

Gifford Park's Pride

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

September 2007

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Bike Rodeo

Saturday, September 8
11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
in Gifford Park
(at the Tennis Courts)



and more...

Health Screenings

Bring a Picnic Lunch & Enjoy Live Music

Organized by J.P. Community Bike Shop of Omaha, Billion Park. "Neighbord and Association and the Omaha Police Department."

















Neighborhood-wide Garage Sale Saturday, September 8 Starting at 9 a.m. 33rd & California Street

The Gifford Park Neighborhood Association (GPNA) will pay for an ad in the Omaha World-Herald to promote garage sales in the Gifford Park neighborhood. If you would like to donate usable garage sale items (no clothes or shoes please) to the GPNA, please call **Neil 933-1960** or **Chris 342-6006** - we will sell items in the business district at 33rd & California starting at 9 a.m. Proceeds will go to the GPNA.



The Kids Are Back To School Please Drive Carefully! Next General Meeting Thursday, September 6 7:00 P.M.

> Guest Speaker: City Councilman Jim Vokal

Creighton University
Med Center
Morrison Seminar
Room

Fall Is Just Around The Youth Garden Corner

Forget about the movements of the sun and the Autumnal Equinox when day and night are nearly equal on September 23rd, and afterward, daytime shortens and nighttime lengthens in our hemisphere. Disregard the mandate of Congress and end of Daylight Saving Time on November 4th at 2 A.M., when we turn our clocks back 1 hour. Pay no heed to the impending Harvest Moon. An intuitive community gardener recently told me the fall season had already come; she could just feel it in the air a week or so ago. I usually welcome fall at the beginning of a new academic year, and most kids have returned to school by now. This year, however, I bid farewell to summer at the conclusion of Gifford Park's amazing Youth Garden program and final Harvest Party on August 25th. Trust two gardeners from your neighborhood that fall HAS arrived.

I reflect wistfully on the past 15 fun-filled weeks and store countless warm (actually hot!) memories to keep with me through the approaching winter months. There are many

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Terry Wilwerding 342-2795

WEEDS & LITTER

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

WELCOMING

Dana Freeman 850-9611

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.

Youth Garden . . . continued from page 1

children, parents, and volunteers who positively shaped the program this summer by their involvement. Most of all, we recognize our excellent educator, avian authority, and butterfly buff **Sarah Newman**. She came to our program with much expertise and experience from the neighboring Dundee School Garden Project. Sarah implemented new weekly lessons and activities for our young gardeners, as well as created lasting structures in the Garden. The summer would not have been the same without her participation. The following summarizes the final 5 weeks of the Youth Garden program, in all its glory:

On *Week 11*, July 28th, neighborhood weather forecaster **Chris Foster** led another exciting lesson on Weather this year that was fun for all ages. He was assisted by special guest **Andrea Rich**, meteorologist from WOWT Channel 6. We walked through the Garden and visited several "weather stations" for cool science experiments, including measuring different temperatures and making clouds with dry ice. We learned about rain and lightning, caused thunder, and made windsocks to take home. Special thanks to **Westlake Ace Hardware** for their donation of 11 thermometers and the **National Weather Service** for the awesome posters and materials.

The Mosquito Man Dr. **Tom Janousek** and his lovely wife and assistant **Tracy** visited the Garden August 4th, *Week 12*, to host a lesson on Insects. They brought a "show & tell" of creepy crawlies, including silkworms, fat and green tomato hornworm caterpillars and the 4-inch long Madagascar hissing cockroaches. (Don't worry. There was only one hissing incident, when one had been dropped under a picnic table.) We even viewed mounted exhibits, wasp nests made from various materials, and aquatic insect life under microscopes and magnifying glasses. Tom also had numerous insect trading cards and even an Emerald Ash Borer temporary tattoo to share. We nibbled on Bug Bites graham snacks, and they didn't even sting! Everyone made a magical butterfly net to take home with them. Special thanks to **Sue Freeman**, Dana Freeman's mom, for sewing all of the nets.

