



Gifford Park's Pride

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

September 2005

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

4th Annual Neighborhood Block Party Fun For All

The Gifford Park neighborhood celebrated its fourth annual **National Night Out Block Party** on Tuesday evening, August 2. Briefly, here are just a some of the many highlights of the evening: Long-time GPNA member **Chuck Kilgore** once again dazzled the crowd with his band's jazz music, the rock-climbing wall was awesome (thanks **City of Omaha**), **Big Air Bros** provided two inflatable rides – a moonwalk and an obstacle course, **Dear Heart Clown** was again a huge hit, **Omaha Public Schools** provided the tables and chairs, **Loren Johnson (J'N'J Grocery)** arranged the hot dog wagon and all proceeds were donated to the GPNA, **Gordon Bunn** organized the action-packed hoop-it-up basketball tournament, & there was face-painting and other hands-on children's activities. **Creighton U. Medical Center** provided health screenings for the neighborhood. Thanks to the **Omaha Public Works Department** for use of traffic cones to help secure the street. A big thanks to our neighborhood partners who made generous donations which made some of our activities a reality – **Creighton U. Medical Center**, **Mutual of Omaha** and **Security National Bank**.

We wish to thank the following organizations and individuals for their help and support – Police Department (Chief **Thomas Warren**, Captain **Dennise Cousin**, Crime Prevention Specialist **Stacy Henry**), Fire

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Dear Heart Clown (aka Judy Quest) entertains at the block party by making balloon animals for the kids.

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

Guest Speaker: Roger Morrissey
Douglas County Assessor

Creighton University Med Center
Morrison Seminar Room

Restore Omaha Conference Scheduled For November

Historic property owners seeking information on restoration and preservation techniques can choose from an extensive menu of programs at the **Restore Omaha Conference, Exhibition, and Tour** November 5-6, 2005 at the **Mutual of Omaha Dome**.

Participants can select from up to 25 educational sessions and spend hours on the exhibition floor meeting with more than 50 representatives of products, craftsmen, and associations geared toward restoring, repairing, and preserving historic buildings.

A frequent contributor to **Old House Journal**, **John Leeke** will be the keynote speaker of the event. Leeke grew up in Lincoln, Nebraska and watched his father learn the woodworker trade from **Keats Lorenz**, an early 20th century woodcarver and architectural stylist who worked on Nebraska's State Capitol. Leeke ended up with Keats' carving tools and has used them throughout his hands-on career in preservation. He now lives in Portland, Maine and gives preservation workshops through his company **Historic Home Works** (www.historichomeworks.com).

Conference sessions will start November 5 at 9:30 a.m. and go throughout the day. Attendees will have

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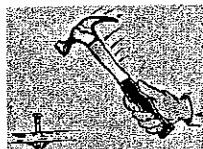
Terry Wilwerding 342-2795

WEEDS & LITTER

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

WELCOMING

Vicki Frey 344-0757



**TOOL
LENDING
HOTLINE**
Chris 342-6006

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

**From The President**

The GPNA will sponsor a booth at the upcoming **Restore Omaha** conference on November 5 in the newly remodeled **Mutual of Omaha Dome**. Our theme is "Grow in Gifford Park". We need volunteers to assist in graphic design, construct presentation boards, create marketing pitches, costume, make-up, and general help in pulling off the best booth in Midtown. Help make it happen and contact me at **556-2090** or **Chris 342-6006** if you have the talent and the interest.

Destination Midtown (DM) invited the GPNA to participate in its first beautification project which will establish "identity" gardens in each of the eleven neighborhoods and at each corner of DM's boundaries. Each neighborhood was asked to suggest three possible locations for the six to ten foot circular flower bed. We offered 33rd & Dodge, 33rd & Cass (Park), 31st & Dodge, and 30th & California. Participating neighborhoods will agree to plant the annual flowers each year as well as weed and water the beds. If you can help in this project, do contact me with your name and phone number and I will keep you apprised of the details.

Other great news: the GPNA is inquiring into the possibility of establishing a community center right here in the neighborhood! We need volunteers to make it happen of course, so if you are interested in organizing the effort or offering a program, let us know.

