



Gifford Park's Pride

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

March 2006

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Down Zoning: In My Own Words

Down zoning was a foreign concept to me a few years ago. I vaguely understood it had something to do with lowering some zoning code, but I was sure it had nothing to do with me or my house. I have since discovered how wrong I was.

To give you some background, down zoning does mean lowering the zoning on a property. The city has zoning codes for each type of residence and business. For example, a typical single-family house is rated R-3 and a multiple dwelling such as an apartment is rated R-7.

In the 1980s many of the residential areas in Omaha looked like a patchwork quilt with various residences on one block rated differently. The city decided to make blocks more uniform and raised many areas' zoning to allow higher density housing. This resulted in some areas where the zoning for an entire block was raised to multi-family because several houses had been converted into apartments. That would then allow the whole block to convert to multi-family at some point in the future.

With the multiple-family rating, the once single family neighborhoods began to have density issues that came with converting an older home into three or four apartments; higher crime, parking issues, disrepair, and neglect of the houses. This higher rating also changed the fabric of the neighborhood, as houses sold and investors bought the homes. The shift away from homeownership tipped the balance to a more transient neighborhood, with renters staying only a few years before moving on. The sense of ownership, community, and neighborhood pride was lost.

Now back to my story. As I looked into this issue I discovered that my own house could be converted into a duplex. My husband and I have lived in our home 18 years and spent many years and a lot of hard work to restore it. It has been, at times, frustrating, irritating, and expensive, but it was a labor of love and anyone who owns an older home understands it can be a love-hate relationship sometimes. Needless to say, we would not like to see our home be converted someday into a duplex.

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

**Speaker: To Be Announced
Topic: Down Zoning Gifford Park
Area Homes**

**Speaker : Lawrence Bradley
Candidate, University of Nebraska
Board of Regents - District 4**

**Creighton University Med Center
Morrison Seminar Room**

**Executive Board Meeting
Thursday, March 2
7:00 P.M.
Yates Alternative School
32nd & Davenport St.**

16th Annual GPNA Easter Egg Hunt



Saturday, April 15
Noon (Sharp!)
Rain or Shine
at Gifford Park
Children Ages 12 &
Under

**Bring Your Easter Baskets
& Be Ready To Hunt!**

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

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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

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.

A Personal Challenge

Recently, I was asked to be on a small panel of “experts” to put on a workshop session at this year’s **Neighborhood Builders** called “Partnership Tools for Solving Problems”. I asked, “Why me?” They said because of what the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association has done in the area of problem solving and working with many different people, businesses, institutions and organizations. So obviously, this demonstrates the importance of good leadership from the MANY dedicated people in our GPNA organization since 1988. This is not to say other surrounding organizations are better or worse; I’m simply speaking about what I know of our neighborhood association. In fact, we need strong leadership in all organizations we work with if our neighborhood is to reach its potential.

I personally believe we have as much opportunity as I can ever remember, and I want to be a part of it - I hope you feel the same excitement. A lot of my optimism is based on the reputation and integrity built by the past and present GPNA leadership. The great thing about these characteristics is they take time and have to be earned; there’s no free lunch. The same can be said about good relationships with our GPNA partners – trusted friendships happen naturally over time and cannot be forced.

Our current GPNA President **Cynthia Shuck**, Vice President **Dan Bodmann**, and Treasurer **Kate Bodmann** are attending this year’s 4-week Neighborhood Builders Program held each Saturday in February at Creighton Medical Center. They all are doing a great job leading our neighborhood association in their first year in their positions, and they all have full time jobs that at times require extra effort. They bring great ideas and energy to the GPNA.

I think the best way to show our appreciation to our current leadership is to support their efforts by volunteering to help out when asked...and on your own or when you see something that needs attention. I realize we are all very busy, and you may ask yourself if the sacrifice is worth it, but in the words of past GPNA President **Ron Frey**, I encourage everyone to find your passion or use your talent to help out. My passions happen to be tennis, gardening, and believe it or not, picking up litter. And I can tell you the passions and visions of our current leadership add to my excitement for the future of our neighborhood.

