

ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PRINT

By Sharon Babbit

200 Park Avenue

ANNUAL MEETING

FPNA holds several membership meetings throughout the year, but the Annual Meeting is the only one that is actually required according to our by-laws. So, it looks like we can't get out of this one even if we wanted to—and we don't want to. This is the time to elect new Board members, pay those much needed dues that help us do the things we do, catch up on all our accomplishments of the past year, and enjoy the good food provided by our hosts, Cindy and Kyle Muschall.

This year's annual affair will be held on Saturday, January 14th, at 4:00 p.m., at the Muschall's home, 332 Glen. Their rooms are so large that there are tables enough for our entire flock to be seated in front of the delicious foods prepared by gourmet chef Kyle and served by champion hostess Cindy. Let's do them the honor of partaking.

The most important order of business will be the election of new Board members. Four positions expire at the end of this term. We know of two outgoing Directors who will not be running for reelection and two others who will run again, unless they change their minds at the last minute. Nevertheless, now is the time to be thinking about stepping forward and serving the neighborhood by getting elected for a two-year term. It is not hard to be a member of the FPNA Board and the reward of service to our neighborhood and its NA is greater than words can express. If you are thinking about running for one of these positions, and are too embarrassed to nominate yourself or to ask someone else to do it for you, there is an alternative (hah, can't get out of it that easily!). You may notify Secretary Tracy Dreessen by e-mail or letter that you wish to run. If this is to be your method, please hurry because this must be done soon. Her address is 164 Park Ave., e-mail tracydreessen@cox.net

EXTERIOR DECORATING AWARD

It will soon be time to choose a lucky winner of the 2011 Exterior Holiday Decorating Award. There can be only one winner of the grand prize of a whopping \$100, but others may receive honorable mentions, unpaid but still rewarding. The winner will get to keep our beautiful award plaque (with their name engraved upon it) on display for the whole of 2012, thus garnering bragging rights long after those decorations are a thing of the past. The FPNA Board will soon be riding around making their on-site decisions so don't shoot if you see these suspicious characters driving slowly down your street. The winner will be announced at the annual meeting and photos will be taken.

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Holiday Nutcracker Concert

The Bluffs Arts Council will collaborate with Omaha Area Youth Orchestras (OAYO) to present a FREE prepared reading of Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker Suite" for the 2011 Bluffs Arts Council's Holiday Concert. The event will be held Saturday, Dec. 17 at 3 p.m. at the Arts Center at Iowa Western Community College, 2700 College Road.

Residents of the Council Bluffs community are invited to bring their instrument and play along with OAYO students and OAYO alumni in the reading of the holiday classic, or attend the concert as audience members. Those who wish to play along are invited to contact Mark Haar at mhaar@qwestoffice.net by December 9th to receive music in advance. In addition, a two-hour rehearsal will be held at the Arts Center the afternoon of Dec. 17 beginning at 1 p.m.

Along with a performance of the "The Nutcracker Suite", this festive, family friendly concert will include: Christmas carols featuring a quartet comprised of OAYO students, performances of classical works featuring students from OAYO's top ensembles, refreshments and a Christmas sweater contest with prizes for winners.

For more information about this event please visit www.bluffsarts.org and for more information about OAYO please call 402.238.2044 or visit www.oayo.org. This concert is made possible in part through the generosity of community organizations including the Arts Center at Iowa Western Community College and the Iowa West Foundation.



WAYWARD FLAG

Fran Beck found a large American flag with thirteen stars by her home at 198 Glen Avenue on Sunday Nov. 27th after the high winds the previous day. She put out the call via the FPNA email distribution list and in no time at all Jeff Fuller, 152 Glen Avenue, had contacted Fran to claim the wayward patriotic banner. Mr. Fuller's flag had been hanging on the front porch and he was amazed that the flag traveled as far as it did. He was grateful that someone decided to try to find the owner instead of just disposing of the item. This is just another great example of neighbors helping neighbors.



