



Gifford Park's Pride

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

November 2007

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

2007 Fall Cleanup Highlights

Even though this year's Fall Cleanup was a scaled-down version, GPNA volunteers got a lot done in Gifford Park. Held Saturday, October 20, in the park, we did not have the normal dumpsters/ compactors for hauling (save these items for the Spring Cleanup), but we tackled lots of projects with few volunteers. We lucked out with the weather again - sunny, breezy and 80 degrees helped to dry the park grounds from the week's rain. Activities included the pumpkin patch (50 pumpkins given away - **Earl May Garden Center** gave us a good deal), removing cockleburrs and weeds from the west end playground sand, weeding the parking lot, and raking leaves; volunteers also weeded and mulched at the two park entrances on 35th Street. **Dana Freeman** and **Jan Franks** monitored the membership/information table and Jan also kept watch over the pumpkins; Dana, **Cynthia Shuck** and **John Barna** supervised groups of youth to help pick up litter in the park and paint over graffiti on benches, trash cans, and the shelter - there was a lot of graffiti! **Bob Hutton** scrapped off graffiti on several benches. The **City of Omaha's Parks Department** also delivered a load of mulch for us to spread around some of our young planted trees. **Keep Omaha Beautiful** donated yardwaste bags. **Kum & Go** donated bottles of water. Also thanks to the City Parks Department for restriping the tennis court lines.

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Next General Meeting
Thursday, November 1
7:00 P.M.

Special Presidential Election

Guest Speaker: David Klitz
Director, Habitat For
Humanity's Re-Store

Creighton University
Med Center
Morrison Seminar Room

University of South Dakota Students Help GPNA Again

Seven **University of South Dakota** students spent just a day and a half in the Gifford Park neighborhood, but they made quite an impression and we gained new friendships with these dedicated folks who volunteered to help with activities on Saturday, October 20 - the Fall Cleanup, Bike Shop and the Community Garden Final Harvest. Please read the articles in this newsletter for more details. The students helped with a variety of tasks including litter pickup, trash hauling, pumpkin patch for kids, weeding, playground area cleanup, painting graffiti, help with the Bike Shop, and community garden cleanup. Thanks to **Julie Kalkowski** who found beds and shower facilities at Holy Name Church for the students to freshen up at the end of the day. Special thanks to **Courtny Nesheim** who planned and organized the students for this effort. You are always welcome in Gifford Park!



John Barna, Sallie Foster, Cynthia Shuck, and Sue Wilwerding represented the GPNA in the Cathedral Centennial Parade on October 6th. The parade commemorated one that was held 100 years ago as part of the Cathedral's cornerstone dedication.

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Open

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Mary Ledbetter 342-4866

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PUBLIC RELATIONS

Chris Foster 342-6006

TOOL LENDING

Chris Foster 342-6006

WATCH GROUP

Terry Wilwerding 342-2795

WEEDS & LITTER

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

WELCOMING

Dana Freeman 850-9611

A Presidential Request

To: The Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

From: John Barna

Presidential Election Announcement

Dear Neighbors,

I would like the privilege of representing Gifford Park as your president.

Over the past few seasons, I have had the pleasure of volunteering at park events and participated in the planning of National Night Out 2006, Address it Now, Holiday Banquet 2006, Destination Midtown Identity Garden and numerous GPNA, MNA board meetings.

As Cynthia Shuck's successor, I will have some big shoes to fill but I am confident that my hands-on experience as well as having such a great support base will empower me to help keep Gifford Park and the wonderful neighbors I have met along the way growing and prospering.

I ask for your vote at our general meeting on November 1, 2007

Respectfully, John Barna

Senator Howard To Address Important Issues

According to **State Senator Gwen Howard's** Capitol Report newsletter, some of the issues she will be working on in the upcoming legislative session include:

- \$500 tax credit for families that adopt children
- Funding for fetal alcohol spectrum prevention; birth defect disorder
- Early childhood education
- Reform of the Health & Human Services System
- Changes in the foster care system
- Neighborhood revitalization
- Property tax fairness and relief
- Making sure Omaha gets its fair share of state aid
- Prohibiting companies that hire illegal aliens from receiving state business tax incentives
- Creating an anti-bullying policy to protect our children at school
- Protect law enforcement officers by requiring motorists to move over when emergency lights are flashing

