

# The Fairmount Press

The Newspaper of The Fairmount Park Neighborhood Association

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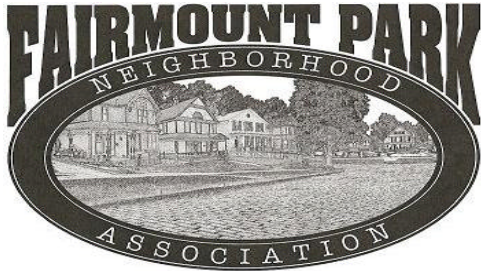
**New Vol. 1**

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**Issue 7**

[fairmountparkna@aol.com](mailto:fairmountparkna@aol.com)

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## **The Night Before Christmas**

**By: Clement Clarke Moore**

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse. The stockings were hung by the chimney with care, in hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there. The children were nestled all snug in their beds, while visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads; and mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap, had just settled down for a long winter's nap, when out on the lawn there arose such a clatter. I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter. Away to the window I flew like a flash, tore open the shutters and threw up the sash. The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow gave the luster of mid-day to objects below, when to my wondering eyes should appear, but a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer, with a little old driver, so lively and quick, I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick. More rapid than eagles his coursers they came, and he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name; "Now, Dasher! Now, Dancer! Now, Prancer and Vixen! On, Comet! On Cupid! On, Donder and Blitzen! To the top of the porch! To the top of the wall! Now dash

away! Dash away! Dash away all!" As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly, when they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky, so up to the house-top the coursers they flew, with the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too. And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof the prancing and pawing of each little hoof. As I drew in my hand, and was turning around, down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound. He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot, and his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot. A bundle of toys he had flung on his back, and he looked like a peddler just opening his pack. His eyes—how they twinkled! His dimples how merry! His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry! His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow, and the beard of his chin was as white as the snow. The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth, and the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath; he had a broad face and a little round belly that shook when he laughed like a bowl full of jelly. He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf, and I laughed when I saw him in spite of myself. A wink of his eye and a twist of his head, soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread. He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work, and filled all the stockings, then turned with a jerk, and laying his finger aside of his nose, and giving a nod, up the chimney he rose. He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle and away they all flew like the down of a thistle. But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight, "Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!"

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 The Fairmount Park Neighborhood Association  
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## A Message from the Editor

By: Tracy Dreessen  
 164 Park Avenue

I received several small tidbits of information that Nate and I thought would be great for everyone in our neighborhood.

- When writing out your cards this year, take one card and send it to the below address. If we pass this on and everyone sends one card, think of how many cards these wonderful special people who have sacrificed so much would get!

A Recovering American Soldier  
 C/O  
 Walter Reed Army Medical  
 Center  
 6900 Georgia Avenue, NW  
 Washington, D.C. 20307-5001

- The Holiday Homes Tour was a huge success. The Historic Preservation Alliance was kind enough to pass along just how much money we helped raise. You may be surprised to see how much. Combined ticket sales for the event totaled \$5,264. Pretty amazing!

- On January 29, 2009, the Council Bluffs/Omaha Community will be doing a count of homelessness from 5 am-7 am according to HUD guidelines. The most challenging part of this count is to find people that aren't using the shelter system and who are sleeping on the street at night. We could use your help. If you see people who are staying in places like alleyways, parts of parks, and other locations please let us know so that we can target our efforts. Not only will we be collecting information about people so that our community can better meet their needs, but people found will be given information and items that will help provide an exit from their homelessness. Also, if you're interested in participating in the count, we could use your help! You'll be partnered up with people that currently work with the homeless. The more people we have participating, the more we'll have an accurate count. Please use the below contact information if you are interested.

