NOT ACCEPTED** include paint, yardwaste, concrete, hazardous material, and oil. Tree brush vouchers through **River City Recycling** will be available on a first come, first serve basis. Tires

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Don't Forget To VOTE!
City Primary Election
Tuesday, April 5



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

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 . . .

Opportunities galore! Yes, we have lots of avenues we need to devote attention to. On the public safety front, the Northeast Precinct just completed its semiannual shift change. We have new lieutenants, sergeants and officers to meet and acclimate to the neighborhood. We have video surveillance equipment that we would like to be able to maximize, but need someone to take ownership of the project. Maybe that someone is you.

On the neighborhood survey front, we would like to put together training in May for people to survey property conditions block by block in our neighborhood. This will give us baseline data on the neighborhood for education, to raise grant money, and to allow us to focus attention, with the city code inspectors, on the issues that contribute the most to the deterioration of our neighborhood. I think we will learn a lot about our neighborhood by undergoing this process. Would you like to be part of this training?

There are State of Nebraska issues on the table. Amendment 1, which was recently passed by voters, allows renovated "historic structures" to keep their pre-renovation valuation for eight years. This would be an important tax credit, but our neighborhood is not a designated historic district. To take advantage of this credit, we either have to loosen the definition of historic, or become a historic district.

Dundee is going through that process of obtaining historic designation now. They had to raise \$15,000 in grants to have a neighborhood survey. That is a path we could start to pursue, if we had assurances that Gifford Park could meet the guidelines of being a historic district. It would be nice if someone would want ownership of this project.

For those of you who are politically motivated, there is also a proposal to exempt the first \$5,000 of major home improvements from state sales tax. It is still alive, but needs political help for it to pass. Why is new construction exempt from sales tax, but not home renovation? Because new home construction companies make more noise down in Lincoln than small neighborhood associations like Gifford Park. Maybe its time we made some noise. It's only 55 miles to Lincoln. Would you like to be Gifford Park's voice to senators in Lincoln?

On the grant front, we have submitted grant requests with four agencies totaling \$15,000 to match the \$10,000 CEP grant administered by the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum. We really want the entrances to our neighborhood to be inviting, with compelling gateways and tree-lined streets. We should hear by May on the results of these requests. Then we will start the *real* planning and planting! How green are your thumbs?

Our activities are starting in full swing. The spring cleanup is April 16. We have Music in the Park on three occasions this summer, in addition to the Show Wagon. Don't forget about National Neighborhood Night Out on 33rd & California in August.

There are a lot of opportunities for you to be involved in Gifford Park Neighborhood. The future of our neighborhood is in your hands. We need your help and it's a great way to meet your neighbors and work to enhance the place where you live. Who knows? You might be the next "Neighbor of the Year!"

by Ron Frey

Spring Cleanup . . .continued from page 1

may be dropped off for **FREE** at **St Adalbert's Church, 2619 South 31st St**; tires will be accepted at the Gifford Park site for \$1 each. Appliances may be dropped off for **FREE** at **Holy Name School, 2901 Fontenelle Blvd.** Appliances containing freon (refrigerators, air conditioners) will be accepted at Gifford Park for \$10 each.

A small donation may be requested to pick up large hauls. GPNA members will get highest priority for hauling items. GPNA annual membership dues are only \$5 for a single, \$8 for a family, and \$25 for a business membership. If you can help with the neighborhood cleanup in any way or if you need help with hauling, please call **Chris 342-6006, Jim 551-1344, Terry 342-2795, or Ron 344-0757.**

GPNA Receives Community Award

On Tuesday, March 29, a contingent of GPNA members traveled to Lincoln to receive the **Omaha Community Development Award**. The Gifford Park Neighborhood Association was chosen to receive this award for being a catalyst in the revitalization and preservation of the neighborhood. **Governor Dave Heineman** presented one of the two Omaha Community Development Awards to GPNA representatives **Chris Foster, Bob Hutton, and Ron Yates**. The ceremony, held in the Governor's Hearing Room at the Nebraska State Capitol, was sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. The award presentation was held in conjunction with national Community Development Week, Mar. 28 – Apr. 2.

