



Gifford Park's Pride

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

June 2011

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Spring Cleanup 2011 Recap

The Spring Cleanup held on Saturday, May 21, turned out to be quite a success. Despite a day that started out cloudy and damp and numerous other social events on that day, we had a steady stream of cars and trucks from 9:00AM to nearly 2:00PM. We ended up almost filling two compactor trucks, and **Eric McGhee**, our metal recycler, and his helpers completely filled three large trailers. We also handed out a dozen vouchers for free brush disposal. Many thanks to **Jim Wilwerding** for leading the efforts. Several crews circulated throughout the neighborhood picking up discarded items. Thanks to **Chris Foster, Luther Larson, Dan Bodmann, Bob Hutton, Paul Mileris, Jim Kyler** and **Terry Wilwerding** for that duty. **Mike Caban** kindly volunteered to direct traffic, provide renewal reminders to errant ex-members, and generate positive PR to newcomers. Others who helped were **Neil Liberty** (garage sale items) and **Roger Freeman**. The high point of the day was seeing two neighbors wheeling a couch on top of a shopping cart down 34th Street to the cleanup site (see below). We also had numerous loads delivered by wheelbarrow and several neighbors hand-carried refuse from nearby lots. Clearly plenty of can-do attitude exists in our neighborhood. Finally, a big "Thank You" to the **City of Omaha** and **Keep Omaha Beautiful** for sponsoring the event, providing compactor trucks free of charge as well as free brush vouchers. **KETV News** did a very nice story about the cleanup, and it included an interview with Jim Wilwerding. Thanks to everyone who participated in making the neighborhood a better (and neater) place for all who live here.

by Chris Foster & Jim Wilwerding



**Note: No General Meeting
In June Or July!**

Next General Meeting: August 11
Tentative Topic: Update On
Destination Midtown
Activities/Progress

7:00 PM
Creighton University
Medical Center
Morrison Seminar Room

Executive Meeting
Thursday, June 23rd
7 PM at the Larson's
3565 California St.

Garage Sale A Successful Fund Raiser

On Saturday, May 28, the GPNA held a neighborhood-wide garage sale. The 20% chance of rain turned into the real thing as morning rain showers slowed sales early, but the weather turned very nice after about 10:30am. 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 and community garden fundraiser held in the business district near 33rd & California St. – we netted just about \$400! Many thanks again to our fearless garage sale leader **Neil Liberty** who organized, priced, and did a GREAT job selling items. Thanks to other volunteers who helped with a variety

continued on page 3

2011

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Luther Larson 330-3286

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Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

WELCOMING

Julie Kalkowski 342-2103

From The President . . .

Summer is here and with summer comes changes in the neighborhood. Changes have included the movement of students in and out of the neighborhood, sale of homes that did not sell over the winter, the opening of a new neighborhood restaurant, and the beautiful display of flowers found in many of the yards throughout the neighborhood.

With change comes opportunity to meet your neighbors. I for example have stopped by to welcome the new college students that moved in around the corner, finding that they grew up in out-state Nebraska (as did I). I also met the new home owners on Cass St., finding that they are excited to be a part of revitalizing the neighborhood. As for the new restaurant, I took time over the weekend to stop by and check it out, meeting the owners and chefs. The food and service were excellent. Now it is your turn; find that neighboring yard that has a beautiful display of flowers and stop by and meet the people behind the flowers. It is the people with all the variety of interest and skills that make Gifford Park the best neighborhood in the city. So get out and meet your neighbors while the weather allows.

by Luther Larson

Gifford Park Grant Update

This grant season has been very kind to the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association. We have applied for and received 3 grants totalling \$17,400 from **The Kiewit Foundation, Mutual of Omaha Foundation and City of Omaha (Mayor's Grant)**. These grants will help to fund the following items in areas indicated:

Gifford Park-Playground
Gifford Park-Trash Cans
Gifford Park-Doggie Doo Receptacles
Teen Market Garden-Shed
Teen Market Garden-Tools
Community Garden-Tools
Community Garden-Mulch
Community Garden-Large Water Storage Container
GPNA-Rain Barrel Workshop Materials and Instructor
GPNA- Safety Lighting

The final funding for the playground has been secured and is going out to bid and we should see the playground transform by the end of July. Teen Market Garden already has its tools and the shed is currently being built. Mulch has arrived at the garden and is being spread around as you read this. Safety lighting has been installed and the poles are shedding light in dark alleys and in our park. Thank you to everyone who helped put these grants together and thanks to the Grantors!