Youth Garden parents **Eric & Annemarie Noll** showed us all how to Cook in the Garden on *Week 13*, August 11th. After leading a lesson on the new food pyramid for kids donated by **OPS Nutrition Services**, everyone made a jar of delicious refrigerator pickles to take home. We didn't just pickle cucumbers but an assortment of vegetables from cauliflower to red peppers. Everyone was able to design and prepare their own personal-sized vegetable and cheese pita pizza to be grilled for a healthy and tasty snack. We also celebrated **Sallie Foster's** 50th birthday with carrot cake in the shape of an elephant and presents. It was a perfect day for feasting!

August 18th, *Week 14*, was a wiggly Worm day in the Garden. **Stuart Shell & Dana Freeman** described worm anatomy and the difference between a worm's head and tail. We learned why these blind and deaf creatures are valuable members of our garden community- they help aerate and fertilize the soil. Did you know that worm poop is called castings, and gardeners often refer to it as "black gold"? There were examples of earthmoving worms, "nightcrawlers," and composting worms, and "red wrigglers," to hold. Red wrigglers feast on fresh vegetables and kitchen scraps. We made wormeries and each participant took home a couple of red wrigglers. Everyone enjoyed a cup of "Dirt." (That's pudding to you.)

Our **Harvest Party** on August 25th, *Week 15*, was a huge success! We had a good turnout of volunteers, students, and family members. **Ari & Emily Manzo** brought their grandparents. **Kate & Ella Bodmann** were in attendance. There was more food

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Yates School Community Focus Meetings To Start

The GPNA is continuing to pursue turning Yates School at **32nd & Davenport St.** back to a neighborhood school. Many thanks to **State Senator Gwen Howard** and **Dave Schinzel** for their hard work and great support of this effort. We have had very productive and positive meetings over the last couple years with **OPS Superintendent Dr. John MacKiel** and his staff regarding our neighborhood's desire to have a neighborhood school again. The first in a series of Community Focus meetings, which will be open to EVERYONE, will begin Thursday, September 20, 7 p.m., at Yates School. Key OPS staff will lead the meeting, but will ask for input from our community. This is our chance to participate in the process and to dream of what we want Yates School to be, discuss options, and ultimately what will be best for the children attending -- what a great opportunity for our neighborhood -- we hope YOU get involved with this chance to shape the future of Yates School and our community. For more information, call Chris 342-6006.

K-N-J Grocery Store Applying For Liquor License

Ketaw Bereded, owner of K-N-J Grocery at 33rd & California St., is applying for an "upgrade to a package liquor license" (Off Sale beer, wine and liquor in the original package). The Omaha City Council will hold a public hearing regarding this application on Tuesday, September 11, at 2 p.m. in the Legislative Chambers, Omaha/Douglas Civic Center at 1819 Farnam Street. Testimony will be received from interested parties at this meeting. You may submit written testimony to the City Clerk, 1819 Farnam Street, Omaha, NE 68183 prior to the hearing date. You can also contact Councilman Jim Vokal at 444-5525 or e-mail: jvokal@ci.omaha.ne.us. For the record, the GPNA Executive Board is opposed to this liquor license upgrade.

Restore Omaha Returns With New Date, New Partnership

This year **Restore Omaha** together with **Metropolitan Community College** will produce the weekend conference focused on teaching and motivating people to restore and preserve older properties. The event has "leaped" closer to spring. Dates are **February 29, March 1 and 2, 2008**. Metro's newly renovated and expanded South Omaha campus will host the all day conference March 1 and South Omaha will be the focus of the home and business tours Sunday, March 2, and the Friday night reception, February 29.

If you have ideas for topics, speakers or exhibitors please e-mailRestore Omaha atinfo@restoreomaha.com. Check Restore Omaha's website www.restoreomaha.com for ongoing updates.

