



# Gifford Park's Pride

*Gifford Park Neighborhood: A Great Place to Live, Work, Learn and Play*  
[www.giffordparkomaha.org](http://www.giffordparkomaha.org)

April 2007

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

## GPNA Spring Clean-up To Be Held April 21 in Gifford Park

The annual **GPNA Spring Clean-up** will be held on **Saturday, April 21st**, from **9 a.m. to 1 p.m.** in **Gifford Park**. This may be the only cleanup for the year (see page 2 for details), so you may want to take advantage of this city-sponsored opportunity. 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, and other activities. 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 may be dropped off for **FREE** at **St Adalbert's Church, 2619 South 31st St., south side parking lot**; tires will be accepted at the Gifford Park site for \$1 each. Appliances may be dropped off for **FREE** at **Holy Name School South Parking Lot, 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. If you can help with the neighborhood cleanup in any way or if you need help with hauling, please call **Chris 342-6006, Cynthia 556-2090, or Jim 551-1344.**

## Community Garden Season Opening Event April 28



We are preparing for the sixth full year of planting at the **Gifford Park Community Garden** located at **35th & Cass St.** To celebrate, on **Saturday April 28**, from **11 a.m. to 1 p.m.**, we will have a fun event with hands-on activities for **EVERYONE** including birdhouse building, music, face-painting, "ask the master gardener", sign-up for free library card and books, plant sale, free seeds, and refreshments. Also, we are planning the fourth annual **Youth Garden** program this spring and summer – we will have registration forms available at the opening event. For more information on the community garden project, call **Chris 342-6006, Cynthia 556-2090 or Kate 496-8419.**

## Next General Meeting

**Thursday, April 5  
7:00 P.M.**

**Speaker: Russell L. Smith  
Senior Research Associate  
UNO Center For Public Affairs**

**Topic: Code Enforcement With  
Omaha Neighborhood Scan**

**Creighton University  
Medical Center  
Becic Dining Room**

**Executive Board Meeting  
Thursday, April 19  
Via Christie  
36th & California**

## 17th Annual GPNA Easter Egg Hunt



**Saturday, April 7  
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

Rodney Flint 346-4575

### RECORDING SECRETARY

Open

### TREASURER

Dana Carlton-Flint 346-4575

## 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

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

Chris Foster 342-6006

### TOOL LENDING

Chris Foster 342-6006

### WATCH GROUP

Terry Wilwerding 342-2795

### WEEDS & LITTER

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

### WELCOMING

Dana Freeman 850-9611

## From The President . . .

The "Address it Now" campaign is one of two recipients of a local award in conjunction with National Community Development Week. This project worked with six neighborhood associations (Gifford Park, Joslyn Castle, Park East, Miller Park/Minne Lusa, and Clairmont Heights), Office of Mayor Mike Fahey, OPD, OFD, City Planning, OPPD, UNO Center for Public Affairs, North High School and Central High School to help raise awareness for clearly visible addresses from the street and on alleys as it is a safety issue for first responders. Many thanks to **Russell Smith** (Omaha Neighborhood Scan/UNO), **Margie Magnuson** (Joslyn Castle N.A), **Sharon Olson** (Miller Park/Minne Lusa) and **Ron Abdouch** (Neighborhood Center for Greater Omaha) for spear-heading the effort. Join us in celebrating the success **Wednesday, April 11th from 5:30 – 7:30 pm** at **UNO W.H. Thompson Alumni Center** (6700 Dodge Street.) RSVP to **Andrea Rolfe**, **444-5142**, [arolfe@ci.omaha.ne.us](mailto:arolfe@ci.omaha.ne.us).

