



## VINCENT BLUFF: AN URBAN NATURE PRESERVE

By Terry Oswald

424 Glen Avenue

Vincent Bluffs, the 41-acre Loess Hills prairie located in the heart of Council Bluffs, will be dedicated as the 94th Iowa State DNR Preserve, on Saturday, May 16, at 10 AM. The preserve is located in the heart of Council Bluffs at the north end of Thallas Street, which lay just a few blocks north of the intersection of Thallas and Woodbury Streets just east of Harry Langdon Boulevard in Council Bluffs.

Vincent Bluff was awarded State preserve status by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources during the most recent winter season. "It's been a long and arduous process that has required hard work and sacrifices by more people than we could ever hope to list here. We definitely wanted to celebrate this award by hosting a free public event as soon as it was warm enough," said Terry Oswald, Loess Hills Preservation Society President. The dedication will be led by Society Board Members as well as representatives from the City of Council Bluffs, the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and the Iowa

Department of Natural Resources. Elected officials and other dignitaries also are expected to attend.

Oswald continued, "Preserve status is awarded by the Iowa DNR through a highly competitive and selective process; almost all applications are rejected. Being recognized as a DNR State Preserve is a critical step for the project and this is a tremendous compliment to the Preserve as well as the tireless efforts and sacrifices of hundreds of volunteers, thousands of contributors and the partner organizations."

Glenn Pollock, Society Board Member and the Project's Restoration Leader said: "State Preserve Status not only affords protection against selling or developing any part of Vincent Bluff, but it also gives a great deal of recognition across the State for the efforts to preserve this spectacular landform. Preserve status also makes Vincent Bluff eligible for grant funding through the State Preserves Advisory and more technical assistance as well."

The Iowa state preserve system

was established in 1965 to identify and preserve, for this and future generations, portions of our natural pre-historical and historical heritage, and to maintain preserved lands as nearly as possible in their natural condition.

State Preserve status means that in order for Vincent Bluff to be sold or developed the Iowa legislature would have to act to overturn the protection afforded by virtue of being a State Preserve. "With this status, we have made sure the existence of Vincent Bluff continues for future generations" adds Society Board Member Larry Tibbles, taking a break from his chain saw after felling several invasive cedar trees at Vincent Bluff.

The 41-acre Vincent Bluff Preserve is located atop a ridge of the Loess Hills on the southern edge of Council Bluffs. The City owns the site as a natural park while the Loess Hills Preservation Society manages the facility. The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation [www.inhf.org](http://www.inhf.org) is another partner and they have provided critical technical, legal and fund raising support from

**Continued On Pg.7**

# President's Corner

By Nate Watson

126 Park Avenue

The National Register of Historic Places - Very few homes make it onto this prestigious listing of the most historic homes in our nation. However, much of our neighborhood will very likely be included on this list very soon. After hundreds of hours of research, including by Tallgrass Historians (our professional assistance) and Mary Lou McGinn (our champion and lifetime honorary member), the nomination is ready. Nearly \$20,000.00 in costs occasioned by the professional assistance was borne by the Council Bluffs Historic Preservation Alliance. Every single house's complete history, and a determination of precise architectural style, was compiled. In short, we have had to prove that our neighborhood is worthy of inclusion on the National Register, and this has required a lot of work, over years. The City of Council Bluffs, including Mayor Hanafan, has given its seal of approval to our nomination. The State of Iowa is about to consent. The final step, expected to be taken on July 12, 2009, is approval by the Secretary of the Interior, at Washington, DC, thereby placing the Federal Government's seal of approval on our nomination. At that point in time, we are officially listed, for the world to see. For purposes of the National Register, we will be known as the "Park/Glen Historic District."

