

ALL THE NEWS THAT IS FIT TO PRINT

By Sharon Babbit

200 Park Avenue

DON'T CALL THE LAW

If you see a black SUV driving slowly through the neighborhood, with six or seven nefarious characters inside, it will only be your FPNA Board looking at holiday decorations! It's that time of year, and we are preparing once again to give away a \$100 award for the best exterior Christmas holiday decorations. Our standards are high, and we have a few unwritten rules we like to follow. From the very first award, we learned from an expert what to look for. The decorations must look good both day and night. A mix of colors is preferred. "Themes" are better than "hodge-podge." FPNA Board members are not eligible to win. Neither are recent past winners, so if a home won anytime during the past five years, it is not eligible for the \$100 until after that period of time has expired (exceptions to this rule can be made, depending on the competition). After all, we are playing with \$100 of your money, so great care must be exercised.

The winner will be presented with the grand prize at the January meeting. Photos will be taken and published in the January newsletter. We like to photograph the human winners as well as the home itself, so don't run away when you see the camera coming. We will also present the runners-up with certificates. Based upon what we've seen in our preliminary run through the neighborhood, this will be a tougher decision this year than ever before. But, even if you don't come out on top or close to it, thank you all for putting on a great light show this year! We deserve to be called "Candy Cane Lane." In fact, maybe we should grab that title before any other neighborhood gets it!

POLES, POLES, OH MY

We're just about ready, friends. If you see the technical drawing of our new identification poles somewhere in this newsletter, you will understand why we are so very excited to begin this new addition to our wonderful neighborhood. It has been a long process to get this far and we aren't there yet, but expect to see the poles sprouting at five of our entrances by next March. We didn't think we would be able to get five poles, but with some creative juggling we have managed it. Our newly designed banners have arrived and can be seen at the January meeting. They are different from our membership flags, being 24" x 48" in size and printed on heavy canvas "Sunbrella" fabrics. The FPNA will pay for the flower baskets, which will be 20" in diameter and will weigh a hefty 70 lbs. when planted and watered. In fact, the heavy weight of these baskets caused a delay in the manufacture of the poles, but it has all worked out.

We hope to include poles throughout the neighborhood by the time all is said and done, and these five are only the beginning. It will take time, though, maybe years, but anything worth having is worth waiting for. This project involves

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The President's Corner

Kyle Muschall

332 Glen Avenue

Now is the time when you start to see all the “Year in Review” specials in the media. When I was considering this topic for the column and thought back over everything we’ve done as the FPNA in 2012 it is uplifting to know that we’ve got neighbors who are invested, involved and willing to put forth the effort to improve not only our neighborhood but the larger community as well.

In the arena of volunteering the FPNA makes it a point to participate in the annual Keep Council Bluffs Beautiful event. We scoured our streets for debris and detritus so all that reside here can enjoy an uncluttered environment. We also commit every year to have our annual “Look Out Point” clean up. The great vistas should not be sullied by folks who think that since the location is secluded it should be a dumping ground. We hauled up a couple of truck-loads of garbage and the City carted it away to the land fill.

A food drive was organized on behalf of the Broadway Methodist church and everyone gave generously to the event. I filled the bed of my truck with all of the contributions and the church was very pleased to receive our donations.

We lent a helping hand to the Shively’s this year when they suffered a very unfortunate auto accident and they needed to be off their feet to recover from their injuries. It was inspiring to see all the neighbors help out with caring for the lawn, taking in the mail, watching the dogs and house and providing regular meals so that Rick and Sarah could focus on getting well.

We made progress on some of our original long-term goals as well. Our website fairmountparkna.org is up and running. Sarah Arnold was instrumental and volunteered to assemble the site and graciously showed yours truly how to navigate thru the Word Press coding to enable frequent posts to keep everyone up to date on news, events and happenings with our neighborhood.

Our FPNA identification poles and banners are becoming more of a reality. With the gracious assistance of the PCCF and CURB foundations we are moving forward with installing them at all of our neighborhood entrances. The poles are being built as we speak and the banners have just arrived. When the ground warms up we’ll pour the footings and raise them to their crowning glory.

We’ve partnered with the Gibraltar Neighborhood

Association, the Dodge House and the C.B. Public Works department to create the “Brick Street Initiative”. By identifying the short-term goal of maintaining the brick streets thru retention of the bricks and the long term goals of reversing the detrimental patch work of concrete and asphalt patches we are working towards preserving these for future generations and our historical neighborhood designation.

The FPNA garage and bake sale was a smash hit. It gave everyone a chance to make some cash and clear out their humble abodes for new stuff. It was rousing to see all the people enjoying our neighborhood and the weather couldn’t have been better.

