

## Now a word or two from your President.....

Many of you may have noticed that it has been several months since you last received a newsletter. It's not because nothing has happened it is because the association did not have the funds to mail a newsletter. Your Board of Directors has been plugging away trying to keep the Association afloat. We continued to apply for grants, attend meetings, and speak out on your behalf before the State, County, and City government. We have all given up family and work time to be your voice. We understood that it came with the commitment we made to you.

The Ford Birthsite Neighborhood Association is one of the oldest continuously active associations in the City of Omaha. I have seen paperwork from the association dated in the late 1970's. I remember seeing a set of by laws from the early 1990's. The association has stood the test of time. We have survived personality struggles and in fighting, not having a place to meet and not having enough funding to pay for the events that many members look forward to. We have survived negative publicity and made the national news as a "good news" story. We have been on the verge of collapse and like the phoenix (that is part of our logo) we have risen from the ashes to fly again. We were very fortunate to get enough grant money to keep the association going for one more year. We are going to have to tighten our belts and cut back but we will make it to next year.

I have great hope for our area. We are in one of the most driven economic redevelopment areas, Destination Midtown. We continue to see positive changes to the housing stock in the neighborhood. We have seen a decrease in crime and continue to receive good support from the police department and the city prosecutor's office. If our progress is to continue our membership needs to keep up their end of the efforts. We need to move forward in a well thought out manner with dedicated leadership.

At the May meeting it was announced that only one officer and two committee chairpersons were going to seek reelection next October. Recently a member asked if we had people "lined up" to take the offices. When I said no she said that "we (meaning the current officers) always hand pick who we want". That comment really brought me up short. Normally we have to beg and plead for people to run. In the recent past we had one election where there was more than one candidate for each office on the ballot. Each slate had a different focus and plans for the association. The members were able to make a choice on which direction to take the association. I had thought that was a wonderful thing! Apparently it was perceived a manipulating on the part of the "old board". Our by laws say that to serve on the Board of Directors a person must have been a dues paying member for two years and have attended the monthly meetings on a regular basis in the year before they are elected. Even that can be changed, just come to the meeting and propose an amendment to the by laws.

If you are concerned with the direction the neighborhood is going or if you are excited about the changes you see, we need you. Over the years we have become a well respected, active neighborhood association. When we have ideas or concerns we have had our voices heard. For that to continue we need to expand our group of active members. At this time we have a very small group of people trying "to do it all" and it is not working.

We are saying that it is up to the majority of the members to control the destiny of the Association. The rest of this newsletter is a member survey. **IF this association is going to continue to exist your input and help is needed.** Please complete the survey and return it as soon as possible. This Board of Directors really does want your honest and frank opinions.

Jan Quinley