I sit on **Destination Midtown's Code Enforcement Strategy Team** as the representative from Midtown Neighborhood Alliance. First I want to encourage everyone to check-out a new tool City Planning's Department of Inspections and Appeals is developing to track/map property data - Douglas-Omaha GIS - [www.dogis.org](http://www.dogis.org). The tool is similar to the Douglas County Assessors' GIS Mapping tool available on their website at [www.dcassessor.org](http://www.dcassessor.org). In addition to property ownership information, at [www.dogis.org](http://www.dogis.org), with the click of a filter check-box, properties with building code "Notice of Violation" shall soon be marked with a neat little dot or symbol. The color will symbolize the severity of the problem. The tool's new code enforcement layers will be available soon, and residents can track the progress of problem properties. The second item I wish to pass along is that the single most critical role residents play in code enforcement (after identifying a problem and notifying the authority having jurisdiction) is **ATTENDING COURT HEARINGS**. If people are willing to take time out of their day to sit in the courtroom while a property owner appears before the judge then the judge is more willing to sentence appropriately, hence enforcing property maintenance codes.

The grant funding for **GPNA's Annual Fall Clean-up** is no longer available through the Omaha Community Foundation. The event costs \$1400 to put on each year (two garbage compactors, pumpkins for the kids, and food for volunteers) and we have not identified an alternative funding source. At this time, we do not anticipate having a Fall Clean-up so take advantage of the up-coming city-sponsored **Spring Clean-up April 21st** in Gifford Park!

**Midtown Neighborhood Alliance** (MNA) elected two positions at the 2007 annual meeting; **Jim Farho**, President and **Cynthia Shuck**, Secretary. Plans for 2007 include three projects: fireworks show, growing neighborhood participation, and a neighborhood walking book. The group will continue to follow up on the subject of group homes and the city's study of group homes as well as take on several code enforcement initiatives with Midtown Business Association and Destination Midtown. They will engage in the Saddle Creek Study, Clean Solutions Omaha and support the Omaha Design Standards. They will explore the possibility of hiring a part-time executive director and the idea of a Council of Alliances — South Omaha, Benson, & North Omaha. If this sounds exciting, consider getting involved. MNA meets at the Field Club of Omaha on the third Wednesday of each month from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. Everyone is encouraged to attend, ask questions, meet their MNA representative and find out what other neighborhoods are doing around Midtown.

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 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.*

## Last Call For Free Tax Help

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 (**April 16**). Everyone is welcome! AARP representatives will provide free tax help for our neighborhood for the 13th year in a row. Processing of basic tax returns and electronic filing will be available. No appointment is necessary; individuals will be helped on a first come, first serve basis. Please call **Jackie at 551-3629** for more information.

To be able to provide assistance, persons will need to bring the following:

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.

## Atta Boy, Harry

And here it was Sunday, February 25, 2007, at 9:30am after a big snowstorm - I look out the window and what do I see other than a lot of snow? **Harry Dirgo**, yes the Harry Dirgo we know with his walker heading west toward the grocery store on 33rd Street. Harry, the symbol of endurance—yep. We know he just recently returned home after rehabilitation from a fall several months ago. At first my thoughts were why is Harry out there in the street with his walker heading west, then came the thought I'd better get my shoes on and get out there to give our neighbor some help, then came the realization this is a gentleman that maybe we could all learn a little from. Why ask someone for help if we believe we can or maybe should do a task we can do ourselves? Oh yes, in case you wonder, I did watch him on his return trip as far as I could and called to assure myself he made it into his home safely...atta boy, Harry.