Many of you are aware of the variety of opportunities that happen each year in our neighborhood, and I want to list some of projects and activities that we can use your help: cleanups, newsletter, park improvement, tree planting, youth tennis program, Easter egg hunt, Show Wagon youth talent competition, block party to celebrate National Night Out, Music in the Park, Halloween haunted house, bike rodeos, neighborhood walks, citizen patrol/watch group, Neighborhood Scan Program, membership, grant writing, GPNA website, tool lending program, and community garden. Please also take a look at the list of neighborhood services to the left of this article for additional committees, names, and phone numbers.

But most of all, the GPNA needs a few more good leaders to help keep the GPNA an active, exciting neighborhood association. And again, we truly appreciate Cynthia, Dan, Kate and the many other past leaders for your dedication. Please consider stepping up and being a part of the GPNA, or just come to the next meeting and meet some cool people!

by Chris Foster

**Visit the GPNA's New Website:
www.Giffordparkomaha.org**

Down Zoning . . *continued from page 1*

I called the city's Planning Department and had a city planner come out to our homes to speak to us and several of our neighbors. After discussing our options, we decided as a group to make a joint request to down zone our area to single-family. The request consisted of submitting a map of our area with the current zoning, a lot description of all our properties (found very easily on the county assessor's site at www.dcasessor.org), the requested change in zoning, and all the owners' signatures (down zoning must be made with owners' permission).

The request then went to the Zoning Board for approval and then on to the City Council for final approval. The process took just two months with very little work on our part other than waiting for it to go through the channels.

Now that we have completed the change in zoning for our house and our neighbors' houses, we are ensured that our homes will continue to be used as single-family residences and cannot be converted into duplexes or apartments without our knowledge or an official zoning change.

I feel we have taken a step to ensure a healthy neighborhood and that our 100-year-old home will continue to maintain its beauty and dignity for many more years to come.

By Margie Magnuson

Margie Magnuson is a member of the Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association and champion of improving the quality of life in historic neighborhoods. To find out more, attend GPNA's General Membership meeting March 2nd, 2006. Down zoning for properties east of 72nd Street is free of charge and GPNA anticipates down zoning all interested properties as a group.

Advertising Rates For The Gifford Park's Pride Newsletter

Advertisements appear in six issues a year (newsletters that are hand-delivered to neighborhood residents for the odd-numbered months). The following rates will apply:

<u>Size</u>	<u>One Issue</u>	<u>Six Issues</u>
Business Card	\$20	\$100
Quarter Page	\$30	\$150
Half Page	\$40	\$200

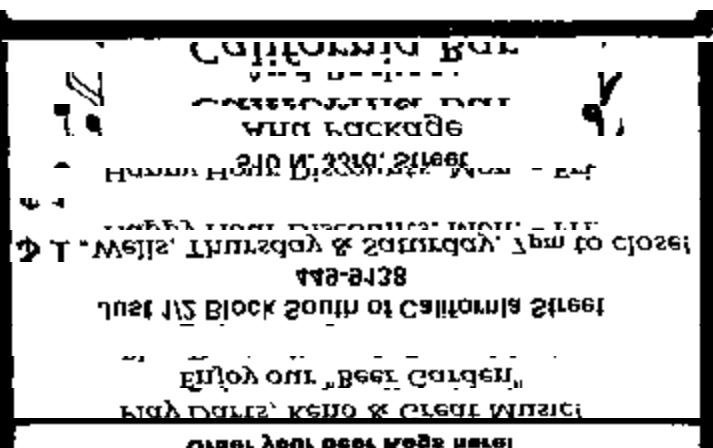
For more information, or if you would like to advertise in the Gifford Park Pride, call **Sue Wilwerding, 342-2795**.

Noise Control Ordinance Explained

Bothered by noise problems in your neighborhood? A routine complaint to the police department deals with that very concern. Here is an explanation of the noise ordinance in Douglas County, along with steps to take if this becomes a problem for you. Keep in mind, there are no specific hours in a day in which your peace can or cannot be disturbed.

