

## COMMUNITY GARDENS



PHOTOS BY KILEY CRUSE/THE WORLD-HERALD

Members of the Benson Community Garden often gather to swap gardening information and stories. Kurt Goetzinger, at right, founder of the garden, said he has made a lot of new friends through the garden.

### GET TO KNOW ...



**Kurt Goetzinger**  
**Age:** 43  
**Family:** adult son Conrad lives in Omaha; daughters Gabriella, 12, and Daphne, 10, live with Goetzinger  
**Career:** owner of Omaha Advertising

**Neighborhood:** Benson

## Gardening more than his yard

By SUE STORY TRUAX  
 WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Kurt Goetzinger was 6 when his family moved to Omaha from Chicago. Now his roots are firmly planted in Nebraska soil, specifically Benson's soil.

"My heart really is in the neighborhood," said the 43-year-old Goetzinger.

He lives in Benson and serves on the boards of the Benson Neighborhood Association and the Benson Business Association.

Earlier this year, he founded the Benson Community Garden on land he owns.

"I bought this old 1911 farmhouse. Next door was this beautiful empty lot," he said.

He inquired about the price, but it was out of his reach. Last October, something told Goetzinger to call again. The price had been lowered: "I could afford it."

He said he has had a long interest in alternative energy and local food, particularly because of the high transportation cost of shipping food.

"I met some people who were involved in community gardens and urban agriculture," Goetzinger said. Community gardens in Detroit and the District of Columbia also inspired him.

"The moment I announced it (the community garden), I was flooded" with offers of help and with willing gardeners. "It was the greatest,

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# A growing purpose



Alexa Budler, 6, keeps a watchful eye on her brother Braxton Budler, 3, as the two pull weeds in the Savannah Shores Community Garden. The garden is in their yard but is shared with others in the neighborhood.



Extra pickings of beets and leeks are left on a picnic table to share with members of Benson's community garden.

A sense of community, knowing neighbors are outgrowths of gardens.

By SUE STORY TRUAX  
 WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Every year, the Douglas County Health Department asks community gardeners, "What is the purpose of your garden?"

The most frequent answer is to meet the neighbors and, together, to build a sense of community, said Mary Balluff. She's division chief of community health and nutrition services, which conducts the survey for its parent, the health department.

The chance to build community also is a top reason given during interviews with people who were instrumental in establishing a neighborhood garden.

"I think it's the neighborhood and community aspect of people and families" that makes the 10-year-old Gifford Park Garden successful, said Chris Foster. It's an outdoor community center, he said.

Foster and his wife, Sallie, own the land that's home to the garden at 35th and Cass Streets.

When people live close to the garden, "it adds to the success," Foster said. "It's their garden — the community garden."

Kurt Goetzinger lives next to and owns the land where the new-this-year Benson Community Garden sits at 60th Street and Lafayette Avenue.

"I'm investing in the community by doing this," he said.

The garden has introduced him to 100 more people in Benson, he said, and he has noticed friendships forming among gardeners.

Last year, the Savanna Shores Community Garden in Papillion produced more vegetables than



An assortment of gardening tools are available for gardeners to use in the shed of the Benson Community Garden.

the 10 gardeners who tend the plot could use.

Jill Budler, on whose property the garden sits, said they loaded the surplus into a wagon and took it door to door to help build community.

The goal of the Hands to Harvest community garden, at 31st and Pacific Streets, is to get neighbors connected to each other, said Brian Henkel.

"It's been wildly successful that way," he said, because people are meeting at the garden. "It's just a wonderful resource for the community in how much it's bringing people together."

Henkel belongs to the Ford Birthsite Neighborhood Association, which co-manages the garden with the Leavenworth Neighbor-

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#### ON OMAHA.COM

More news from your community.

#### HAVE AN IDEA?

Call 402-444-1040 or e-mail connect@owh.com

#### What's happening at your school?

A history project, an arts program and a drive for new band uniforms are some of the events involving area students.

Chalkboard, Page 3D

#### Festival Watch

A listing of some upcoming celebrations includes Westfair, Ashland Stir-Up Days, East Pottawattamie County Fair and Native Omaha Days.

