



Gifford Park's Pride

Gifford Park Neighborhood: A Great Place to Live, Work, Learn and Play
www.GiffordParkOmaha.org

February 2006

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Update From The Legislature

The Legislature began the 2006 session on January 4th. This year will be very busy since this is the short 60-day session and we are facing many contentious issues. My top legislative priority since being elected in 2004 has been the repeal of the sales tax on home repair labor. I have introduced LB 967 which would completely repeal this tax and the Governor has included my repeal of this tax in his tax cut proposal. At this time, there are 32 Senators who have signed onto the repeal legislation. While the prospects of getting this bill passed are good, we have a long way to go and I will need to have your continued support if we are to be successful. Please continue to contact **Senator Dave Landis**, Chairman of the Revenue Committee at dlandis@unicam.state.ne.us.

Other issues are going to take up a great deal of the Legislature's time including the One City, One School District Plan, concealed weapons, other tax cuts, and the possible impeachment of University of Nebraska Regent David Hergert. I have introduced bills dealing with the reorganization of the Health and Human Services System, early childhood education, tougher penalties for sexual offenses against children, sex offender restrictions, and registration and a pregnancy pre-existing condition exemption for health insurance.

As always, I want to hear your thoughts about what is going on at the State Capitol. I can be reached by phone at 402-471-2723 or by e-mail at goward@unicam.state.ne.us.

by State Senator Gwen Howard

GPNA Seeks 501 (c)(3) Status

Federal tax law provides tax benefits to nonprofit organizations recognized as exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The benefits of having 501(c)(3) status include exemption from federal income tax and eligibility to receive tax-deductible charitable contributions.

Individual and corporate donors are more likely to support organizations with 501(c)(3) status because their donations can be tax deductible. While memberships to GPNA will not be tax deductible, donations above and beyond membership dues will be under this designation.

Next Meeting

Thursday, February 2
7:00 P.M.

Guest Speaker:

Jim Nagengast

Candidate, University of
Nebraska Board of Regents
District 4

Topic: Moving Education
Forward

**Creighton University
Medical Center
Morrison Seminar Room**

Executive Board Meeting
Thursday, February 16
7:00 P.M.

Yates Alternative School
32nd & Davenport St.

Destination Midtown Identity Garden Update

Destination Midtown (DM) worked with the **City of Omaha Public Works Department** and **OPPD** to secure a ten foot, historic-looking globe fixture for each identity garden. According to **Tawanna Black**, DM Executive Director, "The height of the pole was a strong concern for many of the neighborhoods, based on the approximate size of the gardens, and I'm glad we were able to reach a compromise that will enhance the beauty and lighting effect of each of the gardens."

The goal for completion of the neighborhood identity gardens is set for summer 2006. Final sites for the gardens are yet to be announced.

GPNA OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Cynthia Shuck 556-2090

VICE PRESIDENT

Dan Bodmann 496-8419

RECORDING SECRETARY

Diane Kaye 341-4146

TREASURER

Kate Bodmann 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 Bodmann 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

City Of Omaha Bulky Site Drop-off Program - 2006

The City has contracted with **River City Recycling** to cost-share on bulky items delivered to them by Omaha residents (NO cost-sharing on yardwaste or tree debris)

River City Recycling

Address: 6404 South 60 Street (between Q & Harrison)

Phone: 731-0414

Each Omaha residence is eligible for up to 4 (four) loads per calendar year under the cost-sharing program.

Drive a personal vehicle or bring the registration from a personal vehicle to prove you are a resident of the City of Omaha or other documentation that may prove you are a resident. RCR can also call 444-5238 to verify if an address is within Omaha city limits.

The resident pays a \$7.00 administrative charge to sign up for the 4-part coupon.

Coupons can be used to deliver the first load if items are brought on the sign-up visit.

Coupons are good for: 4 deliveries (one coupon for each) from automobiles and passenger vans (not to exceed 2 cubic yards) or 2 deliveries (2 coupons for each) from pickup trucks, cargo vans, or trailers (not to exceed 5 cubic yards each).

For car, truck, or trailer loads exceeding these limitations the contractor may require additional payment by the resident of up to \$6.00 per additional cubic yard

For dense or overweight materials (in excess of 1750 lbs.) the contractor may assess a surcharge to the resident of up to \$15.00 per additional 1000 lbs.

There is a \$10.00 per item surcharge for freon-containing devices (eg. air conditioner, refrigerator, freezer)

River City will accept the following types of materials for a fee to be paid in total by the resident (call ahead, 731-0414, if you have questions about what they will accept):

- Tires
- Yardwaste & tree debris
- Concrete, rock & construction materials

River City will **NOT** accept liquids OR hazardous waste OR railroad ties

For more information or questions about this program, please call 444-5238

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.

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 on **Mondays from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m., Wednesdays from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.** and **Saturdays from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.** through the tax season. Everyone is welcome! IRS representatives will provide free tax help for our neighborhood for the 12th 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. To be able to provide assistance, persons will need to bring:

1. Valid Picture I.D.
2. Copies of ALL W-2, 1098, 1099 Forms and the amount of other income received by you and your spouse
3. Tax Identification Number (example: Social Security Number, Individual Tax Identification Number) for you, your spouse and any others shown on the tax return.
4. Provider's address and Tax Identification Number for Child/Dependent Care Credit
5. Form 8332 or copy of divorce decree for non-custodial parent claiming child
6. Proof of Account Number and Routing Transit Number of the financial institution for direct deposit into a savings or checking account.
7. Copy of prior year's tax return, if available.