Also, if you or someone you know recently moved into a house or apartment in the area, let us know about it. Give us the chance to send out the welcome wagon (actually, no wagons are sent in this effort) but let us promote all the great events GPNA offers. And while you're at it, write a letter or send an email thanking all the people who financially realize our events year after year: **Mayor Mike Fahey, Omaha Community Foundation, Creighton University Medical Center, Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, National Tennis Association** and most recently **Mutual of Omaha**. In addition, we thank all individual member and business donations of both time and money.

by Cynthia Shuck

Omaha Neighborhood Scan A Valuable Tool

Historic architecture was the number one primary strength identified by **Destination Midtown's** Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat analysis. The primary weaknesses in the area were absentee landlords, poor perception of the area by others, and the lack of code of enforcement (DM Masterplan, pg 21, 2004)

Omaha Neighborhood Scan is a pilot program created to address these weaknesses using progressive technology to document the current physical state of housing in our neighborhoods with real data. This data will be shared with various local officials and agencies in hopes of determining the roots of the problem and find solutions. The program is a partnership between the **City of Omaha** and the **University of Nebraska at Omaha School of Public Administration**. Funding support is provided through the **US Department of Housing & Urban Development**, the **City of Omaha**, and the **School of Public Administration**. The program is also endorsed by **Destination Midtown** and the **Midtown Neighborhood Alliance**.

To date, 344 residences, businesses and vacant lots have been surveyed in the southwest section of the Gifford Park Neighborhood. Categories for environmental violations include illegally parked (on lawns) or non-working vehicles, sidewalks/

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You Can't Do It All

No you can't. That's a lesson that I learned a long time ago. You can't do it all, and you can't single handedly save the world. But one person can make a difference. My wife had a little story that she liked to share with PTA groups during installations of new PTA officers' ceremonies:

There's a man walking along the beach. He notices a young boy at the water's edge. The boy picks up a starfish, and throws it back into the sea. He repeats this several times as the man approaches.

"What are you doing, son?" The man asks.

"If I leave them up here," the boy says, "they will dry up and die. I'm saving their lives."

"But the beach goes on for miles, and there are millions of starfish washed up on the sand," the man says. "What you are doing won't make any difference in the scheme of things."

The boy stares at the starfish in his hand. And looking up at the man, he smiles and says: "It makes a difference to this one." He gently throws it into the ocean.

You may not be able or willing to participate in every GPNA activity or event. You may only be interested in one thing, be it the community garden, the bi-annual neighborhood clean ups, the watch group, newsletter distribution, the Halloween haunted house, the Easter egg hunt, or the tennis program. Whatever you can, or want to do, to help is an important and valuable contribution. And it most definitely makes a difference.

by Mike Caban

US Bank To Offer Free Financial Seminars

US Bank will be conducting a free financial fair on **Saturday, September 24th**, from 10:00 am to 2:00 p.m. at **Allen Chapel AME Church, 2842 Monroe Street** in South Omaha. Educational seminars will be taught from 10:00 to 11:00, 11:30 to 12:30, and 1:00 to 2:00 on the following topics:

Financial Planning For Teens/Adults
Homebuyer Education
Planning For Retirement
How To Apply For A Job And Interview
Financing A Small Business

There will be FREE food, balloons, and face painting. Booths with product and job information will be available. Please RSVP to and/or for additional information, call **Rev. Portia A. Cavitt at 734-3399** or **Kim Kuhle at US Bank, 434-1249**.

Block Party . . . continued from page 1

Department; and **Judy Johns** with the Community Resource Center.

And finally, because there are so many volunteers before, during and after the event, we don't have room in this article to name everyone. However we would like to recognize the extra efforts of those who went above and beyond the call of duty – **Cynthia Shuck, Kate O'Brien, Dan Bodmann, Clarinda Karpov, Christine Pane, Martin Watson, Lloyd Canfield, Rich Kaster, Ron Yates, Bob & Virginia Hutton, the Slayden family (Betty, Tyffaney, Kayleen, Jacob, Billy), Chris & Sallie Foster, Jackie Foster, Jenny Foster, Jan Franks, Brittney Rubek, Tom Lebeda, Lilly Estes, Jack Sutton, Justin Brown, Martin Watson, Rich Exline, Paul Farrand & Julie Kalkowski, Steve & Rose Carlson, Diane Kaye, Ben Spahn, and Jim Wilwerding.** Our event MVP award easily goes to **Darryl Hutton** who helped with EVERYTHING! – Darryl was the first person there to block off the street and hang the Gifford Park sign to finishing up with street cleanup at 10 p.m. that night. Fortunately the weather was just fine for an early August evening and a good time was had by all.