Erin Bock, Program Coordinator  
 MACCH  
 115 S. 49<sup>th</sup> Ave. Omaha, NE  
 68132

Phone: 402-561-7584

- Historic Downtown Council Bluffs will host its second annual **"First Night" Celebration on New Year's Eve**. This celebration is based on the international first night model, and is the only First Night event sanctioned in Iowa or Nebraska. The event is a family-friendly and alcohol-free arts festival featuring over 40 acts and activities—bands, magicians, comedians, dancers and

other performing artists—in 10 downtown venues clustered around Bayliss Park. The admission to these events is a lapel button that is for sale now at local grocery stores and City Hall, and at City Hall on New Year’s Eve. Buttons sell for \$10 each and get you into all venues. (Children under five are admitted free of charge). Volunteers for 2 hour shifts are needed—5-7pm, 7-9 pm, 9-11 pm, and 11 pm-1 am. Volunteers receive a free button. Volunteers are encouraged to bring their families. (Children 10 and up). Ex. A family of 4 saves \$40 (\$10 a button). Duties include: checking for buttons, selling buttons, helping set up for the acts, moving chairs, and directing people.

- **Congratulations to Thomas and Deborah Lowndes at 444 Glen Ave for winning our first annual “Exterior Decorating Contest” of 2008. They will receive the Traveling Trophy with their names and address engraved in the first gold plate as well as \$100. Can’t wait to see more names on the plate!! ☺**
- Two years ago, the International Downtown Association conducted a study of our downtown area and provided findings and recommendations to grow the economic, culture, arts, and entertainment offerings of our community. Efforts to get those recommendations implemented have been met with limited success, with the greatest success being in the

form of infrastructure investment in the areas in and around the downtown area. A cumulative \$80M has been invested in the downtown area in the past few years, in the new library, the UP Museum, etc. In addition, about \$25M has been invested by the PCDC in store front upgrades, streetscaping, planning, and the adaptive reuse of vacant historic structures as housing and commercial space. What has been missing is a steady stream of events that bring an area to life. About 75 days ago, a group of community leaders met and reviewed where the City was with respect to the IDA recommendations, determined that we have some work left to do, and asked for a team to steer this process: thus, our group. The Main Street Council Bluffs organization is a public-private partnership, focusing on two areas of significant emphasis in the early stages of our development: Marketing and Promotion of the historic downtown area, and organizing ourselves. We hope to work with new and existing organizations, collectively leveraging our talents to facilitate some incredible options for the residents of our city in the form of entertainment, cultural enrichment, historical preservation, and economic growth. Communication is the key for our long term success, ensuring the community has input on our overall direction, agrees with the vision of our team, and provides support during the coming months.

## **President's Corner**

By: Nate Watson  
126 Park Avenue

I want to thank each and every one of you for all of your efforts this past year! The Association continues to grow in active membership, and we can look forward to many wonderful events and activities in the coming new year.

Do you ever find yourself saying things like, "There's nothing fun to do!," or, "Who are my neighbors?" Or, perhaps, "I sure wish things were done differently!" With a new year dawning, I would encourage everyone to get involved. Please don't be shy! We hold our events at different times and on different days of the week to try to accommodate everyone.

All of the various wonderful activities that have taken place this past year, including the wonderful flower baskets and bows, the street cleanups, the Independence Day picnic, the Association birthday party, the holiday decorating contest, the holiday party, the many fine socials and events, and all other aspects of the organization have provided countless opportunities for each of us to help improve our surroundings and get to know one another better. I can think of no better present than that.

## **AWESOME Volunteers**

By Sharon Babbitt  
200 Park Ave

At the recent Christmas Homes Tour, 21 volunteers from our neighborhood and two from Fifth Avenue stepped up to the plate and, along with 15 volunteers from other sources, helped guide the 450+ visitors through the five tour homes without a single traffic jam. The tour was so successful that plans are in the works to sponsor another tour in 2009. Five homes have already been chosen and they are all located in or near our FPNA area and the

newly named Gibraltar NA, which is just over the hill from us. We won't be concerned about finding volunteers for that tour just yet. But don't be surprised if the subject comes up about eleven months from now!

## **A Message from Michelle**

By: Michelle Mutchler-Burns, Vice-President  
407 Glen Ave.

Fairmount Park Neighborhood Association Members,

I want to take the opportunity to thank Nate for hosting our holiday celebration. For those of you unable to attend, we surely missed your company! Nate's home featured more than 17 decorated Christmas trees, a wonderful selection of holiday baked goods, punch and a variety of wines, some from local vineyards, as well as sparkling grape juice to ring in holiday cheer. We had a marvelous turn-out, we estimated 50 to 60 in attendance.

