



# Gifford Park's Pride

*Gifford Park Neighborhood: A Great Place to Live, Work, Learn, and Play*  
[www.giffordparkomaha.org](http://www.giffordparkomaha.org)

January/February 2019

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

## NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

Thursday, February 7 // 6:30 - 7:30 pm  
Yates Community Center  
3260 Davenport Street

### Presentation:

### Omaha Rapid Bus Transit + Transit Oriented Development

Please join GPNA's first general meeting of 2019. See article below for more details.

## What kind of design and development do you want to see around the bus stops on Dodge? Let's talk TOD

by Alexandra Goswami

This impacts our neighborhood, and we have a voice. The city wants to hear our voices. Nothing is decided yet, but the city wants to finalize plans in July for what the space around the new rapid transit bus stops will look like along Dodge. How will this fit into our vital neighborhood? Will houses be torn down? Will new ones be built? Will this housing be affordable? What can we do to make the streets around the bus stops walkable, pleasant, attractive, pedestrian-friendly? What kind of design do we want to see? These are all questions that the city is asking us. Come and make your voice heard. You can speak up or write out your thoughts. There will be neighborhood meetings organized by the city in the later part of the winter. We had one in mid-November too. Stay tuned for updates. The name of this initiative is transit oriented development aka TOD. Google it. The City of Omaha and Metro Transit are building a rapid transit bus along Dodge Street from Westroads to downtown. This is called Omaha Rapid Bus Transit or ORBT for short. This should attract people, and to make it more attractive the city needs to update its Master Plan to allow for old stuff, new stuff, and good stuff around these bus stops. Email me [alexandra.goswami@gmail.com](mailto:alexandra.goswami@gmail.com) if you want more info, follow the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Facebook page for event details and updates, and go to the City of Omaha's "Transit Oriented Development" page to learn more about TOD.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- February Neighborhood Meeting
- Youth Garden Planning Meeting
- Seed Share at Yates Community Center
- Restore Nebraska Conference

*Event dates and details in articles of newsletter*

### 2018 GPNA Officers

**Eliza Perry, President**

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**Marie Hélène André, Vice President**

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**Brent Lubbert, Secretary**

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**Alexandra Goswami, Treasurer**

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### Board

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**Anna Deal, At-Large**

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**Obed Sanchez, At-Large**

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**Martin Janousek, Business Rep**

402-558-4070 | mjjanousek@leoadaly.com

**Chris Foster, Landlord Rep**

402-290-8187 | foster3413@cox.net

**Susan Mayberger, Yates Rep**

402-342-6606 | susanmayberger77@gmail.com

### Opportunities – Contacts

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**Gifford Park Market**

Martin Janousek 402-558-4070

**Yates Community Center**

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**Youth Soccer**

Eric Purcell 402-719-5108

**Youth Tennis**

Chris Foster 402-290-8187

**Spring Cleanup**

Chris Foster 402-290-8187

**Newsletter Editor**

Brent Lubbert 402-213-9646

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 brent.lubbert@gmail.com.

### From the President

by Eliza Perry

The 2019 board sat down last week to lay out the MANY areas of priority we hope to tackle hand-in-hand with our neighbors this year. We will use our neighborhood meetings, our gathering spaces (most especially our little market aka “our neighborhood living room”), newsletters, and social media to collect your perspectives on issues like liquor licensing, led by board member Tyler Magnuson (who had the idea to spark conversation at the Market), neighborhood preservation and transit oriented development, led by Treasurer Alex Goswami, and the landlord registry idea, led by landlord rep Chris Foster, to name just a few area of focus.

I am most excited to bring new people into our mission to make Gifford Park a great place to live, work, play and grow. Every one of us neighbors has something to contribute to this end, we just need to exchange ideas, spread our passion to others and come up with a plan of action on virtually any improvement to the quality of life for our diverse community.

At the absolutely amazing 2018/30th Annual Holiday Banquet, we unveiled our special edition logo, Mike Caban’s visionary 1991 artwork updated to include a child with pigtails and one of Gifford Park’s spirit animals: a chicken. That process kind of epitomized GPNA to me. Learning about our history, honoring and uplifting it, but thoughtfully modifying the old to meet the needs of the present day, is how we try to approach every neighborhood issue we face. I’ve learned that from the many inspiring community leaders we have right here in our little corner.