The Noise Control Ordinance, Sec. 17-3 on Volume Control, reads: "No person shall play, use, operate, or permit to be played, used, or operated, any radio, tape recorder, cassette player, compact disc (CD) player, or other machine or device for producing sound if it is located in or on: 1) any public property, including any public street, highway, building, sidewalk, park, or thoroughfare; or any motor vehicle on a public street, highway or public space unless the volume of amplified sound shall be so controlled that it will not be audible for

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Charles R. Kilgore Jr. Attorney At Law

4913 Underwood Avenue

558-5000

Personal Injury Law
Worker's Compensation
Injury
Auto Accidents
Insurance Claims

Noise Control Ordinance

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a distance in excess of one hundred (100) feet from the source and so that the volume is not unreasonably great and the noise, raucous, jarring, disturbing, or a nuisance to persons within the area of audibility; or 2) residential property, whether a unit of a multiple-family residential dwelling or a single-family dwelling structure, unless the volume of amplified sound shall be so controlled that it will not be audible in any adjoining unit. Provided, however, that actual notice from the occupant of the adjoining residence to the occupant of the property containing the source of amplified sound shall be a necessary element under this subsection."

If you are having a noise problem in your neighborhood, here are some steps to take in an attempt to resolve the issue:

- 1) Contact the person responsible for the noise and let them know that it is bothering you.
- 2) If the problem continues you can call 911, but in order for the police to issue a ticket for the problem you or someone affected has to be the victim and let the officer know that you would be willing to testify in court.
- 3) If a report is made, you will want to contact the city prosecutor and let them know you want to testify in court and also will submit a victim impact statement.

Keep in mind that a noise complaint must have a victim. The way the ordinance is written, you cannot disturb the peace of a police officer. You must be willing to be a victim if you want persecution. Also, many times once a person is notified that there is a problem, they may be willing to be a good neighbor and turn down the volume. If not, 911 is the next option. But, remember that disturbing the peace is a lower priority call, and it may take some time for the officers to respond. Also, keep a log of each time you have either spoken to the party or had to call the police, so that you can show that information to the prosecutor.

*by Bridget Howell
Crime Prevention Specialist,
NW precinct*

*Reprinted from the OPD Community Resource Center
Newsletter*



Wear Company

MATT MANCUSO

Your neighborhood REALTOR

(402) 740-6929

SNAP! Productions Stages Play

SNAP! Productions presents **Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean**, by Ed Graczyk. In a small town dime store in West Texas, the Disciples of James Dean gather for their twentieth reunion. One of them, an extra in the film "Giant", has a child whom she says was conceived by Dean on the set. The ladies' reminiscences mingle with flash backs to their youth; then the arrival of a stunning and momentarily unrecognized woman sets off a series of confrontations that upset their self deceptions and expose their well hidden disappointments.

"Full of home-spun humor [and] ... surefire comic gems." N.Y. Post.

Todd Brooks directs the powerful drama with a cast that includes Mary Kelly, Connie Lee, Teri Fender, Barb Ross, Sara Planck, Therese Rennels, Sarah Ludlow, Liz Kendall and Tyler Swain.

Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean will run from **March 10 - April 2, 2006** at **3225 California Street**. Curtain times are **8:00 pm, Thursday, Friday and Saturday; 6:00 pm on Sundays**. The theater opens a half hour before curtain time. Reservations may be made by calling **402-341-2757** or on the **SNAP!** website:

www.snapproductions.com. Tickets are \$15.00, general admission; \$12.00, students, senior citizens, and TAG members. The play will be sign language interpreted for the hearing impaired by Gary Beck on April 2, 2006.

Midtown Neighborhood Alliance Meeting

The next meeting of the Midtown Neighborhood Alliance (MNA) will be held on **Wednesday, March 15**, from **6:30 - 8:00 p.m.** at the **Perk Avenue Cafe, 1107 Park Avenue**. MNA is an alliance of Midtown neighborhoods 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. For more information about the MNA, contact **Jim Farho** at jfarho@cox.net.

10th "Salute to Safety" Coming in April

On **April 22nd**, from **10 am to 3 pm**, the 10th "Salute to Safety - Expo 2006" will be presented at the **Westroads Mall** - inside and outside! The Omaha Police and Fire Departments, and AAA Nebraska are the sponsors of this yearly event.

Total public safety is the theme, and there will be activities and information for everyone in the family, plus a drawing for prizes. Look for more details in next month's newsletter.

Easter Egg Hunt Volunteers Needed

The GPNA can always use plenty of volunteer to help with its annual Easter Egg Hunt - from park clean-up prior to the event, to assisting the Easter Bunny with candy distribution, to "crowd control". Just come on down to **Gifford Park** around **11 a.m.** on **Saturday, April 15**. Get involved in the most fun event of the year!