"If you can dream it, then you can achieve it. You will get all you want in life if you help enough other people get what they want"

Zig Ziglar

Did the popular image of Santa Claus originate in a Coca-Cola ad campaign?

From "The Straight Dope" by Cecil Adams

Unless the Coca Cola company is a lot more influential than we usually give them credit for, this little bit of advertising legend is merely that: advertising. The red coat probably stems from the fact that the original St. Nicholas was a bishop. A de-sanctified Nicholas appeared later in Clement Clarke Moore's poem A Visit from Saint Nicholas "dressed all in fur from his head to his foot." But how an obscure European bishop became the ultimate American Christmas icon is a story in itself.

The modern image of Santa Claus is an amalgam of several traditions. The figure of the Christmastime gift-giver is found in many cultures, showing up in the person of the "Christkindlein" (from which we get the name "Kris Kringle"), which was superseded by "Pere Noel" in France and "Pelsnickle" elsewhere in Europe. But the introduction of Santa Claus into American mythology stems from St. Nicholas himself.

Not much is definitely known about St. Nicholas. He is thought to have been the bishop of Myra, imprisoned during the reign of Diocletian and released upon the ascension of Constantine as Roman emperor. Nicholas is said to have been famous for his generosity--one story has it that he provided the dowries for three Italian sisters by throwing bags of money through their windows. The tradition arose that he was a secret giver of gifts to children on his feast day, December 6th. Nicholas was one of the most popular saints in Europe throughout the middle ages, but following the Protestant Reformation interest in him died out everywhere except Holland--a matter of significance, as we shall see.

The celebration of Christmas evolved separately. Christmas initially was the result of a tradeoff with the pagan world Christians were trying to convert. They didn't want to be

seen as the bad guys by out and out banning the general rowdiness of post-harvest Saturnalia celebrations. So they compromised, letting the populace keep its celebrations as long as they were now done in honor of the birth of Christ. The drawback was that an air of pagan abandon carried over to the new holiday, and Christmas developed a bad reputation as a time of "misrule."

As late as the mid 1600's, a Christmas ritual in Lincolnshire, England, featured the crowning of a "King of Misrule." The Puritans, coming to America, wanted no part of this "unholiness" surrounding the birth of Christ. They had good reason to be concerned--demographic records show that the number of childbirths spiked dramatically in the month of September, exactly nine months after the Christmas celebrations.

Although there were attempts to turn Christmas into a more devotional celebration during the Revolutionary War era (most notably by the Congregationalists) they were largely unsuccessful until the 19th century when another character enters the story--John Pintard, the forgotten hero of Holiday Town. Pintard was instrumental in establishing

Washington's Birthday, the Fourth of July, and Columbus Day as national holidays, and helped to do the same for Christmas. In 1804 he established the New York Historical Society, with Nicholas the gift-giver as its patron saint.

Pintard was motivated in part by his nostalgia for old Dutch customs and "ancient usages" of New York. St. Nicholas had been an important element of the Dutch celebration of Christmas in New Amsterdam, as New York had once been known. The name Santa Claus, in fact, is an Anglicization of the Dutch nickname for St. Nicholas, Sinterklaas.