PS I can’t stress enough how interesting and important our February 7 Transit Oriented Development Public Meeting will be. If your voice isn’t heard, we could see some construction and rezoning that make no sense in our neighborhood context and doesn’t serve our needs. I want to see all the accessibility, affordable housing, beautification, green space, historic preservation, recreation, small business, walkability, and age-friendly advocates come out from all corners of GP!



## Gifford Park Elementary School Update

by Joy Doll, Bren Duvall and Leslie Wessel

On Monday January 7th, Ms. Kim Jones, Principal of the 32nd and Burt St. Elementary School, along with student representatives Claire Doll, Indigo Duvall, and Nora Wessel presented the proposed school name, school mascot and school colors to the OPS School Board. The board unanimously supported all the proposed items, which is exciting for all those who will attend the new school and for the neighborhood of Gifford Park. It is also the first brand new school in OPS in almost 40 years! Drumroll, please!

School name: Gifford Park Elementary  
 School mascot: Groundhog (to lovingly represent the Gifford Park Community Garden's resident groundhog "Whistlepig")

School colors: Green, black and gold to represent our community as "green" and to coordinate with the interior color scheme planned for the new building

To view the exciting presentation and historic approval, visit here: <https://bit.ly/2AHWm77> (starting time is about 44:19)

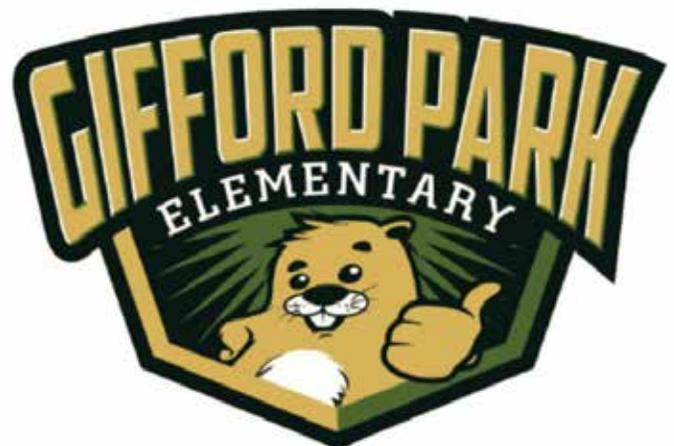
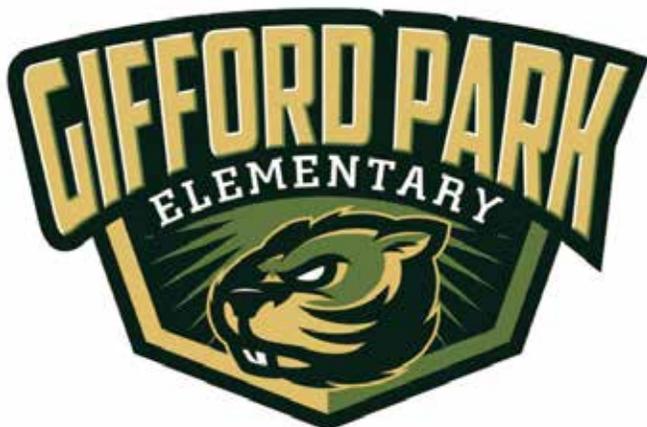


Here is a photo from the meeting

where Ms. Kim Jones, Principal of Gifford Park Elementary along with incoming students to the school Claire Doll, Indigo Duvall and Nora Wessel, all Gifford Park residents, stood in support with Ms. Jones.

We are excited to share these proposed visuals for the new school below (one geared toward grades K-3 and one for grades 4-6). The new school will reportedly be done with construction in June and open for school operations in August 2019. Right now, teachers are being hired. If you have a child who will attend the new school in 2019 and want to support the future Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) at Gifford Park Elementary, please contact Joy Doll at [joydoll@creighton.edu](mailto:joydoll@creighton.edu).

As parents who will have children attend the school, we want to thank community members who advocated for many years to have this school established. Thank you for your tireless efforts to keep our children local and growing in Gifford Park.