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#### Rocket mania!

Interest soars for Bellevue Science Camp.

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## Got pain?

Visit the Symptom Navigator on [livewellnebraska.com](http://livewellnebraska.com) to figure out what your symptoms mean.

Just click on the body part where you're experiencing symptoms, then follow the prompts to learn what might be wrong, how to self treat and when to call a doctor.

## CHECK IT OUT

*Editor's note: This feature highlights some of the free offerings to library card holders. The material is provided by Omaha Public Library. Libraries in other communities may not have the same offerings, but check out what resources they do have for free.*

Omaha Public Library will present another fun-filled Saturday evening for adults ages 21 and up. Board Silly is an event for those who like to play games and meet new people. It will be held on July 30, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., at Benson Branch, 6015 Binney St. This is no ordinary gaming event. Omaha Public Library is offering the same fun and enjoyment that everyone has come to expect from previous Board Silly events, where the hot games included Apples to Apples, Catch Phrase, Twister, Scrabble, Operation and Monopoly. Registration is required at

omahalibrary.org. Snacks will be provided and a cash bar will be available. While Board Silly is just for adults, the library offers gaming events year-round for all ages. From classic Scrabble and the occasional trivia night for adults to Wii, Xbox and Kinect games for teens to Lego Creatory or Candyland for kids — there's something for everyone offered at all 12 Omaha Public Library locations. Enjoy some friendly and fun competition with old friends and new! Check the schedule of events at omahalibrary.org to find the kinds of games you and your family might enjoy.

## Veterans' flags have new home

By CARRIE KREISLER  
WORLD-HERALD NEWS SERVICE

Flags of the Bellevue Avenue of Flags have a new home. The flags of deceased veterans are now being stored at the Bellevue Masonic Lodge, 1908 Franklin St. They were previously stored at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2280 building, which is now the Bellevue Volunteer Firefighters Hall. Ray Guggenberger of Knights of Columbus Council 6192 said there are from 30 and 40 triangle boxes that hold three flags each. Four organizations take turns putting the flags up and

taking them down at Bellevue Cemetery. Each flag is flown on at least one of four holidays. On Memorial Day, Veterans of Foreign Wars Posts 2280 and 10785 are in charge of the flags; on Flag Day, it's Knights of Columbus Council 6192; the Masonic Lodge members are in charge on the Fourth of July; and on Veterans Day, it's the Fraternal Order of Eagles 3192, Guggenberger said. Volunteers are ready to re-energize the Avenue of Flags program and are pleased the flags have a home, he said. If you would like to donate a flag to the Avenue of Flags project, call Guggenberger at 402-681-6572.

## NOTEWORTHY

University of Nebraska-Lincoln May graduates **Cori Curtis** of Wilford, Neb., and **Sarah Lee** of Omaha have been awarded Fulbright Scholarships from the U.S. State Department, as has graduate student **Alexandria Knipe** of Carbondale, Colo. Curtis will be an English teaching assistant in Turkey and Lee will be one in South Korea. Knipe will travel to Turkey to conduct research on ancient Islamic pots and teach ceramics at Cayries University in Kayseri.

in Okoboji, Iowa, has received the Okoboji Summer Theatre Woman of the Year Award. **State Farm Insurance of Nebraska** has given \$20,000 for fellowship awards to Nebraska teachers seeking to improve their math and science teaching skills. The funding enabled 32 teachers to take graduate level courses tuition-free this summer at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Nebraska Math and Science Summer Institutes.

Kohl's Department Stores' Kohl's Cares program honored more than 200 volunteers nationwide, including two Omahans. Honored locally were **Golden Kelly**, 8, and **Emily Reynolds**, 17. Golden is co-captain of her American Cancer Society Relay for Life team and has sold her old toys and clothes plus flip-flops and T-shirt ribbon ties to raise more than \$7,000 for the nonprofit. Reynolds is an active member of the National Organization for Youth Safety and Lobbyies Congress on programs and laws that will help prevent distracted teen driving. The Omahans were chosen from more than 37,000 nominees nationwide.

