



Gifford Park's Pride

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

January/February 2007

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Jan Franks Named 2006 GPNA Neighbor Of The Year

The GPNA was proud to honor longtime member **Jan Franks** as our 2006 Neighbor of the Year. She was recognized at the 18th annual GPNA Holiday Banquet hosted again by Creighton University Medical Center on December 7. With this year's banquet theme of "taking root", it was very fitting for Jan to be recognized for her many years of dedicated volunteerism with our neighborhood, especially with youth activities. Her "GPNA volunteer resume" is quite impressive, as she not only helps out with most events and activities, but takes real ownership and is always committed to whatever project and people she is involved with, whether it is the Easter Egg Hunt, Spring and Fall Cleanup, Community Garden, Sun Dawgs Summer Youth Program, Show Wagon, Music in the Park, Block Party, Tennis Program, Halloween Haunted House, Kellom Elementary School fundraising, and other projects. Keep in mind most of these are annual events that Jan has volunteered to help with over the past 10 years or more.

Jan was born in 1940 and raised in the Gifford Park neighborhood, specifically the house next to the park at 321 N. 35th Ave. She attended Yates School through 8th grade, then graduated from Tech High. For many of her early years, Jan's family lived next door to the Bogard family (of course there are lots of stories). Other close friends and longtime Gifford Park residents include **Fred & Doris Bruce, Jim & Vera Horton, and Denis & Robin Hanson** and their families. Jan recalls many fond neighborhood memories, including ice-skating and sleigh-riding in the park, seeing 25-cent Saturday afternoon movies at the Circle Theater, and meeting at the Grass Shack restaurant before and after school. She continues to live in the same house, spending a lot of time with her grandchildren and watching over the park.

You can always count on Jan to be there when she's needed most. As mentioned above, she cares deeply for our neighborhood's youth, including the thankless job of disciplining children when they misbehave at youth events (I know from personal experience many times over how important this is). Jan has always encouraged her grandchildren to be involved with the GPNA - Brittney, 16, and Zach, 13, have helped with most of the activities mentioned above - they are both good examples for other

Next General Meeting
Thursday, February 1

7:00 P.M.

Speaker: Sherry Haftings
Feline Friendz
Topic: Feral Cat Colonies

Creighton University Med Center
Morrison Seminar Room

Executive Meetings
Thursday, January 18
Thursday, February 15

7:00 P.M.
Via Christie
36th & California

youth to see when it comes to helping make a difference in our neighborhood. Jan was very close to her brother Robert Ford, who sadly passed away last month; he also grew up in the neighborhood and volunteered on many activities. On a personal note, I have great respect for Jan because of her upfront, candid and helpful attitude, including the brainstorming talks we have when planning for upcoming events. She always says "it's no big deal" when mentioning her efforts - this couldn't be further from the truth as anyone who saw this year's Holiday Banquet picture sideshow knows it IS a big deal to many people. Despite several very tough challenges in 2006 for Jan and her family, she was there again for the GPNA. Congratulations, Jan, from all of us in the Gifford Park neighborhood!

by Chris Foster



Martin Luther King
Day
January 15

GPNA OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Cynthia Shuck 556-2090

VICE PRESIDENT

Rodney Flint 346-4575

RECORDING SECRETARY

Open

TREASURER

Dana Carlton-Flint 346-4575

SERVICES

COMMUNITY GARDEN

Chris Foster 342-6006

COMPLIANCE

Leo Wilwerding 345-1433

HISTORIAN

Eva Swanson 345-1707

KELLOM SCHOOL LIAISON

Jean Peck 344-0722

MEMBERSHIP

Chris Foster 342-6006

NEWSLETTER

Sue Wilwerding 342-2795

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

Chris Foster 342-6006

PARK

Roger Freeman 557-2914

PARKING VIOLATIONS

Leo Wilwerding 345-1433

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

From The President . . .

Midtown Crossing Project

Midtown Neighborhood Alliance's (MNA) Community Benefits Committee met with developers of Midtown Crossing, Mutual of Omaha, and City of Omaha leadership last month. They are looking forward to working with Mutual developer ECI toward an excellent Midtown project. They submitted a letter of conditional support to the City Planning Board noting the following key issues:

1. MNA will review and provide input on the design of Turner Park.
2. Farnam Street will be converted to two-way traffic.
3. MNA will be allowed to request use of Turner Park for Midtown community events as approved by the City of Omaha Parks Department.
4. The developer will incorporate signage/kiosk for other Midtown attractions and historical districts.
5. MNA will review and provide input on pedestrian elements including but not limited to: crosswalks, sidewalks and lighting.

