



# Gifford Park's Pride

*Gifford Park Neighborhood: A Great Place to Live, Work, Learn and Play*

September 1997

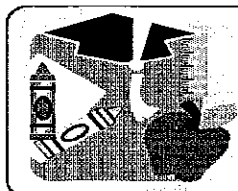
A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

## GPNA Welcomes College Students

We have a large number of university students living in the GPNA who are returning for another year of school. The goal of the GPNA is to improve the neighborhood and make it a better place for all the residents, and we would ask our new student neighbors to become a part of this effort.

The largest part of being a good neighbor is consideration for others. The GPNA has been working with the city and police to improve the appearance and safety of our neighborhood, and we would ask you to help us in this effort. First we would ask the students to be considerate in terms of noise, especially after 10:00 PM. Many families in our neighborhood have children or go to work early. Parties are another problem. Unfortunately, parties always seem to end up bigger and noisier than first planned, and the police have been more active in enforcing noise and underage drinking ordinances. Another difficult problem is parking. Our neighborhood has barely enough parking (like school), so you may not be able to always park directly in front of your residence. Please do not park on lawns, across sidewalks or on the wrong side of the street (facing traffic). Besides making the neighborhood look bad, all of these are parking violations. Also, do not litter and help us keep our neighborhood picked up. All of us pick up trash that we did not leave and we would ask that you would help us keep our neighborhood clean.

Finally, consider coming to one of our meetings and perhaps joining our association. A \$5.00 yearly membership will get this newsletter delivered to you every month, and you will meet your neighbors and many other wonderful people during our activities such as the neighborhood clean-up (we can always use more help). We welcome the students for the upcoming year, and we hope that you will help us continue to make the Gifford Park neighborhood a better place to live.



Back  
to  
School

**Please Drive Carefully!**

## Next Meeting

**Thursday, September 4  
7:00 P.M.**

**Guest Speaker:**

**Officer Mike Paul  
OPD Bicycle Patrol**

**St. Joseph's Hospital  
Glassed-In Dining Area**

**FREE PARKING**

## Historically Speaking...

### "Hillside" - The Yates Mansion

(Last month "Historically Speaking" focused on Mr. Henry W. Yates. This month his home is featured.)

On the site just east of Henry Yates Elementary School once stood the magnificent home of Henry W. Yates and his wife, Eliza. The home, called "Hillside," was almost as outstanding as the Joslyn Castle, built about 14 years later and 10 blocks to the west. Hillside contained 25 rooms and was begun in 1887 and completed in 1889 at a cost of \$40,000. The exterior was of Ohio stone and the foundation was Nebraska stone. It had a slate roof. The home was built on the outskirts of Omaha, just an easy ride by horseback into town. A carriage house and stables were also on the property.

A "house warming" was held in April of 1890. A newspaper account at the time stated: "During the last year one of the most beautiful homes in the west was completed and has ever since been renowned for its genuine hospitality." The article went on: "Mr. and Mrs.

*continued on page 5*

**GPNA OFFICERS****PRESIDENT**

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

**VICE PRESIDENT**

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Rich Exline 341-4388

**MEMBERSHIP**

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**NEWSLETTER**

Sue Wilwerding 342-2795

**NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION**

Mike Bacome 344-3233

**PARK**

Mike Bacome 344-3233

**PARKING VIOLATIONS**

Terry Wilwerding 342-2795

**PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Anne &amp; Linda Chapman 348-0464

**WATCH GROUP**

Ron Yates 558-6027

**WEEDS & LITTER**

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

**From the Desk of the President**

As many of you may have noticed during the past couple of months, there has been a great deal of activity along 33rd street and up California Street. And I don't mean the paving. There were large groups of individuals, mostly male, loitering on sidewalks and in the street along 33rd street and in front of a couple of apartments on California street. Those unfortunate enough to be walking along either of these streets were probably subjected to glares, obstruction, demeaning and/or racist comments, and perhaps felt somewhat threatened and intimidated. If you were driving through, you may have experienced persons walking across the streets against the lights, obstructing traffic, and again making inappropriate comments. Either way, you probably thought that perhaps this area was not a safe place to be walking or driving.