GPNA In Search Of Fall Cleanup Funding

Unless we find about \$800 (cost for 2 each compactor trucks) we will likely **NOT** have a Fall Cleanup this year. The annual event is usually held in October. For many years the GPNA had received grant funding for this event from the **Omaha Community Foundation** which has been greatly appreciated, but the focus has changed for this grant. Unfortunately, the next cleanup opportunity for neighborhood residents won't be until spring. If by chance anyone would like to donate money so that a Fall Cleanup could be held, please contact **Chris 342-6006** or **Cynthia 556-2090**.

Bemis Park Parade of Homes Sunday, September 23, 2007 – 12:00 - 5:00

Tour begins at Augustana Lutheran Church - 38th and Lafayette Tickets — \$10.00

The Bemis Park neighborhood is over 100 years old. The **Parade of Homes** opens private homes for a rare glimpse of the unique architecture and craftsmanship not seen in modern homes. Some homes have remained intact through the year, while others have suffered the ravages of time and are being coaxed back to their former grandeur. This year's selection of homes features fully restored homes, as well as works in progress.

Ollie the Trolley will provide transportation for those who chose to ride rather than walk the neighborhood. Tickets are available outside **Augustana Lutheran Church** at **38**th and **Lafayette**. Ticket price includes a program, free rides on Ollie and admission to all the homes open for tour.

Please join us for an interesting walk through time.

Welcome, Students!

The GPNA would like to extend a welcome to students who are new residents of our neighborhood. The goal of the GPNA is to improve the area and make it a better place for **all** residents, and we would ask our new student neighbors to become part of this effort. Being a good neighbor means being considerate of others, and the biggest concerns we long-term residents have are party noise control, underage drinking, litter, and parking violations. We ask that you be mindful of these situations, and we hope we can count on you to help. Have a great school year!

What's New, Pussycat?

The Saga of Spats

David and Donna shared a terrace with neighbor Rita in their Dundee Apartment building, where a little tuxedo cat started coming around. Black with white "shirt-front" and white "boots" or "spats," the dapper fellow soon became a favorite. David and Rita put out food and water, and Spats routinely came to dinner. Although shy of humans, he soon trusted his hosts to pet him, and visited on the terrace summer evenings.

In winter, invited indoors, Spats would enter and sit on David's or Rita's lap to be petted. But lap-sit over, Spats was desperate to leave, too wild to linger indoors. (He tried to chew his way through Rita's screen door!) David's friend Wes fashioned a cozy shelter for Spats on the terrace by making a hole in a metal chest. Rita furnished it with blankets, and soon Spats was curling up nightly in in his snug den.

Spats's friends wanted to do right by him, and Gifford Park Cats was happy to help. Michelle Trudell trapped Spats in a humane trap and took him to the vet to be neutered. When my partner Dick and I picked him up, the vet told us Spats had already been neutered in the past. (So Spats hadn't always lived wild! He'd had a home and lost it - that's why he let himself trust David and Rita.) Spats got vaccinated; tested negative for leukemia and FIV; and got a microchip.

After a couple of years, in summer, 2006, David and Donna bought a home in the Holy Cross neighborhood. Even though Rita took over Spats's care, David's former landlord at the apartment building threatened to send Spats to the Nebraska Humane Society (NHS) unless David took Spats away with him. The landlord wrote that he'd never given permission for Spats to be on the property (although tenants were allowed pets!), and that Spats could attack someone. (This was before a new city ordinance legalized feeding strays.) Even though shy Spats wouldn't approach anyone, let alone attack, David had to take the landlord's threat seriously; a semi-feral like Spats would be destroyed at the NHS. David worried about the busy streets in the vicinity of the new house, and he didn't know how Spats would adapt to the loss of his familiar territory. (David didn't know that it can take three weeks of confinement before a feral cat will remain in a new territory.)