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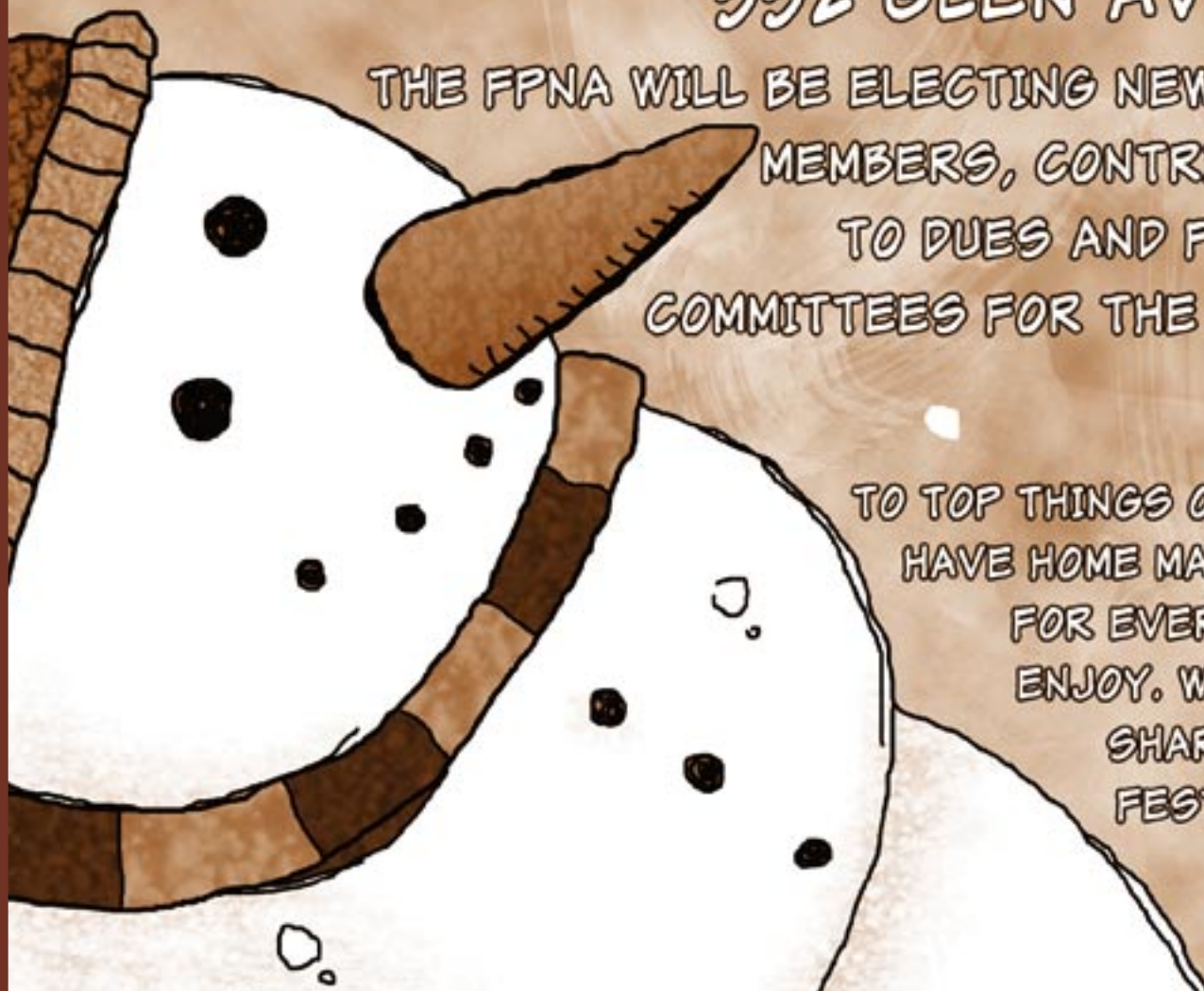


START THE NEW YEAR RIGHT

SATURDAY JANUARY 14TH 4:00 P.M.
332 GLEN AVENUE

THE FPNA WILL BE ELECTING NEW BOARD
MEMBERS, CONTRIBUTING
TO DUES AND FORMING
COMMITTEES FOR THE COMING
YEAR.

TO TOP THINGS OFF WE'LL
HAVE HOME MADE PIZZA
FOR EVERYONE TO
ENJOY. WON'T YOU
SHARE IN THE
FESTIVITIES.



The Real Santa Claus

Continued From Pg.3

But an element of class struggle may also have been a factor. In New York, the wealthy Episcopalian gentry, known unofficially as Knickerbockers, felt their authority was threatened by newcomers. In their eyes, the re-introduction of St. Nicholas into New York society provided a “cultural counterweight for the commercial bustle and democratic misrule of early nineteenth century New York.”