A number of GPNA members, along with owners of area businesses, met twice with representatives of the Omaha Police Department, in order to discuss ways of reducing the actual and perceived threats, and restoring our right to free access to the area and businesses. One solution was to provide increased presence of police officers in the area, both in cruisers and on bicycles. Another solution was to contact the landlords of the properties where the troublemakers seemed to be hanging out., and request that steps be taken to exclude the individuals causing the problems from the properties.

While the problem has not been totally solved, certainly conditions have improved substantially. One of the property owners investigated, and found that most of the individuals causing the problems and loitering on the property were not tenants. He took steps to exclude those persons, and evicted the party living there that was allegedly the person being visited by the troublemakers. Another property has been posted against trespassing, since again the tenants were not the source of the problems. As mentioned elsewhere in this issue, the police responded most favorably by increasing cruiser and bicycle patrols, which certainly made me feel a bit safer, and undoubtedly dampened the enthusiasm of the parties responsible for the traffic obstructions and rude comments.

I suspect that persistence will eventually convince those intent on causing problems that other areas offer more promising opportunities for them, which, while not ideal, allows the residents of our neighborhood to resume our normal activities. Thank you to all who participated.


**TOOL  
LENDING  
HOTLINE**

**Tom 341-3955****Ed 341-0475****Ron 558-6027****Mowers - \$5****Rent for most tools - \$3****Fall Clean-up Date Set**

The GPNA's annual Fall Clean-up will be **Saturday, October 25, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.** in Gifford Park. As in the past, the Fall Clean-up is for **GPNA members only**, or people who donate time or money to the cleanup - so this is a great time to join the GPNA. Activities planned are Neighborhood & Park Clean-up, Dumpsters in Gifford Park, Membership & Donation Drive, Recycling, Garage Sale Items, Park Picnic and Halloween Pumpkins.

It's very important for you to **call the phone numbers listed below BEFORE clean-up day** if you need a volunteer to pick up trash - we will prioritize hauling based on your call. **Tree brush will NOT be accepted** for the Fall Clean-up...save it for the Spring Clean-up. Because the GPNA pays for these dumpsters, we may request a small donation if you have excessive trash (i.e. several truckloads) to help fund the clean-up. Please call **Terry (342-2795)**, **Leo (345-1433)**, **Chris (342-6006)**, or **Ron (558-6027)** for more information or if you can help with this year's Fall Clean-up.

## What's Happening in the Neighborhood ...

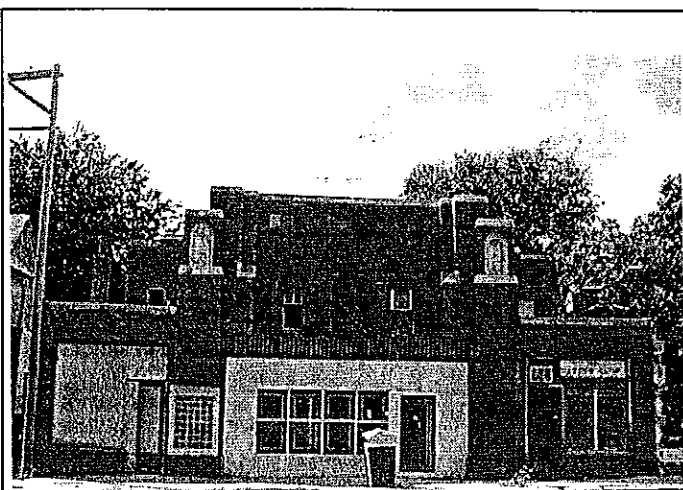
Plan on attending the next general meeting of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, **Thursday, September 4, 7:00 p.m.** at **St. Joseph Hospital**. The Guest Speaker will be **Officer Mike Paul**, who is on the bicycle patrol in our area. Officer Paul will be present to discuss "What the police can do, can't do, and how the neighborhood can help." As always, there will be plenty of refreshments courtesy of St. Joseph Hospital.

