



# Gifford Park's Pride

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

January 2006

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

## Ron And Vicki Frey Named 2005 GPNA Neighbors Of The Year

The husband and wife “team” of **Ron and Vicki Frey** are two people who definitely deserve to be honored as the 2005 GPNA Neighbors of the Year for all of their hard work and dedication to the Gifford Park neighborhood. They have served the GPNA in a variety of capacities since shortly after moving into the neighborhood. Their efforts have truly furthered the cause of making the Gifford Park area a better place to live, work, and play.

The Freys moved to the neighborhood in September of 1995 on the recommendation of **Ben and Dar Sweazy**. They purchased a “fixer-upper” at 3555 California St., and spent the first few years here working on their house. During this time, they discovered a love for older things when it came to remodeling, and they tried to keep their home “period correct”. By the late 1990’s, they began to attend GPNA meetings and started helping with the Association’s various activities. In 2000, they made a conscious decision to “get to know the neighbors” by becoming more involved with the GPNA. When she heard that there was no candidate for the Secretary’s position, Vicki volunteered and was elected to serve from 2000-2002, and Ron took over the position the next year.

In 2003, Ron became President and served until 2005 and Vicki was the Treasurer during this same time period. During his presidency, Ron decided to focus on the benefits of living in the Gifford Park area. He became

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*Chris Foster introduces Ron and Vicki Frey as 2005 GPNA Neighbors of the Year at the Holiday Banquet.*

**Note: No January Meeting!**

**Next General Meeting  
Thursday, February 2  
7:00 P.M.**

**Creighton University Med Center  
Morrison Seminar Room**

**Executive Board Meeting  
Thursday, January 19  
Yates Alternative School  
32nd & Davenport St.**

## GPNA Holiday Banquet Highlights

Once again Gifford Park’s Holiday Banquet was a quite a success, despite it falling in the middle of Omaha’s coldest week! 115 Gifford Park neighbors and guests attended. We appreciate you all coming out to show your support for your neighborhood on such a cold night. Of course, it’s hard not to want to come when you know **Rodney Hay** is preparing his mouthwatering turkeys – smoked or fried – I think I’ll take both, please!

Everyone enjoyed a good meal and a chance to talk with their fellow neighbors. Just for fun we tried a few new things - a new seating arrangement to mix things up a bit and a trivia game that we think was great fun. Tables worked together to see who would win bragging rights and hot cocoa mix. GPNA’s Vice President, **Dan Bodmann**, led the energetic group through questions ranging from easy such as "the reindeer’s name that

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**Martin Luther King  
Day  
January 16**

**GPNA OFFICERS****PRESIDENT**

Cynthia Shuck 556-2090

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Dan Bodmann 496-8419

**RECORDING SECRETARY**

Diane Kaye 341-4146

**TREASURER**

Kate O'Brien 496-8419

**NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES****COMMUNITY GARDEN**

Chris Foster 342-6006

**COMPLIANCE**

Leo Wilwerding 345-1433

**HISTORIAN**

Eva Swanson 345-1707

**KELLOM SCHOOL LIAISON**

Jean Peck 344-0722

**MEMBERSHIP**

Kate O'Brien 496-8419

**NEWSLETTER**

Sue Wilwerding 342-2795

**NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION**

Chris Foster 342-6006

**PARK**

Roger Freeman 557-2914

**PARKING VIOLATIONS**

Leo Wilwerding 345-1433

**PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Chris Foster 342-6006

**TOOL LENDING**

Chris Foster 342-6006

**WATCH GROUP**

Terry Wilwerding 342-2795

**WEEDS & LITTER**

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

**WELCOMING**

Vicki Frey 344-0757

## Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Housing Code Re-scan And Follow-up Survey

### Preliminary Findings

The Gifford Park Neighborhood Association scanned 344 properties in June and July of 2005. The first scan identified 212 properties (61.6%) with 1 or more violations. Two separate mailings were sent out to those with 1 or more major violations. One mailing was sent to the 19 properties with 4 or more major violations and a separate mailing was sent to the 90 properties which had 1, 2 or 3 major violations. The remainder of the scanned area received an informational letter about the condition of the scanned area. In December, these properties were re-scanned to assess what corrections had been made since the initial scan. There were 531 problems found with properties in the Gifford Park Neighborhood. During the August 2005 re-scan of these properties it was found that:

- 214 problems had been fixed (40.3%)

Of the 212 properties that were re-rated:

- 35 properties (16.5%) fixed every problem identified in the May 2005 scan
- 79 properties (37.3%) had fixed one or more of the problems found in the May 2005 study
- 98 properties (46.2%) had not fixed any of the problems found in the May 2005 study

### Follow-up Survey Findings

A letter was sent to Gifford Park Neighborhood Association residents in September 2005 about a housing scan that was conducted on their block between June 18 to July 12, rating each property on 24 different environmental and housing factors. A total of 344 units in the southwest section of the Gifford Park Neighborhood were scanned by seven volunteer residents and UNO personnel. Each unit was assessed for general conditions, such as weeds and site conditions, as well as specifics, such as the condition of sidewalks, roof, guttering, railings on steps, etc. This confidential survey was designed to gauge residents' feelings about the letter sent to them. Residents were asked to return the survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope by Nov. 7, 2005. As of Nov. 16, 61 surveys were returned to Omaha Neighborhood Scan.

