



Gifford Park's Pride

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

October 2007

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

City Reveals Sewer Plans

On August 23rd, the **City of Omaha** held a city-wide public meeting to present the draft of the Long Term Control Plan to reduce combined sewer overflows (CSOs) into the Missouri River and Papio Creek. The meeting gave Omahans another opportunity to comment on the plan before it is submitted to the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

After more than a year of engineering studies and community input, the City has drafted a CSO control plan that satisfies the three goals of the CSO Program:

- Meeting federal Clean Water standards;
- Remaining affordable; and
- Achieving community acceptance.

The draft 15-year plan uses a combination of CSO solutions to meet these goals. The solutions include:

- Sewer separation in small, less complex basins reduce overflows in to the Papio Creek.
- Targeted sewer separation projects in complex basins reduce basement back-ups, offer opportunities for community enhancements and reduce sewer odors.
- Three new, high-rate treatment facilities affordably meet water quality requirements.
- A 5.8 mile tunnel parallel to the Missouri River limit community disruption, achieve meet water quality requirements and reduce number of needed facilities.

This combination of CSO solutions will reduce harmful bacteria in the Missouri River to 1/6 of current levels and will reduce harmful bacteria in the Papio Creek to 1/4 of current levels. In all, the CSO Program will control 94% of the combined overflow volume and reduce the average number of overflows from 57 to 4 in an average year.

The total cost of the CSO Program is estimated to be \$1.5 billion. Sewer user rates are the likely source of funds to complete the Program. All sewer users—residential, industrial, commercial, urban and suburban—

continued on page 3

**Please Note:
No October General Meeting!**

**Next Meeting
Thursday, November 1
7:00 P.M.
Creighton U. Med Center**

No Fall Cleanup This Year; Park Cleanup, Pumpkins, & Membership Drive October 20

Please save your cleanup items for the Spring Cleanup as there will be **NO** “traditional” Fall cleanup. Lack of funding is the primary reason. However on **Saturday, October 20**, from **9 a.m. to noon**, the GPNA plans to have a “scaled-down” cleanup event including park cleanup, GPNA membership sign-up, and pumpkin giveaway (for kids who volunteer to help with the cleanup). We are also expecting to get volunteer help again from ten University of South Dakota students – they have done great work helping the GPNA on two different occasions over the last year. If you have questions, please contact **Chris 342-6006** or **Cynthia 556-2090**.

Midtown Crossing, Farnam St. Improvements To Be Discussed

The **City of Omaha** will hold an informational meeting regarding the proposed construction of the Midtown Crossing and Farnam St. improvements on **Tuesday, October 2**, from **6 to 7 PM** at **Mutual of Omaha, 3316 Farnam St. in Dome Room A**. Design work is in progress and the City of Omaha wishes to inform anyone who is interested of the plans. Personnel from the **Public Works Department** and **Lamp, Rynearson & Associates** will be discussing the extent of the project and will answer questions and discuss concerns. Parking is available at Mutual of Omaha; the lots are accessed by Farnam St. at 33rd St. Access into Mutual of Omaha is through the Dodge Lobby entrance. Contact **Karl Hundtofte** at **444-5106** or khundtofte@ci.omaha.ne.us for additional information.

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WATCH GROUP

Terry Wilwerding 342-2795

WEEDS & LITTER

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

WELCOMING

Dana Freeman 850-9611

Community And Youth Gardeners Unite!

Attention **ALL Community and Youth Gardeners**! We need you help. Mark your calendars for this year's fall garden clean-up on **October 20th**. We should all meet in the garden around **Noon-3 P.M.** for a super fun **WORKDAY**. (Tools and garden gloves provided, of course.) Students from the **University of South Dakota** will be assisting us again this year. Projects to include: harvesting remaining vegetables, removing dead/withering foliage, filling Youth Garden boxes, raking, and amending soil. Also, we will be planting and dedicating a native berry bush donated by the **Dominican Sisters**. Adults will have the opportunity to sign up for next summer's plots and paint their namestakes in advance. Everyone can make an ornament for the holiday tree to be displayed in December. We will all be able to share in a **Garden Potluck** feast later in the afternoon to celebrate our season of accomplishments.

by Dana Freeman

Great Turnout For Bike Rodeo

Think it would be fun to maneuver through a bicycle obstacle course? On Saturday, September 8, that's just what fifty neighborhood youth did! Led by two officers of the **Northeast Precinct**, children had a chance to learn one-on-one basic bike skills and safe riding technique. The officers provided constructive guidance and set a great example for the kids.

To get on the course, the kids needed to have a safe bicycle and a helmet. The **Community Bicycle Shop Omaha**, sponsor of the event, had a stand and tools ready to make necessary bike repairs. And through the generosity of the **Greater Omaha Health and Safety Council**, every child lacking a helmet received one to take home! Of the 49 children who went through the obstacle course (normally more than once!) 37 received helmets.