## Get to Know New Board Members

**Anna Deal** hails from Seattle, Washington. Anna moved to Omaha in 2013, and has called Gifford Park home since 2015. She now lives on 35th Street between Dodge and Davenport with her partner Ryan and their dog Leon. Anna loves to hike, bike, and run on either side of the river valley. In the warmer months, She enjoys camping and kayaking trips and visits with family in Washington. She can also be found chipping away at an endless supply of improvement projects on their 110 year old house! Anna works as an attorney at the Immigrant Legal Center, and values living and working in a diverse community that includes immigrant and refugee families. She has enjoyed volunteering with Gifford Park's youth garden program, soccer camp, and neighborhood market. Anna is honored to join the GPNA Board and she hopes to build on the great work being done to make and keep our community inclusive, connected, and well.



**Obed Sánchez** is a young hard working entrepreneur, from an early age he found an interest in art, food, and entrepreneurship. At age seventeen he combined his passions to start his business Grainolia Bakery. Since then he has worked tirelessly to achieve his dream despite endless adversities. Recently he has received recognition for his work in Omaha, and has been asked to work in colaboración with other local businesses and organizations like, The Union for Contemporary Art, Big Muddy Urban Farm, Myrtle and Cypress, No More Empty Pots, and others. Obed also volunteers his time to the preaching work every month and to nonprofit organizations. He hopes to give back to the community by being a helping hand and also inspiring the youth and others by sharing his story and being a role model. Obed lived in Gifford park growing up for a while and was drawn back as an adult by the Neighborhood Market. He has now been a part of the market for a few years and has seen first hand the power of community and the positive impact it makes. That is why he is honored to work alongside the GPNA board to continue to make Gifford Park a beautiful community for all.



## Youth Garden Planning Meeting on Saturday, February 23

You're invited to discuss 2019 youth garden programming! We will collect ideas for the upcoming youth garden programming and a potential field trip idea too. Last year we covered topics like Wildlife & Animal Care, Bugs & Worms, Pollinators, Making Bread & Butter, Garden Movement, Canning & Preservation, and more! Are there any new lessons we could offer? Bring your ideas to the youth garden planning meeting on Saturday, February 23, 2019 from 10 am - 11 am at the Big Muddy Residency House (3320 Burt St). If you have any questions or are interested in becoming involved with the community garden, youth garden program or Adventure Playground, contact Chris Foster (402-290-8187 or [foster3413@cox.net](mailto:foster3413@cox.net)), or Mike Caban (402-341-4722 or [caban3321@cox.net](mailto:caban3321@cox.net)).

## 2018 GPNA Holiday Banquet Recap

by Chris Foster

What a great celebration of 30 years of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association at our 30th Annual Holiday Banquet Thursday December 6th. Our wonderful neighbor's Duchesne Academy hosted the event with an estimated 180+ GPNA members, family, friends and guests who were greeted by Tyler Magnuson and Martin Janousek. This year's theme was a classy "green pine needles and pine combs". As folks arrived, they viewed historic memorabilia and photos from the past 30+ years, including three amazing scrap books created by GPNA historian Eva Swanson with hand-crafted wood book covers by Leo Wilwerding. Families could also get their picture taken in front of a homemade gold backdrop in a "photo booth" created by the Stanley family! Dinner started with GPNA president Eliza Perry and Duchesne principal Dr. Laura Hickman welcoming everyone to their beautiful historic building and auditorium. We enjoyed an amazing home-cooked dinner and dessert, compliments of Gifford Park's own Wendell & Alyssa Stanley family, and help from Rodney Hay who cooked the turkeys, and the John & Jenn Aerni family helped serve. Toward the end of dinner Eliza unveiled our 30th Anniversary "retro" logo (we sold t-shirts with the logo). Matt Cronin, Adam Sherrerd and neighborhood children led the singing of the "Twelve Days of Gifford Park". Children then enjoyed opening generously donated presents. Our banquet program featured these presentations: "A Walk Down Memory Lane" by Chris Foster highlighting 30 years of GPNA; Easter Egg Hunt/Halloween Festival/Slip'n'Slide events by Brittney Rubek; Adventure Playground by Jasmine Frierson and Monica Lehn – Teal and Sallie would be proud!; Neighborhood Market and Chicken Show by Matt Wettengel, Alexandria O'Hanlon, Emily Hefeli, Eliza Perry, and Martin Janousek. We finished up the evening with Susan Mayberger giving out great door prizes provided by donors. Instead of our typical "ticket raffle", we asked folks to write their name on a card and "What do I love about Gifford Park neighborhood". When Susan drew names, she also read the comments about our neighborhood – great idea Susan! Food donations collected went to the Food Bank. Many thanks to our banquet chairwoman and emcee Eliza Perry for leading this wonderful celebration! Not wanting to risk leaving out any names of our many banquet planning committee volunteers and donors for tables, door prizes, and children's presents – a huge THANK YOU to you ALL!!