1. 95.0 percent of those surveyed responded that they remembered receiving the scan letter from Omaha Neighborhood Scan and the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association.
2. 96.6 percent of those who remembered responded that they read the letter.
3. 17.2 percent of those surveyed responded that they used either the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association or Omaha Neighborhood Scan Web site to access information about their property.
4. 84.3 percent of those surveyed responded that the letter received was either very informative (13.7%) or informative (70.6%).
5. 23.5 percent of those surveyed responded that they have made repairs or addressed maintenance items on their property since receiving the scan letter.

*Survey information courtesy of Heather Bloom, Omaha Neighborhood Scan*

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

**For City Services, Information,  
or Complaints  
Call: Mayor's Action Office  
444-5555**

**Visit The GPNA's New  
Website:  
[www.giffordparkomaha.org](http://www.giffordparkomaha.org)**

### A New Year In Gifford Park

It is that time of year to reflect on the year that has passed and to think about the year to come. I hope that the past year has been both positive and memorable for you. I hope that in some part, living in Gifford Park has been a part of that memory. Maybe you brought a new baby home this year, maybe you planted a new tree, maybe you started college – or perhaps 2005 was a fresh beginning in some other way.

As a neighborhood we adopted a new slogan for Gifford Park – “Grow in Gifford Park”. This statement reflects both our growth as a neighborhood as well as growth as individual people. For Dan and I, we decided that this would be the year for our wedding. We had another beginning as well, in that we decided to take on leadership roles in GPNA as Treasurer and Vice President. It has been a rewarding and sometimes exhausting year.

As you are thinking of New Year’s resolutions, please consider our “Grow in Gifford Park” theme. Consider one resolution that helps the growth of Gifford Park as a community. It may be as simple as renewing your GPNA membership, which helps us to provide all the activities and services that we do for the neighborhood. Or perhaps you might resolve to take a more active role in the activities of the neighborhood.

I ask that you consider one resolution regarding your personal growth that will enrich your life as you are living here in Gifford Park. In 2006, the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association will continue to strive to be your partner in helping us all to grow as a neighborhood, as a community, and as individuals.

*by Kate Bodmann*



*A Holiday Open House was held at Via Christe Assisted Living Center on December 18th. The newly opened facility, located at 36th & California, includes many lovely amenities such as an aviary (pictured above) in the Alzheimer's unit.*

### Free Tax Help Available Again This Year

For the 12th 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 **Jackie** at **551-3629**.

Join the GPNA Today!

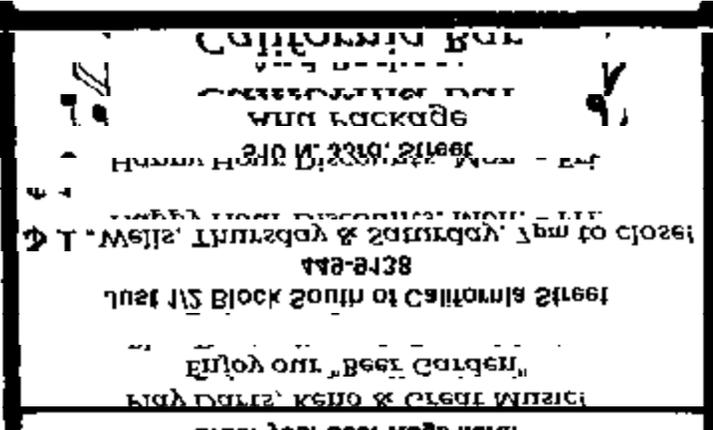
**Amy's  
Ivories**

*Amy Kent, Piano Teacher*

3338 Webster St.

Omaha, NE 68131

561-6327 / Amy528@msn.com



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

Personal Injury Law  
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Insurance Claims

## Holiday Banquet . . . continued from page 1

starts with a B" to more difficult ones such as "the name of the Japanese restaurant that used to be at 33<sup>rd</sup> and California." (Check out the history book on Gifford Park's website for the answer, [www.giffordparkomaha.org](http://www.giffordparkomaha.org).)

While trivia answers were scored, **Chris Foster** announced this year's neighbors of the year. **Ron and Vicki Frey** received the honor for their many years of commitment and hard work, especially in recent years as they led the Association as President and Treasurer. (Read more in the Neighbor of the Year article.)

The many children in attendance were then asked to draw names for the door prizes. Free food... fun... door prizes... and a chance to win bragging rights – what more could you ask for!

Thank you to all who helped this year to be a success. We would especially like to thank our neighbor, **Creighton University Medical Center**, for hosting the event for us. We know a lot of work goes into the event, from making staffing arrangements and setting up the space to the cleanup after we have all left. Thank you to all the distinguished guests who support us and make the time to attend our functions and donate door prizes. Thank you to **Dan Bodmann** for agreeing to act as host for GPNA and guiding this energetic group through the schedule of events. Thank you to **Rodney Hay** for cooking the great turkeys. Thank you to **Chris Foster** for putting together the slideshow. And last but not least, thank you to **Cynthia Shuck** who helped organize and orchestrate this event and for being the tireless President that she is.

