



# Gifford Park's Pride

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

June 2007

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

## Community Garden Season Opening Event Highlights

The 6th annual **Gifford Park Community Garden** Season Opening Event took place Saturday, April 28, at the garden near 35th & Cass St. A variety of hands-on activities included birdhouse building, music, creating concrete garden stepping stones, face-painting, "Ask the Master Gardener", Youth Garden Program registration, sign-up for free library card and books, free seeds, and refreshments. Many thanks to our great supporters: **Indian Creek Nursery, Ready Mixed Concrete, Micklin Lumber, Omaha Public Library, County Extension Office**, and the many GPNA volunteers who helped with this event. Special thanks to **Alex Berke** who again this year organized a volunteer crew of seven students from the **University of South Dakota** who helped before, during, and after the event (they also helped at the Community Bike Shop that same weekend). We added a few more family garden plots on the west side of the property giving a total of 33 plots. There are 55 youth raised beds with over half assigned. For more information on the community garden project, call **Chris 342-6006, Cynthia 556-2090, or Dana 850-9611.**

*by Chris Foster*

## Next General Meeting

**Thursday, June 7  
7:00 P.M.**

## Annual Ice Cream Social

## Election of 2007-2008 Officers

**Creighton University  
Medical Center  
Morrison Seminar Room**

**Executive Board Meeting  
Thursday, June 21  
Via Christie  
36th & California**

**[ Note: No July Meetings! ]**

## "Music In The Park" Date Set

Gifford Park will once again be a host site for the popular "**Music in the Park**" concert series. This year we will host one date:

**Wednesday June 13, 7 to 8:30 p.m. King Kool** will be



entertaining us – they are an 11-piece "party band". Many thanks to the **City of Omaha, The Reader,** and the **Recording Industries Music Performance Fund** as administered by the **Omaha Musicians' Association** for sponsoring this event. We plan to have free ice cream treats, so bring a blanket and enjoy the show.

## Legislative Update

As the 2007 session comes to an end, I wanted to give you an update on what the Legislature has accomplished this year.



After a year of lawsuits and legislative conflict after the passage of LB 1024 last April that split the Omaha Public Schools into three districts, the Legislature and the 11 Omaha area school superintendents came together to get LB 641 signed into law. I believe this is an excellent opportunity for our entire community to take responsibility for educating our most at risk children. Most importantly, the bill repeals the division of the Omaha Public Schools that was part of LB 1024. A new Learning Community Council will be created consisting of 12 elected members and 6 appointed members from local school boards. For the first time, there will be a common property tax levy for all school districts with the funds being distributed based on need

*continued on page 3*



**Fly The Flag Proudly On  
Flag Day - June 14**



## 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 . . .

My two-year term as President comes to an end June 7. Many thanks to the dedicated friends of Gifford Park who make our annual events a success and monthly projects feasible. Join us for ice cream sundaes at the **June 7 General Meeting** to elect new officers and talk about the year in review. There are still openings for President and Secretary. Please consider volunteering for one of these positions.

2007 Grants: We did not receive the Mayor's Crime Prevention Grant funding for the dusk-to-dawn lighting in the business district.

There will be an architectural salvage opportunity at a Creighton University-owned property at **3129 California**. The Salvage Day is **June 9, 2007 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** You must be in good standing with GPNA membership dues and sign a liability waiver to participate. Call me for information, **556-2090**.

Blackstone is starting up a new community garden in their neighborhood. Gardening is a superb way to build relationships as well as become a more sustainable community. Hopefully, they make it organic.

Projects I'll continue to work on even after my presidency include code enforcement with Omaha Neighborhood Scan, nuisance parking with Omaha Neighborhood Scan, and establishing Gifford Park as a neighborhood arboretum.

Keep up the great work and best of luck to everyone! We're making great strides – together - toward becoming a better place to work live and play.

by Cynthia Shuck

## Youth Garden Corner . . . by Dana Freeman

Let's give a warm Gifford Park welcome to **Sarah Newman!** With tons of experience working with kids at Dundee Elementary Garden Club, she is a natural fit for the garden's new position of **Youth Coordinator**. Sarah has many ideas for take-home activities to extend the gardening week and a desire to utilize and develop our existing volunteer base. She would appreciate any *parental involvement*, whether it's volunteering to bring a snack, lending an extra pair of hands to planting, weeding, or reading, or just being present in the garden during any or all learning sessions. Don't be shy! Introduce yourself, and see what amazing things are growing in Gifford Park!