Steady progress is being made on the street construction project that has been going on this summer from **30th to 32nd, Cass to Burt**. Curb replacement is almost complete and resurfacing should begin soon. Also, much of the sidewalk on the 33rd Street side of **Gifford Park** has been replaced.

The GPNA sends its best wishes for a speedy recovery to **Pearl Exline**, mother of **Rich Exline**. Pearl is recuperating after spending some time in the hospital.

Thanks to **Mike Caban** for translating our GPNA brochure into Spanish. This newly translated brochure will be available soon.

Plans for the third annual Halloween Haunted House are just beginning. The **PKA Creighton Fraternity** does a great job putting on this event. The GPNA looks forward to assisting them with this year's project.



*The old Circle Theater's days are numbered. The building, located just south of 33rd & California, has been vacant for many years and is scheduled to be demolished soon.*

## Charles R. Kilgore Jr. Attorney At Law

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**558-5000**

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Serving the Gifford Park  
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Proprietors



## Lawn Mowing Service

Call Rich: 341-4388

8 a.m. to 6 p.m.



**Business Spotlight...****Word Data Business Systems**

Word Data Business Systems, located at 3172 Dodge Street, has been doing business at this address since 1950. There have been many changes. From typewriters to computers, owner Paul Smith has seen it all. Today Word Data focusses on service and support in office systems integration including networking, computers, software, programming, document imaging, office products, technical support and training.

In 1950, Paul started working for Underwood Corp. in the typewriter and accounting division. Olivetti Corp. acquired Underwood in 1959 and Paul became branch manager. In 1980 he bought the business from Olivetti, selling typewriters and calculators. Through the 1980's, Paul decided to strengthen the service organization of Word Data, during a time when the PC computer became a serious business tool. Today Word Data has 35 employees and sells plenty of computer and office products, but Paul says their primary strength is customer service.

Word Data has been a great asset to our neighborhood. In the last few years they have made improvements inside and out. The parking lot to the north of their two buildings was acquired in 1993. Paul has purchased a business membership to the GPNA the last four years. The GPNA appreciates your efforts.

**John Howard...We Will Miss You**

Word Data and the GPNA lost a friend this summer in John Howard, Sales Manager for Word Data. John passed away in late June at the age of 60. Paul Smith, owner of Word Data, said he was a great friend and had unusual customer loyalty. He worked for Word Data for 37 years and was known for being quiet, dependable and always put his customers first. John was also an ambassador to the neighborhood association and talked very highly of the area. He was instrumental in signing up Word Data for business memberships and getting computer equipment for the GPNA. John always encouraged people to patronize neighborhood businesses like Kilgore's and California Tacos.

# California Tacos & More

*Homemade Mexican Food*

**342-0212**

**33rd & California Street**

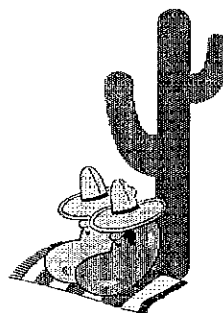
**Dine In or Carry Out**

**Summer Hours**

**Mon - Thur: 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.**

**Fri - Sat: 11 a.m. - 11 p.m.**

**Sun: Noon - 8 p.m.**



*California*  
**Tacos  
&  
More**



*Paul Smith, owner of Word Data Business Systems, says his company's 35 employees focus on service to its customers.*

He worked for Word Data for 37 years and was known for being quiet, dependable and always put his customers first. John was also an ambassador to the neighborhood association and talked very highly of the area. He was instrumental in signing up Word Data for business memberships and getting computer equipment for the GPNA. John always encouraged people to patronize neighborhood businesses like Kilgore's and California Tacos. He knew a great deal about the history of the Gifford Park area and wrote an article on streetcars for this newsletter. John founded Bill Bailey's Banjo Band in 1950 with his brother Jim. He was very gifted at the banjo, playing on the Belle of Brownville boat. John is survived by six children. We will miss you John.