In addition, Senator Howard will continue to be involved in the ongoing discussions between the GPNA and Omaha Public Schools to return Yates School to a neighborhood school. She can be reached at **551-3246** (voice mail), **402-471-2723** (phone), or email: ghoward@leg.ne.gov

***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 information regarding the newsletter.*

Chris Foster Inducted Into Central High's Hall Of Fame

So here we are coming into the fall season, yes, it happens every year as predictable as time itself. Fall 2007 - October 4th to be a little more exact, or maybe approximately 8:00 PM - you know I'm not that exact! At any rate, some of you know that was a very special day. I believe everyone in the GPNA area should know **our very own Chris Foster**, a Central High School graduate of 1980 and a devoted member of the GPNA, was inducted into Central High School's Hall of Fame. The following biographical article was taken from the evening's program:

Chris Foster graduated from Central in 1980. He attended UNO and graduated from the Institute of Computer Science. For the past twenty-three years, he has worked for the Peter Kiewit organization, currently serving as its Information Technology Manager. Beyond his daily occupation, Chris has been an active leader since 1989 in his Gifford Park neighborhood community, organizing annual events and activities for adults and children. For the past 13 years, he has led a summer youth tennis program involving many volunteers to teach tennis to hundreds of children. Youngsters have benefited from the program, learning not only the game but sportsmanship and life skills. The Nebraska and Missouri Valley Tennis Association named Chris and his parents "Family of the Year." In addition to his youth tennis program, he has used his own money and additional grant money to purchase land to start a community garden where his neighbors can cultivate gardens, growing their own flowers and vegetables. Neighbors have characterized Chris as "the driving force," "unsung hero," and "human dynamo" in the Gifford Park neighborhood. Leo Wilwerding wrote in *the Gifford Park Newsletter*: "Whether it be neighborhood cleanups, neighborhood walks, lining up Music in the Park, the Show Wagon, bike rodeo, tennis lessons, or putting up Christmas lights at 33rd & California Streets, Chris is always in the forefront." He received the Suzanne & Walter Scott neighborhood grant for improvements at Gifford Park.

Congratulations, Chris!

by Bob Hutton



**Happy
Thanksgiving!**

**From the Gifford Park
Neighborhood Association**

Hooray For Johnny Appleseed!

The **Nebraska Statewide Arboretum (NSA)** calls for nominations each year and honors individuals and/or groups for their contributions to tree planting, community beautification, landscaping, and plant conservation. **Cynthia Shuck**, whom many of you may know as former President of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association, neighbor, and friend, has been recognized for her activism and hard work. At the NSA **Annual Awards Banquet** on Saturday, November 3, 2007 in Hastings, Cynthia will receive the **Johnny Appleseed Award**, which recognizes an individual who embodies the nature of Johnny Appleseed (John Chapman) through a sustained personal involvement in tree planting in Nebraska.

Cynthia's involvement in tree planting has been in our neighborhood, Gifford Park. She has organized tree planting campaigns, worked on our main-street flower gardens, and crafted a vision for the arboretum Gifford Park could become. She imagines Gifford Park could one day be the first neighborhood classified as an arboretum in Nebraska, complete with a walking tour and map. One of Cynthia's most significant projects during her two terms as president was implementing the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Green Street Corridor Plan, funded by a Nebraska State Arboretum grant. The grant allowed Gifford Park residents to plant approved trees in the city right-of-ways between the sidewalk and street. With her outgoing personality and love of nature, she is transforming the landscape of Gifford Park one tree at a time!

by Dana Freeman



**Daylight Savings Time
Ends Sunday, November 4
Set your clocks back
one hour**

**Charles R. Kilgore Jr.
Attorney At Law**

4913 Underwood Avenue

558-5000

**Personal Injury Law
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Injury**

**Auto Accidents
Insurance Claims**

What's New, Pussycat?



Two Gifford Park residents are popular at Hallowe'en: the bat — now understood to be highly beneficial, and endangered — and the cat. Particularly, the black cat!