*by Bob Hutton*

## What's New, Pussycat?



I bought a home in the 35th and Davenport area in the winter of 2003. By the time spring came in 2004, we had noticed that there were 6 kittens living behind our garage and at that time began feeding them. This was very frustrating, because you could not get near these little cuties. Once we started putting food out, the adult cats came out of the woodwork. We were absolutely horrified by how many adult homeless cats there were. At that time, it was just myself and two children, all of us very soft-hearted, and none of us wanted to see winter come and watch those cats freeze or starve to death. So I began making calls in an attempt to get help. The problem was that these cats were all feral (wild). This is the result of regular house cats being "thrown away" by their owners and left to try and survive in the outdoors, so as a defense mechanism they trust no one. I made call after call, and with no luck. I was only offered a variety of ways to kill them. We had cornered three of the kitties in the garage and taken them to the Humane Society, thinking for sure that they would get them homes—only to find out later that they had put them to sleep. When I asked for help from the Humane Society, they, too, had a solution of putting all of them to sleep if I would trap them. I told them I couldn't do that. Finally I got in touch with Feline Friendz, and they offered a solution we could live with: trap, spay/neuter, and release. It took us nearly one year, but in that year we trapped, spayed, and vaccinated over 30 cats in our backyard. The ones that were "homeable" (there were 18) went to good homes, and the others went back in the back yard. Where they used to live behind the garage, we put dog houses with hay for shelter, and we feed and water them daily. Since then some have died and some are no longer around, but we do have quite a few that call this home. They are healthy, well fed, and they are part of our family. I have to say, this was the best family project we've ever had. I have no regrets; every dime and moment of time we spent was well worth it. It's just like the story of the two guys walking down the beach, and there were hundreds of star fish washed on shore. One of the guys began picking them up and throwing them back in the ocean. The friend looked at him and said, "I don't know why you're doing that. You're not going to make a difference!" The other guy picked up a star fish, threw it into the ocean, looked at his friend, and said, "Made a difference to this one!"

*by Michelle Rubek Trudell (714-3107)*

## 1-877-LEAD-411 (1-877-532-3411)

The Omaha Healthy Kids Alliance is thrilled to announce the launch of the new **OMAHA LEAD INFORMATION HOTLINE**. This number will allow you to directly choose and connect to the services that you need to keep safe from lead in Omaha.

If you have questions about the hotline, please feel free to contact **Kara Henner Eastman**, Executive Director of the **Omaha Healthy Kids Alliance** at **561-7596** or at [www.omahahealthykids.org](http://www.omahahealthykids.org).

## Destination Midtown News

### Nominations Open for Spirit of Midtown Award

In December, Destination Midtown awarded California Taco's with the 1st Spirit of Midtown Award. This award is presented quarterly to a Midtown business who exemplifies the principals of creating a vibrant urban experience.

Area residents, employees and visitors are encouraged to nominate businesses for this treasured award. To receive a nomination form, e-mail [info@destinationmidtown.org](mailto:info@destinationmidtown.org)

### Code Enforcement Strategy Team

Throughout the Destination Midtown Master Plan Study process, residents reinforced the need for improved property maintenance as a critical element in the revitalization of Midtown Omaha. The plan ultimately recommended five code enforcement programs, ranging in focus from inspections to education and response times. In Fall 2006, the Destination Midtown board recommended the formation of a multi-disciplined Midtown Code Enforcement Strategy Team.

The purpose of the team is to research best practices and develop strategies for improving the quality of living for Midtown's 28,000 residents through a multi-disciplined approach to code enforcement that recognizes the roles of home owners, landlords, city government, neighborhood based organizations and Destination Midtown. The members of the team represent the City of Omaha Planning Department, UNO Omaha Neighborhood Scan Program, area landlords, Midtown Business Association, Midtown Neighborhood Alliance and Destination Midtown.

The team began meeting in February with a goal of researching the issues and opportunities and developing strategies by April. Tawanna Black, Destination Midtown executive director said, "It has been an eye-opening experience to have everyone at the same table discussing this issue. The team has received a comprehensive update of the many resources dedicated to property maintenance in Omaha, and the cooperation between various agencies is commendable." She states "The group realizes that there is a role for everyone to play in making our neighborhoods better places to live, but this is the first time that we have thoroughly examined the issues and opportunities from various perspectives."

**Marty Carmody**, Destination Midtown board member and Nebraska Medical Center representative, is chairing the Code Enforcement Strategy Team. He will work with the team to refine recommended strategies for presentation to the Destination Midtown board of directors in April. For more information contact **Tawanna Black**, executive director at (402) 233-7142.

