



ALL THE NEWS THAT IS FIT TO PRINT

By Sharon Babbitt

200 Park Avenue

IN LIMBO

What's going on this month? At first glance, it would seem to be a whole lotta nothin', but let's take a closer look. Yes, our crystal ball reveals dreams, ideas and plans—will they come true? They will if we apply that elbow grease for which we are known!

CLEANING UP

The big clean-up begins, starting with our Adopt-Lookout Point program. This is explained elsewhere but it's important to mention that we're about to put ourselves to work in our beautiful Park, getting rid of a year's worth of detritus. Let's come together on April 14th at 9:00 a.m. and see how many trash bags we can fill. We made quite an impression last year—let's do it again.

RESIDENTIAL TRASH

That unsightly stuff that is clinging to our streets and grass will be a thing of the past when we participate in Operation Clean-up, a Citywide event that will occur later this spring. We can always get an early start if we'll just stoop down and pick up a little bit here and there.

BUT HERE'S THE BEST

For a long time, FPNA has turned its eyes to the future, thinking about the *one big thing*. New grant opportunities have presented themselves and your Board is starting to get jazzed up. There may be enough money to get large banners, something we've always wanted, as a grand way to identify our neighborhood. So, an investigation is under way to make it happen—now. A serious obstacle rearing its ugly head is the problem of where to install banners, if we get them. Utility poles would seem to be the answer but the power company disagrees. They say no to hanging anything from those poles, which hold the major power lines (those lines which run across the tops of poles); unfortunately, this is just about every pole in the neighborhood. Maybe a little influence from high places could make them change their minds but, meanwhile, we've turned our eyes to Plan B. We ask, why not get our own poles? You know, tall aluminum ones designed to hold banners and lights. We nixed the light option but are excited about the banner option. Already we see banners waving at the entrances to our NA, which is all we could afford at first (remember, friends, baby steps). Stay tuned for more on this grand plan. Meanwhile, think positive.

CITY COUNCIL UPDATE

By Nate Watson

126 Park Avenue

This past month on the City Council was a busy one. To take advantage of the current low interest rates, we are basically refinancing some of the existing bonds debt. Just like you and I borrow to be able to purchase a house, our City borrows to purchase long-term needs, such as much of the major street repairs and replacements. Also just like you and me, the City does not borrow for short-term wants, but saves and sets priorities for wants, as opposes to needs.

Speaking of wants versus needs, the City will not be raising property taxes for the coming fiscal year, which runs from July 1st to the following June 30th. Our county was the only one in the state that was required to lower the valuation of all residential property by at least 5%. However, the “rollback” is less generous next year, by a little over 4%, which is also set by the state. The state is also making us pay more into retirement funds that it created, but isn’t providing us any money to do it.

Because the City is not raising its tax rate, what this means is that you will actually be taxed less by the City, to the tune of 0.82% less. Mayor Hanafan, with the input of the Council, was able to set priorities, to avoid a tax increase. Certain City services will take longer than in the past, because the City will be performing the same services but with less money, though I am quite certain all of us will be patient and understanding. You indicated that you wanted your government to do the best it could with current tax rates, and your government has listened.

By the way, because I get asked this question quite a bit, if you notice your property tax, in actual dollars, has gone up this coming fiscal year, it is due to one or both of the following reasons: (1) you own one of the very few properties that actually increased in value, so congratulations not pity are due to you, and/or (2) the county or school governments continue their current pattern of tax increases, which are the two other major entities that tax you via the property tax. Sometimes tax increases are needed, of course, though I leave it to you to decide which are warranted and which are excessive. You might make your voice known to them, if you have an opinion, of course. As one of your City representatives, I can only control what the City charges, not what any other taxing entity may do.

Quite a bit of work (and expense) continues to be incurred to fix storm sewers throughout town and pump houses along the levees. This work is quite necessary, of course, though limits the amount of money available for other matters.

The City has purchased the Bunge elevators and tracks on the west side of town, and is considering various redevelopment possibilities for the area. TJ will finally be completely connected to both of its halves, as those tracks will soon be history.

The Council is currently looking at, perhaps, regulating where satellite dishes may be located on residential properties. Some say they shouldn’t be in front yards, kind of like how we now ban cars being parked on front lawns. Others say that folks wouldn’t put them there unless they couldn’t get a signal otherwise. Where do you stand? Please let me know.

Does anyone want to serve on the Public Arts Commission? If you do, please let me know. Of the nine seats on the board, five must be residents of the City. The other four seats will be as follows: (1) a representative of the Bluffs Arts Council, (2) a representative of the City Parks & Recreation Department, (3) a representative of the Fine Arts Department of Iowa Western, and (4) an architect or engineer from the City. All nine seats are appointed by the Mayor, with the consent of the Council required for each seat. To save taxpayer money, the Commisison will be staffed by existing employees from the Clerk’s and the Parks & Rec departments, rather than hiring it out, as initially proposed.