To complement the motor skill activity, there were several puppet shows that reinforced safe riding. Volunteers from **Pilot International** captivated kids while they learned about the importance of helmets in preventing brain injury. Interested youth also left with coloring books populated with the puppet show characters! The Gifford Park event was rounded out by the **Omaha Public Library**, which was on-site to sign kids up for library cards and distribute free books.

The Community Bicycle Shop Omaha (CBSO) and GPNA look forward to expanding the event for next year. The shop, newly opened this summer, will continue its regular

hours on Saturday afternoons from Noon to 4pm. Both adults and children are welcome to stop in to take a look at our healthy offering of donated bicycles. Donations and volunteers also welcome! **525 N 33rd Street**. Contact **Stuart** for information: **216-1235**.

by Stuart Shell



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.

Neighborhood Garage Sale Recap

On Saturday, September 8, the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association held a neighborhood-wide garage sale. We had almost perfect weather for the event. The GPNA paid for an ad in the **Omaha World-Herald** to promote garage sales in the Gifford Park Neighborhood. We appreciate those of you who donated garage sale items to the GPNA for our association fundraiser held in the business district near 33rd & California St. – we netted about \$529 and even saved a few items for the next garage sale. Many thanks to **Neil Liberty** who organized, priced, and did a great job selling items; he made this a fun event for everyone involved. Special thanks to **Jill Westfall**, who assisted Neil and was a huge help. Other volunteers were **Martin Janousek, Rob Janousek, Darryl Hutton, and Chris & Sallie Foster**. Thanks also go to **Bob & Virginia Hutton** for donating many items, both big and small, that certainly generated lots of \$.

What's Happening In The Neighborhood . . .

Congratulations to **Rich Exline** and his wife **Jennifer** on their new baby girl **Molly Ann**. She was born on August 30th. Rich has volunteered for the GPNA on many activities including neighborhood cleanups and Watch Group. Good luck Rich and Jennifer!

Congratulations to longtime GPNA member **Roy White** who recently finished 17th in the Omaha Marathon. He ran the 26 miles in 3 hours 19 minutes! Roy, his wife **Deanna**, and their three kids live near 33rd & Webster and participate in many of our neighborhood events.

Thanks to City Councilman **Jim Vokal** for being our guest speaker at our September GPNA meeting. Jim updated us on current issues and answered some good questions from those attending.

On **October 6th**, the **Nebraska Vegetarian Society** will be hosting a potluck brunch at the Community Garden. If anyone is interested in this organization or attending the event, please contact **Bonnie Price (556-2014)**. Ms. Price and her parents, **Jim and Vera Horton**, have long been affiliated with Gifford Park.

Just a reminder - Daylight Savings Time ends this year on **Sunday, November 4th at 2 a.m.** - set your clocks back one hour.

City Council Votes In Favor Of Grocery's Liquor Licence Upgrade

The **Omaha City Council** voted 4-3 in favor of **K-N-J Grocery's** application for an "upgrade to a package liquor license" (Off Sale beer, wine and liquor in the original package). The Omaha City Council held a public hearing regarding this application on September 11. For the record, the GPNA Executive Board is opposed to this Liquor License Upgrade, the main reason being that it believes another alcohol outlet will have a negative impact on the neighborhood. The final approval will be up to the **Nebraska Liquor Control Commission (NLCC)**, with the hearing in Lincoln likely later in October. Eight letters of protest were sent to the NLCC. The GPNA appreciates the efforts of City Councilman **Jim Vokal** for opposing the upgrade and attending our September GPNA meeting to listen to open discussion on the matter. Council members **Suttle** and **Gernandt** also opposed the upgrade, while council members **Brown, Welch, Thompson, and Sigerson** voted to grant the licence upgrade.

Sewer Plans. . . *continued from page 1*

will help fund the Program. To pay for the Program, it is possible that residential sewer rates could increase to \$50/month by 2017.

During the next two years, the City will refine the CSO Program. The refinement period includes:

- Incorporation of green solutions to filter and reduce the amount of stormwater entering the sewers;
- Development of a sustainability plan to maximize the community opportunities for this project;
- Completion of a study to determine how best to fund the Program and how to assist fixed and low-income households;
- Continuation of sewer separation projects to reduce basement back-ups;
- Construction of priority projects; and
- Finalization of Long Term Control Plan and construction schedule.

Gifford Park is in the Burt-Izard Basin. Over the next two years, the City will prepare public separation plans for portions of the basin. Other activities in Burt-Izard may include tunnel drop shafts near the Missouri River and green solutions to address existing drainage problems. Watch for updates in the Gifford Park Newsletter, visit www.omahaCSO.com or check information kiosks in Omaha Public Libraries to learn more about the CSO Program in the Burt-Izard Basin.