## **Historically Speaking..."Hillside" - The Yates Mansion**

*continued from page 1*

Yates opened the doors at Hillside to all their friends and gave a reception that was the event of the season."

The magnificent English hall was the center of attraction. It had high wainscoting of carved oak; an enormous fireplace of gray stone, the carved ornamentation standing out in bas relief read, 'O ye fire and heat bless ye the Lord;' and a polished wood floor. The landing of the oaken stairway was enlarged into a balcony of carved wood, overlooking the hall below, and made a perfect music stand, where the orchestra played for dancing.

Opening from the hall was the library with oaken book shelves and a wainscoting of stucco work, richly gilded. This room was hung in olive green brocaded satin and the inlaid floor was covered with many and bright hued Oriental rugs. Adjoining this room and opening into the hall was the drawing room, in marked contrast to the rooms already described by the extreme delicacy of its tints. It was furnished throughout in the Louis 15th style. The white and gold furniture was upholstered in the palest shade of blue with the earliest springlike tint of yellow tapestries, the walls were hung in rose colored brocaded satin and cupids and wreaths and love knots formed the theme which repeated itself in the frescoes and all the ornamentation."

A New Year's party was held at Hillside in 1907. The newspaper of that date recorded that the house was abloom with flowers and Christmas greens. In the dining room a basket of pink carnations combined with wisteria adorned the table while green-shaded candles in silver holders cast a subdued light over these decorations. In the hall were a variety of greens and American Beauties. Egg-nog was served in the library which was adorned with quantities of yellow flowers. The music room was in red and the parlor in pink roses and pink shaded lights. About 400 invitations were issued.

Mr. and Mrs. Yates celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary at Hillside on April 22, 1912. The following was the newspaper account of the event:

"The house was a wilderness of flowers. Friends vied with one another in sending the choicest and best of the season till every nook and corner bloomed with roses, jonquils, daisies, daffodils, lillies of the valley, snap dragons, orange blossoms and a variety of plants and ferns. Mrs. Yates was wearing her wedding gown of white satin and in her white hair was the spray of orange blossoms she wore 50 years ago, and the groom's gift, a rope of seed pearls, was on her neck while she carried two old fashioned bridal bouquets of white roses."

Both Mr. and Mrs. Yates were very active members of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. Mr. Yates was an officer of the church for 48 years, and Mrs. Yates was a member of the Trinity Cathedral Parish Aid for 59 years.

Following the death of Mr. Yates in 1915 and Mrs. Yates in 1929 the house was occupied for some time by their children, Mrs. Florence Yates Voss and Hal W. Yates. The last social function was held in April 1931. It was an Easter Egg Hunt given for the primary Sunday School classes of Trinity Cathedral. (I think the Yates family would be pleased with the Easter Egg Hunts in Gifford Park.)

The Bickel School of Advertising occupied the home for a few years and then it was home for a medical fraternity. Hillside was torn down in 1944 to make way for a 63 unit apartment building, erected by Carl C. Wilson and William S. Hargleroad, Jr. The newspaper reported a waiting list for occupancy for the apartments which were constructed for a sum of \$350,000.

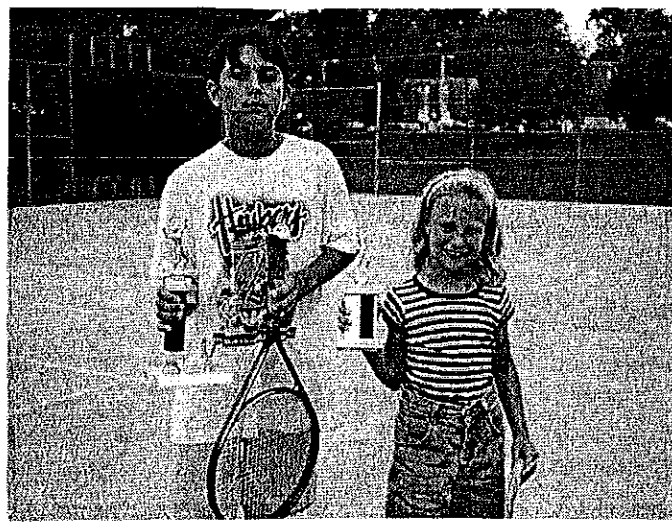
Wouldn't it have been fun to take a tour of Hillside when it was in its prime?