In Britain, a black cat is actually considered LUCKY, and it is the best of luck if a black cat crosses a bride's path as she leaves the church! But in America, superstition holds black cats to be unlucky, and HALLOWE'EN is truly an unlucky time for black cats. Shelters, rescue groups, and shops typically refuse to adopt out black cats during the lead-up to Hallowe'en, and for good reason. Tragically, every veterinarian has horror stories of black cats brought in terribly abused by disturbed individuals during this time of year. If you have to find a home for a black cat or kitten, PLEASE wait until after the holiday. If you cannot wait, carefully screen the cat's new guardian before surrendering the animal (and as always, require a donation). If you are in the habit of letting your black cat roam outdoors, it's important to keep her indoors as Hallowe'en nears. Cruelty to animals is more frightening than ghosts or goblins. Protect your companion, and you and all your cats can enjoy a safe and happy Hallowe'en.

Certainly, the black cats I've known have always made me feel lucky to have them in my life. I would like to celebrate one of them, my black Hallowe'en cat—age 13.

Hallowe'en, 1997, came in the wake of the terrible snowstorm, when leaves still on the trees collected a weight of snow that snapped and brought down great branches all over town, and cut electric power throughout the city.

Late at night on Hallowe'en, I was honoring a Day of the Dead-type tradition from Ireland and the British Isles, preparing to put out a tray of food and drink, with a jack-o'-lantern, to welcome the returning spirits when the veil between the worlds is held to be thin. This is the origin of the goodies we give to fantastically costumed trick-or-treaters! The light of the jack-o'-lantern was supposed to guide departed spirits home this night. The Irish carved them out of turnips. But in the New World, pumpkins were more plentiful—and better looking!

While I arranged the cookies, apples, and cider, the stillness was broken by a blood-curdling wail outside my kitchen door. "Wow," thought I, "the spirits are impatient this year!" I nervously opened the door—to find a little black cat in the snow, begging to be let in. When a black cat seeks shelter from you on Hallowe'en, what can you do but welcome her? I had just learned the English "soul-caking" song that year (soul-caking was old English trick-or-treat, children begging cakes and coins at the door). The song features the popular folksong refrain, "If you haven't

got a penny, a ha'penny will do;/If you haven't got a ha'penny, then God bless you!" So I named my feline trick-or-treater "Halfpenny" (an English coin, a half-penny, pronounced "hay-penny").

While most strays in Gifford Park are from a clan of orange tabbies, black cats seem to rule in Dundee, where I lived at the time. But Halfpenny wasn't one of these. Although no one replied to my Found Cat ads, Halfpenny, then three years old, had already been spayed and, sadly, declawed (although she has tiny paws). I believe that she was an orphan of the storm, a black cat who slipped from a blacked-out home, to be lost in the snow.

At first, Halfpenny was a curmudgeon, who snubbed my playful kitten Percy. Like many declawed cats, she seemed stressed and vulnerable. But she has mellowed with the years, and now, though our smallest cat, she rules with quiet authority, admits the other cats as friends, and is a gentle sweetheart who sleeps on my pillow. She's always been the most intrepid, adventurous, and indomitable of our cats. When I first moved to Gifford Park, she boldly emerged from her cat carrier to explore our new home, while the other cats cowered in their carriers for two days before following her lead. Although all our cats are indoor cats, Halfpenny likes to go with me outside on a leash, and she takes me all over the beautiful green space at 30th and Cass.

Halfpenny has health issues: kidney disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and a thyroid removed. A lot to handle for someone under 9 pounds! Yet our wonderful vet keeps her in excellent health, and Halfpenny takes her vet visits in stride. A petite cat with a great spirit, Pen is my role model: feminine and loving, but tough, strong, fair, and indomitable, protecting her boundaries without fighting; brave and gracious in meeting life's challenges. I wish I were more like her! Being outdoors with her on her leash has taught me, from a cat's-eye-view, to wonder at the beauty and mystery of nature in my own backyard. Although she has many nicknames—Ms. Puss, Pen-Pal, Sweet Pea, Pea Pod, and Pod—a pretty Penny and a shiny Penny—she's a lucky Penny to my partner Dick and me.

Without fosterers, cats will be left out in the cold. Fosterers urgently needed. Please phone 553-3736 for info or to volunteer.

by Clarinda Karpov 553-3736

Looking for a lost cat in the Gifford Park Area?