*by Ellen Fitzsimmons
Urban Planner, HDR*

What's New, Pussycat?

by Clarinda Karpov



Gifford Park Needs Heroes!

The unsung heroes of cat rescue must surely be the fosterers. And we need to recruit more fosterers, here in Gifford Park.

Rescued stray cats fall into three basic categories. The truly wild or feral cats are best neutered, vaccinated, released where they were trapped, and provided ongoing food and shelter at the site. This humanely enhances their quality of life, and prevents further breeding of homeless kittens.

For the tame strays, adoptive homes can be sought almost immediately (after spay/neuter and vaccination). But the third, and largest, category, requires foster homes. These are the cats who, while not wild, are not yet fully tame. They are shy or afraid, unaccustomed to humans. They may be impressionable kittens; or if adults, they may have lost a home, or be the offspring of tame strays. These cats have the potential to curl up on a cozy pillow, making some family very happy, just like your cat or mine— but they need a little coaxing and TLC to get them there. That's where the fosterer comes in.

As the name suggests, a fosterer agrees to take a rescued cat, or perhaps a litter of kittens, into his/her home temporarily, just long enough for the cat to learn how to feel safe living with humans. Sometimes the process is quick, sometimes it takes longer. No special skills are required. If you've lived with a cat, you already have all the skills you need. The tools are food, patience, and love. Bonding and trust— drawing out the shy cat— all typically develop over food! Patience is required, because the cat will not jump into your lap at once! She may be spending a certain amount of time under your desk at first, lured out more and more by that bowl of food, to eat while you pet her. Every time she's shy at your approach, and she discovers that nothing scary happens— that she's fed, petted, played with, or even just left in peace— she trusts more, becoming tamer and more relaxed. Common sense (don't let the cat outdoors!) and soft-spokenness (you can even sing the cat to sleep!) complete your tool-box. The reward? Watching a cat or kitten blossom, learn to trust, and grow to be a loving companion with the promise of a good life ahead. A fosterer has the reward of knowing that he or she has changed a cat's life forever. And the gig is playing with kittens, and petting cats!

Fosterers are desperately needed. It is heartbreaking when, for lack of a foster home, a rescuer must release into the wild a cat who has the potential to live indoors as a loved companion. Why are there not enough fosterers? Many open-hearted cat lovers don't know about the need, or how to connect with rescue groups. People who regularly foster are usually at their limit, and so may not be available to meet an emergency need. Many fosterers fall in love with their foster cats and end up adopting them, and so run out of room to foster! Millions of homeless cats are destroyed in shelters annually for lack of space, so every fosterer counts.

Potential fosterers typically have two concerns. The first is about litter habits. How do I housebreak a cat? Fortunately, nature has done this for you. All you need provide is the litter box. It is said that we use kitty litter to approximate the sand where ancient Egyptian cats buried their spores! It is even more essential for outdoor cats than indoor ones to have excellent litter habits, and every homeless cat or kitten I've fostered immediately knew what to do with a litter box, and consistently did it, like a good cat.

The other concern is, will my own cat be disturbed by the foster cats? If you were adopting a new cat, the most successful approach would be to put the newcomer in a room, and let the old and new cats sniff one another under the closed door for days or even weeks before making introductions. When fostering, you do the same. Keep the foster cat in a separate room with a closed door, and spend time with him there at least twice a day, visiting, petting, playing. Your resident cat will not be inconvenienced, and may be curious and interested. It will be entirely up to you whether eventually to introduce the cats or not. As the foster cat becomes tame, you may introduce him to more of your home, or continue to keep him in the "nursery." It is good that the foster cat be exposed to as many gentle, friendly humans as possible. He may, but need not, meet your resident pet, as you prefer.

Most importantly, know that as a fosterer, you will not be alone. Resources abound to help. Local rescue groups are here to give aid, advice, and support. Typically they will help spay/neuter, vaccinate, and health-test the foster cat at low or no cost to yourself (usually before the cat moves in). They may even be able to help provide food, should you need assistance. And they will facilitate the adoption process, when the cat is ready. You bring the heart, and the foster home.

Gifford Park Cats salutes Sandy Jones, Cynthia Shuck, and Ryan Shuck for their fostering work this month.

Please phone Sandy at 932-6300, or me, Clarinda, at 553-3736, to consider joining their numbers as fosterers. Without your help, Gifford Park Cats may have to turn our backs on furry friends no different than yours or mine.

