



Gifford Park's Pride

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

April 2012

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

30th years of Keeping Gifford Park Clean

By Jeff Spiehs

May 19 marks the 30th Anniversary of the Omaha Spring Clean Up. Once again, we will have our Spring Clean Up spot at Gifford Park. Disposal opportunities for bulky or difficult to dispose of items such as chairs, couches, appliances and tires will be available for you. Spring Clean-Up also offers the opportunity to dispose of large limbs and brush not eligible for the City's weekly yard waste collection. Our Gifford Park site will have vouchers available that will cover the disposal cost of tree limbs and brush at an off-site location that day.

You can come to the parking lot at Gifford Park between the hours of 9am-2pm on Saturday May 19. Volunteers are needed to help direct traffic, offer hospitality, or help clean up the park during the event. Please contact Jeff Spiehs 457-9979 if interested.



Got good stuff? If you have items that you no longer need, but someone else might put to good use, donate it to the Gifford Park Garage Sale. This year's Garage Sale is tentatively scheduled for June. Contact Neil Liberty 933-1960 or Chris Foster 290-8187 to make arrangements.

**Next General Meeting
Thursday, April 12**

**Guest Speaker:
Joslyn Castle Citizen's Patrol**
**7:00 pm
Creighton University
Medical Center
Morrison Seminar Room**

Upcoming Events

**Easter Egg Hunt
April 7 12:00 noon**



**GPNA Meeting
April 12 7:00pm**

**Cultural Celebration
May 12 12-4:00pm**

**Garden Opening
May 12 9:30 am**

**Spring Clean Up
May 19 9-2:00pm**

About our guest speaker

By Martin Janousek

Recently our good neighbors and friends to the west, the Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association, have asked if we would like to join them in a joint Citizen Patrol effort. For a while now, unbeknownst to most of us, they've been passing through our neighborhood on slow nights in their part of midtown and helping us out. Speaking for myself, I would like to say thank you Joslyn Castle Citizen Patrol. I can definitely say, those extra

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330-3286

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457-9979

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213-3105

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Neighborhood Market

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Spring Clean-up

Jeff Spiehs 457-9979

Neighborhood Watch

Terry Wilwerding 342-2795

Editor's note: If you have news of interest to the Gifford Park Neighborhood, we encourage you to submit an article for the monthly newsletter. Editorials are subject to approval by the GPNA Executive Board. Please include your contact information. Articles may be submitted by email to jill.lynn.westfall@gmail.com.

From the President

By Luther Larson

Spring has truly sprung early in the neighborhood. It has been great to see all the pretty blossoms and spring flowers. The warm weather has sure made the new playground in the park a popular hang out for the younger crowd. Hopefully we will soon have the new benches around the playground for the older crowd. My thanks to all involved in making this improvement to the park. GPNA is planning to have a playground dedication on April 22 where we can more formally thank all involved. Please keep an eye out for the notice of the event.

Earlier this week I attended a meeting as the neighborhood representative to provide input into the redesign of the Dodge Street S-curve, which borders our neighborhood between 31st Street and I-480. Lots of good open discussion about the Turner Park trail, North Turner Park, North/South traffic flow from Park Ave to 30th St, etc., all of which will impact the Southeast portion of our neighborhood. The good news is that you too can provide input by attending an open public hearing on the project on Thursday, April 12th, 5-7:00 pm at Mutual of Omaha Auditorium (enter via the west doors of the main building on 34th St.).

You may have already noticed, but the public hearing is just before our GPNA April meeting, so I encourage you to make it an evening and attend both. At the meeting we will discuss the S-curve project from a neighborhood prospect and also have our bordering neighborhood association from the West, Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association, discuss their neighborhood citizen's patrol program and how GPNA might be able to work with them to expand the program into Gifford Park.

Before closing I would like to thank Dana Carlton-Flint for all the hard work she has put into grant writing for the neighborhood and gardens. Many of us have come accustom to the grant funding just coming there, but in reality there is a lot of work going into acquiring this funding. Thanks again Dana for all you do.