by Dana Carlton-Flint

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 City Services, Information,
or Complaints**

**Call: Mayor's Action Office:
444-5555**



**TOOL
LENDING
HOTLINE** Mowers - \$5
Rent for most tools - \$3
Chris 342-6006



Tennis Block Party Highlights

Despite another rainout on our original Tennis Block Party of Wednesday, May 25, we had a great turnout the very next evening. The GPNA partnered with the **Missouri Valley Nebraska Tennis Association** and the **Omaha Tennis Association** to put on the event at Gifford Park. About 90+ youth and 20 volunteers participated in the event, where youth learned the basic tennis skills along with rally courts, and we finished up with the always popular "King of the Hill" competition. Thanks goes to neighborhood volunteers who provided us with refreshments for the event. Many thanks also goes to our great tennis instructors – **Jane Hines, Don Gildon, Kirk Peck, Jim Wilson, Brian Beene** and his daughter **Burkley, Roger Freeman, Laurie Bolte, Brian Carmody, Travis Lavender, Jeff Spiehs, and Vince Emery**. This year we asked some of the past older youth participants to help with our rally courts, and they did a great job! Thanks **Stanley sisters (Dawn, Crystal, Justine, Whitney), Max Kaye, Tyler White, Marcus Anderson, and Quannie Nance**. Thanks to **Jan Franks, Bette Tanner, Mike Caban, Chris & Sallie Foster, Aleta Stevens, Darryl Hutton, Ben Spahn, and Dina White** for helping with multiple tasks including registration, signage, setup, taking pictures, and food. Special thanks once again to **Jane Hines** for doing additional behind the scenes work. One final note: thanks to **Brook Bench, City of Omaha Park Maintenance, and Roger & Sandy Freeman** for helping to keep the park looking very nice for this event and all spring long.

We are offering to the older youth (9 to 19 years old) the opportunity to continue on playing tennis with several instructors on **Wednesdays** from **10am to noon, June 15 - July 20** at Gifford Park. Anyone who is interested can contact **Chris** at **342-6006** for a registration form, or you can show up at the tennis courts.

by Chris Foster



Duchesne Academy

OF THE SACRED HEART

*Call today to schedule a visit in
the Academy or Preschool!*

3601 Burt Street • Omaha, NE 68131 • 402-558-3800
www.duchesneacademy.org

Garage Sale . . . continued from page 1

of tasks including setting up tables, carrying items, and putting out garage sale signs around the neighborhood - **Mary Liberty, Martin Janousek, Luther Larson, Ben Spahn, Darryl Hutton, Bob & Virginia Hutton, Emerick Huber, Billy Dooly, Lloyd Canfield, and Chris & Sallie Foster**. Besides making \$, this event always brings familiar folks and some new faces to our neighborhood, adds positive street life, and we do our part to recycle and reuse. Great effort by everyone!

by Chris Foster

Free Weather Preparedness Class

Are you and your family prepared to survive the spring storms?

If you live in the Midlands you understand the need to be prepared to protect yourself and your family during periods of severe weather. In most cases the government will not be able to support your needs for days or even weeks. Your survival may depend on your own personal life skills. **Eastern Nebraska Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)** offers a free 20 hour class created by the Department of Homeland Security to teach you survival skills. The next class is offered on **June 24th, 25th, and 26th, 2011**. You need to attend all 3 days. Additionally, if you were not directly affected by the severe weather event, this class will give you the skills to help others in the community who were. The registration deadline is **Tuesday, June 21st**. Registration, the hours of class, and additional information is available at www.easternnebraskacert.com or by calling **402.680.8705**.

Keith Deiml
Program Manager
Eastern Nebraska CERT
402.680.8705

Charles R. Kilgore Jr. Attorney At Law

4913 Underwood Avenue

558-5000



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



Welcome To The Garden!

On May 7th, the **Gifford Park Community Garden** celebrated its Garden Opening. It was a hot and wonderful day when gardeners could begin planting, meet fellow gardeners, and get some free plants. Music and snacks were also plentiful. The **Teen Market Garden** was on hand to offer individuals the opportunity to sign up for their CSA. Children also were able to paint pots for Mother's Day and get their own faces painted. We were also graced with a visit from one of the Community Garden founders pictured with Chris Foster. We had a wonderful day and were happy to see so many gardeners!



Most gardeners have planted their plots. I encourage you to walk down to the garden and enjoy it! We recently received a generous donation from **Lowe's** of some lovely annuals which are being planted in the front beds.