The City of Omaha also wishes to honor the GPNA for receiving the award. This event will be held on **Monday, April 11, at the Livestock Exchange Building, 4920 South 30th St. on the 10th Floor, beginning at 5:30 p.m.** GPNA members are invited to come and share in the recognition of the association by the community. If you have any questions about this event, contact **Ms. Norita Collar at 444-5177.**



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 from 1 to 4 p.m., Wednesday's 6 to 8 p.m. and Saturdays 10 to noon** though the tax season.

Everyone is welcome! IRS representatives will provide free tax help for our neighborhood for the 11th 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.

You will need to bring:

- A) A valid picture ID
- B) Copies of all W-2, 1099 forms, and proof of other income received by you and your spouse
- C) Social Security card or Tax ID # for you, your spouse and any others shown on the tax return.

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 service, please call her at **612-3632** for more information.

Street Construction Update

According to **Lennis Pederson** from **Creighton University**, the work on Burt and Cuming Streets is progressing well, even though older utility infrastructure is causing some delay in daily progress. Also, this project is requiring significant coordination with the utility companies to keep all parties on schedule. The contractor, **Hawkins Construction**, remains cautiously optimistic that the finish date of the project will be in August.

The piling for the new bridge columns is expected to start on **April 5**. Pile driving will start at about 7:00 a.m. and last for the day. Driving piling is expected to be completed in about six working days or April 12 as weather allows. A covered sidewalk will be implemented at the time of pile driving and will remain in place for the majority of the overhead bridge work. The sidewalk will be screened during the pile driving to minimize the chances of oil from the pile driving hammer "squirting" on people using the sidewalk.

In about three weeks Burt Street will be closed for a night as the bridge beams are hoisted into position. The street will probably be closed around 6:00 p.m. Both vehicular and pedestrian travel will be curtailed at the time of closure. The street should then be open for morning traffic. It is expected that the largest mobile crane in the city will be used in this operation.

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What's Happening In The Neighborhood . . .

Music in the Park is coming back to Gifford Park for three visits this summer. Mark your calendars for the 2nd Friday of each month: **June 10, July 8, and August 12** from 7 to 8 p.m. Look for more information in coming newsletters. Also, don't forget about the **Show Wagon on Tuesday, June 21**. For Show Wagon information and entry forms, contact **Karin Moyer** at 444-5164 or kmoyer@ci.omaha.ne.us

We are preparing for the fourth full year of planting at the **Gifford Park Community Garden** located at 3416 Cass St. We are tentatively planning a season kickoff event on **Saturday, May 7**, at the garden - look for more information in the May newsletter. Also, **Kate O'Brien (496-8419)** is planning the second annual 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**.

The **GPNA Executive Meeting** will be held on **Thursday, April 21, 7:00 p.m.**, at **Yates Alternative School, 32nd & Davenport**. Also, election of officers will be held at the June general meeting. If you are interested in serving as an officer in the GPNA for 2005-2006, contact **Ron 344-0757** or **Chris 342-6006**.

The GPNA would like to extend its sincere condolences to **Rodney Hay** on the death of his mother in February. Rodney has been helping with the fall and spring cleanups and has also prepared delicious turkeys at the Holiday Banquet for the past several years.

Don't forget - yardwaste collection will resume the week of **April 4**. There is no limit to the amount of properly prepared yardwaste that will be collected.

Construction . . .

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The plan is to have a message board on the construction site to better alert people of the exact date. There will be an established detour route that will have the necessary signage.

Milling of Burt Street between 30th and 15th Streets is anticipated to be accomplished in late May. Resurfacing will follow immediately. Cuming Street will be overlaid with asphalt at about the same time.

Mayoral Forum April 10

The **Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association** will host a forum for Omaha's mayoral candidates incumbent **Mike Fahey** and challenger **Dave Friend** on **Sunday, April 10**, from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. at the **Cathedral Cultural Arts Center, 39th & Webster St**. Don't miss this chance to find out where the candidates stand on issues that affect us every day.



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 |

For City Services,
Information, or
Complaints

Call:

Mayor's Action
Office

444-5555

**TOOL
LENDING
HOTLINE**

Chris 342-6006

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