As always, I have office hours from 9am to noon on the Saturdays before Council Mondays, in Suite 414 of the Park Building, 500 Willow Avenue, directly across from City Hall. I hope to continue to hear from you.

Regards,
-Nate

EVERYONE IS IRISH

On March 17, everyone is Irish; At least a wee bit. Suddenly we have an O' in front of our name or we wear green or are thirsty for some green "barley pop". Is there any other nationality that can make this claim? But why the Irish? Possibly the root of it lies with the potato. It was the diet mainstay of the Emerald Isle in the 18 and 19 Centuries. Unfortunately the potato would suffer from occasional infestations of potato blight. One of the worst, ravaged the potato fields of Ireland from 1845 to 1852. There were other contributing factors, but the infestation of potato blight led to mass starvation in Ireland. This then led to huge waves of emigration to Canada, the U.S. and to Australia, almost 250,000 in one year alone. By 1850 1.5 to 2 million people had left Ireland. For the U.S. that meant one quarter of the populations of Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore were Irish, as well as some scattered mining communities. Thus setting the stage for a heavy Irish influence. By the 1870 westward expansion was taking hold in the U.S. This meant Irish workers heading to the Midwest and West to help build railroads, mine for ore and work in the stockyards bringing their customs, food and religion with them across the continent. In the next 150 years other nationalities would emigrate giving the country the "melting pot" phenomena, but none have left quite the mark as the Irish. Today that translates into green beer, celebrations with Irish music and shamrocks.

C.B. CITIZEN POLICE ACADEMY

The citizens' police academy is designed to give people who live or own a business in Council Bluffs the opportunity to learn what police work is like in their community. The academy runs for 12 weeks and meets on Thursday nights.

The classes generally run from 6:30PM until 9:00PM at the new Southwest Iowa Law Enforcement Training Facility. The classes cover everything from community-oriented policing to special weapons and tactics teams and are taught by Council Bluffs police officers. Most of the classes are designed to be hands on experience for the participants.

If you wish to register for the CPA visit the citizens police academy website www.cbpolice.org/cpa3.asp and open the PDF, fill out the form and send it to: Officer Mark G. Alba 227 South 6th Street Council Bluffs, IA 51501.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Officer Mark G. Alba at 712-329-1825

Registrations for the Spring 2012 CPA are being taken now.

2012 GARDEN CONFERENCE

Saturday, March 31st at The Center (714 S Main St). Sponsored by: West Pottawattamie County Master Gardeners. Keynote speaker: Kelly D. Norris, Horticulturist, Plant Breeder & Author, "Chic Plants for Modern Gardens: A Commentary on New Plants," among several other workshops throughout the day. Registration fee: \$30 on or before March 26, day of conference \$35. For registration form go to www.extension.iastate.edu/ and visit the gardening conference page on the West Pottawattamie County Extension and Outreach website or call (712) 366-7070.

Mayor's Neighborhood Cabinet

Sheila Barak Graham

286 High School Avenue

- The City is saving some money on not having as much snow removal this winter, but some expenditures, like salt, are purchased ahead of the season at a reduced rate and stored, and some of these funds are used for smaller road repairs
- City expects ~\$45 million to be spent on 28 miles of levees
- Emil Ln & Dog Bite Ln flooding
 - Cost prohibitive to raise houses to meet 500-year flood standards (new federal regulations would require changes to meet 500-year flood standards)
- The City has spent ~\$12 million on flooding so far
 - Federal reimbursement so far is only at \$600,000
 - The hope is to eventually get back about 70%
- Residential property values were rolled back 5% across Pottawattamie County, so City cash reserves are down
- The City is projecting some slowdowns in services to keep expenses down since taxes are not being raised
- Out of a ~\$90 million City budget, ~\$13.6 million goes toward employee benefits for City employees, including police and fire
- If the proposed plan from the governor on reducing commercial property taxes goes through, the City expects to lose ~\$20 million over an 8 year period
 - Cities would receive funding to counteract this, but the City is not optimistic on receiving these funds as they are still waiting for other reimbursements promised from the state
- 657A abandoned properties
 - There is a growing list of these properties, but the City is wanting to come up with a policy on what to do with these properties so there is a procedure to follow every time a property falls into this category
- Wal-Mart made a pitch for the N 16th property (old Gordmans building)
 - Wal-Mart wants \$5 million in tax incentives
 - City Council got the number down to \$3.5 million, but Wal-Mart is wanting more, so they are still at negotiations
- The scope of the River's Edge Park project has been reduced by about \$4.5 million, but the primary points that were originally approved for the project are still in place