Did you know that every house is that "individually eligible" or "contributing" to the Park/Glen Historic District is eligible to display a plaque on the side of the house? Only those houses deemed "non-contributing" are ineligible to display a plaque. Very few homes in our neighborhood, within the parameters of the historic district, have been deemed "non-contributing." Some are too new; most of them have been too altered to any longer be considered "historic." If you would like confirmation as to whether or not your particular house is within the historic district, and whether it is "individually eligible" or "contributing," please let me know. Various companies sell the plaque, and it comes in various sizes. I would encourage all those who are eligible, which is over 120 of us, to procure and display the plaque. The fact that so many signs could be shown, depending on if you purchase one, does not lessen the honor, but rather, demonstrates for the whole world to see how very special our neighborhood is. This is just another example, of many of the wonders that come to those who work hard and work to make their neighborhood a better place to be. On behalf of our neighborhood association, I extend our thanks for all the wonderful help and assistance provided by so many people on our behalf.

## A BABY GIRL!!



A beautiful baby girl, Rory Elise Fent, arrived in the neighborhood on April 15<sup>th</sup>, right on schedule, and is now resting peacefully at home with mom, Katie, and dad, Chad. She is absolutely the youngest member of this or any other neighborhood association. Congratulations to our friends, the Fents, and may their new daughter bring them many years of joy.

# ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PRINT

By Sharon Babbitt

200 Park Avenue

## PICNIC STUFF

Our annual summer picnic will be held at 2:00 p.m. on July 12<sup>th</sup> at Lookout Point in Fairmount Park. Lookout Point is at the back entrance of the Park (where Park and Huntington converge). Plenty of shade is available, as well as tables and bathroom facilities. (Yes, this is the Lookout Point of our high school days, but we will, perhaps, remember it differently now.) We have invited the members of the other neighborhood associations to attend, as well as the Mayor, members of the City Council, other city officials, and our friends from the Neighborhood Center.

Our seven-member picnic committee will be meeting soon to iron out the plans for the food, etc. Everything we need to know will be printed in the next newsletter because we will not have a regular FPNA meeting before then. Some of us may be contacted by a member of the picnic committee if it becomes necessary beforehand. We could possibly expect 200 or more guests and it will be an honor to welcome them to this wonderful event held right in our own neighborhood.

## NRHP

The nomination for our neighborhood to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places is sailing right along and no obstacles are anticipated. The final meeting in Washington, D.C., will be held on July 12<sup>th</sup>, the same day as our picnic. Who knows? Maybe we will get the official call while we're grilling our hamburgers!

## GARAGE SALE DOPE

Tell the truth now—have you been accumulating those garage sale items in all your nooks and crannies so that you can barely walk through your house, and can't park your car in your garage (assuming you have one because, as we are all aware, that piece of architecture can't be found at every residence in this neighborhood)? Well, you won't have long to wait until the fateful weekend of May 30-31, when all that stuff will be snatched up by the buying public. Be sure to put price tags on every item; that makes it easier on sale day. Kyle Muschall made a terrific design that will be used to announce the sale at each location, and the Neighborhood Center loaned us the holders. We will also have balloons for those who feel they need the extra identification. You **MUST SIGN UP** with either Kyle or Tracy so we can accurately figure out how to share the costs of the extensive advertising we plan to do. See elsewhere for their contact information. After we measure our success this time around we can decide whether or not to make this an annual event.

## OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP

Our semi-annual neighborhood clean-up will take place on Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup> from 9:00-12 noon. The Neighborhood Center is furnishing a dumpster to each NA, but they will not be in place until early that Saturday morning. The dumpster in our neighborhood will be placed in the vacant lot between 171 and 177 Glen. This lot is owned by John Huggins and is directly behind his Park Ave. residence. The dumpster will be available for any and all kinds of trash, excepting electronic items, and everyone in the neighborhood is welcome to use it that morning. We will need

## RESIDENTS RECEIVE SOLUTION FOR NEIGHBORHOOD GRAFFITI

**Y**ou and your neighbors will benefit from a new solution provided to eliminate neighborhood graffiti, thanks to the support of the Neighborhood Center.

The Neighborhood Center is providing free security cameras for graffiti victims. These cameras are given on a first come first serve basis.

If you are interested in filling out an application or have questions please contact Jessica Regan at 402-599-9486 or email her at [jaregan@unomah.edu](mailto:jaregan@unomah.edu).

