



Gifford Park's Pride

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

December 2005

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Restore Omaha Conference A Hit With Midtown Residents

The first **Restore Omaha Conference** attracted 453 lovers of older properties to the newly renovated Mutual of Omaha Dome on Nov. 5. They heard from two keynote speakers, **Bob Yapp & John Leeke**, and 20 breakout session speakers about how to preserve and restore their home or business. On the exhibition floor there were more than 30 representatives of products, craftsmen, and associations geared toward restoring, repairing, and preserving older buildings.

Around 150 people also attended a tour of Midtown homes, churches, and businesses the next day. A neon tour Saturday night to view 30 examples of neon lights was sold out.

Attendee response for the first-time effort was enthusiastic. Speakers received high marks on their knowledge and ability to communicate to those in attendance. Everyone agreed the value of the conference was far and above the low cost of just \$15, and \$5 for the Midtown home tour. Money raised from the event will provide seed money for next year's event and be used by the Midtown Neighborhood Alliance to further their mission of improving and promoting the Midtown area.

The GPNA put together an exhibitor booth for the conference. Many thanks to **Cynthia Shuck, Dan & Kate Bodmann**,



Dan & Kate Bodmann and Cynthia Shuck are pictured in front of the GPNA booth at the Restore Omaha Conference.

Next Meeting

**Tuesday, December 6
7:00 P.M.**



**Holiday
Banquet**



**Creighton University
Medical Center
Becic Dining Room**

See Page 3 for more details!

**Note: No December
Executive Board Meeting**

No January General Meeting

Chris & Sallie Foster, Clarinda Karpov, Martin Janousek, and Justin Brown for creating the display which drew praise from attendees. Clarinda dressed up as the "Green Man" and played the flute; this fit in well with our theme "Grow in Gifford Park". Another highlight was when GPNA members **Bob Hutton** and **Dana Carlton-Flint** volunteered to help keynote speaker John Leeke with a little "carpentry project" during the morning session.

"This conference succeeded in bringing together Omaha's preservation and restoration groups to work together to create an event that would teach and motivate people to restore and preserve their older properties," said **Kristine Gerber**, event director.

"Based on the response from attendees, this is an event they wanted and needed. The committee and I are so pleased that our first-time effort was a huge success and we are already starting to plan next year's event," she said.

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From The President . . .

Many thanks to **Kate and Dan Bodmann, Chris and Sallie Foster**, as well as my brother **Ryan Shuck** who riveted and spray-mounted posterboard well into the night in preparation for Restore Omaha. Special thanks to **Clarida Karpov** for introducing Midtown to "Green Man" and the idea of "GROWING in Gifford Park". The conference was a tremendous success to all in attendance. Restore Omaha anticipates an even better event next year and has already begun the planning process. Contact **Vince Furlong** (vfurlong@cox.net) for volunteer opportunities.

Due to recent break-ins in the 31st and Cass area, GPNA is pressing for additional Omaha Police Department (OPD) patrol in the area. Residents are encouraged to report any suspicious activity to 911.

I've been challenged recently to find out if there is anything residents can do about loitering along 33rd Street between Cass and California even though there is no loitering law/ordinance. According to NE Precinct **Captain Cousin**, while there is no loitering law per se, it does not prevent a citizen/and or business owner/manager from contacting 911 if he/she observes a suspicious person. The officer would attempt to locate the party and check him/her for warrants. If the party doesn't have warrant/locate then we must determine if he/she is on private or public property. If the party is on private property and the owner doesn't want him or her there we would enforce the trespassing ordinance. However, we also cannot make a person move that is on the sidewalk or city property unless a violation has been noted. Therefore, your call is a catalyst in getting officers to investigate and making their presence known on our streets. Please call 911 if you

continued on page 3

Midtown Neighborhood Association Update

MNA is an alliance of midtown neighborhood associations whose common mission is to preserve the integrity of and advocate for a vibrant community which is sustainable, secure, diverse, historically rich and economically strong. Members of MNA include Blackstone, Columbus Park, Field Club, Ford Birthsite, Gifford Park, Joslyn Castle, Leavenworth, Morton Meadows, Pacific-Leavenworth, Park East and West Central, which are all neighborhood associations. Three "at large" members round out the group including Omaha Main Streets, Destination Midtown, and the Omaha Area Board of Realtors. Reports from committees are as follows:

The Home Ownership committee's goal is to increase owner-occupied housing 1% each year by marketing midtown to current and prospective homebuyers in Omaha. In talking with several relocation companies, the biggest hurdle for promoting Midtown neighborhoods to newcomers is the perception of poor quality schools in the area. This committee is looking for help marketing our midtown neighborhoods. If you are interested, contact me **556-2090**.

The Historic Preservation committee is presently collecting information on LB 66 implementation and working with the Nebraska State Historical Society, which may give a presentation to MNA early next spring. There are concerns with the standards set by this bill which are high and complicated, but historic designations in the neighborhood raise property values.

One more announcement: MNA is looking for a new treasurer position. If anyone is interested, please call me with contact information to forward on to MNA's current Executive Board.

by Cynthia Shuck

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 mailed to the GPNA, P.O. Box 31462, Omaha, NE 68131-0462; please include your name and phone number. Contact Sue Wilwerding (342-2795) or Chris Foster (342-6006) for information regarding the newsletter.