Note: I want to personally thank Mike Caban for his steadfast 'behind the scenes' help and support, I call Mike the "Seer - Soothsayer" of Gifford Park. And one more shout out, this to Brent Lubbert. Unbeknown to most of the audience, as dinner was being served, Brent and I were scrambling something fierce to get the slideshow presentations to display on the big screen, but we had "technical difficulties" and it was not working – YIKES! Finally, between Brent's "coolness", my lucky "rabbit's foot", and my mom's prayers, we got things working just in time! We'll see you around the neighborhood!

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## GPNA Holiday Banquet - Gratitude Statements

Thank you to everyone who made the 2018 GPNA Holiday Banquet such a success. At the banquet, people had the opportunity to write a GPNA Gratitude Statement. The statements are listed below and are testimony to the strength of our neighborhood.

- Thank you for building a community where all feel welcome.
- Thank you so much for the invite. So glad that we can help - Omaha Municipal Land Bank
- "You have two important days in your life. The day you are born and the day you discover the reason why." Mark Twain
- Thank you for the great sidewalks to run on.
- Gratitude makes sense of your past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow
- Thank you for being such a great community! \*Lookin' at you, Chris!
- We love you!
- Thank you Gifford Park Neighborhood Association for the years of work you've done for children.
- We love coming back into the neighborhood to help volunteer and do the activities.
- I am grateful for the diversity of our neighborhood.
- Grateful that this community allows for people to express themselves in so many ways.
- Being part of GPNA has cultivated our sisterhood on the foundation of a tight-knit community. We are proud to live in Gifford Park.

# Photos From Holiday Banquet



# Photos From Holiday Banquet



## Gifford Park Neighborhood Holiday Market Recap

by Matt Wettengel

Huge thank you to everyone who braved the cold and attended the Holiday Makers Market on Dec. 8!! By all accounts it was the most successful holiday market to date and none of it would have been possible without the wonderful vendors and volunteers and our supportive community! Highlights included all the wonderful handcrafted items that filled the Yates gymnasium, delicious soups from Phyllis and Louise Creative Catering, tasty Syrian food, eggnog cold brew from Myrtle & Cypress, and a robust kids' craft station.

While snow currently sits on the lot on 33rd Street where we host the Gifford Park Neighborhood Market, planning for the 2019 season will begin very soon. Anyone interested in vending their locally-made goods or locally grown produce, providing activities or art projects, volunteering, playing music or doing anything at the market in the season ahead, shoot us an email at [gpnmarket@gmail.com](mailto:gpnmarket@gmail.com) with details about what you want to do. We will be scheduling a vendor meeting early in the spring, so now is the time to get on our mailing list!

The beauty of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Market is that it's truly for everyone and we look forward to hearing any and all ideas that you might have for how we can make 2019 the most enjoyable market season ever!!!



## SEED SHARE

Annually presented by

Big Garden in collaboration with City Sprouts and Big Muddy Urban Farm

Saturday February 16th, 2019  
10AM - 2PM

Yates Community Center  
3260 Davenport St.



## Remember to Shovel Your Sidewalk

We try very hard in Gifford Park to be a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood. As a friendly reminder, and in respect to your neighbors, please keep your sidewalks shoveled to keep pedestrians safer. Omaha has a City ordinance to clear sidewalks within 24 hours of a snowfall. Residents can call the Mayor's hotline (402-444-5555) to report addresses of properties that do not clear their walks within the 24 hours. This is a serious public safety issue and residents need to work together to address it!

Be A Good Neighbor  
Please Shovel Your  
Sidewalk!



## **Community Bike Shop Update**

*by Adam Blowers*

Happy New Year from the Bike Project! Around this time we like to button up last year and start making goals for this year. We always try to improve on the previous year and 2019 will require a lot of work because 2018 was pretty good to us. We had the most Adult Earn-a-Bike graduates ever (43!) and saw some growth in Kids Bike Club. We also got that sweet new signage all done so that people can see us from the road. The awesome old wood sign will still have a home on the building so don't worry about it. Through bike donations, refurbished bike sales, and our Earn-a-Bike programming we distributed 616 bikes into the community and kept them out of landfills.