Helping with the re-invention of Christmas was Washington Irving, a member of the New York Historical Society who published The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon. Best known for the stories of Rip van Winkle and Ichabod Crane, the book also contained four stories of a fictional Bracebridge Hall, a traditional English setting where “[the occasion of Christmas] seemed to throw open every door, and unlock every heart. It brought the peasant and the peer together, and blended all ranks in one warm generous flow of joy and kindness.” Irving later admitted that he could not remember actually seeing the type of Christmas he described, and that much of it was conceived from whole cloth. But it did give Pintard a model for his newly-invented Christmas season.

All these different strains came together in A Visit from St. Nicholas (1823) by Clement Clarke Moore. Moore, a wealthy New York landowner, took the traditional person of St. Nicholas and mixed it with some of the ideas in Irving’s Sketch Book to provide a visual image of Santa Claus. Pintard’s reintroduction of St. Nicholas was only for the upper classes, but Moore’s poem captured the imagination of rich and poor alike. Eventually, Moore’s image combined with other traditions around the country to create the figure we have today. The well-known newspaper cartoonist Thomas Nast drew illustrations of Santa Claus that were widely circulated in the late 1800’s. Santa’s image was solidified in 1931 when Haddon H. Sundblom began to draw his popular pictures of Santa Claus for the Coca Cola company. By that time, however, the image of Santa Claus in his traditional red and white had already become a standard figure in American iconography.

So, when you think of the figure of jolly old Santa Claus, in his red and white costume, instead of grabbing a cold one, think instead of a minor bishop from Myra and the New York Knickerbockers.

It’s the real thing.

CHRISTMAS TREE FACTS

Christmas trees have been sold commercially in the United States since about 1850.

In 2002, Oregon, North Carolina, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Washington, New York, and Virginia were the top Christmas tree producing states. Oregon was the leading producer of Christmas trees – 6.5 million in 2002.

The best selling trees are Scotch pine, Douglas fir, Noble fir, Fraser fir, Virginia pine, balsam fir and white pine.

In the United States, there are around a half billion Real Christmas Trees growing on U.S. farms.

In 1979, the National Christmas Tree was not lighted except for the top ornament. This was done in honor of the American hostages in Iran.

Since 1966, the National Christmas Tree Association has given a Christmas tree to the President and first family.

The first decorated Christmas tree was in Riga, Latvia in 1510.

Recycled trees have been used to make sand and soil erosion barriers and been placed in ponds for fish shelter.

The first Christmas tree retail lot in the United States was started in 1851 in New York by Mark Carr.

Christmas trees take an average of 7-10 years to mature.

Christmas trees remove dust and pollen from the air.

**“Example isn’t
another way to
teach, it is the
only way to teach”
Albert Einstein**

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Our December meeting/Christmas party was held at Nate's house on December 3rd, despite the snow and ice, which accompanied it. The potluck was to die for and so were the decorations. We are sorry to say that there were NOT 25 Christmas trees there (Dan actually counted them!), but Nate came close with 22, all beautiful. It was a grand kick-off to the holiday season and thanks go to Nate for hosting it once more.

PERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD

We surprised Carol Mattox with this year's Person of the Year Award at the above party. She was embarrassed but we stationed Mike Ring at the door so she couldn't escape. Although some might say we "honored" her by giving her this award but, actually, the opposite is true—she "honored" us with her hard work for FPNA, the neighborhood, and the City as well. Carol not only did the work of organizing our sidewalk repair project, she nearly single-handedly worked to get the Mutual of Omaha volunteers over here to paint the stadium at Kirn Park. Yes, yes, Carol will say that she wasn't the only one who did all this, but she was the lynch pin that held both projects together. Thanks, Carol, for your year of superior service.

DID YOU SEE IT?