We also celebrated our neighborhood's contribution to the Council Bluffs Historic Preservation Alliance's "Historic Homes for the Holidays". The tour, held Sunday, November, 30<sup>th</sup>, featured Nate's home, as well as Cindy and John's at 420 Glen. The tour was a tremendous success! Thanks to the Alliance for giving us the funds to purchase the wine for the party.

One more celebration to add, is Mary Lou McGinn's Birthday. We successfully surprised her with a beautifully framed and matted print, thanks to her husband, Joe. The print is a paper rendition of our banner, declaring her and "honorary Member". We attribute the success of our quest for Historic District designation to Mary Lou's tireless efforts, she is truly someone special!

If you haven't already noticed, be sure to see the Glendale Pumping Station in its holiday splendor. We asked for their

permission and the CBWW agreed to let us decorate their building. It's best to see it at dusk, when you can appreciate both the greenery and lights. Our next meeting will be Friday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at Kyle and Cindy's home, 332 Glen Ave. Please plan to join us!

## **Financial Column: One Big Mess A monthly op-ed**

By: Chad Fent, Secretary/Treasurer  
439 Glen Ave.

At times, there can be a great deal of confusion surrounding what is happening in our financial markets. And the remedies proposed by Congress, the US Treasury, and the Federal Reserve rarely do anything to clear up the confusion. It is my intention to try and help explain the mess we find ourselves in, offer insights (read: predictions), offer solutions, and most importantly, to arouse poignant thought and questions regarding the validity of the actions taken by specific parties. Though, as with anything else, I must add this disclaimer: The views reflected in the articles you will read are not necessarily those of your elected board of directors, nor the editors of this newsletter. This is simply meant to be an opinion column, and is not intended to be investment advice.

What on earth is going on? The stock market fell and is fluctuating wildly. Your home may be worth less today than it was a year ago. You hear about a new bailout for some company or other every few days. Your portfolio might be decimated. You might be having a tough time getting a loan for, well, anything, unless you have stellar credit. You could be afraid of losing your job, in the wake of the news you've heard. The Federal Reserve Bank continues to lower interest rates, and just about everyone got a stimulus check last year, but nothing seems to work. Why?

The answer is plain and simple: We must purge the excesses out of the system before we can have any hope of recovery. This is one of the foundation pillars of Austrian Economic Theory. Consumers, companies, and governments have gotten in to debt far over their heads, and now the debt must be repaid, or simply wiped off the books in order to begin anew. Ludwig Von Mises (the father of Austrian Theory) said in no uncertain terms that once an economy becomes laden with excessive debt, that a downturn is inevitable. And doesn't it seem natural? You understand that in your personal finances, there is only so much debt you can take on. There are of course, non debt consumables (food and utilities) that figure into your monthly budget. But the majority of what you have to pay out every month is financed by debt-- a mortgage, a car loan, a credit card, a student loan, etc. Most of us understand that you can only rack out those credit cards so far before you find yourself in the precarious position of not making a bill. And that is scary. You know the answer is not taking on more debt, you simply can't afford it. If you understand that, you understand the basic principle of Austrian economics. If it were not for this principle, we could all live on \$5 an hour, and live in \$1 million homes. You say that is preposterous, but that is the direction our Congressional Leaders, Treasury, and Reserve Bank are taking us in.

I'm about to make a connection here, and I hope the light goes on. This is precisely why bailouts, stimulus checks, and other forms of interventionist handouts don't work. There are two ways that the government (at the Federal Level) can get money. One is to collect taxes. The second is to issue debt in the form of US Treasury securities (T Bonds and T Bills). Does anyone remember when Dick Cheney uttered the phrase several years ago that deficits don't matter? Though many thought it was a ludicrous statement, it