### Are You Midtown's Biggest Fan?

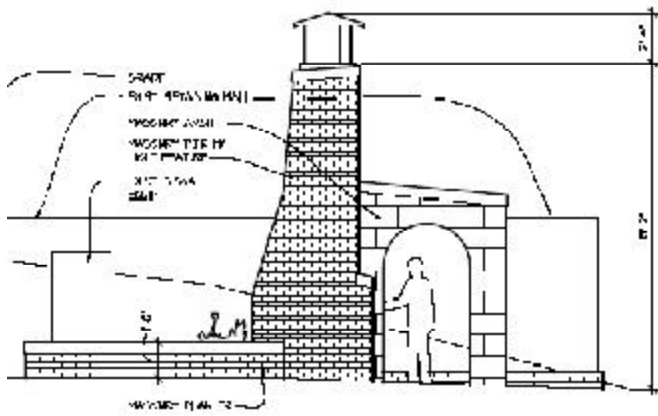
Since the Destination Midtown planning study launched in 2003, over a thousand people have been actively engaged in helping to revitalize the heart of Omaha. Your engagement is the foundation of our success in making Midtown a destination of choice. It is also the best way for us to be sure that we're gaining community feedback every step of the way, and that we know "what's happening in Midtown" when you do.

People often ask me, "How can I support Destination Midtown?" Everyone from residents, pastors, business owners, Midtown employees, and Omahans who simply love this part of our city are always reaching out for ways to get engaged. Well, we've got an answer...

We're launching the **Destination Midtown Ambassadors Program**. We're looking for people who want to wake up, at least a few days a month, wondering what they can do for Midtown. More specifically, the Destination Midtown Ambassadors will serve as a community liaisons to Destination Midtown staff about current events, issues and program opportunities in the area. The Ambassadors will also assist us in continuing to engage our stakeholders in various meaningful ways.

We are accepting applications for Destination Midtown Ambassadors until April 15. We encourage you to apply and to encourage the biggest Midtown fan that you know to apply as well.

To apply, or for more information, contact **Tawanna Black**, Executive Director at (402) 233-7142.



The Gateway Committee is making steady progress on the Gateway Feature at 30th & California Streets. While many details for the monument are still in the works, the basic concept is currently under review by the city Departments of Planning and Public Works. In April the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association will solicit bids for the work, and construction should begin by the end of the month! Call **Stuart Shell** to help with the process - 216-1235.

## Salute To Safety - Expo 2007

The Omaha Police Department's "**Salute to Safety Expo**", will be held on **April 21st** from **10 AM to 3 PM** at the **Westroads Mall**. At this year's event, there will be over 70 participants, fire rigs, ambulances, helicopters, and cruisers from various police, fire, and emergency medical services in the metro area. In addition, the State Patrol's roll-over car, fingerprinting, Citizen Corp information, KoKo the School Resource Dog, clowns, face painters, small robotic police and fire cars, the nine-foot-high inflatable mascots Officer Johnny Justice and Fire Dog Spanner will be there, plus many more attractions inside the mall and on the northeast parking lot. Partners for this year's event include **AAA Nebraska, Life Net, the Omaha Police and Fire Departments, Fire and Police Unions, and FOP #1.**

*Reprinted from the OPD Community Resource Center Newsletter*

## KOB Sponsoring Helping Hands

**Keep Omaha Beautiful, Inc.** is again sponsoring its **Helping Hands** program. This program offers a free-one time yard clean-up to elderly or disabled residents who could use the help. We pair volunteer groups with residents and provide all the bags and equipment. Services include raking, weeding, light trimming of bushes, collecting fallen branches and general cleanup. If you know/are a resident who could use this service, please call **Keep Omaha Beautiful, Inc.** at **444-7774**. If you know a group who would like to volunteer for this wonderful program, please contact our office as well.

## Bike Co-op Gala A Huge Success

**Bagpiper & Artwork Raise Money For Community Bike Shop Omaha**

**Community Bike Shop Omaha** is on the road to opening its doors at **525 N. 33rd Street!** At the end of April, the shop will take a big step toward fulfilling its mission by teaching bicycle repair to neighborhood youth. The fundraiser held for the bike co-op on Saturday, March 24, was a great success. **California Tacos** hosted the event, selling tacos to neighborhood residents and community members who showed up for a tour of the recently renovated facilities.