## DATES TO REMEMBER

May 16th  
Celebrate CB  
C.B.Historical  
Preservation Alliance  
Walking Tour

June 19-20th  
F.P.N.A. Clean Up

July 12th  
F.P.N.A Summer Picnic  
at Lookout Point  
National Review for F.P.N.A  
Historical Places Designation

September 12th  
F.P.N.A September Meeting

October 23rd  
F.P.N.A October Meeting

Continued On Pg.5



# ONE-OF-A-KIND-STREETSCAPE

By Sharon Babbitt

200 Park Avenue

**H**ave you always wondered what Amelia Bloomer looked like in those pantaloons? Or what about Mr. And Mrs. Jean Bregant, those tiny people who were advertising spokespersons for Woodward Candy Factory? Or maybe you have wondered about the actual Woodward's factory itself, when it was in operation on Broadway between Park and Glen? Well, you are in luck because all you have to do is stroll down to the bottom of Park or Glen, saunter along the south side of the 200 block of Broadway, cross the street, and continue east into the 100 block. When you reach the walkway connecting Broadway with the alley behind, just turn down the walkway to see more. If you keep your eyes open you will experience a condensed history of our old pioneer city as it was long ago.

Inside each of the pillars located in the retaining walls along this streetscape, you will see tiles on which are printed copies of more than fifty vintage postcards that depict early scenes of Council Bluffs, interspersed with whimsical advertising art. Several early hotels are featured, along with the original 1890 Bayliss Park fountain; Fairmount Park itself; several street scenes of early Council Bluffs; two historic schools, both gone now—the first Bloomer school and the magnificent original Washington Avenue school complete with tower; and Lake Manawa in the old days (it was quite a destination then). Peppered among the historic scenes are wonderful advertising postcards (my personal favorite is an announcement of the National Corn Show), proving once and for all that our ancestors did, indeed, have a sense of humor.

Some of the things depicted in the postcards have direct connections to our historic neighborhood, beyond the expected entrances to Fairmount Park and the candy factory. For instance, the owner of the Neumayer Hotel lived at 228 Park, and Henry Eiseman, owner of The Peoples Store, made his home at 134 Park. Oh, this is so much fun and, just think, an entire new set of postcards will one day appear in the streetscape of the 100 block of Broadway. Then we will get to see what the demolished Ogden Hotel really looked like.

Who is responsible for all this wonder? Rose Brown of the Community Development Department tells me that this portion of the project was funded by an Iowa West Grant to the City, and that the graphic work was done by an artist from RDG Planning and Design of Des Moines, at the cost of \$3,000 per pillar. Pam Minor, owner of Beauty on Broadway, and our own Mary Lou McGinn served on a committee with the awesome task of choosing the images from hundreds, if not thousands, of postcards belonging to the collections of the Pottawattamie County Historical Society, Dr. Richard Warner, fireman Cal Peterson, Bob Burgin and others. Fortunately, no postcards were damaged in the process of reprinting them onto the Italian tiles used for the project.

A last word the advertising postcard from the old Iowa Clothes Shop (remember that, men?) contains a motto that could actually be adopted by the FPNA. It says: "We go a long way to make friends and a longer way to keep them." But some of us feel we already have a motto. When someone recently referred to us (in a friendly way, of course) as a "rogue neighborhood", we began to shout, with fists in air, "Rogues Rule"! So, you see, we don't really need another slogan.



# ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PRINT

By Sharon Babbitt  
Continued from Pg.3

200 Park Avenue

a couple of strong volunteers to stand by the dumpster on Saturday to help load any of the heavy trash that shows up that morning. We will meet Friday evening at 6:00 p.m. at the pump house at the top of Glen, to begin our sweep of the streets, and this trash will be bagged and brought to the empty lot. We thank the Neighborhood Center for their generosity in furnishing dumpsters to all of the Council Bluffs Neighborhood Associations.