Our Christmas bows took center stage on the front page of the Nonpareil on Saturday, December 10th. Cindy Christensen, FPNA member and photographer for the paper, snapped a beautiful photo depicting our bows with their bright colors and their tiny caps of snow, surrounded by a real Victorian snow covered street—a Dickens Christmas if we ever saw one. In fact, we think the photo would make a nice Christmas card so, Cindy, how about it?

FPNA BOARD MEETING

On December 5th the FPNA Board held its final meeting of the year with everyone present. The following discussions were had:

1. The FPNA, as the entity which represents our entire neighborhood, will send letters to the Community Development Department and to the Iowa West Foundation outlining its recommendations regarding the derelict houses in the 400 block of Park Ave. We will state that the integrity of the neighborhood is best served if the houses in question are saved rather than demolished, if possible. While we recognize that the decision on the final disposition of these houses is not ours to make, we have been asked for our input.
2. The 2012 Christmas bows will also include wreaths as well as the customary bows. Twenty wreaths were donated to FPNA by Nate Watson. Approximately \$85 was approved for the purchase of any additional wreaths and ribbons required.
3. In the future, invitations for our Christmas parties will be done via computer only.
4. Grant opportunities in 2012 include \$10,000 grants from PCCF and un-stated amounts from CURB. We will ask PCCF for help to continue our sidewalk repairs. Because the CURB grants will not open to the public until at least April 2012, it was decided to postpone any discussion on that grant opportunity until then.

Minutes of this meeting were taken by Tracy Dreessen; this synopsis was written by Sharon Babbitt.
Until next time.....Sharon

DATES TO REMEMBER

Bluffs Arts Council
Free Holiday Concert
December 17th. 3:00 p.m.
Arts Center at Iowa Western
Community College

FPNA January Meeting
January 14th. 4:00 P.M.
332 Glen Avenue



DID YOU KNOW?

Our neighborhood played a part in one of the mysteries surrounding the Council Bluffs schools, which were recently written about in the Nonpareil? Who was Mantie Mangum and why was a plaque made in her honor? And what does it have to do with us? Ms. Mangum taught school at the Washington Avenue School in Council Bluffs from 1880 until her retirement in 1928. During that time, and for the rest of her life, she lived at 223 Park Ave., now the home of Kelly and Ward Prine. Can't you just envision her walking to and from work only blocks away from home, long skirts swishing? And the plaque? It was placed on a memorial drinking fountain erected in her honor, which was paid for by collecting pennies from many of the 5,000 children she had taught during her career. She died in 1945.

Secrets from a Convicted Burglar

Installment No. 1

Hi, remember me? I'm the one who carried a clipboard through your neighborhood. Or I might have been the one who looked like a lawn boy and carried a rake. I've always done my best to never, never look like a crook.

I love looking in your windows. I'm looking for signs that you're home, and for flat screen TVs or gaming systems I'd like. I'll drive or walk through your neighborhood at night, before you close the blinds, just to pick my targets. If you don't answer when I knock, I try the door. Occasionally, I hit the jackpot and walk right in.

The two things I hate most—loud dogs and nosy neighbors.

More next month.....



THE Fairmount Press
 The Newspaper of the Fairmount Park Neighborhood Association
 200 Park Avenue Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503
fairmountparkna@aol.com

Sharon Babbitt	President
Kyle Muschall	Vice President/ Publisher
Tracy Dreessen	Secretary
John Huggins	Treasurer
Terri Dowell	Editor
Maxine Gotto	Special Representative

Sharon Babbitt	Board Member (2012)
Kyle Muschall	Board Member (2013)
Tracy Dreessen	Board Member (2012)
Nate Watson	Board Member (2013)
John Huggins	Board Member (2012)
Carol Mattox	Board Member (2012)
Linda Ring	Board Member (2013)

**Have an Opinion?
Please Share!**

We 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: John Huggins, Treasurer, 206 Park 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 \$12.00

(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: Sharon Babbitt, President, 200 Park Avenue Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503 or John Huggins, Treasurer, 206 Park Avenue Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503