In 2019 we hope to hire a new part time employee who can run our Earn-a-Bike programming and open the shop one more day a week. We want to grow our programs and ensure that even more people have access to safe and reliable transportation. We will be taking even more camping trips and hope to get even more youth involved in outdoor recreation.

2019 will be our 12th year in operation and we expect big things. We could always use help though! If you're interested in volunteering you can find more information at our website [www.communitybicycleshopomaha.org](http://www.communitybicycleshopomaha.org). You can also find out any information about upcoming events (Like Beers and Gears on Jan 24th!) and any announcements about the shop there. Plus our sweet new blog where we talk about shop happenings and most importantly, cool bikes.

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## **New Bike Share Station in the Neighborhood**

*by Pell Duvall*

Gifford Park is excited to welcome Heartland B-cycle to our neighborhood! The station is located on the northeast corner of 33rd & California Streets just west of Selena's Market and came online in November.

Heartland B-cycle is the first large-scale municipal bike sharing system in the Omaha metro area operated by Heartland Bike Share. Bike sharing makes it economical and convenient to use bikes for trips that are too far to walk but too short to drive. As a member or using a FUN! pass, you can use a B-cycle to run an errand, grab lunch, travel from the bus stop to your office, or just get some fresh air.

We are so excited that our neighborhood is included in Heartland Bike Share's expansion. There was a 'Ceremonial Check Out' on November 21st. GPNA President Eliza Perry, Community Bike Shop Director Adam Blowers, and Heartland Bike Share Executive Director Ben Turner spoke about how this station is part of a network of solutions to help you use active transportation in our city.

The bikes are readily adjustable for people short & tall, equipped with baskets to carry your goods, and lights to keep you safe! The bike has a built-in lock, and it has three speeds to make climbing our neighborhood's hills easy...well, easier.

Memberships are available on a monthly or annual basis and include unlimited 1 hour rides at all metro locations. Or you can try it out with a \$6 FUN! pass for unlimited 1 hour rides for 24 hours! Use the B-Cycle app or the station kiosk to buy your FUN! pass and get riding. You can check out bikes at any of the 70 stations in the metro area! Members can purchase and use their Heartland Pass card or the B-cycle app to check out bikes.

We hope you'll join us and try out Heartland B-cycle in Gifford Park! For more information about Heartland B-cycle, visit <https://heartland.bcycle.com/> or call 402-957-2453.

RESTORATION EXCHANGE OMAHA & HISTORY NEBRASKA PRESENT

# 2019 RESTORE NEBRASKA CONFERENCE

Saturday, March 2 | 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

PRESENTED BY



KEYNOTE  
SPEAKER

Daniel G. Carey  
President & CEO  
Historic Savannah  
Foundation

**Metropolitan Community College, Fort Omaha Campus**  
North 32nd Street and Sorensen Parkway | Omaha, NE

## FRIDAY

- 9AM - Noon: **Coffee with Contractors and Funders.** Sponsored by the Omaha Municipal Land Bank  
Cost: Free
- 7PM - 10PM: **Friday Evening Reception** at the B Side in Benson with tour of the historic Benson Theatre  
Hor d'oeuvres & cocktails. Cost: \$25

## SATURDAY

- **Conference Tickets:** \$50 general admission & \$40 member admission
- **Keynote by Daniel G. Carey** of the Historic Savannah Foundation. For the past ten years, Carey has helped build Savannah's reputation as a leader in historic preservation
- **Choose from 18 breakout sessions.** Everything from restoring windows, repairing plaster, and painting historic places to insulating and air sealing older homes. Also, learn about the Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte Memorial Hospital on the Omaha Indian Reservation, listed as one America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places by the National Trust for Historic Preservation
- **Restore Jam!** Share before and after photos of your own restoration project
- **Local vendors galore!** Visit with local craftsmen to gather ideas, contacts, and solutions

**BUY TICKETS AND FIND MORE INFORMATION AT  
[WWW.RESTORATIONEXCHANGE.ORG](http://WWW.RESTORATIONEXCHANGE.ORG)**

## Gift a Teenager a Swiss Army Knife! Please.

by Adrian S. Petrescu

Motto: "In an unstable complex system, small islands of coherence have the potential to change the whole system"

(Ilya Prigogine)

Ann Arbor Michigan, a decade and a half ago, in a coffee shop

"Daddy, can I please have your Swiss Army Knife?"

