



Gifford Park's Pride

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

December 2008

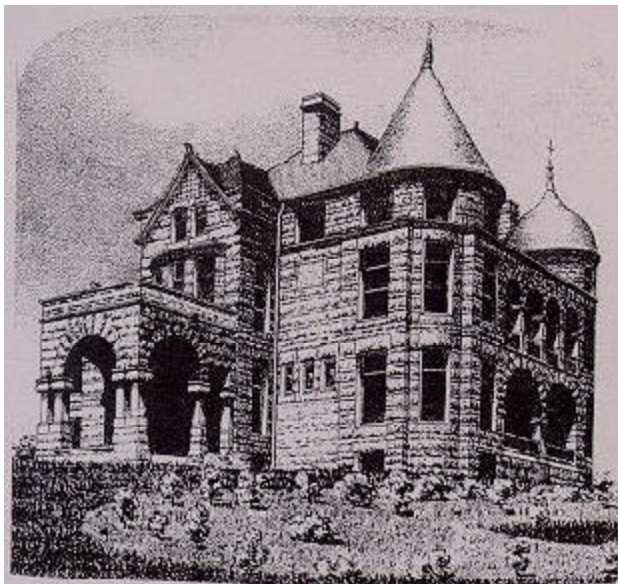
A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Yates Returns With Open House

Help us celebrate the opening of **Yates School Educational Community Partnership** on **Tuesday, December 16**, from **4-6pm**. Since closing in 1999, neighbors, community activists, and local politicians have been working to bring a neighborhood program back to the school. This open house will be an opportunity to celebrate the history of our school. The site of Yates was originally sold to the Omaha School Board for \$1 by **Eliza Yates**, wife of the prominent banker **Henry Yates**. Learn more about the history of our neighborhood's gem at www.giffordparkomaha.org/History_Yates_Elementary.html

Thanks go to **Mike Caban**, **Chris Foster**, and **Gwen Howard** for seeing this project through. **Susan Higginson** with OPS has worked to engage the community in planning for the new school to include a pre-K program and parent center. Thanks also to **Nancy Oberst**, Director of Elementary Education, for considering community needs in the planning of additional programs at Yates. **Bonnie Perry**, Community Relations Specialist at OPS will help facilitate community use of the building as the project moves forward. If you have ideas for how we can help utilize Yates please plan on attending the open house.

by Stuart Shell



The Yates mansion at 32nd & Davenport St.



**20th Annual
Holiday Banquet
For GPNA Members
(Reservations Required)**

Thursday, December 11

**6:00 PM - Reception
6:30 PM - Dinner**

Location: Betic Dining Room

**Hosted by:
Creighton University
Medical Center**

**Please bring a canned food
donation to support the Food Bank**

**Note: No December Executive
Meeting
No January General Meeting**

Holiday Activities Planned

It's time to untangle those strings of Christmas lights and dig out the yard decorations from under the basement steps! The annual **Gifford Park Neighborhood Holiday Lighting Contest** will be held again this year. Judging will take place on the evening of **Thursday, December 18th**. Any residential location within the GPNA boundaries is eligible to win prizes. Winners will be notified and posted in the January/February newsletter. Also, plans are in the works for a **Holiday Caroling/Tree Lighting** event similar to last year's. Hopefully, information will be available at the Holiday Banquet, or call **Chris 342-6006** or **Dana 850-9611**.

GPNA OFFICERS**PRESIDENT**

Dana Carlton-Flint* 346-4575

VICE PRESIDENT

Stuart Shell 216-1235

SECRETARY

Jill Westfall* 213-3105

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LANDLORD

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GARDEN LIASON

Dana Freeman* 850-9611

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WEEDS & LITTER

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

WELCOMING

Julie Kalkowski* 342-2103

* denotes new officer, board, or committee member

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).

President's Column

The end of the year is upon us and I personally can not believe how fast it has gone by. Gifford Park NA will be seeing change take effect January 1st thanks to the diligence of our board, volunteer efforts of our members, and support from surrounding businesses and organizations.