New GPNA Website Operational

I am pleased to announce that Gifford Park now has a brand new website.

www.GiffordParkOmaha.Org is growing in leaps and bounds! Although it has only existed for a few weeks, you will already find useful and interesting content. Can't remember the details about an upcoming Gifford Park event? Check out the new home page for details. In addition to information about upcoming events, useful phone numbers and links to Midtown Omaha web content, you will also find our new online version of the Gifford Park History Book Many thanks to **Eva Swanson** and **Chris Foster** for putting this document together.

The Gifford Park Executive Board will be holding a website planning session this Winter to assess the website and to generate ideas for what comes next. My personal vision is for our website to grow into a "virtual" focal point for the neighborhood. A website can help tell the story of where we've been, help us communicate in the present, and help us focus our vision for the future. On a related note, while it is not our primary focus, our website is broadcasting out to the greater Omaha area that Gifford Park is great place to live, work and play (and, oh by the way, we are only 5 minutes from downtown). Uh oh, the secret's out!

Do you have ideas for the website? Do you have a great photo of a neighborhood activity or event that you would like to share? When you're at the website, you'll find my e-mail address at the bottom of every page:

dan_bodmann@GiffordParkOmaha.Org. Feel free to send me your photos, ideas, suggestions and other feedback. I'll bring every suggestion to our upcoming website planning session. Thanks!

by Dan Bodmann



The Gifford Park Neighborhood Association requests your presence at the

17th Annual Holiday Banquet to be held

at 7 p.m. on December 6th
at Creighton University

Medical Center

601 N. 30th Street

in the glassed-in (Becic) dining room
south of the cafeteria.

Creighton University Medical Center graciously demonstrates its support of the GPNA by hosting this annual event for members.

There is no cost - you just need to be a GPNA member.

Please bring a canned good item which will be donated to a local charitable agency

For questions or more information, call
Cynthia 556-2090



Creighton
UNIVERSITY
Medical Center

From The President . . .

continued from page 2

observe intimidating persons along your path to the 33rd and California business district.

In other news regarding code enforcement, Gifford Park's Councilperson Jim Vokal is looking into a way to introduce rental inspection programs which reward responsible landlords and penalize irresponsible ones for improper up-keep of housing. Gifford Park is approximately 75% rental property. Should we insist landlords be responsible for maintaining the "health, safety and welfare" of their tenants? Should we insist City of Omaha enforce those codes?

Write **Mayor Fahey** and share with him your experience with rental property in Gifford Park. Due to overwhelming observation of abusive tenant/landlord relationships and blatant lack of conformance to City adopted International Property Maintenance Codes, I believe rental property in Omaha needs regulation.

by Cynthia Shuck

For City Services,
Information, or
Complaints

Call:
Mayor's Action Office
444-5555



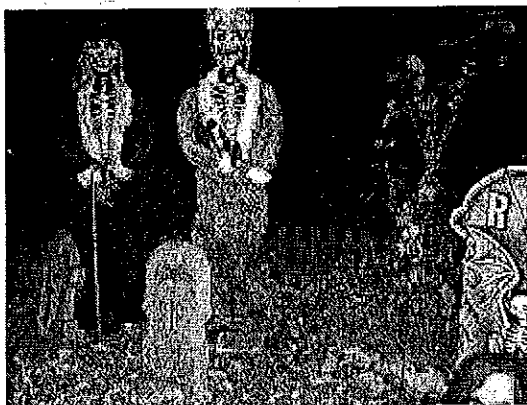
Happy Holidays
from the GPNA!

Halloween A Festive Holiday In Gifford Park

The 11th Annual PKA-GPNA Haunted House was held Saturday, October 29. GPNA volunteers for the event were: **Bob & Virginia Hutton, Betty Slayden, Tiffany Slayden, Kayleen Slayden, Billy Slayden, Jacob Slayden, Nathan McClellan, Terry Wilwerding, and Clarinda Karpov.** Many thanks to all of the GPNA volunteers who made goodies. Thanks also to **Lois Baumhover** who donated a number of stuffed animals (many were Halloween-type characters) for the younger children who attended. We once again had good weather for the event. This year's event was one of the best haunted houses PKA has put on – great job!

If there would have been a neighborhood Halloween decorating contest, **Neil & Mary Liberty, 3405 California**, would have won hands down. For the last several years they have put up an amazing display that rivaled the best in town, including various mummies, intricate lighting, moving skeletons and even boarded up windows – a real live haunted house!

Chris Foster



Pa. display, this "brilliant" looked like they might be headed for their "haunted honeymoon" in Neil & Mary Liberty's yard this Halloween. The PKA-GPNA Haunted House was also a big hit with the neighborhood kids. The GPNA thanks the PKA Fraternity for their assistance with the event again this year.

Holiday Lighting Contest 2005

Get ready, get set . . . GLOW! It's time once again to get ready for the **Seventh Annual GPNA Holiday Lighting Contest.** On the evening of Thursday, **December 22nd**, a panel of judges will travel throughout the neighborhood looking for the best holiday displays. Last year, 12 prizes were awarded. Any residential location within the boundaries of the GPNA is eligible to win. Let's create a "winter wonderland" in the neighborhood this year. Good Luck!

Public Safety Notice

Prevent Auto Theft & Thefts from Motor Vehicles

Dear Citizens,
We want to work together with you to eliminate auto theft and theft from motor vehicles. Please consider these four simple measures to keep your property safe:

- **Take your car keys with you**
- **Lock your car doors**
- **PLEASE REMOVE valuables insight or put them in the trunk before you arrive at your destination**
- **Report prowlers and suspicious activities to 911**

*Thank you,
Omaha Police
Department*



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