"What are you going to do with it?"

"I need it for this little project. (making art out of a straw)"

"Here it is."

Somewhere in Texas, over a decade ago, from the back-bench of the car

"Daddy, can I please have your Swiss Army Knife?"

"Mic, you know the rule. No sharp objects in the car. I'll give it to you as soon as we stop somewhere and we get out of the car."

We learn from our parents how to try our best to be a parent in our turn. My Dad never gave me a pocketknife. Or he did, kind of. I got a Swiss Army Knife in Romania, from an American physicist friend of my Dad's, when I was in junior high. I had a brand new but smaller knife, which I had just received from my German kindergarten teacher's husband and then I exchanged the one I had for my Dad's American friend's Swiss Army Knife. I can't blame my Dad. You couldn't buy a Swiss Army Knife in Romania of way back then, and he always helped me get a good sense of using tools and pushed me to trust myself and he put his trust in me in everything I was trying to do. He did his absolute best at times, and I hated him for it all too often back then. With my getting my Swiss Army Knife maybe he trusted me too much though. This is a crime that was never discovered and about which I never confessed to anyone, but I can no longer keep this on my chest after so many years. Here it goes.

Bucharest Romania, about 1982, Adrian's neighborhood

Over the weekend we couldn't use the basketball courts at our neighborhood school because the gate to the schoolyard was locked with a chain and padlock. We had used them for a while anyway by simply jumping over the gate, but now the school administration got smarter and added another four feet or more of wire fencing atop of the gates and barbwire on top, just as the concrete fence surrounding the school already had. Makes one think why didn't they put it there on the gates as well in the first place when they put the extra wire fencing over the concrete fence, but that's a different story. The group of children who was always playing in the neighborhood, playing soccer over the small park in the middle of the neighborhood roundabout simply got bored with soccer that day, and decided to go jump the gate to the school yard again that Sunday afternoon. Then we all noticed the new wire fencing. I looked at the gate. Studied the chain and padlock. Pulled out my Swiss Army knife. I showed it to my friends. They looked at it and at me in disbelief. I pulled out the metal saw blade and showed it to them. "Wow." We looked at each other. Then I started to cut the padlock. In less than 5 minutes the gate was open and we were in. We could play basketball. My Dad always said "use the right tool for the task. Every time. And always remember safety first." I promise I was careful, Dad. And I used the right tool.

I have a buyer who wants a home in Gifford Park. If you want to sell, please let me know.

**Mike Yowell 402-619-6331** REALTOR®

Licensed in Nebraska & Iowa; 712-328-5008; Fax: 712-328-9395; Email: myowell@npdodge.com

NP Dodge, 1032 Woodbury Ave, Council Bluffs, IA 51503



*continued on page 12*

## **Gift a Teenager a Swiss Army Knife! Please.**

*continued from page 11*

Then, and ever since. The administration never managed to figure out who cut the padlock. Nonetheless, they put another padlock a while later, and we cut that one too. After a third attempt we won, maybe just out of the administrators' laziness to keep fighting, and they stopped locking the gate, and we could go and use the basketball courts on Sunday. It was our schoolyard, after all. There you have it. The crime is confessed. But was it the right tool, after all? I don't mean just the correctly chosen Swiss Army Knife tool—the metal saw—for cutting a padlock on a gate... I mean more generally.

I am quite elated, and a bit taken aback too, as this year 2019 starts off. It's going to be a great year.

This is the year when on May 10 we as a nation, and the entire world with us, will celebrate the 150th anniversary of Promontory Summit, in Utah, where Omaha NE based Union Pacific Railroad got first to complete the Trans-Continental railroad. Our state's capital's name itself is witness to the visionary leadership of President Abraham Lincoln who facilitated in part this great achievement, having changed the nation in so many ways, both very good and not so good.

As I write these words, we celebrate 100 years from the ratification on January 16, 1919, of the Eighteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, the Prohibition Amendment. The Twenty-first Amendment of course repealed the Eighteenth 14 years later. Yet, during its staying in effect, Prohibition never accomplished well what it was intended to do. In many ways quite the opposite. When all you have is a hammer, everything starts looking like a nail. Not all tools chosen are always the right ones, it would seem. Sometimes prohibiting something may be not as good as persuading, educating, or a cultural approach.