Remember, our garden is a community! We only work with the help of many volunteers. Are you looking for an opportunity to help? Please join us for Garden Work Parties. Put these on your calendars! Not only do we work to make our Garden beautiful, but we have a lot of fun! During Garden Work Parties, gardeners will have access to the tool shed and the water. Access to these items will also be available on Saturday mornings from 10-11:30 am during the Children's Garden Program. Gardeners can also volunteer for the Children's Garden Program on Saturdays.

The upcoming Garden Work Parties for 2011 are from **6-8 pm** on **Wednesday, July 6th**, and **Wednesday, August 3rd**.

We will also have the return of our Garden Potlucks. Dates are being finalized in mid-July and in September. Please stay tuned.

Your Garden Board is working hard for you. Please feel free to contact any of us.

Mike Caban- Caban3321@cox.net

Joy Doll (Director/Plot Coordinator) - joyot@juno.com

Bren Duval (Secretary) - bren.design@hotmail.com

Chris Foster (Land Owner) - foster3413@cox.net

Dana Freeman (Children's Garden) - dana.freeman@gmail.com

Sue Freeman (Children's Garden) - glenda.freeman65@gmail.com

Diane Kaye (Treasurer) - diandmax@aol.com

by Joy Doll



What's Happening In The Neighborhood . . .

Congratulations to **Brittany Rubek**, granddaughter of **Jan Franks**, and **Sam Leach** for the birth of their baby **Ari'Anna**, born April 18 weighing 6 lbs 11 oz. Jan and Brittany volunteer for many GPNA events. This is Jan's first GREAT-grandbaby!

Congratulations to **Will Slayden**, son of **Betty Slayden**, and **Tatiana Huggins** for the birth of their baby **Bryson**, born May 29 weighing 8 lbs 6 oz. Will, Betty and the rest of the Slayden family volunteer for many GPNA events. This is Betty's first grandbaby!

Congratulations to **Mark Trampe** and **Sara Waldner** on their recent marriage on May 29. Sara has lived near the community garden for the past couple years, and now Mark is officially a Gifford Park resident!

We will miss **Steve & Tiare Weak** and their children **Julian**, age 11, and **Jianna**, age 3. The Weak family recently moved near Denver, Colorado after living in the Gifford Park and Joslyn Castle neighborhoods. All were very active with neighborhood activities, especially gardening and sports. Tiare and Julian were a big part of the Teen Market Garden lead by **Cynthia Shuck**. They were also one of the first families to have a community garden plot nearly 10 years ago. You may have bought a jar of apricot jam from Julian at last summer's Gifford Park Market on 33rd & California. Julian was also active with the tennis program earning a scholarship to play indoors this past winter. We wish the Weak family much success in Colorado; they were great neighbors!

We are sad to hear Kellom Principal (and Yates Educational Community Principal) **Eric Nelson** is leaving at the end of this school year, but we wish him great success with his new opportunity as principal at Fontenelle Elementary. Eric said in a letter "The last 7 years have been incredible and I feel we have made such a wonderful commitment to our kids and community. I will miss everyone and know that the rich traditions that make Kellom such a strong, positive school will thrive long into the future, as **Ms. Carrie Hutcherson** is rejoining the Kellom staff as the new Principal". The GPNA worked closely with Eric and his staff to develop excellent learning programs that now fill the Yates building at 32nd & Davenport. Good Luck Eric!

Many thanks to dedicated volunteers **Diane Kaye**, **Max Kaye**, **Roger & Sandy Freeman** and **Bob Hutton** for their time and effort keeping the Identity Garden and Gifford Park sign area at 33rd and Cass St. looking great this spring. The flowers and expanded plantings look great as you walk or drive by!

Check out **Marrakech**, the new restaurant in our business district at 504 N 33rd Street. It is currently having a soft opening, but the plan is to officially open around **June 15** with open hours 10am to 10pm every day. Co-owners **Ishmael Mohammad** and **Drissi Moussa** will serve Mediterranean food. Stop in soon!

The LOCAL Campaign is gearing up to finalize the zoning ordinance that will provide more opportunity to **Let Omaha Control its Alcohol Landscape**. The group hopes by summer to have the ordinance before the Omaha City Council. If you haven't done so already, please see the "Resolution of Support" in last month's newsletter on page 9 (www.giffordparkomaha.org). If you agree, simply print the page and send the signed resolution to the mailing address listed on the resolution. To contact the LOCAL Campaign, e-mail thelocalcampaign@gmail.com or join the Facebook page at "The LOCAL Campaign" to receive important updates.