Nebraskans **Joseph Henry Kelly Jr.** and **James J. White** have accepted appointments to the Coast Guard Academy and have begun their studies in New London, Conn. Both are 2011 graduates, Kelly of Omaha Creighton Prep and White of Ralston. More than 1,800 college business students convened recently in Orlando, Fla., for the Phi Beta Lambda National Leadership Conference. These Nebraska students won awards: Peru State College — **Will Fogle**, first in database design and applications, second in computer applications; **Mike Mulrone**y, first in justice administration; **Elizabeth McKim**, second in marketing concepts. UNO — **Peter Raun**, third in financial services. UNL — **Gabe Williamson**, first in help desk and telecommunications; **Shelbi Svoboda**, first in human resource management, second in hospitality management; **Erica Lam**, first in retail management; **Joel Jantzen**, second in financial concepts; **Katie Weander**, second in marketing analysis and decision making; **Cole Malmberg**, third in sports management and marketing.

**Lauren Mabry**, a master of fine arts in ceramics student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's department of art and art history, won first prize for her piece, "Cylinder," in the eighth-annual Marge Brown Kalodner Graduate Student Exhibition at The Clay Studio in Philadelphia.

Peru State College Dean of the School of Education **Jodi Kupper** was installed recently as president of the Nebraska Association of Colleges of Teacher Education.

**Jean Condon**, business instructor and chairwoman of the Business and Technology Division at Mid-Plains Community College in North Platte, Neb., received the Outstanding Educator Award for the Nebraska Alpha Upsilon Chapter of Delta Pi Epsilon at its recent annual conference in Kearney, Neb.

Compiled by Sue Story Truax

**Anne Thorne Weaver**, who lives in Omaha but spends summers

## FESTIVAL WATCH

Here are some community festivals planned for this weekend and next.

**EAST POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY FAIR**  
When: Through Monday  
Where: Avoca, Iowa

exhibits, agricultural machinery, commercial vendors and more. Big Rodeo features professional rodeo clowns, riders and cowboys. Rodeo Friday through July 31, 7:30 p.m.  
Information: <http://nebraskasbigrodeo.com/>

**WESTFAIR**  
When: Tuesday through July 31  
Where: 22984 U.S. Highway 6, Council Bluffs  
What: The West Pottawattamie County Fair, with 4-H competitions, midway rides, automotive events and a Kansas City Barbeque Society BBQ Contest.  
Information: [www.westfairevents.com](http://www.westfairevents.com) and 712-322-3400

**NATIVE OMAHA DAYS**  
When: Wednesday through Aug. 1  
Where: Native Omahans Club, 3819 Laird St.  
What: Biennial Homecoming celebrates Omaha roots with a gospel night, parade, golf tournament, dance and picnic.  
Information: [www.nativeomahaclub.org](http://www.nativeomahaclub.org)

**ASHLAND STIR-UP DAYS**  
When: Saturday and Sunday  
Where: Ashland, Neb.  
What: Community festival with parade, frog-jumping contest, carnival, dance and games.  
Information: 402-944-2050

**NEBRASKA'S 89th ANNUAL BIG RODEO AND GARFIELD COUNTY FAIR**  
When: Tuesday through July 31  
Where: Burwell, Neb.  
What: Homemaking and livestock

Information: [www.extension.iastate.edu/eastpottawattamie](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/eastpottawattamie); click on the "June Newsletter."

Compiled by Kiley Cruse

# Gardens: Community plots share a growing purpose

Continued from Page 1

hood Association. This is the garden's second year. Community gardens vary widely in size, but they share much: **» Gardeners pay to use the land, with prices tied to plot size.** The money is used for shared equipment, improvements and water use. **» Gardens usually have a gathering spot, such as a picnic table or benches.** Potluck meals are common at Gifford Park's picnic tables. Produce that's up for grabs is set out on the table in Benson. **» Many gardens have a youth program.** Youth gardeners at Gifford Park meet Saturday mornings during the growing season. Teen gardeners get help with marketing their produce.