For a short time, all went well. Spats ate on the deck of the new house, and came to the garden evenings to "chat" with David about his day. But then, Spats stopped coming, and the food went uneaten. Spats had been frightened off by the neighbor's big tom cat, and was gone. Saddened, David told Spats's friends, who swung into action. We put up posters; filed Lost reports and checked Found reports with the NHS, newspapers, and the microchip company; to no avail. We could only hope that Spats was alive and had met with kindness elsewhere.

In November, with hope almost faded, David got a call. A veterinarian, scanning a stray brought in by a client, found a microchip that gave her David's phone number. The cat was Spats! He had crossed Center and Woolworth, and seemed to be working his way back to Dundee, when the bad weather hit. But Spats found kindness, and a food bowl, again. This time—perhaps tired of wandering, or for his own cat reasons—Spats decided to try life as an indoor cat, and his new protectress wanted to adopt him. David agreed that a life indoors would be best for Spats.

It felt like a miracle!—as though anything was possible. Spats's microchip would have saved his life, had the NHS picked him up. And it would have brought him home, if that were best. What it did do was give everyone the huge relief and joy of knowing that Spats was alive and safe and loved, at his new address. David and Rita are welcome to visit Spats in his new home whenever they wish.

LOVING HOME NEEDED for elegant, charming, affectionate Sable, dark calico/torti cat, seafoam green eyes, youthful 9 years old, spayed, vaccinated. \$25 donation. Likes to be an only cat. 553-3736.

by Clarinda Karpov 553-3736

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A Great Neighbor: Sallie Foster

Sallie Foster has been involved with the GPNA from almost the beginning in 1989 as a member and volunteer. Much of her work involves the "behind the scenes" duties that don't always get recognized. She has helped in some way with nearly all GPNA events and activities and continues today. She has a particular interest in the Community Garden. When asked how Sallie has influenced her, **Diane Kave** had this to say, "Sallie was instrumental in getting me approval to plant all of my roses. Chris was so cautious and nervous when the garden first started. Sallie just told him to let me plant and be done with it." Stuart Shell first met Sallie at the Garden. He commented, "Sallie welcomed me into the neighborhood at the garden with gentle encouragement and her warm personality. Thank you, Sallie, for adding your careful attention and keen understanding to our community."

Sallie also has had a strong interest in youth activities and seeing Yates School return as our neighborhood school. This caught the interest of **Senator Gwen Howard** (even before elected Senator), and of course you all know Gwen's great support and commitment to Yates School.

Did you know that Sallie just had a birthday? On August 12th, Sallie Foster turned 50! The Youth Garden helped celebrate with a carrot cake in the shape of an elephant and presented Sallie with an elephant hand puppet and note paper made from recycled elephant pooh. If you haven't guessed, Sallie loves elephants! **Mike Caban** calls Sallie "Little Bit" because she's "short, and cute, and sweet... oh yeah, she's also a little bit feisty, too."

There are too many things to mention about Sallie's long commitment to the GPNA and neighborhood as a whole, but over the years, one of her most important jobs has been to take pictures at all the neighborhood events for our newsletter, website and overall promotion of the good things the GPNA does. Julie Kalkowski observes, "I love to watch Sallie photograph the kids in the community garden. Not only does it make her look so happy, but she always seems to capture the spirit of the event and/or child(ren) being photographed!" Other Gifford Park neighbors, like Daniel Lawse, agree that Sallie is a fabulous photographer and are thankful she preserves such treasured moments in the community. We all share Dana Carlton Flint's sentiment, "Thank you, Sallie, for being there for everyone."

by Dana Freeman

Have A Safe And Happy Labor Day!



Green Homes: Living Lightly and Lovin' It

To call a home "green" is no longer a reference to its paint color. A green home today means that a house is energy, water, and resource efficient, creates less waste, and is healthier for those who live in it. Green homes provide economic, environmental, and health benefits for the entire community.

Lower energy and water bills are just one feature of a green home. The average homeowner could save up to 30% on their utility bills through the efficient use of resources. These savings are equivalent to buying a cup of Starbucks each day for a year! Collectively these savings add up to substantial economic benefits.