*Week One*, May 19th at the Garden was "organized chaos." There was so much to do and so little time! We produced a group list of expectations and rules, designed and painted our plot name-stakes, tasted and selected our vegetables to plant the following week, and seeded annual ryegrass to take home in aluminum pans. Despite the rainy morning, over twenty-five kids showed up for *Week Two*, May 26th! Although we didn't plant our vegetables, kids chose and staked their plots, weeded and cultivated them with the help of volunteers, and planted flowers in various-sized boots. A special thanks to everyone who donated shoes for "These Boots Are Made for Planting"; it was a neat activity. *Don't forget to water your flowers*, even though they may be heat and drought tolerant! Here's what a couple of kids have to say about gardening so far:

"My favorite thing was planting in the boots." –*Summer Anderson*, Age 6

"It is so fun. My favorite thing is weeding." –*Madelin Larson*, Age 8 ½

Everyone is looking forward to the summer ahead, from planting to harvest. We have much to learn and do, and with everyone's help, we can expect this to be our biggest and most successful year yet!

**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.

**Update.** . . . *continued from page 1*

to each school district. While there are some details that will need to be worked out, I am confident that these can be addressed before the law takes effect in a year. The most important thing to come out of LB 641 is that the uncertainty about the future of the Omaha Public Schools has been removed.

My priority bill for this year was LB 551 which would increase the amount of state sales tax revenue that comes back to Omaha to help pay down the debt on the Qwest Center. I felt this was a critical bill because if the funding issue had not been addressed, the homeowners of Omaha would most likely have seen a property tax increase. I joined my colleagues in making clear that this funding could only be used for the Qwest Center and not for any new baseball stadium.

I supported the \$424 million tax cuts passed by the Legislature. The state will fund a property tax credit that will amount to \$80 on a \$100,000 home. The state estate tax was repealed and the marriage penalty was eliminated. The earned income tax credit will be increased to 10% of the federal tax credit. Finally, the sales tax on construction labor for commercial projects will be eliminated. I was also successful in getting funding for the continuation of the early intervention program for newborn mothers over the next two years.

I want to thank all of the neighborhood leaders who have participated in my monthly gatherings at Gerda's. I appreciate your willingness to take time out of your busy schedule to attend these meetings. I cannot tell you how beneficial these meetings have been to me. I also want to give a special thanks to Gerda for her hospitality.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me when I can be of any assistance to you. My door is always open. Have a wonderful summer!

Gwen Howard  
 State Senator  
[goward@leg.ne.gov](mailto:goward@leg.ne.gov)  
[<mailto:goward@leg.ne.gov>](mailto:goward@leg.ne.gov)  
 phone: 402-471-2723

**What's New, Pussycat?**



The City Council has legalized feeding stray and feral cats in Omaha

The new ordinance requires that you obtain a permit for \$12.50 a year, and that you work toward humanely trapping and sterilizing the cats you feed. The **Nebraska Humane Society (NHS)** will provide FREE spay/neuter, vaccinations, etc., to permit-holders for ferals/strays. For permit info, phone the NHS at **444-7800, ext. 451**.

After spay/neuter, you re-release the feral cats and continue to provide food, water, and a simple shelter. You try to find homes for the tame cats and the kittens. Feline Friendz, the Coalition for Animal Protection, Gifford Park Cats, and the NHS can help caretakers to trap and arrange for sterilizing (spay/neuter).

Unsterilized, males fight and females are exhausted by endless breeding. Kittens of depleted mothers may not survive. Spay/neuter plus feeding results in healthier cats, and humanely controls feral population. Thanks to a pilot feral spay/neuter project by the NHS in partnership with Feline Friendz, the number of homeless kittens at the NHS this spring has fallen dramatically over previous years. The NHS hopes that this may be the first year when no cat will be destroyed in the NHS shelter due to overcrowding and lack of space.