## FLOWER BASKETS

Dallas Johnson Nursery has once again donated 50 flower baskets to be hung on the hangers we installed last year. Fifty is enough for us and for the Wickham NA. Dallas Johnson is considering donating flower baskets for other downtown areas but no decisions have been made about that yet. Your Board voted to purchase a large watering container with wand to make caring for the baskets easier than in the past. Hint: If you volunteer to adopt a basket or two, please remember that they require regular care, so don't forget about them when it starts to be a little more trouble. Thank you.

## HAMMERING

Call them canyons, ravines or glens—whatever they are they magnify noise in a most unusual way (read, loud). Sometimes it is the train whistles at 2:00 a.m., but currently it is the noise of home improvements. As old house owners, this is music to our ears. Right now you are hearing a new roof being installed at Ron and Barb Neal's place at 231 Park—less noisy but still important is the new electrical service and the flooring. Sadly, the Neals made \$1,000 too much in 2008 to receive a grant. Ouch! But Gloria Hunter got grant money to paint the exterior of her Craftsman home at 162 Park, as well as some foundation work. Betty McKee used her grant money for cement and electrical work, and new windows at her Civil War era home at 209 Park. Very exciting!

## MAKING IT A YEARLY TRADITION

Those words were uttered by Bob Pashek and Bill Mann after the FPNA meeting on May 9<sup>th</sup>. Everyone who attended the potluck in their patio definitely wants to do it again, and said it was more like a party than a meeting. Bill and Bob not satisfied with grilling burgers and brauts, also fried chicken, furnished drinks, and then surprised us with cherry cobbler. We know of some members who were still there at 11:00 p.m., so, yes, we don't want to think that it was a one-time fling!

## ROBBERS

If you should ever be forced by a robber to withdraw money from an ATM machine, you can notify the police by entering your PIN number in reverse. For example, if your PIN is 1234, then you would put in 4321. The ATM recognizes that your pin number is backwards from the ATM card you placed in the machine. The machine will still give you the money you requested, but unknown to the robber the police will be immediately dispatched to help you. This information was recently broadcast on FOX News Network; they stated that it is seldom used because people don't know it exists. But now we do.

## SNAPS FROM OUR MAY MEETING



Photos By: Kyle Muschall



# JOIN THE FAIRMOUNT PARK GARAGE SALE

## FOR FUN AND PROFIT

WE'D LIKE TO INVITE EVERYONE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD TO PARTICIPATE. WE WILL BE PLACING ADS IN THE LOCAL PAPERS THROUGHOUT THE METRO AREA, ON CRAIG'S LIST AND GETTING THE WORD OUT THRU SIGNS AND POSTERS. SO IF YOU'D LIKE TO THROW YOUR LOT IN WITH US WE'D LOVE TO HAVE YOU. PLEASE CONTACT:

**TH** KYLE MUSCHALL  
KMUSCHALL@COX.NET OR TRACY DRESSEN  
323-4047 515-8535

**ST** WITH YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS

TO OFF SET THE COST OF SIGNAGE AND ADS WE ARE ASKING ALL PARTICIPANTS TO DONATE A PORTION OF THEIR PROCEEDS PREFERABLY 10%. A SMALL COST CONSIDERING THE TRAFFIC THAT WILL BE BROUGHT TO YOUR DOOR STEP

**30**  
**4**  
**31**



## MESSAGE FROM MICHELLE

By Michelle Mutchler-Burns

407 Glen Avenue

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, Nate and I, as well as our friend Wayne, had the opportunity to attend a National Register of Historic Places workshop in Des Moines. The workshop, intended to clarify the nomination process, explained what documentation was necessary to have properties individually listed on the National Register. One thing I found surprising was that a listing did not have to be a building. They mentioned things such as caves and monuments. Another interesting point that was made was regarding abstracts. An abstract is a land document and does not describe the building.

Toward the end of the session, the presenters learned that Nate and I were residents of the proposed Park-Glen Historic District. They explained that when the neighborhood listing is approved, there is no need to individually list our homes, because they are already considered "individually eligible" for the National Register. I explained that I would still be pursuing the nomination because I wanted to place a plaque on the exterior of our home and to our surprise, we were told that we could have a plaque, no further documentation is necessary. Actually, each of the 145 homes which are considered "contributing" to our neighborhood's proposed Historic District may purchase a plaque. They are orderable through several companies, come in numerous styles and sizes, and can be customized in any number of ways. Expect it to cost between \$100 and \$200. If you aren't sure if your property is considered "contributing", please speak with Nate Watson, Sharon Babbitt, or myself.