Please call 203-4682

Yates School Meeting Update

On September 27, a Community Focus meeting was held at Yates School to discuss the desire of the GPNA and Gifford Park neighborhood to pursue turning Yates School at 32nd & Davenport back to a neighborhood school. OPS Representatives (**Jerry Bartee, Thomas L. Harvey, Susan Higginson, Casey Hughes, Carla Noerrlinger**) and nearly thirty neighborhood residents were in attendance. OPS presented general information and also specific data about Yates and the area neighborhoods. Residents asked many good questions and offered thoughtful comments. One resident challenged OPS to think creatively about options to return Yates to a neighborhood school. Another asked OPS to develop a master plan for Yates to include expansion options. Another said their family moved into the neighborhood many years ago because of Yates School for their children. **State Senator Gwen Howard** said she fought hard in the legislature for neighborhood schools and believes whole-heartedly in returning Yates to be our neighborhood school – she has been very supportive. OPS is currently developing the Student Assignment Plans for all schools; this will have an impact on decisions regarding Yates. Ultimately the OPS Board will make the final decision. If you have ideas, questions or want more information on this issue, call **Chris 342-6006**. Stay tuned.

by Chris Foster

Liquor Commission Denies K-N-J License Upgrade

On October 19, in Lincoln, the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission (NLCC) denied the K-N-J Liquor License Upgrade application (off sale beer, wine and liquor in the original package) – the vote was 2-1. The owner may appeal the decision, but for now the K-N-J Grocery cannot sell more than beer. You may recall the Omaha City Council held a public hearing regarding this application on September 11. For the record, the GPNA is opposed to this license upgrade. Unfortunately, the council voted 4-3 to approve the upgrade.

Thanks EVERYONE for your efforts and support. **Diane Riibe** and **Erin Baum** from Project Extra Mile provided excellent research and data that we used during testimony. The GPNA also thanks **Steve Virgil** and **Jeannie Dickes** for their efforts to win the Supreme Court case earlier this year regarding Orchard Hill Neighborhood Association's fight – this was a two year effort that helps set precedent for other neighborhoods like ours to have a better chance to win these cases. Thanks again for everyone who wrote protest letters. This was truly a team effort! We'll keep you updated if there is an appeal.

by Chris Foster

A Bright Idea To Save Money and Green Your Home

Wise energy use is one of the pillars of an **efficient, cost-effective**, green home. A green home has improved comfort and functionality, but uses substantially less energy. This month, green your home by changing a standard light bulb (or all of them) to a compact fluorescent bulb.

The Scoop

Making improvements to your lighting is one of the fastest ways to cut your energy use and likewise your energy bills. Lighting accounts for 11% of the utility bill in an average household, but most of us can use a lot less energy with the same (or better) light output. Using compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) or light-emitting diodes (LEDs) can reduce lighting energy use in your home by 50% to 75%. And turning off unused lights saves even more.

Benefits

- CFL bulbs last 4 to 10 times longer (up to ten years). Look for those rated for 10,000 hours or longer. Spend less time changing light bulbs and more time enjoying life!
- Replacing one incandescent light bulb with a CFL can save \$7 each year. For a light bulb that costs \$2, that is a 350% return on your investment.

Take Action

- **No money?** Turn off unused lights, appliances and fans to save cash.
- **\$15 Action:** Buy and install 6 CFLs for \$10 and save \$70 the first year. (Average annual savings of \$7 per bulb)
- **Go all the way:** Replace ALL incandescent light bulbs (even if they still work) in your home with CFLs for increased savings. It's better to shed the old bulb right away rather than wait for it to burn out—that is how efficient CFLs are!

Save 10% - Support Local Business

Bring this November 2007 Gifford Park Newsletter into **Ideal Hardware and Paint, 3909 Cuming St.**, or **Westlake Ace Hardware, 350 N. Saddle Creek Rd.**, to receive 10% off the purchase of compact fluorescent light bulbs through November 30, 2007. Offer good only at these locations.

by Daniel Lawse

Neighborhood Impact *****

If every household in Gifford Park changed 3 incandescent light bulbs to CFLs, our neighborhood would collectively save \$35,700 each year. That's a lot of cash for a little change ...of a lightbulb.