Free NHS spay/neuter for ferals and strays must be arranged through **Feline Friendz (778-1111; [felinefriendz@yahoo.com](mailto:felinefriendz@yahoo.com))**. DO NOT bring ferals/strays directly to the NHS.

Despite what you may have heard, NHS President **Judy Varner** emphasizes that the new ordinance does NOT stop “people or businesses from feeding cats off their back porch. NHS does not search for people doing this. If someone calls and complains about a [cat] colony, we will go out to investigate. Prior to the passage of this ordinance, we could offer no legal alternative. Now, we can.” That legal alternative is a permit, spay/neuter, and continued feeding. Ms. Varner states that the NHS wants to help feeders and feral caretakers do the most good, and to educate them—not to complicate their lives or be punitive.

The ordinance recognizes that feeding ferals and strays is humane and beneficial, especially when accompanied by spay/neuter. We are already seeing the value and success of TNR (Trap-Neuter-Release) in Gifford Park!

\*\*\*\*\*

WANTED: Loving foster and adoptive homes for wonderful Gifford Park kittens! (553-3736).

\*\*\*\*\*

Advertising cats or kittens? Always request a donation—never say “free to good home.” Why? See next column!

*by Clarinda Karpov 553-3736*

**GPNA 2007-2008 MEMBERSHIP RATES**

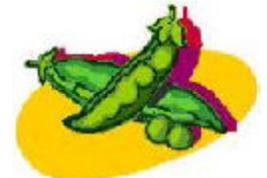
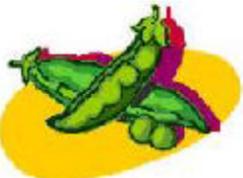
**Single - \$10**  
**Family - \$15**  
**Business\* - \$ 25**  
**\*Including Landlords**



**Happy Father's Day!**



# Springtime In Gifford Park

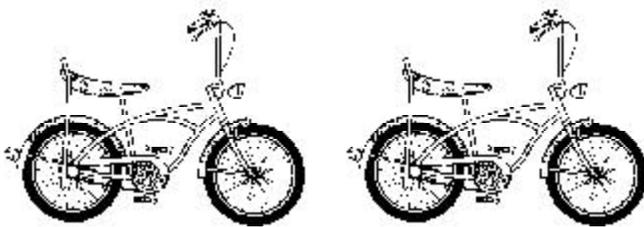


## Tennis Block Party Highlights

The GPNA partnered with the **Nebraska Tennis Association**, the **Omaha Tennis Association**, and the **City of Omaha** to put on a **Tennis Block Party** at Gifford Park on Wednesday evening May 30. Nearly 50 youth participated in the event, where they learned the basic tennis skills. A BIG thanks go to **Godfather's Pizza** again this year for donating 15 pizzas for the event! Everyone attending received a T-shirt, frisbee and can of tennis balls. Many thanks go to all the wonderful instructors - **Rick & Jane Hines, Eric Hines, Jackie Foster, Chris & Sallie Foster, Don Gildon, Stuart Shell, Linda Richter, Nancy Samson, Don Clees, Carla Faulk, Shelley Angelloz** and her daughters **Emily and Madison, Rob List, Jim Lang, Marc Shulz** and **Brita Castrop**. Special thanks go to **Jan Franks, Betty Slayden, Tyffaney Slayden**, and **Kayleen Slayden** for helping with registration. Also, **KETV** did a nice news story of the event.

We are offering to some of the older youth (9 to 19 years old) the opportunity to continue on playing tennis with a few instructors on **Wednesdays** at **9 to 11 a.m.** starting **June 13 – July 25** (off July 4) in Gifford Park. Anyone interested, please contact **Chris** at **342-6006** for a registration form. One final note: **Darryl Hutton** came to the rescue again – on very short notice (just a few hours before the tennis party) - he painted over graffiti on the tennis backboard and fixed one of the tennis nets – “you da man!”

*by Chris Foster*



The **Community Bicycle Shop Omaha** is now open for business! Please stop in on Saturday afternoons to learn how to repair you bicycle, earn a new bicycle, or help out neighborhood kids. The Shop believes that bicycles are good for our community because they are a healthy way to travel and provide constructive activities for youth. The location of the shop (south of California Tacos at 525 North 33rd St.) is well-suited to bring new interest into the community from the broader Omaha cycling world. The shop is looking to extend its open hours as the volunteer base grows. We need you!