In July this year we'll celebrate 50 years from the fulfillment of the

"We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too."

speech by President John F Kennedy at Rice University in 1962, that in turn led to the United States and the world landing a man on the moon on July 20, 1969. Same year as Woodstock!

Gifford Park Elementary will open this year. It was time, as there are 20 years from the closing of Yates School. Yes, we waited that long without a school. The Whistle Pig predicted it all along, as it was wandering around the neighborhood in search for its new "home" to open in August, where he finally found its place as mascot. Perseverance always pays off. For the neighborhood, just as for the groundhog too!

Brussels, Belgium, September 4, 2008, at Marie H el ene's home

"Adrian, here's your Swiss Army Knife, and the champagne cap. You're an engineer. You can make me an engagement ring."

"(Just a bit surprised, then taking the knife and champagne cap) See, I knew I asked you for good reason!"

I'm elated that we're here in Gifford Park when our neighborhood school will open this year, where we are at home and we enjoy so much interacting with and learning from everyone, and where everyone brings all of their special talents to the community as nice as only here could happen. The Stanleys' dinner and service, and everyone's entire preparation of and participation in the Christmas party was a blast, just as the Holiday market was a real success again. Yes, we got more elephants in support of Madagascar wildlife rescue, but you probably imagined that already. The excellent food, the celebration, and the fellowship with dear friends were all very hard to depart from...

*continued on page 13*

## Gift a Teenager a Swiss Army Knife! Please.

*continued from page 12*

When we as a community set down to help Omaha Public Schools to understand and adopt what we wanted from our neighborhood school we asked for many things, among which two were quite important to us but never materialized in the end. First, we wanted a learning vegetables garden, for the children to continue to learn at the school in a more formal way what they are already learning at the community garden and in the neighborhood, namely that tomatoes essentially don't grow on shelves at the grocery store. Second, we wanted some public space open to children to use to play over weekends and evenings, outdoors in the summer and indoors in the winter, to continue at school and to expand the community spirit that soccer and tennis and other Gifford Park activities provide to all the children in the neighborhood, and to ensure that home schooled and public school children continue to engage and play with one another at school over weekends just as they do in the community outside of school time. The two demands were not met. The first due to lack of space right next to the school—parking trumps education on vegetables—and security concerns of crossing a street to get to potential garden lots that OPS owns. The second was too complicated to design and execute, or we simply don't know why it was overlooked.

These two “little” things that we never got make me feel a bit taken aback. Also, I had supported naming the school Alan J Heeger Elementary, in memory of the 2000 Nobel Prize winning physicist who was here in the neighborhood studying eight grade at the Yates School 70 years ago this year. He is turning 83 this year. It didn't happen that way. That's OK. There are other better tools to promote curiosity and STEAM with children than the name of the school. Just as there are other fitted tools to continue to persuade the school administration and OPS as a whole to hear us and to adopt and nurture our community values.

“Always use the right tool for the task.” That's what a Swiss Army Knife means, and what it teaches. Handing over your knife to a child to use, or gifting her a Swiss Army Knife of her own as the time comes means you trust her to choose the right tool, with safety in mind, even when you are not there. You trust her, and you trust yourself that the lessons you tried with her over time worked and she got it. “Always use the right tool for the task” is always much beyond the Swiss Army Knife though. Any tool. Just make it the right one! A conversation could be it. A smile could be it. How about coffee or tea? A book could be it, too. Diplomacy. Insistence with perseverance could be it. Showing things in another perspective. Borrowing a tool or solution tried elsewhere that worked. Yes, someone else may have figured out a solution to your issue before you, and all it takes is to borrow theirs, as opposed to reinventing the wire to cut butter... I mean the wheel. Sorry, the butter-cutting wire is from French. I wonder... was the wire to cut butter invented before or after the wheel? Who cares, as long as we use the right tool for every task.

Not everything happens the way you want it all the time. It turns out there was a way to open the gate at Adrian's old school in Romania that didn't involve the metal saw on a Swiss Army Knife. I'd like to hope that

*continued on page 14*



# OLD HOUSE Restoration

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## **Gift a Teenager a Swiss Army Knife! Please.**

*continued from page 13*

in the end the parents discussed with the school and agreed to let the gate open. Maybe there is a way to improve Gifford Park Elementary once it opens, and cutting padlocks has nothing to do with it.