The FPNA also participates in the Downtown Neighborhood Alliance to share our experience with other associations and learn what other groups are working on and concerned about. We’ve also opened our homes and streets to Preserve Council Bluffs events throughout the year that help raise awareness and protect our heritage.

We continue our tradition of the decorating for the holidays and Linda Ring has upgraded our bows this year to include wreaths. The splash of color and fabric really livens the corners up on a drab day. Our flower baskets were hung with pride on the utility poles at the start of spring but the oppressive heat over the summer really did a number on them. No worries, our new banner poles have larger 20 inch baskets that we plan to fill with flora and décor to add the exclamation point when residents and visitors enter our neighborhood.

I think folks can lose site of all that is accomplished throughout the year because we’ve got our heads down and are concentrating on the task at hand. But if you take a moment to reflect we realize that we are truly fortunate to have friends and neighbors that are motivated to make a difference in their surroundings. Next year is shaping up even better than this year. Thanks for your time.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION LOAN PROGRAM

The Historic Preservation loan program is designed to assist eligible homeowners located in specific target areas in and around the downtown area to make repairs to their property. This program is in conjunction with the Housing Rehab Program.

Eligible repairs include exterior improvements (such as gutters, roofing, painting, siding, retaining walls, concrete work and window replacement) and interior improvements (such as electrical, plumbing and mechanical system updates). The architectural integrity of the homes assisted through this program shall be preserved. The program is operated on a first come, first served basis until all funds are expended or committed.

Eligibility is based upon the number of persons in the household and the yearly income of everyone living in the household. Properties which have received funds under the City's rehabilitation or ownership programs are not eligible to receive assistance for 20 years.

All properties assisted through the Historic Preservation Loan Program shall remain as single-family, no conversions to multi-family use will be allowed. Rental properties and homes purchased on a land sales contract are not eligible. The CD Forbearance Loan, CD Forgivable Loan and CD Principal Only Loans are all loans available through the current Housing Rehab Program. For more information contact:

The Community Development Department at (712) 328-4629.



Reflections on Advent

By Karl Allen

445 Glen Avenue

The Christian church teaches that Advent is a season of quiet meditation and waiting. It's a beautiful image. Unfortunately, it has little validity for the Holiday Season as it is now. Maybe we should find an alternate way of understanding Advent.

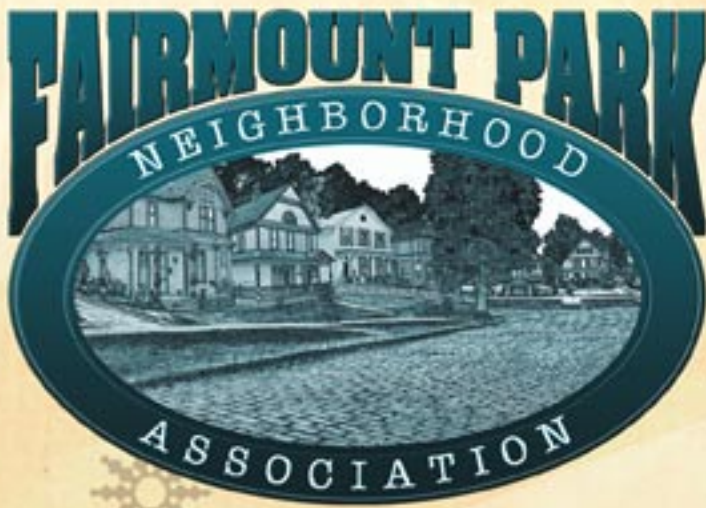
Imagine that God, in His kindness, chooses to let the pagan gods out of captivity once a year, to stretch their legs and again rule humanity for a little while.

On the first week of Advent God releases Dionysus, god of Revelry. In the United States, Dionysus reappears a little earlier, so that he can preside at Thanksgiving celebrations. Dionysus initially appears dressed as a Thanksgiving turkey. He then manifests himself at company Holiday celebrations, and Christmas bake-off events, and incarnates himself as gallons of egg-nog, spiked and unspiked.