# VINCENT BLUFF: AN URBAN NATURE PRESERVE

**Continued From Pg.1**

the project's start. The creation of the preserve would not have been possible without the support of the Society, City and INHF as well as the donations from over 400 individuals, organizations and other partners totaling over \$1,000,000 in funds and over 10,000 hours of services.

The bluff contains high-quality prairie remnants and provides wildlife habitat and offers a tremendous view of the entire region from its high points, and its signature form is seen daily by hundreds of thousands of drivers who pass by along Interstate 80, Interstate 29, the Loess Hills Scenic Byway, the Western Historic Trails Center and the Wabash Trace Nature Trail. Vincent Bluff is one of the first things drivers on I-80 see as they cross the Missouri River into Iowa. The property also is directly adjacent to the area once known as Skyline (City Park) Drive and historic Boys Scout Point where many Scouting events including climbing contests and camp-outs were once held.

Vincent Bluff Prairie Preserve stands as the only truly urban prairie preserve in the State of Iowa, and likewise, is a great example of Loess Hills prairie, oak savanna, and eastern deciduous forest ecosystems. The fact that this nearly pristine landscape exists in the heart of a metropolitan area of nearly 1 million residents speaks of the resiliency of prairie and the ruggedness of the Loess Hills.

tOswald offers a final thought about the project and this moment, "The Society got its start in the early 1990's because of a passionate citizen's response to the threat of soil mining to this very Hill. There's just so much

emotion, pride and passion tied to this place. But, one of our objectives from the very start has been to save this Hill by showing that if we could, we also could help Iowa 'dress for success' – meaning: if we truly want this area to become successful at attracting and retaining positive business investment, in the form of higher paying jobs, then we have to dress for the part. You wouldn't go into a job interview wearing jeans and a t-shirt, so why would we, as Iowans, want the first impression others get of our state to be an unsightly dirt mine, or a junkyard? The effort to create this one-of-a-kind facility has been a perfect example of this. But, this hasn't happened just by chance. It's happened because of incredible sacrifices, planning, and the ability to just keep on going for over 15 years even when we were facing huge obstacles and yes, even threats. It will be an incredibly touching and emotional moment on Saturday for everyone, and especially for those of us who roamed this Hill and the ridge next to old Skyline Drive and Boys Scout Point when we were kids."

The Loess Hills Preservation Society is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that works to protect the unique natural resources and landforms of the Loess Hills through education, land protection projects, sound land use planning and land acquisition. It is the mission of the Society to promote and utilize voluntary land protection methods and land acquisition to ensure that the Loess Hill's resource integrity continues for generations.

The Society has pioneered the use of positive, win-win approaches to conservation and protection and

is credited with leading successful efforts to identify alternate cost-effective environmentally impact neutral sources of fill material for many of the large development projects completed in the areas. The Society also has supported efforts to update local and county zoning ordinances with Loess Hills sensitive and economic supporting land use updates. The organization also co-hosted and co-founded Council Bluffs fall festival named: Autumn in the Bluffs [www.autumninthebluffs.org](http://www.autumninthebluffs.org) and has made more positive impacts in the Loess Hills region than space and time here can permit.

To learn more about the Society or to get involved, visit:

<http://loesshps.org>

or e-mail:

[terry-oswald@msn.com](mailto:terry-oswald@msn.com)

or call:

712-310-7423.

To learn more about the City of Council Bluffs Parks, Recreation and Public Property Department, visit:

[www.parksandrec.councilbluffs-ia.gov](http://www.parksandrec.councilbluffs-ia.gov)

or call:

712-328-4650.

To learn more about the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, visit:

[www.inhf.org](http://www.inhf.org)

To learn more about the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, visit: [www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov).



