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ALL THE NEWS THAT IS FIT TO PRINT

By Sharon Babbitt

200 Park Avenue

NEXT MEETING

We had to cancel our annual picnic because of bad weather, so it's been a long time since we came together for a bit of fellowship, now's the time. Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 20th at 7:00 p.m., hosted by Terri and Karl, who live in that magnificent home at 445 Glen Ave. Desserts and drinks will be furnished. Please come and reconnect with your friends, or make new ones, and find out what's been happening in the neighborhood. Also, get a chance to see the inside of this historic home and maybe, just maybe, Karl can be talked into showing us his magnificent collection of history and reference books, located in the library we all dream about but will never have ourselves. See you there.

YARD OF THE MONTH

Our July YOM is 420 Glen, home of Cindi Ostronic and John Kmiecik. This yard, even the back yard, and the home that goes with it, are always immaculate and designed to perfection. Beginning with the framework of river rock and large containers, which lead on to the flowering shrubs and plants, the eye travels around this front garden and always finds something beautiful to see. Cindi and John have spent several years creating their masterpiece garden and the only change they've made this year is to seamlessly replace the ailing impatiens with begonias. Imagine having the opportunity to enjoy all this from the swing, or the rocking chairs, on their Victorian front porch, and think about bygone days when earlier owners may have done the same thing—only maybe their front yard wasn't as pretty.

WE PAID OUR DUES

One person brought his dues up to date in the past few weeks, Steve Beck, and we thank him. Remember, dues are payable once a year and remain \$20 per person/family.

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The President's Corner

Sharon Babbitt

200 Park Avenue

Excitement builds as the grand opening of the renovated Fairmount Park approaches. We take special interest in this great park. Not only have we adopted it as our name, we also think of it as a part of us as it is right next door, and we try to give it a thorough housecleaning once a year, at Lookout Point anyway. So, when a new and permanent opportunity comes along, we grab the brass ring.

The artist-designed signs are in the works. They will include directional and identification signs, as well as those depicting historically important spots within the park. There will also be one upon which donors' names will be engraved, and that's what I want to talk about. Although the City has secured grants to help renovate the entire park, these grants always require additional funding (we know this as we've done the grant thing ourselves).

They have put out the call for donations, large and small. Small donors' names will be listed on the brochure that will commemorate the grand opening. Large donors (donations of \$1,000 or more) will get their names permanently engraved on the above-mentioned sign and will live on forever in the park. **FPNA's name belongs there.**

So, after surveying a sample selection of FPNA members, the Board made the commitment to donate \$1,000 to our great park and to get FPNA's name engraved permanently on the donors' sign. We have made a down payment of \$400 and have committed ourselves to raise an additional \$600 by this time next year.

Beginning right now, we are asking you to donate whatever you can toward this goal. We know from past experience that this is an achievable goal, as this neighborhood is very generous. Please bring your donation to the next meeting, or to any meeting later, or else send your check to Treasurer Dave Huggins, 150 Park. A reminder, the FPNA is a 501c3 so your donation is tax deductible. We will send all donors a letter acknowledging their generous contribution.

When we see FPNA's name engraved as a donor to our Great Historic Park, we will be proud, our children will be proud, and our children's children will be proud.

"I Never married because there was no need. I have three pets at home, which answer the same purpose as a husband. I have a dog that growls every morning, a parrot that swears all afternoon, and a cat that comes home late at night"

Marie Corelli

Now is the Time
For The
Fairmount Park
Neighborhood Association's
October Meeting

Terri and Karl Allen will be hosting
Drinks and Desserts will be provided
Come visit with friends and neighbors

Tuesday Oct. 20th
445 Glen Avenue 7:00 p.m.



FAIRMOUNT PARK A HISTORY

By Sharon Babbitt

200 Park Avenue

Or, what you never knew about our Park Fairmount Park is beginning its third incarnation as one of Council Bluffs' premier parks. Or maybe its fourth, if you count the Native Americans.

In the beginning, the Native Americans used its highest hill (now known as Lookout Point, or Dodge's Lookout Point) as burial grounds. From beneath the ground here, at a depth of from four to ten feet, their skeletons and those of other early-day Americans were found. One skull had been estimated to be several thousand years of age. Flint arrow-heads and other stone utensils were once found on the surface of the ground. Because this hill is higher than any hill within a radius of 200 miles, it probably seemed to these early natives to be a sacred place. These skeletons have long since disappeared but if today's sensitivity to such burial grounds had been practiced in those days, Fairmount Park would have had a far different history.