Wise use of energy and water not only pads your pockets, it also benefits the environment. Homes are responsible for 21% of the nation's carbon dioxide emissions. Each home emits more carbon dioxide than two average cars. Through greening a typical home, annual carbon dioxide emissions can be cut by 4 tons—that's equivalent to removing one car from the road for 8 months! Cutting carbon dioxide emissions helps combat climate change and using less energy requires fewer fossil fuels to be burned, which reduces how much outdoor air pollution is generated.

To top it all off, green homes are healthier for you and your family. A green home reduces your exposure to mold, mildew, and other indoor toxins. Lead, radon gas, carbon monoxide, and volatile organic compounds can all be found inside of homes. Through the right selection of materials and proper remodeling practices these indoor toxins can be minimized or eliminated creating a healthier living environment, especially important for young children and the elderly.

Now that you know what a green home is, you probably want to know how to green your home. Stay tuned! Each future Gifford Park Newsletter will feature a column with practical, cost effective suggestions to green your home. Collectively if each of us makes small changes to improve the comfort and health of our living space and improving the health of the environment, Gifford Park can become the Greenest Neighborhood in Omaha.

This month, know that living in an existing home, rather than choosing to build a new one, is the greenest first step you can take. The greenest home is the one that is never built!

by Daniel Lawse



August Rains Finally Break For Tennis Program Finale

Well, the many years of good luck with our 14th annual **August Youth Tennis Program** finally caught up with us this year with two full rainouts and another half session rainout. Ironically, in the previous 13 years, we had only 2 rainout sessions out of over 60 total, one being the very first session. This year's program, held in Gifford Park, was the second year we had two age groups to better handle the number of kids on the limited court space. We had about a dozen volunteer instructors for the Wednesday evening sessions. The kids were divided into two age groups (6 to 6:45 p.m. for ages under 10, and 6:45 to 7:30 p.m. for ages 10 and over) so they could learn each of the basic tennis skills. With the number of participants, we again used the basketball court and set up mini-nets for the younger kids. Unfortunately, due to the rain, we did not give away prizes this year, however everyone received pizza, snacks and tennis balls on the last day finale on August 29.

A BIG thanks goes to Godfather's Pizza again this year for giving us a great deal on 24 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 with the crazy weather: Rick & Jane Hines, Jim Wilson, Jim Lang, Ane Tillotson, Roger Freeman, Kirk Peck, Sharon Reefe, Susan Mayberger, Ben Thomas, Ike Thomas, Jackie Foster, Chris & Sallie Foster, Don Gildon, Stuart Shell, Tyler Johanek, Nancy Sampson, and Ryan Shuck. Don Gildon gets our MVP Award for this year's program by coming to every session (including the rainouts) and has great teaching skills to go along with his talented tennis skills - and the kids all wanted to rally with Don! Special thanks go to Jan Franks, Bette Tanner, Betty Slayden, Tyffaney Slayden, and Kayleen Slayden for helping with registration – the program could not happen without their help year after year. Thanks also to the Omaha Tennis Association, the Nebraska Tennis Association, the United States Tennis Association, and the City Parks & Recreation Department for their generous support over the years. GPNA members Dana Freeman and Jim Wilwerding also helped out in a variety of ways. We also wish to thank Shelly Angeloc for heading up the June/July Wednesday morning tennis lessons in Gifford Park – it was a big hit with the kids attending to get more personalized instruction. If anyone who participated in the tennis lessons is interested in more advanced lessons this fall, please contact Chris at 342-6006.

by Chris Foster

Youth Garden . . . continued from page 2

than everyone could eat! Thanks to all who brought something to share. Our final project was to make seed bombs that can be strategically deposited in areas that need floral improvement. These balls of harvested seeds, clay, and compost have all they need to grow and will break down after a good rain shower. Supporters, volunteers, and young gardeners who have shown good attendance and plot maintenance were given a new Youth Garden t-shirt. **Stuart Shell** made two t-shirt designs, and **Dana & Sue Freeman** then ironed them on. We hope to make this a Youth Garden tradition. Can you dig it?