by Chris Foster



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Tenant's Rights Explained

If you are having a problem with your landlord, want to better understand your lease, or want to know more about your rights as a tenant, the **Landlord and Tenant Handbook** will help explain Nebraska law governing landlords and tenants. These laws are complicated and can be confusing, so you should always call an attorney as soon as you begin having a problem with your landlord or receive court papers. The sooner you call an attorney the better!

You can find a copy of this handbook at <http://www.nebls.com/LL%20T%20Handbook.pdf> or call **Legal Aid of Nebraska (402) 348-1069** located at 500 South 18 Street Omaha, NE

If you are living in Section 8, OHA, or other public housing, the rules in this handbook may apply; however, there are many specific rules that public housing tenants must follow because they are receiving housing benefits. You should consult your OHA or Section 8 caseworker first to request assistance with your situation. If a problem does not get resolved, you should ask for information on how to appeal the decision of the public housing authority and contact **Nebraska Legal Services Accessline** for assistance at **1-877-250-2016** for free legal advice.

A few Reminders for Tenants

1. If at all possible, get a written lease from the landlord instead of relying on a verbal agreement.
2. Insist on signing a move-in checklist to note any problems with the apartment/house, and make sure the landlord signs it too, and keep a copy.
3. Always pay your rent on time even if your landlord does not charge late fees, and get a receipt for each payment.
4. Make any important communications with your landlord in writing, send it by certified mail and return receipt requested and keep a copy for yourself.
5. Never stop paying your rent without the advice of an attorney.
6. Do not ignore papers given to you or sent to you by the court.

Put it in writing! If you decide to send any of the notices or letters described in this handbook, they must be put in writing and sent by certified mail, return receipt requested. You should always keep the return receipt card that comes back to you and the letter you sent as evidence that you sent the notice.

Landlord and Tenant Handbook
Copyright ©2002 Nebraska Legal Services
Last Modified: April 22, 2003

Josh Melancon


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Back To School Tips

- Teach children (whether walking, biking, or riding the bus to school) to obey all traffic signals, signs, traffic officers and safety patrols, and to be extra careful in bad weather.
- When carpooling, deliver and pick up children as close to school as possible.
- If your child is home alone for a few hours after school:
 - Set up rules for locking doors and windows, answering the door & telephone, and activities allowed.
 - Make sure he/she checks in with you, or a neighbor, right after school.
 - Agree on rules for having friends over, and for going to a friend's house when no adult is home.
- Take time to listen carefully to your children's fears and feelings about people or places that scare them or make them feel uneasy. Take complaints about bullies and other concerns seriously.

Reprinted from the OPD Community Resource Center Newsletter

Restore Omaha . . . *continued from page 1*

the opportunity to meet with craftsmen and watch them demonstrate restoration and preservation techniques. The conference also will allow plenty of opportunities to network with historic properties owners to gather ideas and solutions. Conference price is \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door. Admission includes the keynote session, up to three lectures, hands-on demonstrations, exhibitor area plus a continental breakfast and a box lunch.

On **Sunday, November 6** a \$5 tour is planned from 1 to 5 p.m. highlighting current and completed preservation efforts in Omaha's midtown area along with having the **Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center** open for tours.

A committee consisting of representatives from a number of midtown neighborhood associations, American Institute of Architects, Metro Omaha Builders Organization, Nebraska State Historical Society, Omaha Main Streets, Landmarks Inc., Omaha 2020, Midtown Neighborhood Alliance plus midtown businesses are helping to organize the conference.

The conference is made possible with support from the Omaha Community Foundation, Midtown Neighborhood Alliance, University of Nebraska Medical Center, Mutual of Omaha, Ford Birthsite Neighborhood Association, Park East Neighborhood Association, Carpenters Union and IBEW Local #22.