Yates School Update

Omaha Public School (OPS) conducted research on returning Yates to Gifford Park's neighborhood school and presented the findings to a committee reviewing the Student Assignment Plan on January 12th. The purpose of the committee is to review how Yates would impact the overall integration of other schools. GPNA and Senator Gwen Howard are committed to continuing efforts with OPS on returning Yates to a neighborhood school.

Combined Sewer Overflow/Clean Solutions Omaha CSO

If interested in learning about this long term plan to control combined sewer overflows consider attending one of the public informational sessions this month. Attend the **Saturday, January 20th** meeting from **10:00 – 11:30 AM** at the **North Omaha Boys and Girls Club (2610 Hamilton)** for information about our Burt-Izard Basin. City-wide meetings shall present the same information January 23rd and February 1st (see page 4).

by Cynthia Shuck

Longtime GPNA Member Bob Ford Passes Away

Our neighborhood will greatly miss longtime GPNA member and volunteer **Robert "Bob" Ford**, who sadly passed away December 16 - he was just 60 years old. Bob lived at 3416 Davenport for many years. You may have seen from recent GPNA newsletters that he had become ill again this past fall. Words like humble, modest, quiet, duty, honor, charity, giving, and bonding friendships were used to describe Bob. Even some of his closest family and friends didn't know until the very end of Bob's life the extent of his generous contributions to many charities, including those to help abused children. He also specified a yearly contribution to go towards GPNA youth programs. If you were around the neighborhood for any length of time, you probably saw Bob collecting cans and picking up litter in the park. He was preceded by parents **Harry & Shirley Ford**; survived by his best friend **Denis & Robin Hanson**, sister **Jan Franks**, niece **Michelle Rubek** and her children **Brittney** and **Zachary**. Bob was a lifetime member of the V.F.W. and he retired from Vickers after 26 years. Bob's passing leaves a big hole in the lives of his family, friends and the Gifford Park neighborhood.

by Chris Foster

*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.*

Editor's Note: Due to scheduling issues in regard to newsletter preparation, this current publication of the Gifford Park Pride is a combined January/February edition. The next newsletter (March) will be delivered to all neighborhood residents.

Free Tax Help Available Soon

The site for the annual free tax assistance is the **Lay Apostolate Center at St. Cecilia's Cathedral, 40th & Webster St.** Tax help will be available starting the first week of **February on Mondays from 1 to 3:30 p.m., Wednesdays from 6 to 7:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 to 11:30 a.m.** though the tax season. Everyone is welcome! IRS representatives will provide free tax help for our neighborhood for the 13th year in a row. Processing of basic tax returns and electronic filing will be available. No appointments; walk-in on first come first serve basis. Please call **Jackie at 551-3629** for more information.

Neighborhood Builders For Adults, Teens Scheduled For February

Neighborhood Builders will be holding its 11th annual Leadership Sessions for adults each **Saturday in February (3rd, 10th, 17th, and 24th) from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.** at a **NEW Location!!! - Douglas/Sarpy Extension Office, 8015 West Center Road** (south side). Parking is available on site. The sessions will be interesting and interactive. The goal is to make the topics useful to participants in everyday life. Newly acquired skills will help at work, home, and in one's neighborhood community. Topics include Building on Neighborhood Assets, Utilizing Community Resources, Planning & Effective Management, and Neighborhood Problem Solving. Sessions include activities on the "topic of the day", continental breakfast, lunch and neighborhood networking. The goal of this program is to help build stronger, healthier neighborhoods by assisting in developing positive leadership.

Registration is on a first-come, first-serve basis. Applications are available at the **Neighborhood Center, 115 South 49th Avenue, Omaha, NE 68132** or you may contact **Mark Simmons at 561-7575** to register or for more information.

Neighborhood Builders for Teens is a similarly structured program for youth between the ages of 15 to 18 years. Young people who are interested in community betterment and care about their neighborhoods are encouraged to participate. The sessions will be held on the same Saturdays as the adult program and at the same location (**Douglas/Sarpy Extension Office, 8015 West Center Road**), but will meet from **9:00 a.m. to 1 p.m.** Deadline for applications to the program is **Friday, January 26**. Class size is limited and registration is on a first come, first served basis. Applications are available at the **Neighborhood Center, 115 South 49th Avenue, Omaha, NE, 68132**. If you are interested or have further questions or just want more details, please call **Mark Simmons at 561-7575**.