## Remembering Jim & Ruth Windorski

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**, who passed in June, 2004, were two of the founding members of the GPNA. They did so much for the Gifford Park neighborhood. Jim & Ruth had lived in the Black Duck and Pennington, Minnesota area the last few years after living in the Gifford Park neighborhood and raising their family for many years. Jim & Ruth are survived by their children **Mark, Roxanne, Lance, Ross (Dawn Goli), Kent (Dasha Lewis), Karen (Paul Klostermeyer)**, and **Ellen O'Brien**.

I'd like to share a couple of my experiences of Jim & Ruth, as they were the first to get me more involved in the GPNA. I remember back in 1990 while on a neighborhood walk - Jim was telling me about the upcoming Spring Cleanup and asked me if I wanted to run it since I showed interest in litter pickup. He told me he would back me up and go with me to a required meeting with the City of Omaha, but he challenged me to lead it. This was the great thing about Jim - he challenged people to fight for what they believe in. Ruth was also involved with most of the annual events we still have today. Jim & Ruth were as committed to our neighborhood as any two people I've known, and they did a tremendous amount of work, especially in the early days of the GPNA.

I want to share Jim's beliefs regarding our neighborhood, which also appear in our GPNA History Book. Jim believed communication of information to residents, especially through the newsletter, was a top priority of the neighborhood association. He felt that it was important for residents to be informed and have input with issues affecting them. Jim also focused on establishing good relationships with government officials to gain their respect. He frequently attended city council meetings downtown to represent the GPNA on issues affecting our area. Jim believed the general membership meetings were a forum for anyone to vent concerns and even frustrations. He thought it was important to interact with other neighborhood associations to develop our own. Jim had lived in the neighborhood for 30 years and said we must accept what our neighborhood is and what it is not, and to strive for improvement for all residents.

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 them.

*by Chris Foster*

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

**SNAP!** Productions presents Paul Rudnick's most out (and outrageous) adult romantic comedy *Jeffrey*. This is the first show in a series called "SNAP! Back" that will remount the best of **SNAP!** Productions from the last fifteen years. When **SNAP!** Productions opened *Jeffrey* at the old Firehouse Dinner Theater space in 1994, it played to sold out audiences. The play runs from **May 31 - June 21** at **3225 California St.** Curtain times are **8:00 pm Thursday, Firday, and Saturday; 6:00 pm on Sundays.** Reservations may be made by calling **341-2757** or on the **SNAP!** website: [www.snapproductions.com](http://www.snapproductions.com). Tickets are \$15 general admission, \$12 students, senior citizens, and TAG members.

Have you noticed the 9 large flower pots that are planted in the 33rd & California Street business district? If you haven't, take a few minutes to walk through the area and check them out. This is a cooperative effort between the business owners and the GPNA toward beautification in the area. This year **Mulhall's Nursery** gave us a great deal on two more pots and donated plant material. The business owners are funding the cost of flower pots and more plants. We also received funding from last year's Mayor's grant. **Indian Creek Nursery** supplied good dirt for filling pots. Plants include sweet potato plants, coleus, petunias, zinnias, vinca, and cana. Weeding and watering will be done by employees of several local businesses. We thank the following people and businesses for contributing: **Brad Bogard (California Tacos), Ketaw Bereded (K'N'J Grocery), Lilly Estes (California Bar), Dale Robinson (Robinson's Garage), Gifford Park LLC, Glen Burns, Melrose Apartments, Jim O'Brien, Chuck Kilgore, and Shelterbelt/SNAP! Theater.**

Once again, Gifford Park is a full-time site for the **Sun Dawgs Youth Program.** This program offers youth ages 6-15 a fun summer by providing a wide variety of playground programs... crafts, games, sport events, swimming, special events, field trips and evening family events. The program runs from **June 11 – August 2.** Activities are scheduled for Monday through Friday, **10 a.m. to 4 p.m.** Cost is **FREE!** The GPNA wishes to thank the **City of Omaha** and all of the private contributors for keeping this valuable youth program in our parks and community centers. Parents are always welcome to assist with supervision during activities. The purple and yellow Sun Dawg shack is located in the west end of Gifford Park.



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