For more information contact **Kristine Gerber**, Conference Director at (402) 614-0056 or eventive.marketing@cox.net

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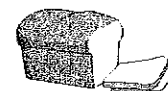
WE DELIVER!



7:00 AM - 10:00 PM Monday thru Thursday

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

8:00 AM - 10:00 PM Sunday



12th Annual Tennis Program Highlights

This year's GPNA Tennis Program, held in Gifford Park, was the 12th annual and the biggest - which presented new challenges for handling such a large number of kids on the limited court space. We had about 15 instructors for each of the four sessions in August and averaged over 90 kids per session. As in the past kids were divided into age groups so they could learn each of the basic tennis skills. The older kids then used their practice skills to rally with instructors. With the number of participants, we used the basketball court and set up mini-nets for the younger kids. The last day featured awards and tennis party. Special recognition went to over 80 kids who had perfect attendance and demonstrated good sportsmanship - each received a free tennis racquet (provided by the Nebraska Tennis Association), a certificate, and a racquet cover. A BIG thanks go to **Godfather's Pizza** again this year donating 20 pizzas for the event! Neighborhood volunteers provided delicious treats also. Many thanks go to all the wonderful instructors for their support and dedication to this program, especially on those hot days: **Rick & Jane Hines, Eric Hines, Ane Tillotson, Roger Freeman, Donna Walter, Dan Sloboth, Kari Sloboth, Sue Sloboth, Sharon Reece, Jenna Coalson, Susan Mayberger, Ben Thomas, Ike Thomas, Nancy Gaarder, Jim Lang, Jacob Slayden, Laurie Bolte, Nancy Samson, Jackie Foster, Jenny Foster, Chris Foster, Ed Hogan, Dan Bratetic, Bill Roach, Julie Wilwerding, and Ron Goodman.** Special thanks go to **Jan Franks, Brittney Rubek, Bette Tanner, Betty Slayden, Tyffaney Slayden, and Kayleen Slayden** for helping with registration, prizes and serving food. Thanks also to the **Omaha Tennis Association, the United States Tennis Association, and the City Parks & Recreation Department** for their generous support over the years. GPNA members **Jim Wilwerding and Mike Wilwerding** helped serve food and cleanup on the final day. My wife **Sallie** worked very hard behind the scenes to help prepare before each session - thank you! If any children who participated in the tennis lessons are interested in more advanced lessons this fall, please contact **Chris** at 342-6006.

by Chris Foster



Highlights From The Destination Midtown Mid-year Update

In January of this year, we began the exciting process of implementing the Destination Midtown Master Plan. I'd like to provide you with a mid-year update on that plan specifically focusing on four areas: neighborhood development, economic development, transportation, and coordination.

Neighborhoods

Later this year we will begin to offer Home Ownership and Financial Literacy classes.

With the passage of LB66 there are now tax incentives for restoring homes on the historic register; we are promoting the availability of these incentives to residents.

We have aggressively pursued the allocation of city budget funds towards increased code enforcement in our neighborhoods. In June we announced the implementation of a Destination Midtown Identity Flower Garden project throughout all 11 Midtown neighborhood associations.

Economic Development

We continue to actively inventory available properties in the area to market those properties to persons interested in doing business in Midtown.

To attract and retain businesses in Midtown, we have hired a consultant in cooperation with the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce to conduct a detailed retail analysis of Midtown Omaha. We expect a report in early fall that will provide us with the information to effectively market the area to local, regional, and national retailers who are right for Midtown.

Transportation

The Omaha City Council has approved a contract that will allow a feasibility study of five selected Midtown improvements. This study will provide us with recommendations for the most optimal transportation solutions to meet the needs of all who travel through and within Midtown. We plan to engage the public in this study process toward the end of the year.

Coordination

The \$100,000 Peter Kiewit Foundation grant has opened doors to other funders and revenue sources, further enabling the organization to fulfill its mission. In the third and fourth quarter of this year we will increase our fundraising efforts. In November of this year, we will again host forums to engage the community as we move into our second year.

I am happy to announce the revitalization of our quarterly e-mail newsletter and the creation of our new website.

This excerpt was taken from the **Destination Midtown August 2005 Newsletter** by **Tawanna Black**, Executive Director, Destination Midtown. If you are interested in receiving regular broadcast emails detailing Destination Midtown programs and events contact info@destinationmidtown.org to submit your request. Include your name, address, city, state, zip, phone, and email address.