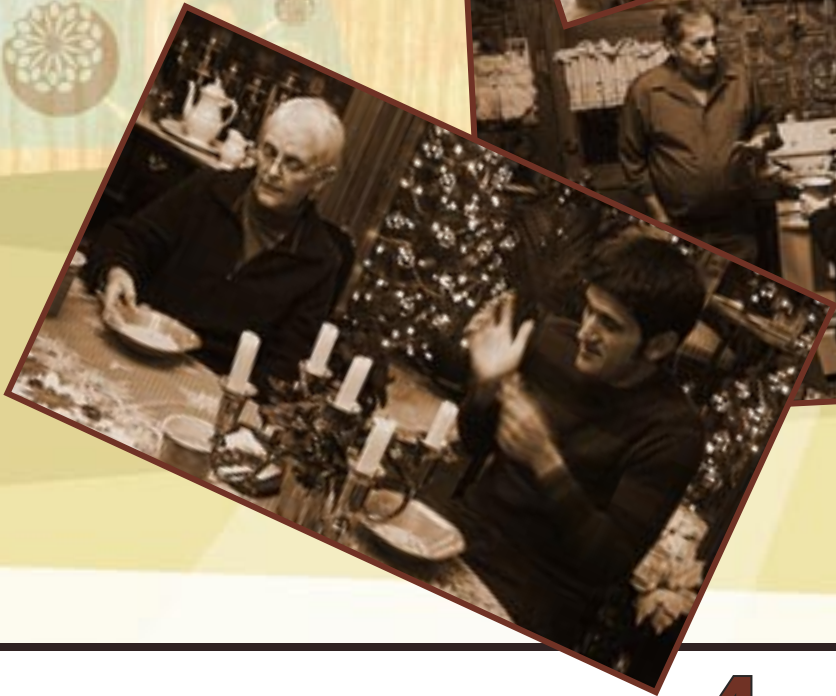
On the second week of Advent, God releases Orpheus, god of Music. Orpheus leads loudspeaker recitations of "I'm dreaming of a White Christmas", "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer", "I Saw Mommie Kissing Santy Clause", and other holiday favourites. Orpheus is manifested in the ancient crooners, reggae artists, and teams of musical barking dogs who perform these happy songs.

On the third week of Advent, God releases Hermes, god of Commerce. Hermes is the wing-footed God, and manifests his power by propelling us hastily from one mall to another madly running up our charge cards. Hermes was worshipped

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HOLIDAY PARTY 2012



ADVENT

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through naughty idols; now he is incarnated on TV as smiling Santa-girls whose long legs protrude from red parkas.

On the fourth week of Advent, God releases Ares, god of War. In mercy, in this country, God keeps close tabs on Ares, so that he doesn't get out of hand. But Ares is permitted to roam with his two war-dogs, Deimos (Fear) and Phobos (Panic). As the last shopping days wind down, worried shoppers, party-planners and store clerks are chased by the dogs of war, leashed, but still ferocious.

In this pagan cacophony, it is impossible to wait in stillness and meditation. In the midst of crowds, God's Spirit moves us to ask for something deeper and better than revelry, tunes and commerce, though we do not have the wits to know what we are asking for. So in the Advent season, we learn again, through the release of the old gods, what life was like in the old pagan world, harassed and goaded, trapped in pointless quests, lost and blindly seeking our savior.

Then Christmas Day comes, and once again, God sends us the Christ-child, in simplicity and peace. In His Advent, the power of the old gods breaks, again. Again he teaches a lesson we are slow to learn: that our worship is rightly paid, not to commerce, music and parties, but to the one who humbly incarnated into a chaotic world.

The gods go back to captivity grudgingly. First Ares leaves. As day-after-Christmas sales and gift returns cease, Hermes goes too. Orpheus' special music fades out. Dionysus, first released, is last to return. He gets a final whirl around the world on New Years Day.

**"Live your life
and
forget your age"
Norman Vincent
Peale**

What to do After the holidays

*Besides put away decorations
or
make New Year's Resolutions*

Resolve to join us for the FPNA January Meeting. We will be electing new Board members, contributing to dues and forming committees for the coming year. Bring your appetite as a Summer Picnic buffet dinner will be provided. We hope to see you there.

January 18th 6:30 pm

332 Glen Avenue



TREE PLANTING 2013

Various partners in Council Bluffs have come together to bring a new program called “Heart of the City” to the community.

This program allows residents to request a tree to be planted on public property in neighborhoods. All trees and planting costs will be paid through donations from Black Hills Energy, MidAmerican Energy, Council Bluffs Trees Forever, and the Council Bluffs Parks, Recreation and Public Property Department.

The Heart of the City program has been developed in an effort to beautify local neighborhoods with trees. The purpose of the program is to provide opportunities for residents of Council Bluffs to have a tree planted in their front parking or side parking.

Trees can only be placed on public property, and the public property must be bordering a residential property. Public property is typically defined as the green space between the sidewalk and the curb.