FOR THE FPNA MARCH MEETING

MARCH 24TH
3:00 P.M.
439 GLEN AVENUE

BRIANNA AND ROB STODDARD
ARE HOSTING THE MARCH GET TOGETHER
LITE SNACKS AND BEVERAGES WILL BE PROVIDED
LET'S BRING SOME SIDE DISHES AND DESSERTS TO
ROUND OUT THE EVENT

The President's Corner

Kyle Muschall

332 Glen Avenue

I've two topics to share this month. The first is our Adopt-Look-Out-Point Clean up event. Scheduled for Saturday April 14th at 9:00 a.m., we hope the weather will cooperate. This is the second year in our effort to help maintain the beauty of one of the highest points in our city.

Last year it was truly amazing, or disheartening depending on your perspective, the amount of trash we pulled up from the hills and ravines. Mattresses, decking, bottles, bed-frames, old tires, car parts and so many wrappers, cups and fast food sacks that I think every drive thru restaurant was equally represented. We are coordinating with Keep Council Bluffs Beautiful who will be supplying the trash bags and providing the trucks to haul away the pile of debris. We ask that anyone participating wear proper shoes and bring a pair of work gloves to protect your hands. There are many sharp, jagged objects so we want to keep everyone safe.

Many hands make light work so we've also invited the Gibraltar Neighborhood Association as they eagerly participated in the inaugural event last year and are committed to the same beautification goals that the FPNA hold in high importance. So please join us we will have donuts, milk and juice to celebrate at the end for a job well done. A note; if April 14th is called on account of rain our back up is the following Saturday April 21st. I hope to see you there.

The second topic is the article that appears on page 6 about the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Two months ago I didn't know of the existence of this organization but when an article in the Neighborhood Center Newsletter piqued my interest I took some time to research their website www.preservationnation.org.

The work this organization is doing to help create jobs, save important places and enriching communities across this great nation for current and future generations to enjoy is why I took the pledge to help raise awareness.

The Federal Historic tax credit, one of our nation's most powerful preservation tools, is having a direct impact right here in Council Bluffs. The Bluffs Towers building, formerly know as the Chieftain Hotel, at the intersection of Pearl and First Avenue has been approved for the Federal Historic tax credit. The building will be completely renovated, and according to National Register guidelines, it will continue to serve our residents of a certain age and abilities. This effort is due in large part to a conscientious developer and the work that the National Trust for Historic Preservation continues to perform in raising awareness of the benefits of this program.

I urge anyone who is interested to take a little time to review their website and come to their own decision. I think you will agree that this program is a powerful tool that creates jobs, saves buildings and attracts investments to communities nationwide. They truly are helping build a better tomorrow, today. Thanks for your time.

CRIME INFORMATION

Visit the Council Bluffs Police Department website

www.cbpolice.org/avenues2.

to view crime information that reflects written reports by the officers of your police department in a given time frame (just click on the "Crime Information" links to open up the reports as PDF documents). There are five sections on the PDFs that are broken up to show case number, date and time report was written, general location of the incident, the district the incident occurred, and a description of the incident.

The Council Bluffs Police Department hopes the citizens of Council Bluffs find this information useful in keeping their neighborhoods safe. Remember if you see something say something.

If you see a crime in progress please call 911, if the crime has already happened (shed broken into) you can call the non-emergency number 712-328-5737. This phone is answered by

Legislative Coffee

Legislative Coffees are designed to give all Chamber members, public officials, and citizens an opportunity to hear the latest news from the Legislature and to have their questions and concerns heard.

9:00 –10:30 a.m. Woodrow Wilson Middle School 715 N. 21st Street Council Bluffs, Iowa. Again, these are open to everybody, and there is no cost to attend. Dates are as follow;

March 24

NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

In his State of the Union Address, President Obama laid out a plan for an economy that's "built to last", one that revolves around "American manufacturing, American energy, skills for American workers, and a renewal of American values."

The National Trust for Historic Preservation would like to offer the perfect complement to that vision. A program that for more than thirty years has quietly and effectively created skilled American jobs, stimulated local economies, and revitalized historic buildings and communities built to last. This program is the Federal Historic Tax Credit. You may never have heard of it, but communities around this nation have seen what it can do. Consider Boston's Faneuil Hall, the Ferry Building in San Francisco and the Apollo Theater in New York City. These iconic structures and 37,000 others were rehabilitated with the help of the historic tax credit — generating 2 million jobs, attracting \$90 million in private investment, and revitalizing communities nationwide in the process. Locally, the Chieftain building at Pearl and First Avenue is the most recent recipient of the Federal Historic Tax Credit in Council Bluffs.