Community Garden Final Harvest

After the Fall Cleanup ended, many of the same volunteers were hard at it again in the afternoon of Saturday, October 20, doing a final harvest and garden plot cleanup in the community garden. As part of our fall harvest event, we held a ceremony to plant native berry bushes in the garden. In all we planted eight bushes donated by the **Dominican Sisters of the Kentucky Order**; they have been very generous and supportive of the community garden project since the beginning – we greatly appreciate their involvement. **Joanie Petersen**, an associate of the Dominican Sisters, attended the ceremony. Once again we had great help from the seven **University of South Dakota** students. Thanks to all the community gardeners, parents and youth gardeners who helped make quick work of putting the garden to bed for another year. Many thanks to **Dana Freeman** and **Sarah Newman** who headed up the Youth Garden program this year. Thanks again to **Bob Hutton** who drained the water lines in preparation for winter. At the end of the day we had a pot luck dinner (thanks **John Barna** for cooking the burgers) at the garden to celebrate another great year.

by Chris Foster



Fall Cleanup . . . continued from page 1

Besides the seven **University of South Dakota** students (see Page 1), the rest of our dedicated volunteers included: **Roy White** and his daughter **Kiley**, the **Stanley family**, **Lloyd Canfield**, and **Chris & Sallie Foster**. Special thanks to one of our young youth volunteers **Jaquan Nance** who helped much of the day and has a great volunteer spirit.

by Chris Foster



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Nightly Specials - 7 till Close

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SAVE THE DATE

Conference, Exhibition and Tour
February 29, March 1 & 2, 2008

The preliminary workshop
presented by Landmarks, Inc.:
Seed, How It Shaped our Local
Landmarks and Community

Friday, Nov. 16
4:30-6:30 p.m.
Fl. Museum
4701 S. 28th Street



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

8:00 AM - 10:00 PM Sunday

What's Happening In The Neighborhood . . .

On October 10, several GPNA board members met with the new Northeast Precinct **Captain Dave Baker** and a few others from his staff, including bike patrol officers and Crime Prevention Specialist **Stacy Henry**. Those in attendance thought the meeting went well and are encouraged by the discussion. The GPNA looks forward to working with Captain Baker.

Over twenty **PKA Fraternity** members pitched in to do a bang-up job in picking up litter and clearing out weeds in Gifford Park and part of the business district on September 29. The GPNA appreciates their effort as this kind of manpower gets a lot done in a couple hours time.

The **Community Bicycle Shop Omaha** at **525 N 33rd Street** will remain open through the winter. Regular hours are **Saturday from noon to 4pm**. The shop is a place for you to repair your bicycle or work with youth on bicycle projects. As the shop concludes it's first season of service in the community, it is beginning to plan events for next year. Contact **Stuart** at **216-1235** to provide feedback or to get involved!

Thanks again to **Senator Gwen Howard** for donating a rain barrel for the community garden. This will work out great to have another place to collect rainwater and address water conservation. A rain barrel was an item on our wish list - thanks Gwen!

The **Bemis Park Citizen's Patrol** is sponsoring a benefit event on **Saturday, November 3rd**, from **6 to 8 PM** at **Augustana Lutheran Church, 38th & Lafayette Ave**. Chili and hot dogs will be served. Tickets are \$5.00 per person. For more information, call **932-4744**.

Just a reminder - yardwaste collection season will end the week of **November 26 - November 30th**. Yardwaste collection will resume again in April.

It's Coming In December!

The 19th Annual GPNA Holiday Banquet For Members
Look For More Details in the Next Edition of the GPNA Newsletter!



Gifford Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA)

P.O. Box 91462, Omaha, NE 68131-0462



Membership Application

*Note: The GPNA membership year runs from June 1 through May 31

Today's Date: _____

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

If Business, Name of Business: _____

Name: _____

Spouse: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES I am interested in helping out with... (Circle interests):

- | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Chairperson | Newsletter Delivery | Community Garden | Easter Egg Hunt |
| Membership | Book Club | Youth Garden | Boiling Cleanup |
| Social Activities | History | Tree Planting | Fall Cleanup |
| School Liaison | Wash Group | Youth Activities | Neighborhood Walks |
| Tool Lending | Cal. Committee | Lawn Program | Holiday Banquet |



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