If you couldn't make this year's event we hope to see you at one of our activities soon and we look forward to seeing you at next year's Holiday Banquet!

by Kate Bodmann



With the help of a number of "holiday assistants", GPNA president Cynthia Shuck picks the winners of a variety of lovely door prizes donated by members and guests at the 2005 Holiday Banquet.



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## Ron & Vicki Frey . . . continued from page 1

involved with the Main Street Program as a way to revive the small town business district atmosphere. His interest in the Destination Midtown organization lead him to strengthen partnerships between the GPNA and surrounding businesses. He felt that the Gifford Park neighborhood needed these businesses and their support – and he spent many hours pursuing those relationships. Ron also wrote many grant applications during his tenure, and the GPNA received most of those that he was involved in writing. His work on the Green Master Plan with Big Muddy Workshop will hopefully result in a more pedestrian-friendly neighborhood in the years to come. Vicki, meanwhile, chose to focus on many "behind the scene" activities – she was involved in such tasks as organizing the Welcome Committee and GPNA T-shirt sales. Both Ron and Vicki have helped with the cleanups, tennis program, newsletter delivery, National Night Out Block Party, watch group, garage sales, written great articles for the newsletter, and started the holiday caroling activity. Of all the events they have been part of over the years, they enjoyed the Holiday Banquet the most. They were actively involved in planning, decorating, and hosting the banquets for the past few years.

On a personal note, Ron and Vicki have been married 21 years and have a son, Erik, who is 17 years old and a senior at Central High School. Ron currently serves as a Retirement Benefits Specialist at ConAgra and Vicki works at Christ Community Church in the accounting department. Ron, who has a Masters Degree in Theology, is also very active in a variety of ministries at Christ Community Church.

Congratulations, Ron and Vicki – the GPNA is lucky to have a family like yours who lives out its mission to serve others.

by Chris Foster and Sue Wilwerding  
photo courtesy of Jim Wilwerding

## 2005 GPNA Holiday Lighting Contest Winners

The GPNA would like to thank everyone for decking their halls over the holiday this season. Whether this is your first year or your thirtieth, the festive lighting is a joy to observe each year. **Kate Bodmann** and **Cynthia Shuck** judged displays on December 22nd. This year's judging included winners for a variety of categories. Prizes will be awarded at a later date. The following winning locations were:



**Greatest Variety of Lights:** 137 North 37th St.

**Brightest Lights:** 318 North 35th Ave.

**Best Woodland Scene:** 3217 Webster St.

**The Green Award\*:** 803 North 35th St.

\*Green as in incorporating recycled materials into the display. The GPNA judges applaud all efforts for environmentally conscious living!

**Best Animated Display:** 3405 California St.

**Most Picturesque:** 3429 Webster St.

**Best Lit Tree:** 621 North 36th St.

**Best Overall Display:** 715 North 36th St.

## California Tacos & More

*Homemade Mexican Food*

**342-0212**

33rd & California Street

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Monday - Saturday: 11a.m. - 8 p.m.

Closed Sunday

*California* **Tacos & More**



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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 **Bob Hutton, Darryl Hutton, Dan Bodmann, Ben Spahn, Roger Freeman, Jim Wilwerding,** and **Chris & Sallie Foster** for putting up holiday lights this season in the business district and Gifford Park. Special thanks to **Justin Brown** who did some research and found a great solution for stringing our lights on (inexpensive) permanently attached plastic clips on the building tops – this sure beats the duck tape of years past! Thanks also to the local business owners for the “extra” electricity needed to have them on during the holiday season.

**Neighborhood Builders** will be holding its 10th annual Leadership Sessions each Saturday in **February (4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup>)** from **8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.** at **Creighton University Medical Center Becic Dining Room** (free parking in the visitor’s lot). The sessions will be interesting and interactive. The goal is to make the topics useful to you in everyday life. Newly acquired skills will help at work, home, and in your neighborhood community. Topics include Building on Neighborhood Assets, Utilizing Community Resources, Planning & Effective Management, and Neighborhood Problem Solving. Sessions include activities on the “topic of the day”, continental breakfast, lunch and neighborhood networking. Neighborhood Builders is a joint community effort led by the Neighborhood Center, 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 49<sup>th</sup> Avenue**, or you may contact **Mark Simmons** at **561-7575** to register or for more information.

**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 North 24<sup>th</sup> St., 68102**) or contact **Jan Franks 345-5765** for a pick-up. Thanks!

The GPNA asks everyone to keep the **Hinchman** and **Whelan** families in your thoughts and prayers. On November 26, brothers **Jay** and **John Hinchman** were driving home from an outing when they were hit by a drunk driver. Jay died a few hours later and John was seriously injured, but he is recovering at Immanuel Hospital. Parents **Jim & Sandra Hinchman**, the brothers' sister **Jane**, her husband **Mic Whelan**, and their family have lived in the neighborhood and have been involved with the GPNA for many years.

*by Chris Foster*



**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).