A share of the proceeds from sales at California Tacos went to support the bike shop. A silent auction that included art, gift certificates, and other items raised money for the shop. The evening was activity-filled with a live band, roaming bagpiper, and guided tour of the co-op facilities. In attendance were members of Bikeable Communities, an area advocate for bike-friendly streets. Central High School Honor Society students along with Duchesne High School students added spark to the event with their handiwork and spirit. **State Senator Gwen Howard** attended in support of the Gifford Park neighborhood. A representative of Pilot International attended the event to promote brain injury awareness for children in Midtown. Those who attended also included Creighton students and staff, GPNA residents, and cycling enthusiasts; all part of the diverse crowd that showed up for Community Bike Shop Omaha's first event.

Conceived as a way to provide safe bicycles to neighborhood youth, the Community Bicycle Shop Omaha provides a safe, positive environment for learning the basics of bicycle mechanics, repairing and distributing bicycles, building community, and promoting cycling. As a non-profit organization, donations are tax-deductible and directly support the shop and programs. Visit [www.omahabike.org](http://www.omahabike.org) or call **213-3105** for more information.



## What's Happening In The Neighborhood . . .

The GPNA is continuing to pursue turning **Yates School** at 32nd & Davenport back to a neighborhood school. Many thanks to **State Senator Gwen Howard** and **Dave Schinzel** for their hard work and great support of this effort. We have had several meetings over the past year with OPS Superintendent **Dr. John MacKiel**; these meetings have led to positive discussion. Another meeting is being planned for early May - we will keep you posted.

The GPNA wishes a fast recovery for longtime GPNA member **Greg Slayden** who had surgery recently. Our thoughts are with the Slayden family – **Betty, Tyffaney, Kayleen, Billy** and **Jacob**. As you know the Slaydens volunteer for most of the GPNA events and activities, and of course Betty was honored for "Neighbor of the Year" in 2004. They plan to be at the Easter Egg Hunt.

As many of you may know, we have very sad news to report: **Jim Windorski** passed away March 6 in Pennington, Minnesota - he was 67. Jim was the first GPNA Chairman/President in 1988. Jim and his late wife **Ruth** were two of the founding members of the GPNA. There is so much Jim did for the Gifford Park neighborhood that we will publish a more significant article in the upcoming May newsletter. The family is planning an event in Gifford Park in early May to remember Jim & Ruth. Jim & Ruth had lived in the Black Duck and Pennington, Minnesota area the last few years after living in the Gifford Park neighborhood for many years and raising their family here. Jim & Ruth are survived by their children **Mark, Roxanne, Lance, Ross (Dawn Goli), Kent (Dasha Lewis), Karen (Paul Klostermeyer),** and **Ellen O'Brien**. There's no question our neighborhood would not be nearly as strong as it is today without the tireless commitment of Jim & Ruth Windorski – we will miss you.

The **Habitat for Humanity Restore** ("Your Home Improvement Discount Outlet Store") is having a sidewalk sale on **Saturday, April 21**, from **9 AM to 5 PM** in commemoration of Earth Day. Food and beverages will be provided. The Habitat for Humanity Restore is located one block south of 24th & Leavenworth on the east side of 24th St.

Yardwaste collection begins for the 2007 season the week of **April 2-6**.



Gifford Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA)

P.O. Box 91462, Omaha, NE 68131-0462



### Membership Application

\*Note: The GPNA membership year runs from June 1 through May 30

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Membership:  Single (\$10.00)  Family (\$15.00)  Business (\$25.00)

If Business, Name of Business: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES** I am interested in helping out with... (Circle Interests):

- |                   |                     |                  |                    |
|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Chairperson       | Newsletter Delivery | Community Garden | Easter Egg Hunt    |
| Membership        | Book Club           | Youth Garden     | Boiling Cleanup    |
| Social Activities | History             | Tree Planting    | Tall Cleanup       |
| School Liaison    | Wash Group          | Youth Activities | Neighborhood Walks |
| Tool Lending      | Cal. Committee      | Lawn Program     | Holiday Banquet    |

**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