Changes/improvements include:

- Membership cards issued for membership year 2009.
- Our fiscal year will start then instead of June.
- Water will be installed in the north part of the park
- A new roof will be put on the shelter in the south part of the park
- The garden will have a governing body and its own master plan
- Business Membership drive in March
- Volunteer Drive in February

Thank you to everyone who has given of themselves; their time, energy, and funds. Our neighborhood would not be what it is without all of you. I didn't realize until accepting this office just how many projects, both big and small, are accomplished each year by our members. The great thing is that many of you still have talents that we can utilize for current and future projects and our goal in 2009 is to find a place for all of them.

Our family wishes your family a very safe and happy holiday season.

by Dana Carlton-Flint

Grant Update

Great News! After speaking with both the **City of Omaha** and **Mutual of Omaha Foundation**, we have been allowed to keep the grant dollars given in 2004 to create a Gateway feature and reallocate them for other neighborhood projects. After asking the membership for ideas and thoughts, the board selected three projects that fit the criteria and funds available for execution. Those projects are: a new roof on the shelter in the south part of the park, water accessibility to the north part of the park, and funding for the Children's Garden Program for two years. Not only were we able to get these much needed projects done/funded but we were told that our neighborhood will qualify for grants from both of these organizations in the future. Thank you to everyone who has worked on any aspect of these grants in the past; your efforts are truly appreciated.

The Green Neighborhood Council of the **Green Omaha Coalition** held the first Green Home Tour in Omaha on September 6th, 2008. Over 260 visitors came out in the overcast weather to see four unique homes featuring green strategies that were affordable, easy and fun. With the help of over forty volunteers during the tour, visitors were able to get a hands-on look at water savings in the Water Home, energy efficiency in the Energy Home, edible garden and orchard tour at the Food Home and green materials and renovation strategies at the Material Home. Visitors at the Energy Home could take a neighborhood tour featuring stops at the Gifford Park Community Garden and the Omaha Bicycle Shop. One green home visitor was overheard commenting, "I didn't know some of the items on the tour and how easy it is to make your home green." A local Creighton professor was so impressed he said that the Green Home Tour was "one of the most impressive community events I've ever been to." The Green Home Tour owes a debt of gratitude for its success to the numerous individuals involved in its planning and execution, as well as all the grassroots partners and local media who showed up. Planning is underway for next year's Green Home Tour.

by Tim Hemsath

Can You Dig It? Community Garden News

Gifford Park Community Garden Strategic Planning

It's time to take another look at what the future holds for our community garden. On **Saturday, January 17, 2009**, core gardeners will be invited to participate in a facilitated discussion to assess our current situation and envision where we go from here. Everyone is welcome to submit agenda items to **Dana Freeman** at **402.850.9611** or dana.freeman@gmail.com. We would appreciate everyone's input and involvement.

Invitation to a Community Garden Panel

You are invited to attend a Community Garden panel titled "From Here to Community Garden" and hosted by the Food Choices Committee of the Green Omaha Coalition (www.greenomahacoalition.org).

What: "From Here to Community Garden" - A Panel of Community Garden Experts and Zoning/Land Use Representatives

Why: Get acquainted with the concept and benefits of community gardens and learn practical information on how to support and/or start a community garden. Hear success stories, challenges, and local knowledge about community gardening.

When: Saturday, January 24, 2009, from 10:00 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Where: Neighborhood Center for Greater Omaha, 115 South 49th Avenue (www.unomaha.edu/ncenter)

Topics: Funding, Volunteers, Leadership, Land Acquisition, Resources, Case-Specific Stories

RSVP: If you would like to attend this event, please contact Trilety Wade (trilety@hotmail.com).

Grand Opening: Energy Smart Company

The **Energy Smart Company**, an energy conservation products and services store located at Rockbrook Village, had its grand opening Saturday, November 22. You can learn about and buy lighting retrofits for homes and businesses, wind turbines, as well as solar panels, hot water heaters, skylights, and so much more! This is the first retailer in the region to specifically accommodate consumers with an energy conservative and conscientious lifestyle.

More information can be found on the store website (energysmartcompany.com) or by telephoning company founder **Paul Vonderfecht** at **402.677.6850**. He plans to impact energy conservation in Omaha by making Energy Smart Company an easy one-stop shop with installation services and a wide range of energy conservation solutions.

by Dana Freeman

GPNA Calendar Of Events

DECEMBER

11th: Holiday Banquet @ CUMC
No Board Meeting....Happy Holidays!