Luther

Gifford Park Neighborhood Cultural Celebration

in partnership with Yates Community Center

Saturday, May 12 12:00-4:00 pm

Event will include food, performances, tours of Yates Community Center, contra dancing, bike rodeo and more.



Contact Eric Purcell, 402-719-5108, if you are interested in helping.



Gifford Park Neighborhood Market

By Martin Janousek

If you live in a neighborhood that doesn't have its own business district, everyday shopping requires you to fill up the gas tank and walking to the store is almost unheard of. Those of us who have the opportunity to live in Gifford Park know that doesn't have to be the case. We're lucky to have a neighborhood that has its own historic business district with grocery stores, an auto repair shop, 2 restaurants, a bike shop, a local bar, laundromat, a regional live theatre power house and the annual Gifford Park Neighborhood Market on Friday evenings. With summer just months away, we'll soon have our market open again and if you're interested in having a booth to sell your products please give us a call. The market has been a great place to sell your produce, products and other items, plus it's a great way to get connected with your neighbors.

For more information and details call Martin Janousek, 402-558-4070.

Save the Dates

Tennis in Spring and Summer in Gifford Park

(more details to follow in future newsletters):

Tennis Block Party in Gifford Park
Wednesday May 23, 6-7:30 pm

Summer Daytime Follow-up Clinic
Wednesdays 10-Noon, June-July

Wednesday Evening Clinics,
August, 6-7:30 pm



About our speaker

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eyes on the street has helped all of us out in some way.

If you've wondered why the GPNA doesn't have a Citizen Patrol, I assure you the idea is not new. We have had a variety of patrols through the years, both walking and driving the neighborhood at night. Mike Caban started the Watch Group years ago and Bob Hutton has conducted neighborhood walks off and on for years. More recently, Mike & Terry Wilwerding and Harry Dirgo worked as an informal and stealth team patrolling our neighborhood on Friday and Saturday nights. Lately, they've been on hiatus and I would say they probably needed a break.

This offer by our Joslyn Castle neighbors comes at a great time. Both of our neighborhoods are small in area and by joining we would help to make the rides more productive, enjoyable, and resource friendly. This would also be a good way to get to know our neighbors to the west, build stronger relationships in both neighborhoods and make Gifford Park an even better to live.

If you're interested in volunteering in the citizen patrol please call GPNA President Luther Larson at 330-3286. The Joslyn Castle Citizens Patrol will be at our meeting April 12 to discuss it further and answer any questions.

“S” Curve Input Needed

Thursday, April 12th, 5-7:00 pm
Mutual of Omaha Auditorium
(enter the west doors of main building on 34th St.).

The city of Omaha would like to hear your thoughts about the future of the Dodge Street “S” Curve and other streets that connect North and South of Dodge Street around the Turner Park area. The city is starting a multi-year study to examine how this area and streets could be improved for safety reasons and future economic development. This study will have an impact on our neighborhood and hearing from you is important.

Good Neighbors

by Mike Caban

This is one of those stories that kind of go under the radar, but perhaps it is why, for me, it makes for a good “good neighbor” story. A few years ago, and I can’t remember exactly what the occasion was, but I mentioned to one of our long-time members about Judi’s Christmas cookies, and how I missed those delicious sweets that she made for me and our kids, my colleagues at work, the teachers at Yates, and close friends, and family [Judi was Mike’s wife. She passed away in 2001.]

Around the Christmas holidays, that year, here comes Sandy Freeman holding a tray with Christmas cookies for Ben and me... and if anyone has tasted some of Sandy’s sweet treats, you know how special she made that Christmas for us.

She plants moss roses along the edge of the community garden terrace wall, just because Chris Foster likes them. She brings treats at every potluck that we have at the garden. She sends me email jokes and real cool classic car photos to brighten my day. She, along with her husband, Roger, cares deeply about her neighbors and the neighborhood. I just think that good neighbors like Sandy Freeman are very special folks.

Please share your Good Neighbor stories with us! Call Rose Carlson at (402) 342-9335 or email rhcarnson@yahoo.com.