Gifford Park, Omaha, Nebraska, a few years ago, at home

“Daddy, can I please have your Swiss Army Knife?”

“Go to your room and open the desk’s left top drawer.”

“(Running down the stairs while ripping the wrapping and opening up the box) Daddy... that’s my own Swiss Army Knife. Thank you.”

“I figured it was about time you got your own. I got mine at about your age.”

Gift a Swiss Army Knife to a teenager, girl or boy. It is a sign you trust them. Teach them to always use the right tool for any task. From a metal saw to adopting a solution from a book she self trusted to discover, or to insisting with perseverance for all that is worth promoting and adopting. They will certainly rise up to the trust you put in them. Someday the teenager of today might just change the world with a Nobel Prize they may get for using or maybe even discovering a new tool, or who knows for what...

It’s going to be a really good year of celebration of achievements, of today and tomorrow in our neighborhood, and in the world. We will keep persuading about our values and solutions.

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## **Big Muddy Urban Farm Welcomes 2019 Aspiring Farmer Residents**

Big Muddy Urban Farm is excited to introduce the 2019 Aspiring Farmer Residents. The group is writing their business plan now and can’t wait to get outside and plant. We will start seeds in the greenhouse in early Febraury and you’ll be able to find their produce at the Gifford Park neighborhood market, amongst many other dedicated vendors. New to this year, we are introducing a new position of a farmer coordinator position, which is an opportunity for a first year resident to return for a second year in a full-time capacity. Gavin Johnston is returning from last year and is defining the role with his leadership. Residents are really eager to get outside and plant as well as get to know their neighbors in Gifford Park!



*2019 Aspiring Farmer Residents (L to R): Shayna Sterling, Maggie Weedman, Gavin Johnston, Matt Wettengel, Jordan Eberhardt, Eddy Quintero*

## Bike De'Lights Recap

Saturday night December 8 about 40 participants braved the cold for the 10th Annual Bike De'Lights Ride and decorated their bikes and rode around midtown Omaha to see the holiday lights with friends. It's a social ride at a casual/conversational pace hosted by Bike Walk Omaha. This year the route began and ended in our Gifford Park neighborhood at Burnzzz Burgers, Wings & Games.



### Gifford Park Neighborhood Association 30 years of Volunteering

Number of Years of Program/Event

- Monthly Newsletter – 30
- Meetings – 30
- Holiday Banquet – 30
- Spring Cleanup – 30
- Watch Group – 30
- Easter Egg Hunt – 29
- Tool Lending Program – 28
- Youth Tennis Program - 25
- Halloween Festival – 24
- Community Garden – 18
- Youth Garden Program - 15
- Business District Flower Pots – 14
- Restore Omaha – 13
- Community Bicycle Project – 11
- Neighborhood Market – 11
- Free Food Drop-Off – 10
- Big Muddy Urban Farm – 7
- Youth Soccer Program – 7
- Yates Cultural Event – 5
- 33rd Friday Block Party – 5
- Adventure Playground – 4
- Porchfest – 2
- Youth Basketball Camp – 2
- Slip'N'Slide – 2

Gifford Park's neighborhood bar for 80 Years

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Gifford Park Neighborhood Association  
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 Omaha, NE 68131

Place  
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 Here

**Gifford Park Neighborhood Association  
 Membership Application**

*The GPNA membership year runs from January 1 to December 31.*

Type of membership:       Single (\$10)                       Family (\$15)                       Business (\$25)  
 Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Business Phone (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Name (1): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (2): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (3): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (4): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (5): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**Volunteer Opportunities! I'm interested in helping with...**

- |   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Call committee         | <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Banquet        | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Watch      | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanup/Beautification | <input type="checkbox"/> Landlord/Tenant Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Distribution | <input type="checkbox"/> Tool Lending  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Garden       | <input type="checkbox"/> Memberships            | <input type="checkbox"/> School Liason           | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Planting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Easter Egg Hunt        | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Market    | <input type="checkbox"/> School Activities       | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Garden  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History                | <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Walks     | <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer                  |  |

Return completed form along with check or money order to:  
 Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, PO Box 31462, Omaha, NE 68131.