JANUARY

No General meeting held in January
15th –Board Meeting at the Flint's
17th –Garden Strategic Planning meeting

FEBRUARY

21st - General Meeting (**Note date change because regular meeting date is Valentine's Day)
28th – Board Meeting at the Flint's

What's New, Pussycat?



Some holiday reminders for those of you with cats and dogs:

- Chocolate should never be shared with cats and dogs; it can derange their nervous system and is easily fatal
- A large number of plants which are popular for holiday decorations are poisonous to cats, especially poinsettias, azaleas, and mistletoe berries
- Aspirin is OK for dogs, but poisonous to cats
- Angel hair can be lethal if swallowed or if a tiny piece is inhaled into a cat's lungs
- tinsel, yarn, string, ribbon, yarn, cellophane, and other similar materials can be dangerous if swallowed
- cover the water that the Christmas tree stands in so that animals are unable to drink it; make sure that your pet has source of fresh water to drink
- store household cleaners and antifreeze away from animals and children
- rescue an animal or adopt one from a shelter - but don't give pets as gifts without involving the recipients and getting a commitment to care for the animal

Safe and happy holidays to all!

by Clarinda Karpov 553-3736

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



**TOOL
LENDING
HOTLINE
Chris 342-6006**

What's Happening In The Neighborhood

Are you interested in learning how to repair your bicycle? Or would you like to earn a bicycle? Stop in at the **Community Bike Shop Omaha** at **525 N 33 St** from **12-4pm on Saturdays** to help out. The shop will remain open throughout the winter, when we'll be cleaning our basement of bikes to get ready for next season. If you have time, come down to the shop and help us salvage parts off bikes that cannot be repaired. Dismantling bikes is a great way to learn how about the various special tools for bicycle mechanics. The best part is, you don't have to put it back together! Call **Stuart** with questions at **216-1235**.

Several neighbors are interested in organizing a women's self defense class early next year. The class would be open to women in high school and older. The fee for this course would likely be \$10. We're determining whether there is enough interest to hold this class - please call **Stuart** at **216-1235** and let him know if you would consider attending.

On the **Saturdays of February** from **8:30 to 12 noon**, **Neighborhood Builders** will offer an exciting program with lots of great information for you. Everyone is welcome to attend and as always the information provided will be especially beneficial to both new and "seasoned" neighborhood leaders in Omaha and Council Bluffs. Neighborhood Builders 2009 is in the planning stages. Each "edition" of Neighborhood Builders will be held this year on the UNO campus in the new College of Public Affairs and Community Service, College Commons area. You will not want to miss this. A continental breakfast will be provided each Saturday. So, save the dates (**February 7, 14, 21, and 28**) for Neighborhood Builders 2009.

Save the date: **Restore Omaha Conference Saturday, February 28, 2009** at Metropolitan Community College, South Omaha Campus.

One Last Time

Yes, she's back! Joan Crawford has sharpened her axe and strapped on her high heels. Now, she's ready to host this year's production of **Christmas With The Crawfords** for it's fifth and final run at **The Shelterbelt Theatre. SNAP! Productions** and The Shelterbelt have brought this Christmas classic to Omaha audiences for four sell out runs and this year will not be an exception. If you've haven't seen or you never miss this holiday romp, you will always have an outrageous time. There isn't a better show to see at the holidays then Christmas With The Crawfords. On the exclusive VIP list are Hollywood elites like Liberace, Hedda Hopper, Shirley Temple, Gloria Swanson, Ethel Merman, Bette Davis, The Andrew Sisters, Hattie McDaniel, Carmen Miranda and Judy Garland. It will definitely put the missile in your mistletoe. It will put the fruit in your fruitcake. It will.... well, just consider yourself invited to the hottest party this Christmas.

Buy your tickets now for Richard Winchester's send up to the Golden Age of Hollywood. Christmas With The Crawfords will run from **November 28 – December 21, 2008**, at **3225 California Street**. Curtain times are 8:00 pm, Thursday, Friday and Saturday; 6:00 pm on Sundays. The Sunday, December 21st show will start at 2:00 pm. The theater opens a half hour before curtain time. Reservations must be made on-line at the SNAP! Productions website:

www.snapproductions.com.

Tickets are \$20.00, general admission.

Wire hangers? Forget about them. It's Christmas! Be merry and gay! Besides, you have a special invitation to spend Christmas With The Crawfords.



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 |