# THE Fairmount Press

The Newspaper of the Fairmount Park Neighborhood Association

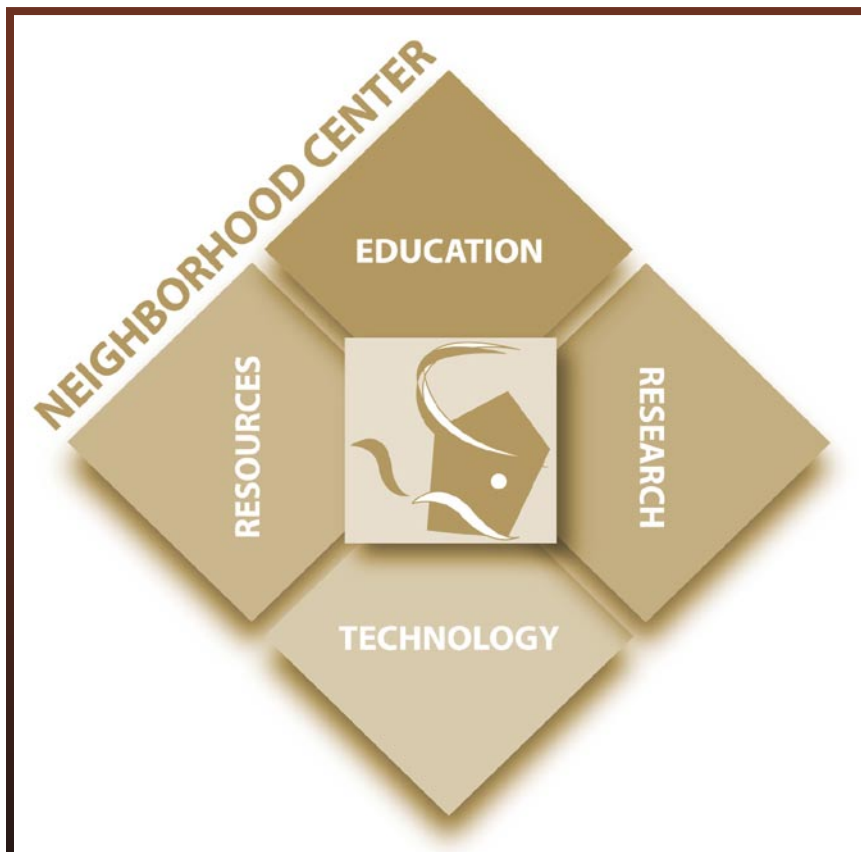
126 Park Avenue Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503  
[fairmountparkna@aol.com](mailto:fairmountparkna@aol.com)

Tracy Dressen	Editor
Kyle Muschall	Publisher
Nate Watson	President
Michelle Muchler-Burns	Vice President
Chad Fent	Secretary/Treasurer
Amy Dixon	Special Representative
Sharon Babbit	Board Member (2010)
Kyle Muschall	Board Member (2011)
Chad Fent	Board Member (2010)
Nate Watson	Board Member (2011)
Michelle Muchler-Burns	Board Member (2010)

## Have an Opinion? Please Share!

**W**e welcome any submission from a member that constructively furthers a topic of current public interest. Of course, opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Association or its membership. Any submission must be received by the first day of the month for inclusion.

## COPIES PROVIDED BY THE



**Yes!** I want to be an active member of the Fairmount Park Neighborhood Association. Please find enclosed a check for annual dues in the amount of \$20.00 per household.

My Name and Spouse's/Significant Other's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Children's Names and Ages: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Numer: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Remit to:** Chad Fent, Secretary Treasurer, 439 Glen Avenue Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503



**Yes!** I want to purchase a Fairmount Park Neighborhood Association banner.

Please find enclosed a check for the Banner fee of \$10.00

(Or additional amounts of \_\_\_\_\_ for additional banners totaling \_\_\_\_\_.)

You must be a paid member to purchase a banner

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Numer: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Remit to:** Michelle Mutchler-Burns, Vice President, 407 Glen Avenue Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503 or to Sharon Babbit, Board Member, 200 Park Avenue Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503