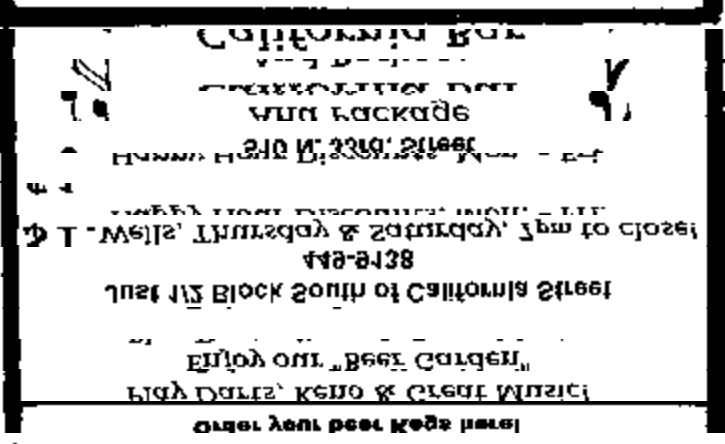
Brad Bogard Receives First "Spirit Of Midtown" Award

On Monday, December 11, Mayor **Mike Fahey** along with other officials presented the first "**Spirit Of Midtown**" award to **Brad Bogard** at his restaurant, **California Tacos & More** at **33rd & California St.** **Destination Midtown** officials chose to recognize Bogard on the basis of his work with businesses and the GPNA to improve the area, and it plans to make the award on a quarterly basis to other merchants who demonstrate those qualities.

Bogard has been instrumental in forwarding the Gifford Park business district's revival and has provided funding and assistance for a wide variety of the GPNA's projects. In addition, he has allowed the Association to hold meetings and other gatherings at his restaurant.

The building that houses California Taco has been in the Bogard family since 1914. Brad's grandfather built it and operated a pharmacy out of the location, which was run in later years by his father and uncles. Brad bought the building in 1996 and opened the restaurant.

Congratulations, Brad, on the well-deserved award!



Charles R. Kilgore Jr. Attorney At Law

**4913 Underwood Avenue
558-5000**

Personal Injury Law
Worker's Compensation
Injury
Auto Accidents
Insurance Claims

Henry W. Yates Elementary School - Wouldn't That Be Something!

To think that there just might be the possibility of Yates School opening its doors to our neighborhood children once again... it would be like a dream come true. There are a number of us in this community who spent many hours at Yates, be it at Christmas programs, PTA meetings, Ice Cream Socials, Spaghetti dinners, Bake Sales, Fund Raisers, the wonderful Yates' Carnivals, Safe Walk to School for incoming Kindergartners... what a lifetime of memories!

Not too long ago I had some major plumbing work done on my house. The gentleman who managed the job for the company I chose was very helpful, and he waited until the last day to say, "You still don't know who I am, do you, Mister Caban?" I looked at him, and his face seemed familiar; but no, I had no idea who he was. He introduced himself, and added, "I went to Yates and helped you with the carnivals, and my mom was PTA president a couple of times. She and your wife worked on all those programs together, back in the 70's and early 80's". Here he was, a grown man, still living in the neighborhood. It was so great to see him all grown and successful.

That's what is so exciting about the possibility of having Yates as a neighborhood school again. The children remember, and they become part of the community, and they raise their own children, who in turn learn what community is all about.

The GPNA has a motto about our neighborhood – a great place to Live, Work, Learn, and Play. For too many years now the "Learn" part has been missing due to Yates removal as our neighborhood elementary school. Part of the glue that binds us has been missing, and I don't think we can continue to "Grow in Gifford Park" without our neighborhood school. I applaud State Senator **Gwen Howard, Chris Foster, Cynthia Shuck, Kate Bodmann,** and everyone involved in this labor of love. It is well worth the effort.

by Mike Caban



**TOOL
LENDING
HOTLINE**
Chris 342-6006
Rent for most tools - \$3

CSO!

Clean Solutions for Omaha

CSO Hotline:
341-0235
www.omahacso.com

The City of Omaha, through a mandate from the federal government, must develop a plan for reducing the wet-weather overflows of the combined sewers which still exist for about 51 square miles of the eastern part of Omaha.

You're invited to come hear more about the development of this plan and to ask questions at either of the following meetings. Parking is free.