The hills were there when Lewis and Clark passed through. They were the running ground for wild animals before any white man set foot on them. Their hills and valleys, nooks and glens, weeds and brush struggled against the annual fires that swept them. In short, there had not been any material change in the landscape since the hills were thrown up by the swirling winds of the Missouri River valley when it stretched from hill to hill across the valley where Council Bluffs now lies, but that was about to change.

In the 1850's, this 90-acre tract of land was made a portion of the City. It was platted into lots by Edward Williams and was called Williams'

second addition. Despite the fact that the hills were too steep and the roads too devious for use as building lots or farm ground, a skillful scam was perpetrated on gullible settlers from the East, and for twenty years these lots were sold. Finally, the purchasers investigated and found they had been buying 45-degree slopes, unsuitable for building or farming. The taxes remained unpaid.

Enter Andrew Graham, a visionary who was chairman of the park board as well as a member of the city council. He was familiar with these hills, filled with towering walnut, elm and linn trees. A small portion of the property was at that time needed for a standpipe for the newly constructed water system (still in existence today and pumping strong). At the council meeting held in June, 1879, Mr. Graham outlined his plan for the purchase of the ground. A resolution was passed ordering condemnation proceedings. Back taxes were cancelled and the land was appraised for \$1,553, which was the original and practically the total outlay for the land. Condemnation proceedings started into motion a series of legal battles in an attempt to stop the sale, which lasted into the 1890's. Despite these legal battles, the city was given title to the park ground in November, 1879. Within a few days, work was started trimming the trees and clearing the brush. The following spring, blue grass and clover were sown, and in March, 1880, the park was ready for visitors. Incidentally, Mr. Graham was instrumental in choosing "Fairmount Park" as the name for this beautiful but undeveloped area.

Although many hardy souls visited the park, it was plain that easy access had to be created. To

FAIRMOUNT PARK A HISTORY

enter the park at that time, a tortuous climb or a wide detour of the hills was necessary. Some grading was done and new roads cut into the grounds, and in 1887 the right-of-way for the street car line was secured. The city made the necessary cut through the hills for the tracks and the popularity of the park grew, but was the enjoyment of nature enough to entertain the Victorians?

No. They wanted more and they got it. Celebrations took place and even moving pictures were shown in the natural amphitheater in the east valley. Swan pond was created, so named for the white swans, which swam there during the warm months. Mr. Graham tried to buy black swans for the pond but they were too expensive, so he settled for white. A zoo was installed, as well as a children's playground, a pavilion was built, and benches for seating were strategically placed within the park. Many wells were drilled, with an automatic electrical pump at each well to furnish park visitors with excellent tasting water. This water was free to the public and hundreds of families living in that vicinity made daily trips to the wells in preference to city water. After considerable grading, miles of roadways were completed with wide turns suitable for automobiles. At some time during the park's development, a giant California Redwood tree was shipped to the city in pieces and located near Lookout Point to designate its highest point. If the stump is still there, it has not been found.

Time marches on. The zoo was gone. The swans and their pond (in the center of which The Boy with the Boot had spouted water) were no more. The playground became obsolete. In fact,

the popularity of the park faded as fewer and fewer visitors went there. Although the wide-open spaces within the park continued to be maintained, the woods and pathways gave way to invasive trees, shrubs, weeds and trash, time for another incarnation.

Nearby Fairmount Park Neighborhood Association adopted the Lookout Point portion of the park with the goal of cleaning out the accumulation of trash, large and small. In its first year, the volunteers carried out appliances, furniture, car parts and sundry smaller items by the truckload. As the years of cleanups continued, less and less trash was found, a good thing, but nature was still slowly covering up whatever improvements remained. Fairmount Park called out for another visionary to see its potential once again. It found one when Larry Foster, the present head of the city's parks department, and with the approval of a cooperative city council, went into action to renovate it for yet another generation. Work is now under way to remove the invasive trees and undergrowth that had threatened to obliterate the original beauty so captivating to our predecessors. A water park and children's playground, a new lodge building, new artist-designed signage identifying the history of this great park, and many other improvements will soon restore the park to the public.