*by Eva Swanson*

## 1997 Gifford Park Tennis Action



*Lance Pecoraro, 9, takes volley practice during the Target Hitting Contest.*



*Sportsmanship Awards were earned by Jackie Whelan, 7, and Eric Chan, 12.*

Even a light rain shower couldn't dampen the spirits of kids participating in the last day of the fourth annual GPNA Tennis Program. Prizes were given away. A total of around 35 youngsters turned out for both fun and exercise during the 4-week session at Gifford Park. The free tennis lessons, which were held each Wednesday during August in Gifford Park, were taught by the following volunteer instructors: **Cliff Davis, Chris Foster, Jackie Foster, Jenny Foster, Willie Foster, Roger Freeman, Ron Frey and Kirk Peck.** Additional help was provided by **Brian Kokensparger and Greg Slayden.** Again this year special thanks goes to **Betty Slayden** for helping to organize the event and handling registration check-in each week. Also a big thanks goes to **Carol Hodges** and the **City of Omaha** for donating T-shirts, **Kiewit Construction Company** for donating frisbees, **J'N'J Grocery** and **California Tacos & More** for food, candy and pop, and the **GPNA** and other fun prizes - the kids loved them.

Congratulations to two kids who received trophies for very special achievement this year. "Sportsmanship Awards" were earned by **Jackie Whelan, 7,** and **Eric Chan, 12.** Parents wishing to pursue further tennis instruction can contact Chris Foster at **342-6006** for upcoming tennis lessons in the fall and winter. Thanks to all the kids and parents who participated. Don't forget to practice - see you next year!



*Instructor Roger Freeman shows 4 year-old Tre Brown how to hit a winning volley.*



*There was a good turnout despite some rain on the last session of tennis. See any future Wimbledon tennis champs?*



## An Open Letter to the Omaha Police Department

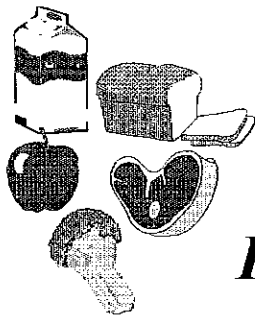
I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, to extend our gratitude to the Omaha Police Department, but especially to **Captain Don Thorson, Lieutenant John Friend, Sergeants David Baker, Mary Neuman, Barry Dejong, and Officers Michael Paul, George Merithew, Adam Kyle, Lowel Petersen and David Turco,** and all of the other officers who participated in the increased presence in our neighborhood.

At the meetings we held to address our difficulties, police commitment to restoring order, and the willingness of supervisory personnel to increase the level of officers assigned to the area, was much appreciated. The presence, dedication, and professionalism of the officers participating was also evident and very much appreciated. In the face of threats from persons loitering in the area, it was quite reassuring to see that officers were present and willing to take action to minimize and control threats, thereby increasing the level of confidence of neighborhood businesses and residents that our problems were being addressed.

Apparently there are many theories as to the best method for the police to provide law enforcement and crime prevention in order to enhance public safety. I expect that our members would agree that having officers present in the neighborhood is the best way to improve the level of public safety.

One aim of our association is to preserve and enhance the quality of life for residents in the neighborhood. The continued cooperation and assistance of the Omaha Police Department greatly increases our effectiveness in working towards this goal. Thank you very much.

*by Jim Wilwerding, GPNA President*

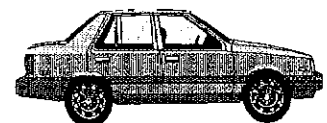


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**7:00 AM - 11:00 PM Friday thru Saturday**

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