**TOOL
LENDING
HOTLINE**

Call Chris 290-8187

Mowers - \$5
Rent for most tools - \$3

From the former newsletter editor

By Sue Wilwerding

Having recently retired from my nearly 15-year stint as the editor of the Gifford Park’s Pride newsletter, I would be remiss if I did not convey my gratitude to a variety of individuals who helped me in this endeavor. First of all, I would like to thank my husband Terry, who was my chief proofreader, photojournalist, and advisor, and who was very supportive while I had this “job.” My son Steve was my “Information Technology” guy who helped me get out of a lot of computer jams.

Thanks to everyone who supplied the great articles, from GPNA presidents to the wonderful neighbors who make up this great community - I discovered that there are a lot of talented and committed people here in Gifford Park. Thanks to the staff of the Creighton University Medical Copy Center, who would bend over backwards to make sure the newsletter would get printed as soon as possible. I would also like to thank the new editor, Jill Westfall. Her enthusiastic acceptance of this position made me feel better about turning over the reins, and after reading her first newsletters as editor, I know I have left the job in very capable hands. And last, but most importantly, thanks to Chris Foster, who was (and is) the driving force behind the newsletter. He coordinated the articles, wrote the majority of them, and organized newsletter pickup and delivery. Thanks for all your hard work, Chris, and thanks for your unwavering support.

Having no formal training in journalism, being editor proved to be a wonderful opportunity for me personally. I learned computer skills that I probably wouldn’t have on my own. I have become better at grammar, punctuation, and spelling (I wish I would have paid better attention in English and Spelling class!) Putting the newsletter together gave me a creative outlet - I have always enjoyed writing, and the challenge of putting everything together was kind of fun. It also provided me the opportunity to serve the neighborhood, get involved, and interact with the wonderful people of Gifford Park. Thanks, everyone!



Community Garden Update

By Chris Foster

The record-breaking warm March weather has allowed the community garden at 35th & Cass Street to get a jump on a couple projects. Thanks to everyone who helped March 17th to reconfigure the youth garden area to space out the plots better. Volunteer Evan Johnson was featured on the front page of the World Herald Midland's section on March 18. That same weekend we constructed the compost and dirt pile bins in the northeast corner of the garden. The wood slats can be removed for easier turning of compost material. Check them out!

Garden orientations for garden plot renters (or anyone who is interested in learning more about the community garden) will be **Saturday, April 14, 10:00 am & noon**. The orientations will involve: a 20-30 minute walkthrough of the garden, where stuff is, meeting other gardeners, reviewing plot guidelines, and answering questions. Mark your calendars for our annual Season Opening Event on **Saturday, May 12, 9:30 am-noon**.

Youth Garden Program

The Gifford Park Youth Garden (GPYG) program will be kicking off its 9th year at the Gifford Park

Community Garden (35th & Cass) growing young gardeners. The program teaches youth of all ages how to grow vegetables, prepare, eat, and share our harvest with others. Plus, we'll be creative with art, music, and poetry; explore our natural environment; and have fun while working together and getting our hands dirty. GPYG relies upon parents and volunteers each and every week to provide snacks, lead lessons, and simply share their time with participating young people. Currently we are in planning stages for the 2012 program, which will be each Saturday morning from 10:00 to 11:30 AM May 19th through August 25th.

A big thanks to Big Muddy Farms (<http://bigmuddyfarm.blogspot.com/>) for their ideas, enthusiasm and energy. They will be growing a pizza garden for their CSA and teaching our Youth Gardeners. Also excellent ideas from everyone regarding the community garden in general.

Please contact Chris Foster (402-290-8187 or foster3413@cox.net) or Mike Caban (402-341-4722, caban3321@cox.net) if you have any questions about our garden programs.

Community Bike Project Omaha

By Matt Martin, Executive Director

Spring has sprung, although lately, it's felt an awful lot like summer! The Community Bike Project has a lot going on, so whether you want to donate some bicycles, volunteer some time, or contribute in other ways, we're always happy to get more involvement from our local Gifford Park neighbors. We are selling used bikes, too, if you're looking for an inexpensive way to get around and get some exercise in the process!