Report Crime

This is a great opportunity for us as a neighborhood to help law enforcement and help our own neighborhood, especially this time of year as the weather gets warmer and more people are out. Here's things you can do: Observe and report suspicious activity (it's the right thing to do and it helps to document issues). When calling 911 be willing to meet with officers even if you meet at a nearby location (the call will be given a higher priority). If possible, take pictures and provide as much information as you can. Northeast Police Precinct Crime Prevention Specialist **Theola Cooper** (444-3367, Theola.Cooper@ci.omaha.ne.us) is an excellent resource to contact if you have specific information on problem issues. Remember the old saying "If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem."

**Fly The Flag Proudly
On
Flag Day
Tuesday, June 14**



Charles R. Kilgore Jr. Attorney At Law 4913 Underwood Avenue 558-5000



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



Summer has arrived at A.V. Sorensen Community Center

We are very excited about all the **fun activities** we have planned this summer.

Reminder - every participant must have a registration card on file signed by a parent or guardian

Every Monday afternoon we will be walking to **Kelley's Bowling**. The cost is **\$1.00 per person**. They will have a concession stand open if the kids want to bring money.

Every child must have a signed permission slip before we leave and their \$1.00 admission fee.

Every Tuesday afternoon we will be **swimming at Elmwood Pool**. We will not be transporting kids to the pool so they will need to find their own ride. On June 7th we will meet at 12:00 pm at the pool. The lifeguard will be going over safety rules of swimming. The kids can either eat lunch before we go to the pool or bring a lunch to eat before they swim. Every child must have a **proper swim suit** (cutoffs and gym shorts are not allowed; must have inside netting) or they will not be allowed into the pool. Swimming will begin at 1:00 pm.

Several times through out the summer we will have the climbing wall. Every participant must have a permission slip signed by a parent before they are allowed to use the climbing wall.

Elmwood Park is now open this summer for Rec's Kids Clubhouse. Now you have two locations to fill up your summer.

Any questions regarding our activities - feel free to call anytime. Every week we will send out the schedule for the following week.

Have a wonderful summer!

The Staff of AVS Community Center

4808 Cass Street
402-444-5596

Business District Flower Pots

The flower pots in the business district have been planted and are ready to be admired. Keeping the business district looking good is great for business and neighborhood pride. For many people who visit our neighborhood, it's the business district that they remember. So, a Big Thank You to those who help with keeping our neighborhood and business district looking good.

Now first the bad news: within hours of the flowers being planted some were stolen. The good news: someone anonymously planted some new ones in a few of the flower pots a few days later. Now that's what makes the neighborhood great. Thank you "Secret Flower Planter Guy...or Gal."

The other good news is, we had a couple more donations that have come in since our last newsletter and another **Big Thank You** goes out to **Charles R. Kilgore Law Office** and the **California Bar** for their donations to the Flower Pot Fund.

Everyone enjoy the summer and we hope to see you down in the business district.

by Martin Janousek



Longtime Neighborhood Family Will Be Missed

Sometimes change can be bittersweet. And so it is with the change that recently came to our block on North 36th Avenue. Our dear friends **Jim** and **Jean Watson** have moved from their home of 35 years. And while we will miss them being out and about around the neighborhood, we remain forever grateful for the decades we were able to call them “neighbor”.

Jim and Jean Watson and their four daughters were probably the first on the block to welcome us to 36th Avenue nearly 24 years ago, and it was readily apparent that the Watson family was more than just another household on the street - they were an important, integral part of the local landscape. Everyone knew the Watsons, as they made it a point to know and befriend everyone they met. And few, if any, lived untouched by these most wonderful of residents.

The summer just after we moved to 36th Avenue, we held the first of many neighborhood block parties. Jim, (ably assisted by Jean, to be sure), was the first block party chairman. When the GPNA was in its early, formative years, I was accompanied to my first GPNA meeting by Jim. And as our family grew, the Watsons were always there to lend their support, companionship, and love.

Jim and Jean both worked at Mutual of Omaha for many years until their retirements. Jim was very active in local theatre, including the Omaha Community Playhouse productions. The landscape around the Watson household was meticulously tended to by Jean, and the yard was the envy of many, ourselves included.