KILEY CRUSE/THE WORLD-HERALD  
Carol Dona hammers a post into her plot in the Benson Community Garden. She was propping up fencing for her pole beans to climb.

Creek Community Gardens in Council Bluffs runs its youth program out of a building on the garden property at Avenue B and 12th Street in the Indian Creek neighborhood.

ing. Another Gifford Park garden was added this year, Foster said. "Because we own the house next to the garden, we took over its backyard for a permaculture garden," he said. This gardening practice combines wildlife gardening, edible landscaping and native plants in a low-maintenance, productive ecosystem.

The kids' garden plot in Benson grows unusual items whose names or looks are guaranteed to draw attention. Among the plants are dragon tongue beans, yellow tomatoes and one broccoli plant. That last one was planted as a joke, Goetzinger said, because kids always say they hate broccoli.

Goetzinger needed a three-rail fence to enclose the Benson garden, but the price was daunting. He said S&W Fence Inc. of Omaha was removing a large wooden fence elsewhere and was willing to donate the lumber if Goetzinger would haul it. Now the Benson garden has "a handsome-looking fence," he said. Keep Council Bluffs Beautiful's Creek garden is on City of Council Bluffs land that has water lines and use of a building. The garden's orchard came courtesy of Hy-Vee Supermarkets in the Bluffs, which donated seven fruit trees last year, and Trees Forever, which provided nine this year.

In Savanna Shores, children help their parents with the work. **» Gardens rely on benefactors.** Henkel with Hands to Harvest said his Ford Birthsite group got a Mayor's Grant for \$5,000 and the Leavenworth group got one for \$1,800. Urban Village Development donated use of an empty lot and provided mulch for the garden. Gifford Park's Foster said he and his wife funded a lot of the infrastructure. They paid for water lines to three spots in the garden, grading, a tool shed and installation of a retaining wall. "We put our time and passion into the neighborhood associa-

tion," Foster said. Goetzinger also is a family man. Son Conrad is an adult who lives in Omaha. Daughters Gabriella, 12, and Daphne, 10, live with their father and have their own plots in the community garden. "It's been such a positive ex-

perience," he said, having his daughters garden with him. Three years ago, Western Hills Magnet Elementary School started a school garden, Goetzinger said, and his daughters were president and vice president of the school's gardening club. Gabriella will be a seventh-grader at Lewis and Clark Middle School. Daphne will be a fifth-grader at Western Hills. "Those two keep me on my toes," Goetzinger said.

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## Know: Benson gardener nurtures more than his yard

Continued from Page 1

coolest feeling," he said. "This is probably one of the best things I've ever done in my life. It's just the most fulfilling thing."

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## AROUND AND ABOUT: ON THE CALENDAR

**MONDAY**  
"Driving for Excellence" golf benefit for **Mercy High School**, 11 a.m. lunch, noon shotgun start, dinner and awards follow golf, Players Club. Fee: \$125 individual, \$600 foursome. Information: <http://mercyhigh.org> or 402-553-9424.

**AUGUST 6**  
**American Cancer Society's** Passport to the Cure Gala, 6 p.m. auctions, entertainment, food and midway games, Scouler Ballroom. Tickets: \$75 individual. Information: 402-393-5801, ext. 70764, or [www.passporttothecureomaha.org](http://www.passporttothecureomaha.org).

960-0980 or [datoelle@yahoo.com](mailto:datoelle@yahoo.com).

**JULY 30**  
Summer Wine and Food Festival, a benefit for the **Partnership for Our Kids**, 5 p.m.-9 p.m., Midtown Crossing. Tickets: \$85 individual, \$150 patron. Information or advance tickets: [www.partnershipforourkids.org](http://www.partnershipforourkids.org) or Nicole at 402-930-3028.

**AUGUST 8**  
Swing With Pride golf benefit for **Roncalli High School**, 11 a.m. lunch, noon shotgun start, dinner and awards follow golf, Players Club. Fee: \$125 individual, \$500 foursome. Information: [www.roncallcatholic.org](http://www.roncallcatholic.org) or 402-571-7670.