Although the formal program has ended, the gardens are still growing. Youth are still welcome to care for and harvest from their plots at any time with adult supervision.

Because of collaboration and a dedication to learning and growing, the Youth Garden has continued to improve through its 4th summer season by reaching out to Gifford Park neighbors and the surrounding Omaha community. The Youth Garden took its easels of pictures on the road to Lauritzen Gardens on August 26th to the **City Sprouts** 5th **Annual Gala & Silent Auction**. Not only did we have a booth to show off our beautiful children, projects completed this summer, and neighborhood and Garden, but we were able to contribute to the auction. Gifford Park Community and Youth Gardens donated a basket of fresh, organic vegetables, herbs, and flowers, a birdhouse gourd painted by a young gardener, and a new Youth Garden t-shirt. We were able to raise a total of \$58 for City Sprouts. Most importantly, we displayed what a great place Gifford Park is to live, work, learn, and play.

There are numerous people to thank for helping us through the summer— our super Saturday morning volunteers who help us learn each week, donors of materials for our important projects, snacks, and poem challenge, and weeders and water-ers of garden plots. Extra special praise to those not mentioned above: **Cynthia Shuck**, **Mike Caban**, **Dana Carlton-Flint**, **Diane Kaye**, and **Sarah Newman's** daughter **Natalie**. Thanks to everyone for growing with the Youth Garden! Let's look forward to Summer 2008.













by Dana Freeman





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What's Happening In The Neighborhood . . .

A big congratulations to **Dan & Kate Bodmann**. Their first child **Eletta (Etta) Marie Bodmann** was born July 27 and was 7 lbs 7 oz and 19 1/2 inches. Most of you know Dan has served as our GPNA Vice-President and continues to maintain our great GPNA website. Kate has served as GPNA Treasurer, membership committee member, and started the Youth Garden program. Dan & Kate have been very active in our neighborhood ever since they moved here just a few short years ago. Congratulations!

Our sincerest condolences go out to family and friends of longtime GPNA member and volunteer **Kathy Rose** who passed away on August 14. Kathy was very involved with many of the events and activities in the early days of the GPNA, including membership, Watch Group, newsletter, Easter Egg Hunt, cleanups, garage sales, park activities, and others. She will be missed.

Congratulations to our good friend and neighbor Margie Magnuson of Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association (JCNA). Margie was recently featured in the Omaha World-Herald for her incredible community volunteer work for many years, including JCNA President. She has even somehow finds time to help out the GPNA with the Community Bike Shop, Yates School, and attending some of our events. Keep up the great work!

Here is a great opportunity for kids and adults of the metro to enjoy a **FREE** fun day at the lake while learning about water pollution. The third annual **World O! Water Festival** will be **September 16, 2007,** from **noon-4pm** and it's much bigger than last year. Over 40 organizations are participating this year and nationally acclaimed musician **Stan Slaughter,** "The Eco-Troubadour" will be featured. There will be **free lunch** from **Whole Foods Market** for the first 500 attendees. Activities include a huge children's area, free canoe rides, animal demonstrations, booths, crafts, art projects, naturalist-led nature hikes, water rockets, raffles, prizes and more! **Chalco Hills Recreation Area** is located at **156th and Giles (Wehrspann Lake)**. The event is sponsored by **Keep Omaha Beautiful, Inc.**, the **City of Omaha**, and the **Papillion Creek Watershed Partnership**.

SNAP! Productions is currently presenting the off-Broadway hit **Zanna, Don't!**, a musical comedy that is touted as a cross between *Grease* and *Hairspray*, with a heaping spoonful of *Footloose* on top. **Zanna, Don't!** runs until **September 16th** at **3225 California St**. Call **341-2757** or visit **www.snapproductions.com** for more information.





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Call: Mayor's Action
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