2005 "Music In The Park" Series Ends On High Note

The third and final "Music in the Park" event this summer was held Friday, August 12, in Gifford Park. The U.S. Air Force Heartland of America Band "Winds of Freedom" (Woodwind Quartet) put on a wonderful, classic show, starting off the evening program with a rendition of the "Star-Spangled Banner". The GPNA wishes to thank US Cellular, City of Omaha, Recording Industries Music Performance Fund as arranged by the Omaha Musicians' Union Local 70-558, for the opportunity to host these events. Thanks also to the Roberts Dairy for the ice cream treats and Loren Johnson (J'N'J Grocery) for bottled water and pop.



Community Garden News

While the gardening season is not quite over, we had our last Saturday morning youth garden program this last weekend. Old and young alike had fun learning and working together over the past summer. The kids should be very proud of how their gardens grew and of their hard work. If you haven't had a chance to check it out you will be amazed at the giant sunflowers, large watermelon, and cute pumpkins they have grown. For those who don't know, the youth gardens are the small plots at the back of the community garden at 35th and Cass.

Our young farmers and their parents took a field trip to Gifford Educational Farm in Bellevue on our final week together. There we got to dig up some of their potatoes and interact with all the animals that live on a real farm. The best part for them may have been the slide down into the hay pile! Thanks to all who helped by giving of their time and resources to make this program happen. I would especially like to thank the Omaha Community Foundation for granting us money again this year to help make this program such a success.

by Kate O'Brien

Neighborhood Loses Popular Landlord

The GPNA was saddened to learn of the loss of one of its former "Landlords of the Month". **Jeff Erickson** died on August 22 just after he finished mowing at one of the properties he owned on 33rd & Webster Street. Jeff owned several properties in the Gifford Park area, and he took good care of them. A few years ago, Jeff was recognized by the GPNA as a "Landlord of the Month" and was featured in an article in the *Gifford Park Pride*. In an *Omaha World-Herald* article, Jeff was described by his tenants as a good landlord; he was a landlord who cared about his tenants and took pride in the appearance of his property. The GPNA sends its sincere condolences to the Erikson family.



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GPNA Fall Cleanup
Saturday, October 15
9:00am - 1:00 pm

Look For More Details In The
October GPNA Newsletter

Neighborhood Scan

continued from page 2

driveways in need of repair, weeds in excess of 12", sanitation i.e. litter or dead storage on porches or in side-yards, accessory structures in disrepair, and graffiti. Categories for housing violations are protective treatment, exterior walls and foundation members, exterior overhangs, roofs & drainage, stairways/decks/porches, missing handrails, chimneys, window and door frames, glazing (glass), and doors in disrepair. Exterior light covers were also noted in addition any obvious electrical problems.

Property owners in the current scan will receive more information regarding the scan results of their particular property. Eventually, all properties in the neighborhood will be scanned and notified of their property results.

Neighborhood Walk

Friday, Sept. 2
7:00 - 8:00 pm

Meet at California
Tacos & More
33rd & California
Free Chips, Salsa, &
Pop for Participants

GPNA Executive Meeting
Thursday, Sept. 15
7:00 pm
California Tacos & More

For City Services,
Information, or
Complaints
Call: Mayor's Action
Office
444-5555



GIFFORD PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 31462 Omaha, NE 68131-0462

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Please print clearly)

Membership year: _____ *(Membership year runs from June 1 through May 31)*

Type of membership: Single (\$5) _____ Family (\$8) _____ Business (\$25) _____

Name of business _____

Name _____
(Last) (First)

Spouse _____
(Last) (First)

Address _____
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Telephone Number: _____
(Home) (Work)

E-mail Address: _____

Can we contact you for help on any of the following items? (please circle areas of interest).

Cleanup/Beautification
Membership
Neighborhood Walks
Social Activities
Landlord/Tenant Issues

Tennis Program
Youth Activities
Park
Tree Planting
Calling Committee

Block Captain
History
Merchants
Watch Group
Public Relations

Tool Lending
Newsletter
Newsletter Distribution
Meeting Program
School Liaison