P.S. Tragically, every veterinarian has horror stories of black cats brought in terribly abused by disturbed individuals during this time of year. If you have to find a home for a black cat or kitten, PLEASE wait until after the holiday. If you cannot wait, carefully screen the cat's new guardian before surrendering the animal. If you are in the habit of letting your black cat roam outdoors, it's a good idea to keep her indoors as Halloween nears. Cruelty to animals is more frightening than ghosts or goblins. Protect your companion, and you and all your cats can enjoy a safe and happy Halloween.

Yates School Committee Focus Meeting Held September 27

At the time this article was being written, the GPNA and Gifford Park neighborhood were continuing to pursue turning **Yates School** at 32nd & Davenport back to a neighborhood school. The GPNA has had very productive and positive meetings over the last couple years with OPS Superintendent **Dr. John MacKiel** and his staff regarding our neighborhood's desire to have a neighborhood school again. The first in a series of Community Focus meetings involving the neighborhood and Omaha Public Schools (OPS) began Thursday, September 27, at Yates School. Our neighborhood has a great opportunity to participate in the process and provide input of what we want Yates School to be in the future, discuss options and challenges, and ultimately help to decide what will be best for the children attending the school. We hope YOU get involved with this chance to shape the future of Yates School. For more information, call **Chris 342-6006**.

The following is a letter written by longtime GPNA member **Mike Caban**. This sums up the feelings of many in our neighborhood.

The Future of Yates School

When you think about what makes a neighborhood, a number of things come to mind, like affordable housing for families, a store, at least one place of worship, a park, and a school. These are the basic elements of any viable community. Until about 1998 all those elements were present in the Gifford Park Neighborhood. In fact, the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, one of the most active neighborhood associations in the city of Omaha, owes its existence to members of the board of directors of Yates Elementary School's PTA, back in 1987-88. Without this neighborhood school, the seeds of leadership that founded our association would have never germinated. I hate to imagine what this area would be like now, if it weren't for those leaders who bravely endeavored to change what was happening to our park, our business district, and to the lives of our neighbors and their children. This building, and all the good things that happened here, inspired parents to become advocates for children by means of their PTA involvement, and in doing so, they also developed the skills and the vision to become active community leaders as well.

So to determine the future of Yates School we should consider its past. The building sits on land that Mrs. Eliza Yates sold to the Omaha School Board for the sum of one dollar shortly after her husband's death in 1916. The land was to be used for a school named after her late husband, Henry Whitfield Yates. For 80 years this school was a place where countless children who lived in this neighborhood received their primary education. We would like OPS to restore it to that original purpose.

Our efforts today, as a neighborhood association, to bring back Yates Elementary as our neighborhood school is a debt that we owe to all those community leaders who had their start right here, in that building. They cared deeply about their children's education and their neighbor's children, and this beloved school building, its teachers and administrators. We owe it to all those families who moved into this neighborhood because it had a local school, and to all the families who will move into this neighborhood in the future, and all the children who now live in this neighborhood. And finally, we owe it to the spirit of Mrs. Eliza Yates, and her husband.

And for me, personally, I owe it to the memory of my late wife, Judi, who dedicated the last twenty years of her life as an advocate for the children and families of Yates School, and as Nebraska PTA President, for all the children and families of this state. Thank you for your kind attention, and please consider restoring this building to what it was in the past - our neighborhood Elementary School.

Annual Festival To Include Cornerstone Centennial Parade

Saturday, October 6th 3:00 p.m. Trace the steps of 10,000 men and women who marched from 19th and Farnam to 40th and Burt Streets on October 6, 1907. The parade, just as one hundred years ago, will celebrate the diversity of all those who came to Omaha seeking a new life. The Vanguard of the parade will begin from the historic starting point at 2:30 p.m. meeting marching bands, ethnic groups, horse and buggies and antique autos at Mutual of Omaha at 3:00 p.m. All will converge at the Cathedral Plaza to celebrate the anniversary of the laying of the Cathedral Cornerstone. Don't miss it -- you won't see a parade like this for another one hundred years! For more information, contact **Cathedral Arts Project, 558-3100**.

All the traditional fun of **CathedralFest** continues on **Sunday, October 7**, from **noon until 6 PM** at **St. Cecilia's Cathedral**. Hang out under the Big Tent with food, music and raffles. Try your hand at games of skill. Check out the booths of handmade goods, memorabilia, books, plants, the Silent Auction and the White Elephant Sale. There will be rides for the kids and lots of other fun!



13th Annual Haunted House

Where:
PKA House
3100 Chicago St.



When:
Friday, October 26th
Ages 10 & under: 6 p.m.
All ages: 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

FREE!



hosted by:
Pi Kappa Alpha (PKA) Creighton Fraternity
Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

All Neighborhood Children And Parents
 Are Welcome to Stop By For Refreshments
 And Trick-or-Treats!



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 31

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 | Fall 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