And Speaking Of Taxes . . .

Do you have a persistent tax problem with the IRS that you have not been able to get resolved? We can help! Many people are not aware that the **Taxpayer Advocate Service**, an independent organization within the IRS, is dedicated to providing free, confidential, and impartial assistance to both individual and business taxpayers to help resolve lingering federal tax problems. We also assist when actions taken or proposed by the IRS cause a significant economic hardship. You may be among those who have never before heard of our services – why not call and see if we can help?

Qualifying taxpayers will receive free personalized service from one of our knowledgeable Advocates. We will listen to your situation, help you understand what needs to be done to resolve it, and stay with you every step of the way until your problem is resolved to the fullest extent permitted by law – so you can move on.

You can reach us in Omaha by phone at **402-221-4181** or by fax at **402-221-3051**. Our mailing address is: **IRS - Taxpayer Advocate Service, 1313 Farnam Street, Room 208, Omaha, NE 68102**. You can also visit our website www.irs.gov/advocate.

Death By Chocolate

Chocolate, a delight to some and a passion to others, is a poison to dogs and can easily be lethal. The toxic substance in chocolate, which dogs do not safely metabolize, is called theobromine. Baking chocolate contains the greatest concentration, then dark chocolate, then milk chocolate; all are dangerous.

If you think your dog may have eaten chocolate, do not wait for her to show symptoms: rush her to the veterinarian or animal emergency hospital immediately, for prompt treatment increases the chances of survival. Symptoms of chocolate poisoning may include violent shaking, disorientation, legs buckling, etc.

Please know, too, that onions and grapes are also poisonous to dogs. Chocolate is also dangerous for cats, and aspirin is poisonous to cats. Our companion animals may be like us emotionally, but they are quite different from us physiologically.

In Omaha, emergency critical care is available after-hours, weekends, and holidays from **Animal Emergency Clinic**, 339-6232, 9664 Mockingbird Drive, located 2 blocks south of 96th & L, then 1 block west.

Lastly, please remember that antifreeze, fatally poisonous to dogs, cats, (and small children), has a sweet taste that is very attractive, so always store it properly, clean up spills, and dispose of it safely, so that it can't hurt urban wildlife.

by Clarinda Karpov

Community Garden Update

At the time of this article (late January) we are still flirting with record warmth, the kind of weather that gets you thinking about gardening...not so fast, we still have at least a couple months of winter left and we can sure use some moisture. However, we do have some great news to report – the Gifford Park Community Garden received a \$5,000 grant from the **Jonquil Fund For Earth Education** established by the **Dominican Sisters of St. Catharine, Kentucky**. The grant will help fund our Youth Garden program, training and education opportunities, plant labeling and interpretive signage, gardening tools, and supplies. Many thanks to the Dominican Sisters, particularly **Sister Joan Miriam Glaser** and **Sister Paschala Noonan**, for this very generous donation and for their commitment to earth education and to the community garden. Special thanks also to our dedicated volunteers who keep the garden alive and kicking every season: **Dan & Kate Bodmann** (Kate is Youth Garden Director), **Cynthia Shuck**, **Diane Kaye**, **Elora Morowitz**, **Eric & Annemarie Noll**, **Mike Caban**, **Bob & Virginia Hutton**, **Chris & Sallie Foster** and others. As spring approaches we look forward to another fine garden season. For more information, contact **Chris (342-6006)**, **Kate (496-8419)**, or **Cynthia (556-2090)**.

What's Happening In The Neighborhood . . .

Neighborhood Builders will be holding its 10th annual **Leadership Sessions** each **Saturday in February (4th, 11th, 18th, and 25th)** 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 49th 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 24th St., 68102**) or contact **Jan Franks 345-5765** for a pick-up. Thanks!

Please keep longtime GPNA member **Bob Ford** in your thoughts and prayers after his recent surgery. Bob is brother to **Jan Franks** in case you didn't know. You have probably seen him helping with GPNA events as well as picking up litter and cans in the park and surrounding streets. Bob is now home and doing much better. It's great to have you back home, Bob!

by Chris Foster

The Gifford Park Neighborhood Association was formed in 1988 to enhance public safety, promote community-building activities, and encourage economic and land-use rehabilitation in an effort to preserve as well as adapt its late 19th and early 20th century infrastructure to modern and contemporary uses.

Omaha Neighborhood Scan (ONC) Update

Eleven properties out of nineteen cited for four or more "major code violations" during the ONS who did not address code infractions were turned over to the City of Omaha Planning Department this month. One housing inspector is handling all eleven properties. ONS submitted the list of the violations for each property, including photo documentation as well as the letter/material and relevant dates sent to each property owner. The inspector will look at each property in the field and then make decisions on the course of action to take.

The GPNA continues to scan all properties within the Association's boundaries. We anticipate partnering with Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association and ONS in an effort to define programs to address ongoing code violations.

by Cynthia Shuck

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

**GPNA
P.O. Box 31462
Omaha, NE 68131**