Our Open Shop has resumed its normal hours of Wed/Thurs 6-8pm and Sat noon-4pm, so if you'd like to donate a bike, learn how to fix your own bike, or volunteer with us, that's the easiest time to make all that happen. We are around at other times during the week, too, teaching classes, setting up future activities, meeting with other local folks about bicycling, and the like, so if those hours don't work for you, give us a call or email us and we'll try to work something out.

Our upcoming art extravaganza, "exhiBIKEtion: a bike-themed art show" opens Friday, May 4th, at

The New BLK Gallery in the Old Market. The show will culminate with a silent auction the following weekend. In addition to this, we are excited to announce a live build sculpture event called "FRAME:work" on May 5th from 12-4. At this event, sculptors will work to create pieces from bike parts! More information to come!



We are helping out with several upcoming bike rodeos, too. We're always looking for people to give us a hand and oversee the kids as they're learning to ride safely and confidently. Here are the numbers: Saturday, May 12 at Yates School; Saturday, May 19 in Florence; and, Saturday, May 26 in Adams Park. Contact us for more information.

We're planning lots of other fun bike stuff for the spring, summer, and beyond. Stay tuned! Watch this newsletter, check us out on our website (<http://www.communitybikeproject.org>), give us a call (402-957-2453), or just stop by to say hi. Happy Pedaling!

Restore Omaha 2012 Recap



On March 2 & 3 another successful Restore Omaha Conference brought together organizations, businesses and government entities to provide a "one stop shop" for attendees to gather ideas, products, contacts and solutions for their older property needs. The GPNA had a booth at the conference promoting the good qualities of our neighborhood – thanks to Chris & Sallie Foster, Luther & Deb Larson and Travis Lavender for helping with our booth. Gifford Park's own Rob and Martin Janousek did an excellent breakout session presentation on their 3201 California Street restoration/fix-up project. And finally a big thanks to the entire Restore Omaha committee for organizing another great event.

(left) GPNA President Luther Larson mans the booth at the 2012 Restore Omaha Conference.



Gifford Park Free Soccer Program

For: Youth (4 to 7 years old)

Dates: June 13, 20, 27, July 11, 18, 25

Where: Gifford Park (33rd & Cass St.)

Time: 6:30-7:30 PM

The Gifford Park Neighborhood Association is offering a FREE summer soccer league and will provide goals, balls and instructors. Parents and others are welcome to help.

To be enrolled, YOU MUST complete the form shown below and return it to Eric Purcell 3152 Chicago St, Omaha, NE 68131. Special prize for those who attend every lesson and demonstrate good sportsmanship. There is limited space available so please be on time. Call 719-5108 for more information.

Registration/Permission Form - Bring this form (completely filled out) with you to the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association summer soccer league.

Youth's Name: _____ Parent/Guardian Name_____

Street: _____ Street:_____

City, State, Zip: _____ City, State, Zip:_____

Age:_____ Date of Birth:_____ Home Phone:_____

School:_____ Work Phone:_____

As the parent or legal guardian of the child named above, I hereby give my full consent and approval for my child to participate as a member of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Youth Program.

I understand that there are certain risks of injury inherent in the practice and play of this sport, as well as related activities incidental to my child's participation, and I am willing to assume these risks on behalf of my child. I hereby certify that my child is fully capable of participating in this sport and that my child is healthy and has no physical or mental disabilities or infirmities that would restrict full participation in these activities, except as listed below.

I hereby waive, release and hold harmless the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Youth Program, and the City of Omaha, Nebraska, its Officers, coaches, sponsors, supervisors and representatives for any injury that may be suffered by my child in the normal course of participation in this sport and the activities incidental thereto, whether the result of negligence or any other cause. Further- more, I give consent to any necessary medical treatment in case of emergency. I permit the taking of photos during Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Youth Program activities for publication and use as the program deems.

Signature of Parent/Guardian:





Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
PO Box 31462
Omaha, NE 68131

Place
Stamp
Here



**23rd Annual GPNA
Easter Egg Hunt
Saturday, April 7 Noon**

Gifford Park
(by the Tennis Courts)

Rain or shine!
Bring your Easter baskets!
Children 12 and under



**Gifford Park
Playground Dedication**

Sunday, April 22 2:00 pm

Gifford Park
35th and Davenport

Refreshments provided