never got the attention or questions it really deserved. This is why *he* thought they don't matter. He thought that the US Treasury could "expand their balance sheet" by issuing Treasuries ad infinitum to the Federal Reserve (and others) in exchange for Reserve Notes (cash- not the paper kind anymore, it's all done by a simple computer keystroke.) Note that I don't call this "money" for a very important reason that I'll get to another time. That's how Congress and our Executive branch thought they could deficit spend, by taking on debt. In their minds, the debt was only temporary, and when it came time to pay on the debt (the maturity or redemption date), the money would be there. Problem is, they keep piling it on. You know that you can only spend to a certain point that you just can't afford any more, and that nobody will issue you anymore debt. That is what is already happening with the US Government. Recently, the Treasury found that fewer and fewer buyers were showing up at Treasury Securities auctions (usually institutional investors and foreign governments). Now, they are becoming increasingly reliant on the Federal Reserve to buy up their securities. There is an even bigger problem here that I cannot go into detail in this month. I just don't have the room. But the point is that we are no longer a creditor nation, we are a debtor nation, and the breaking point is soon approaching.

A point will come-again, soon- where the US Government will no longer be able to meet its debt obligations. You may not want to hear this but, GM, Ford, and Chrysler bankruptcy possibilities are merely a blip, and the USA may have to declare bankruptcy. Though this will not be official, and normal bankruptcy proceedings will not ensue. What will happen is, the Federal Reserve will try to "print cash" like there is no tomorrow. The

situation we find ourselves in now is peculiarly similar to that of Weimar Germany in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Consumable goods are likely to rise significantly in relation to the value of everything else you own. Think of it as stagflation of the 1970's on hyper drive. You may think I'm old fashioned, and hopelessly out of touch with this one but, gold and silver will be the shining stars in the midst of all of this. I will go into greater depth on the merits of these real, hard, currencies in the coming months.

But the downturn is a good thing, and is absolutely necessary to cleanse the system. I'm not all doom and gloom. I'm absolutely exultant that things will one day be better, as I have utmost confidence in human spirit and his resiliency. Everything in life, everything around you, operates in cycles. The sunrise and set, the lunar phases, the tides, seasons, birth to death. The fundamental laws of nature most certainly apply to financial markets as well. Nikolai Kondratieff discovered the cyclical nature of economies in 1928. He predicted the crash of 1929 and the ensuing downtrend commonly referred to as the Great Depression. Again, here is another subject on which I will enlighten you in coming months. Tough or not, we will get through this, but we have to take our medicine now.

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## **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.

## Dates to Remember!

**Jan 16<sup>th</sup>- Annual Meeting -- Notice.** This is the next scheduled meeting after the holidays. This meeting is very important to attend! We will be voting on two board-member positions, as the seats currently held by Kyle Muschall and Nate Watson are up. In addition, the officer positions of President, Vice-President, and Secretary/Treasurer are up for election annually. Any member in good standing may stand for election. To be an officer, one must be a member of the board. To run for a position, a member needs to let Secretary Fent know prior to the meeting, or show up at the meeting and so declare.

Please note: Membership dues are now due for the year 2009. To vote or stand for election, dues must be paid (or a hardship waiver obtained). The dues for 2009 are \$20.00 per household.

The meeting will take place at Kyle and Cindy Muschall's home at 332 Glen Avenue, at 7 pm.

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## Mary Lou McGinn 2008 Person of the Year



Left to Right: Mary Lou McGinn, Kyle Muschall, Michelle Mutchler-Burns, and Nate Watson

For her countless hundreds of hours of tireless service to causes great and small, and particularly because we, the residents of FPNA, have been truly blessed by her wonderful help regarding our attempt at historic-district designation, the Board and Membership of The Fairmount Park Neighborhood Association have awarded Mary Lou McGinn the 2008 Person of the Year award, including a lifetime honorary membership in the Association for her and her husband, Joe. Thank you very much, Mary Lou!



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 Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Remit to: Chad Fent, Secretary/Treasurer, 439 Glen Ave., Council Bluffs, IA 51503.**

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Yes! I want to purchase a Neighborhood 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 in order to purchase a banner.

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

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

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Remit to: Michelle Mutchler-Burns, Vice-President, 407 Glen Ave., Council Bluffs, IA 51503, or to Sharon Babbitt, Board Member, 200 Park Ave, Council Bluffs, IA 51503.**