To quote directly from an early publication on parks in the city: "Words cannot convey even the faintest conception of the grandeur and magnificence of Fairmount Park." Well said.

Sources: The Report of the Parks Commission, Renovation of Council Bluffs Parks System, published in 1914 by the Parks Commission, Mary Lou McGinn, Sharon Babbitt

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200 Park Avenue

Continued From Pg.1

BARKING DOGS

Again, more trouble with dogs. or maybe it is more correct to say, again, more trouble with dog owners. This time it is barking dogs during the nighttime hours, a definite no-no. If you put your dog outside in the evening and then forget about it, there will be barking. After all, if you were a dog, wouldn't you? But in this City, continually barking dogs after 10 p.m. can result in the arrest of your dog and incarceration in the animal control facilities. Do you really want that? And, neighboring homeowners, if you can't reason with said dog owners, please call Animal Control or the Police Department. Animal Control can actually take action with some teeth in it (couldn't resist, sorry), so they are your first choice.

THIS 'N THAT

Sarah Query and Chris Ebke got married in August. Congratulations to them! We're told they spent their honeymoon enjoying the gentle breezes of their own front porch. Why not, when they have each other?

Some anonymous people did a marvelous job of cleaning up a portion of the alley behind the 400 block of Glen. Anonymous people, whoever you are, we want you to know that your neighbors noticed and appreciate it.

WHAT IS ESCAPING FROM YOUR ATTIC?

Your utility budget is something you want to keep in house. If you have a leaky, poorly insulated attic, however, those energy dollars are slipping up, up and away. What can you do? Grab a flashlight, a tape measure and a pair of gloves. Head up to your attic and find ways to bring your utility bills back down to earth.

Look at your insulation Adding attic insulation is one of the most effective ways to reduce heating and cooling costs, but how do you know if you have the right amount? If there's no insulation up there, that's a no brainer. Call a qualified contractor right away.

If you do have insulation, you'll have to find out what type you have and how much. Most attics have batt insulation or loose-fill. Batt insulation is that pink fuzzy stuff that comes in rolls with brown paper on back. Insulation level is measured in R-value, which should be listed on the brown paper.

If you have loose-fill insulation, calculating the R-value gets a little trickier. Shove your tape measure down into the insulation at several places in the attic to measure the depth. Loose-fill comes in different types. Use the descriptions in the following table to determine your type and multiply the depth by the numbers provided to figure your R-level.

Now, check your R-value against recommended levels for your climate zone. If your insulation level is less than those recommended, you're losing energy and money. Consider adding insulation.

STILL MORE ESCAPING FROM YOUR ATTIC?

Check the quality of the insulation as well. If batts are not securely attached to the joists, energy can escape. Fill insulation surface should be even; low spots could mean that those areas are not adequately covered.

Sealing in savings

You've got the right level of insulation and it's installed correctly. You're good to go, right? Well...not so fast. All of that extra insulation won't do much good if there is a lot of air escaping through gaps or holes in your attic.

Locate all ceiling fans, recessed lighting fixtures and electrical outlets in the ceiling below your attic. Each of these is a potential source of air leakage. From the attic, pull back the insulation to find the cutouts and seal them with caulk or expandable foam. Check for and seal gaps around plumbing vents, furnace flues and ductwork. Also, seal the attic door or access with weather stripping.

Get a home energy audit. Not a do-it-yourselfer? No problem. A qualified home energy professional can help you find cost-saving opportunities in your attic and throughout your home. For more information visit:

www.midamericanenergy.com/ee

You may also learn how MidAmerican Energy Company can help you save even more money on your energy bills. MidAmerican Energy offers various EnergyAdvantage® energy efficiency programs designed to encourage the use of high-efficiency equipment in residential, commercial and industrial buildings.

JULY YARD OF THE MONTH



Cindy Ostronic & John Kmiceick 420 Glen

Photos by Kelli Deere

THE Fairmount Press

The Newspaper of the Fairmount Park Neighborhood Association

332 Glen Avenue Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503
www.fairmountparkna.org

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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. Please Contact the Editor.

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Council Bluffs



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