In recent years we had watched as their family grew and grandchildren often visited. But now, Jim and Jean have made the change to a new, smaller place of residence, thankfully not too far away so visits can be frequent. The neighborhood may never be the same, but it will always be grateful to the care and influence provided by Jim and Jean Watson.

Bittersweet as it may be, change is unavoidable. But with the departure of the Watsons, we gain a new family to celebrate on 36th Avenue; **Jason** and **Denise Bash** and their young children. We hope that we can be as neighborly, as helpful, and as much of a positive influence on them as Jim and Jean were (and are) to us.

by John and Jackie Lynch

CBPO Update

Welcome, Summer!

Ok, I know summer doesn't officially begin until June 21st, but with the weather we've been having, it sure seems like it's already here.

For the Community Bike Project, that means we're hopping! With school out and everyone itching to ride a bike, our Open Shop hours on Wed/Thurs nights and Sat afternoons are busy. That means we can always use a hand in the shop, mostly helping us keep the Shop from devolving into chaos. If you have any bike mechanical skills, that's just a bonus. Please send an email to matt@communitybikeproject.org if you want to help out, and I'll get you scheduled for a shift.

In other news, our next round of bike classes are starting soon! We're offering two different sets of classes now: one focusing on safe bicycling skills and the other focused on bike mechanics and repair. We've teamed up with Metro Community College to teach these classes, so you can now get official certificates for completing the whole class curriculum for each. To sign up for the classes, go to MCC's website and look under “Continuing Ed” and then “Sports & Games.” The cost is \$19/class with discounts if you sign up for the whole course all at once. The tuition allows us to pay our instructors something for their time, as well as to help support CBPO. All classes will be taught at the Community Bike Shop in Gifford Park.

Let us know how we're doing! Stop by to chat or email me at [matt @communitybikeproject.org](mailto:matt@communitybikeproject.org). Happy June!

Ride Safely!

Matt Martin

Community Bike Project Omaha



Midtown Neighborhood Alliance And Fireworks

This year the **Midtown Neighborhood Alliance** was selected to be one of the non-profit organizations to have a fireworks stand in the city of Omaha. The money raised will be used to help continue the work the Midtown Neighborhood Alliance has been doing over the years and help implement new ideas for the neighborhoods it represents.

With this said, they need your help. Starting **June 24th through July 5th**, MNA will be staffing a fireworks stand at 78th and L Street from 8am until 11 pm for those 2 weeks. They are looking for volunteers to help work the booth. If you're interested, there will be training on such things as using a credit card machine to actually seeing what the various fireworks do. There is also an opportunity to work over night as a security guard with other volunteers to keep an eye on the merchandise. Now most people would consider this a perk just to be able to say they've worked at a fireworks stand and fill their personal "bucket list", but wait! After your shift, you will have the opportunity to purchase fireworks at a discount and have your own pyrotechnic extravaganza to rival any local show.

If you're interested in volunteering contact **Jim Farho 402-212-5571** or at jim.farho@continuumww.com

by Martin Janousek



Neighborhood Market
Friday Evenings
4 PM to 8 PM
Starting June 3rd
In The Empty Lot
Between KNJ Grocery
Store & The California Street Bar

Interested in Participating as a Vendor?
Call Martin Janousek
402-558-4070
for information

Membership Application

v2009.03.30

Gifford Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA)

The GPNA Membership Year runs from January 1 through December 31.

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

Today's Date:

Name (1):	E-Mail (1):
Name (2):	E-Mail (2):
Name (3):	E-Mail (3):
Name (4):	E-Mail (4):
Name (5):	E-Mail (5):

Address:

City: State: Zip Code:

Telephone:

Volunteer Opportunities! I am interested in helping out with...

Please indicate areas of interest:

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| ☐ Cleanup/Beautification | ☐ Newsletter Delivery | ☐ Community Garden | ☐ Easter Egg Hunt |
| ☐ Membership | ☐ Block Captain | ☐ Youth Garden | ☐ Spring Cleanup |
| ☐ Social Activities | ☐ History | ☐ Tree Planting | ☐ Fall Cleanup |
| ☐ Landlord/Tenant Issues | ☐ Watch Group | ☐ Youth Activities | ☐ Neighborhood Walks |
| ☐ School Liaison | ☐ Call Committee | ☐ Tennis Program | ☐ Holiday Banquet |
| ☐ Tool Lending | | | |

Mail check or money order with this completed Membership Application Form to:

Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

P.O. Box 31462

Omaha, NE 68131-0462

For additional information about GPNA, please visit our website:

www.GiffordParkOmaha.org