Join the GPNA today!

California Tacos & More

Homemade Mexican Food

342-0212

33rd & California Street

Dine In or Carry Out

Hours:

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

Closed Sunday

California **Tacos
&
More**



J'N'J

GROCERY STORE

Fresh Meats -- Fresh Produce

Friendly Service

3301 California Street -- 422-1058



WE DELIVER!



7:00 AM - 10:00 PM Monday thru Thursday

7:00 AM - 11:00 PM Friday thru Saturday

8:00 AM - 10:00 PM Sunday

Chris Foster Receives Children's Advocacy Award

Former GPNA President Chris Foster received the "Making A Difference For Children Award - 2006" from the Voices for Children in Nebraska organization at its annual Valentine gala on February 11. In the program for the event, Chris was recognized as "a voice for inner city children in Omaha's Gifford Park neighborhood. Since moving into the neighborhood twenty years ago, Chris and his wife Sallie, who has worked along side of him in many of his neighborhood ventures, have been a self-sacrificing inspiration to their neighbors, and a shining example for others to follow in their dedication to their neighborhood and the children."

The program cited Chris' direction of the **GPNA Youth Tennis Program**, which he founded 12 years ago. Noting the fact that the program has had a positive impact on the children because of the social interaction between the neighborhood's diverse ethnic groups, Chris said that "they are encouraged to behave better and gain more respect for the community." He and Sallie were also recognized for their establishment of the **Gifford Park Community Garden**, which has provided neighborhood children with the opportunity to learn organic gardening through the summer youth program. In addition, Chris has been instrumental in organizing the annual block party, bike rodeos, the Show Wagon's stop in Gifford Park, the Easter Egg Hunt, and the Halloween Haunted House - all with the goal of providing an educational and fun experience for the area's children.

Although he would rather accept this award on behalf of the GPNA, those of us who have been around this neighborhood for any length of time know that many of the aforementioned programs for children would not exist if it weren't for Chris' hard work, dedication, and enthusiasm. Congratulations, Chris, on receiving this well-deserved award.

by Sue Wilwerding

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.



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

Membership

Neighborhood Walks

Social Activities

Landlord/Tenant Issues

Tennis Program

Youth Activities

Park

Tree Planting

Calling Committee

Block Captain

History

Merchants

Watch Group

Public Relations

Tool Lending

Newsletter

Newsletter Distribution

Meeting Program

School Liaison

ATTENTION SENIORS! REDUCE YOUR PROPERTY TAXES!



Homestead Exemption Assistance

Free Application
Assistance Available at
the sites listed below!
Walk-ins Welcome!

March 14, 2006

Holy Name Church
2909 Fontenelle Blvd.
1:30–3:00 p.m.

March 25, 2006

Willa Cather Library
1905 S. 44 Street
10:00–2:00 p.m.

March 28, 2006

Kountze Memorial Lutheran
Church
2650 Famam Street
1:00–3:00 p.m.

April 5, 2006

AARP Information Center
(Center Mall)
1941 S. 42 Street
10:00–12:00 p.m.

April 11, 2006

AARP Information Center
(Center Mall)
1941 S. 42 Street
1:00–3:00 p.m.

What Is Homestead Exemption?

Homestead Exemption provides property tax relief for those who meet eligibility criteria.

Who Qualifies?

- Must own your home
- Individuals 65 and older
AND
- Meet income guidelines
 - Married and make less than \$33,250.99 per year
 - Single and make less than \$28,200.99 per year
- *Certain out-of-pocket medical expenses may be deducted to help you meet income guidelines.*

Please bring the following:

- Completed 2005 Income Tax Forms
- Homestead Exemption Application
(Call County Assessor at 444-6459)
- Deductible Out-of-Pocket Medical Expenses
(Insurance premiums, Prescription drug expenses, Co-pays, Medical equipment expenses, etc.)

A partnership with Volunteers Intervening for Equity and the University of NE-Omaha School of Social Work

Please contact the Douglas County Assessors office at 444-6459 for more information about Homestead Exemption.
For questions regarding actual site locations please contact Volunteers Intervening for Equity at 444-6604.