Residents may call the Parks and Recreation office (712) 328-4650 or E-mail Skyler Beck sbeck@councilbluffs-ia.gov. to set up a free tree-planting inspection. If no problems are uncovered during the inspection, the Parks and Recreation Department will then forward an application to fill out requesting the type of tree to be planted. Trees will be planted Spring or Fall of 2013.

RING IN THE NEW YEAR IN STYLE

Celebrate New Year’s Eve 2012 in the Historic Dodge House Ballroom with a delicious prime rib dinner and all the trimmings. The Gibraltar Neighborhood Association (GNA) is hosting a festive evening of great food in a grand setting as a fundraiser for the historic Dodge House, 605 South 3rd street.

The Dodge House will be decorated in full Victorian splendor and you will be joined by the General and Mrs. Dodge. The event will be held Monday December 31, 2012. Appetizers will begin at 6:00 p.m. with dinner starting at 7:00 p.m. which includes dessert, coffee and tea.

You are welcome to bring your own wine or champagne if you would like. The cost is \$50.00 per person. Seating is limited to 50. Reservations and payment must be received by December 26, 2012.

Please contact Paulette Brandt at 712-328-7399 for more information.

FIT TO PRINT

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many volunteers to make it all happen, from the grant writing and managing all those details, to taking delivery of all this heavy stuff, to the final pouring of footings and installing poles, and continuing on to the planting and caring for the magnificent plants that will put the crowning touch to each entrance. Gosh, we’re exhausted already!

ANNUAL MEETING

We are pleased to announce that Kyle and Cindy Muschall (332 Glen) will once again open their home to us all for the FPNA Annual Meeting on Friday, January 18th at 6:30 p.m. They plan to furnish food, too, and are calling their spread a “summer picnic buffet.” What does that mean? Guess we’ll have to attend to find out!

This meeting is a very important one. The annual report of FPNA’s 2012 activities will be presented and the election of three Board members will take place (the terms for Kyle, Nate, and Linda are expiring). Please attend! FPNA needs the support of everyone.

FISCAL HEALTH OF THE COMMUNITY

Three cheers for the folks who manage the funds for the City of Council Bluffs! Thanks to their careful and conservative approach, the City’s bond rating has been maintained at AA2, placing us among the top 20-25% of cities nationwide. The City also received the award of excellence in financial reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association for its 2011 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. And, there will be no increase in property tax rates, despite annual material increases in police and fire retirement systems, and some growth in the cost of providing services. Note that the last property tax increase was in 2006. This is amazing, considering all the problems with the flood and economic trends nationally. Thanks, City!!



DATES TO REMEMBER

GNA New Year's Eve Fundraiser
December 31st 6:00 p.m.
Historic Dodge House

FPNA January Meeting
Jan. 18th 6:30 p.m.
332 Glen



MSCB Promotions Committee

Bringing Main Street to Council Bluffs (MSCB) is seeking members for their promotions committee, and they would love for neighborhood residents to be involved.

Some details about the committee are below. If you are interested in participating or would like more information, contact Valerie Ware at iowairis@aol.com or 402.679.6366.

The purpose: Develop a marketing strategy, enhance the community's image, provide assistance at events, develop special events.

Internal tasks: Draft a committee work plan, analyze existing promotional calendars and events, develop a promotional strategy based on market analysis, develop an advertising strategy.

External tasks: Create a logo/brand for MSCB, produce a printed calendar of events, produce a business directory, develop an image-enhancement ad campaign, develop holiday promotions and decorations, develop retail tie-ins to existing events; add fresh promotions/ads, new activities.

"Gratitude is the best attitude"
Author Unknown

Crime Mapping

In an effort to help reduce crime and further strengthen local community oriented policing efforts, the Council Bluffs Police Department recently went live at CrimeMapping.com. CrimeMapping.com is a nationwide public mapping service that allows residents to analyze interactive maps of recent crime activity. Visitors to the site can generate reports, search by location and filter for different time periods as well as crime types. Crime Alerts are one of the most popular features at CrimeMapping.com. Residents can register online to receive free updates via e-mail whenever new crime activity occurs in their area. Keeping the public well informed has been proven effective as a crime fighting strategy and the Council Bluffs Police Department is proactively sharing this information with the citizens of Council Bluffs.

FPNA ON LINE!!

We've joined the digital age. The official Fairmount Park Neighborhood Association website is finally up and running. We've been working these last few months constructing and loading content on the site. I want to extend a very heartfelt thank you to Sarah Arnold who has been lending her Web Design expertise to this project so that we can establish a web presence. Without her generosity this endeavor would never have been realized. So visit our site, add it to your favorites, leave a comment and let us know what you think.

www.fairmountparkna.org

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