Community Public Meetings Combined Sewer Overflow Study Project

Tuesday, January 23, 2007

6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Omaha Public Schools TAC Building
3215 Cuming Street

or

Thursday, February 1, 2007

6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Douglas County Cooperative Extension - Central Office
8015 West Center Road

Community Information Session January 16th

Local residents will have the opportunity to learn how **the Urban Design Element** will be used to help make the city more vibrant, connected, and distinctive at a community information session set for **Tuesday, Jan. 16**. The event, which is free and open to all interested citizens, will be held from **6:30 to 8 p.m.** at the **Scott Conference Center, 6450 Pine St.**

The Urban Design Element centers on three components: Green Omaha, which seeks to preserve and enhance the city's natural setting and public park system, Civic Omaha, which seeks to define and improve the city's civic places and public image, and Neighborhood Omaha, which seeks to preserve and enhance the city's residential neighborhoods. The Omaha City Council adopted the Urban Design Element as a component of the city's master plan in December 2004. Since that time, a core group of city officials and staff from Omaha by Design have been working with area developers, architects, land use attorneys, nonprofit organizations and others to draft implementation measures for the Urban Design Element. The Jan. 16 event will feature a brief history of the Urban Design Element, comments from **Mayor Fahey**, a presentation on the proposed implementation measures, and a question-and-answer session. For more information, contact **Teresa Gleason** at **342-3458** or teresa@omahabydesign.org.

Scenes From Holiday Season Activities in Gifford Park



2006 GPNA HOLIDAY BANQUET HIGHLIGHTS

A big thanks to everyone who pitched in and made the 18th annual Holiday Banquet another success!

This year the weather cooperated as a record crowd of 145 GPNA members, family, and invited guests enjoyed ~~some camaraderie and holiday cheer at Creighton U. Med Center's Becic Room~~ **Chris Foster** and **Cynthia Shuck** set the greeting area to showcase some of this year's highlights in pictures. Three get well cards for members who were too ill to attend were well received. As we all gathered in the Becic Room for the opening ceremony, and as I stood in front of one the largest crowds I have ever emceed for, knees trembling, mouth dry, and my heart beating faster than a humming bird's, I glanced down at **Bob Hutton** and his "Bob Devaney" era red jacket and I knew all would be well! This year's theme, "Taking Root" was a celebration of all the new development and renewed focus in the Gifford Park neighborhood, as reiterated by the President of the GPNA, Cynthia Shuck, during the "State of the Neighborhood Address." This was followed by what I personally will say is the best turkey I have had. (And I used to be a chef!) Many thanks to **Rodney Hay** for his time and culinary expertise. Rodney, as most of your know bakes, smokes, and deep fries the turkeys for us every year. **Sodexo** made it complete with a buffet of traditional holiday fare. (I got seconds. Well, thirds. Um...Let us just say I enjoy good food!)

This year's recipient of the "Neighbor of the Year" as introduced by Chris Foster was long time resident and volunteer, **Jan Franks**. The night was capped of by drawing of door prizes that were donated by our members and VIP's.

As with any event in Gifford Park, there are many people to thank for their generosity and support. The Holiday Banquet is no exception! GPNA would like to extend its sincere gratitude to the following people:

STATE \ CITY OFFICIALS

State Senator Gwen Howard, Chris Rodgers, Jim Vokal, Joe Gudenrath, Steve Scarpello, Subby Anzaldo
CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY/SODEXHO

Dan Burkey, Deborah Williams, Theresa Richardson, Trisha Akerlund

DOOR PRIZES

State Senator Gwen Howard, Jim and Liz Vokal, Subby and Janice Anzaldo, Lily Estes, Brad Bogard,
"Design With You in Mind " (Dana Carlton-Flint)

CENTERPIECES

Bob Hutton, Jean Peck, Leo and Marlene Wilwerding

GREETING TABLE \ REGISTRATION \ CAN DONATION

Cynthia Shuck, Dana Freeman, Stuart Shell

And to all the members and their families for attending, THANK YOU!

And last but not least, I would like to give my thanks to the President of the GPNA, **Cynthia Shuck**, and the guy who I call the hardest workin' man in Gifford Park, **Chris Foster**. As emcee and coordinator for the banquet, I leaned on these two for guidance and assurance during the whirlwind of meetings, phone conversations, and endless emails. I could not have done this without them. I have a new appreciation of how much hard work and dedication it takes to make this and all the other events a success.

by John W. Barna

2006 Holiday Lighting Contest Winners

The GPNA would like to thank everyone for decking the halls this holiday. Whether this is your first year or your thirtieth, the festive lighting is a joy to observe each year. **John Barna, Chris Foster** and **Cynthia Shuck** judged displays on December 14. And the winners are:

3408 CALIFORNIA

137 N 37 ST

348 N 37 ST

621 N 36 ST

3702 CASS ST

3514 CALIFORNIA

3416 CASS ST (COMMUNITY GARDEN)



Caroling Party, Tree Lighting Brightens Holiday Season In Gifford Park

Thanks to everyone who participated in our Holiday Caroling and Tree Lighting ceremony held the evening of Saturday, December 9. Neighbors met in front of **California Tacos** at 5 p.m. and sang holiday carols until everyone showed up – we were joined by 7 members of the **Millard West Choral Group** including a piano player! Then our group marched up to 36th & California to **Via Christe Assisted Living Center** for more caroling in front of the residents. Their dining area was very nicely decorated, including a beautiful tree. Then we walked to the **Community Garden** at 35th & Cass to gather around the tree for a tree-lighting ceremony, and more caroling. Then we walked back to California Tacos “party room” for hot apple cider and holiday treats at about 6 p.m. Thanks again to **Brad Bogard** for letting us use his party room. We want to thank **Rodney Hay** for donating two nice benches for the Community Garden – these came in very handy for this event. And special thanks to **John Barna** who came up with the tree-lighting idea and led the caroling event – what a voice the man has!!!

by Chris Foster

California Tacos & More

Homemade Mexican Food

342-0212

33rd & California Street

Dine In or Carry Out

Hours:

Monday - Saturday: 11a.m. - 8 p.m.

Closed Sunday

California **Tacos & More**



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

**Please
Patronize
Our
Newsletter
Advertisers**

J'N'J

GROCERY STORE

Fresh Meats -- Fresh Produce

Friendly Service

3301 California Street -- 422-1058

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



What's Happening In The Neighborhood . . .

The **2007 Cathedral Flower Festival** celebrates the Centennial of **St. Cecilia Cathedral**, the 75th anniversary of **Joslyn Art Museum** and the 5th anniversary of **Lauritzen Gardens**. This year, enjoy works of art from the Joslyn Art Museum vault, each paired with a floral designer's personal interpretation. Along with the special selections from the Joslyn, new acquisitions to the Cathedral's extensive Spanish Colonial collection will be featured. The flower festival is free to guests with free-will donations accepted. Festival hours are **10 a.m. to 4 p.m.** and **7 to 9 p.m.** on **Saturday, January 27** and **1 to 4 p.m.** on **Sunday, January 28**. St. Cecilia Cathedral is located at **701 N. 40th Street**. If you have questions, please call the **Cathedral Arts Project** at **551-4888**.

Congratulations to "academic neighbor" **Duchesne Academy** on completing its 125th anniversary year in 2006. The school, which is located at 36th & Burt St., was established by the Religious of the Sacred Heart in 1881. A Mass at St. Cecilia's Cathedral and reception at the school in November was the culmination of the year-long celebration.

We want to welcome **Ketaw Bereded** into the neighborhood. Ketaw is the new owner of **J-N-J Grocery** on 33rd & California. Many thanks to previous owner **Loren Johnson** for his generous donations and support of many GPNA activities.

We are very excited to report that longtime GPNA member **Jim Watson** is making tremendous progress after suffering a very serious, life-threatening fall the day before Thanksgiving. Through the thoughts and prayers of many family and friends, Jim has made a remarkable recovery and is now in rehab at Immanuel Hospital. Many have followed Jim's day-to-day progress by visiting the website link the family setup after his accident: www.caringbridge.org/visit/jimwatson. Jim, your many friends in the Gifford Park neighborhood continue to keep you, wife Jean, and the rest of the Watson family in our thoughts and prayers – we know you're anxious to come home soon!

The GPNA, as well as the Omaha community, lost a great friend when **Sibyl Myers** passed away Monday, January 8. She was the Omaha World-Herald's neighborhood columnist for many years. Sibyl was always very kind to the Gifford Park neighborhood by promoting our events, activities and people. Her column was the way many neighborhoods stayed connected. Sibyl was also a very active volunteer in the community. The GPNA sends our sincerest condolences to her family.



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 30

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

Snow Removal Rules

A **Snow Emergency** means that no vehicles may be parked on the streets where you see an Emergency Snow Route sign. Crews will plow these streets first. If cars are left parked on an Emergency Snow Route during a snow emergency, the cars will be subject to a fine and may be towed at the owner's expense. Radio and TV stations will broadcast all necessary information.

Omaha's Municipal Code requires **all sidewalks to be shoveled within 24 hours after a snowstorm**. Walks left unshoveled may be cleared by City crews at the expense of the property owner. For more information, or if you have a comment or complaint, please call the **Street Maintenance Office** at **444-4919** (24 hour line).