**AUGUST 19-20**  
**Riverfront Wine Festival**, 4 p.m.-8 p.m. Aug. 19 and 20, wine and beer tasting, food and entertainment, Aksarben Village's Stinson Park. Tickets: \$25 general admission, \$50 VIP (3 p.m.-8 p.m. Aug. 20 includes wine classes and special reserve tasting). Information: <http://riverfrontwinefestival.com>.

**AUGUST 1**  
Rescheduled date for Mike Logan Legacy Golf Tournament for **Nebraska DECA**, 11 a.m. shotgun start, dinner to follow golf, Pacific Springs Golf Course. Fee: \$75 individual, \$50 for students or advisers. Information: [www.nedeca.org](http://www.nedeca.org) or Nicole at 402-471-4803.

**AUGUST 13**  
Ak-Sar-Ben Buckaroo Bash for **youth programs, the Omaha Mounted Patrol and the Justin Cowboy Crisis Fund**, 6 p.m.-11 p.m., Omaha Mounted Patrol Facility. Tickets: \$65. Information: 402-554-9600, ext. 107, or [www.rivercityrodeo.com](http://www.rivercityrodeo.com).

**AUGUST 21**  
Golf tournament to benefit **Victory Boxing Club and Community Center**, 1 p.m. tee-off, Miracle Hills. Fee: \$75 individual or \$300 foursome. Register: Tony Aguilera at [tony@victoryboxingclub.org](mailto:tony@victoryboxingclub.org). Information: [www.victoryboxingclub.org](http://www.victoryboxingclub.org).

**AUGUST 5**  
**Heartland Family Service's** annual Dueling Pianos Event, 6 p.m.-11 p.m., Harrah's Convention Center in Council Bluffs. Tickets: \$75 each. Information: Nancy Schulze at 712-325-5600 or [nschulze@heartlandfamilyservice.org](mailto:nschulze@heartlandfamilyservice.org).

**AUGUST 14**  
Golf Scramble for the Animals, a benefit for **Hooves & Paws Rescue**, 8 a.m. shotgun start, Tregaron. Fee: \$65 individual, \$260 foursome. Advance registration: [www.hoovespaws.org](http://www.hoovespaws.org).

**AUGUST 31**  
**Child Saving Institute** Guild's PurseOnalities scholarship luncheon, 10:30 a.m. patron event, 11 a.m. silent auction, noon luncheon with speaker Paula McLain, Ramada Plaza Hotel and Convention Center, 72nd and Grover Streets (formerly the CoCo Key convention center). Tickets: \$65 to \$95. Information: [www.childsaving.org](http://www.childsaving.org) or 402-504-3664.

## NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

The **Clairmont Heights Neighborhood Association** summer party will begin at 3 p.m. Saturday on 45th Avenue on the south end of Miami Street. The children's parade will begin at 3 p.m., followed by the family games at 4. The potluck supper will start at 5:30 p.m. And live music will begin at 6. The rain date will be Aug. 6. Trivia note: Saturday is the 101st anniversary of the first flight in Nebraska, which took place in the Clairmont Heights neighborhood. **Deer Park Neighborhood Association** and The Neighborhood

Center were among participants at a three-day workshop Friday with Graffiti Consultants of San Jose, Calif. One focus of the session was for city and county leaders to learn how to reduce tagging. Neighborhood and other civic groups attended training and input sessions. The **Dundee-Memorial Park Association** will be at Elmwood Park from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Saturday for its regular volunteer effort to pick up litter and tend to plants. **Keystone Day** at the Keystone

Klub will run from noon to 5 p.m. Saturday. Celebrate the neighborhood with games for kids, a dunk tank, swimming relays and more. Food will be sold. Pool membership not required on this day. **NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS**  
**Monday**  
**Skylark/Cryer Neighborhood Association:** 7 p.m. in the cafeteria

at Beveridge Magnet Middle School, 1616 S. 120th St. **Thursday**  
**Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Board:** 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the home of a board member.  
**Spring Lake Neighborhood Association:** 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the former South Omaha City Hall, 5002 S. 24th St.; use north entrance. *Compiled by Sue Story Truax*