The best part? This program more than pays for itself. In the 32 years of the program, the amount of tax credits paid by the U.S. Treasury is far less than the amount of federal taxes generated by these projects. The worst part? The federal historic tax credit is now in danger. Tax reform on Capitol Hill threatens to reduce or even eliminate this powerful economic development tool.

Now is not the time to cut programs proven to create jobs. The National Trust for Historic Preservation needs you to join the campaign to raise awareness of the impact of historic preservation. Go to www.preservationnation.org and take action by taking the pledge and join our fight to help our communities prosper through preservation and keep the Federal Historic Tax Credit off the chopping block. Thank you for your time and effort.

Cherry Surprise Cake

by Carol Mattox 225 Huntington Avenue

2- sticks of butter-softened

2 cups sugar

2 eggs

1 tsp. Vanilla extract

2tsp. Almond flavoring

1 pint. sour cream

3 cups flour

1 tsp. baking soda

1 cup chopped maraschino cherries

1 1/2 cups chopped nuts

icing

1 cup butter

3 3/4 cups powdered sugar

1 drop vanilla, 1 drop Almond flavoring

1 oz. marachino cherry juice.

-Cream together butter and sugar. Beat in eggs

-Mix in Vanilla, Almond flavoring, and sour cream.

-Add in flour, baking soda then mix in cherries and nuts

-Bake in greased pan at 325 degrees for 70 minutes

icing

-Mix all ingredients together until smooth

-Cool cake completely before frosting.

DATES TO REMEMBER

History Day
and

FPNA March Meeting
March 24

Mayor's Breakfast
March 29

TipTop Ballroom 7:30 a.m.

2012 Garden Conference
March 31st - All Day
The Center

Adopt-Look Out Point Clean Up
April 14th. 9:00 a.m.

150th Anniversary

By Karl Allen

445 Glen Avenue

One Hundred Fifty Years Ago, during the Civil War, Council Bluff's own regiment, the 4th Iowa, and Colonel Grenville Dodge, were heroes. On the 7th and 8th of March, 1862, they played a key role in the Battle of Pea Ridge.

The Confederate Army had made a daring march completely around the Federals, and attacked from behind at two points. To defeat them, General Curtis concentrated most of his army against one of the attacks. But someone had to hold off the other attack until the battle was won. Dodge and the 4th Iowa were part of the holding force. All day on the 7th of March they fought back and forth near Elkhorn Tavern, Arkansas, as Missouri soldiers and cannon struck at them from three sides. They held, at the price of 160 casualties.

Dodge himself got through the battle with amazingly little damage. Unlike many Union officers around him, he had not been shot. He merely had two fingers dislocated by the impact of a spent shell fragment, and some bullet holes in his coat. He had also been knocked off his horse when a cannon ball broke off a tree limb above him. Aside from that, and a bad cold, he was fine. In early April, as his and the 4th Iowa's wounds were healing, he was made General Grenville Dodge.

Secrets from a Convicted Burglar

Installment No. 4

Love those flowers. That tells me you have taste—and taste means there are nice things inside. Those yard toys your kids leave out always make me wonder what type of gaming system they have.

If decorative glass is part of your front entrance, don't let your alarm company install the control pad where I can see if it's set. That makes it too easy.

It's raining, you're fumbling with your umbrella, and you forget to lock your door—understandable. But understand this: I don't take a day off because of bad weather.

Do you really think I won't look in your sock drawer? I always check dresser drawers, the bedside table, and the medicine cabinet.

You're right: I won't have enough time to break into that safe where you keep your valuables. But if it's not bolted down, I'll take it with me.

Go ahead—announce your vacation plans on your Face Book page. It's easier than you think to look up your address.

THE Fairmount Press

The Newspaper of the Fairmount Park Neighborhood Association

332 Glen Avenue Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503
fairmountparkna@aol.com

Kyle Muschall	President/Publisher
Linda Ring	Vice President
Carol Mattox	Secretary
Dave Huggins	Treasurer
Terri Dowell	Editor
Sharon Babbitt	Special Representative

Sharon Babbitt	Board Member (2014)
Kyle Muschall	Board Member (2013)
Nate Watson	Board Member (2013)
Dave Huggins	Board Member (2014)
Carol Mattox	Board Member (2014)
Linda Ring	Board Member (2013)
Michelle	Board Member (2014)
Mutchler-Burns	

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. Please Contact the Editor.

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: Dave Huggins, Treasurer, 150 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: Kyle Muschall, President, 332 Glen Avenue Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503 or Dave Huggins, Treasurer, 150 Park Avenue Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503