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ALL THE NEWS THAT IS FIT TO PRINT

By Sharon Babbitt

200 Park Avenue

HOLIDAY CHOICES

Pick a holiday, any holiday. You have lots of choices, such as Labor Day, Columbus Day, Halloween, Yom Kippur, the Queen's Birthday, Thanksgiving.....or Christmas. One or all? This could be a dilemma for some, but a few of us will skip over everything and head right for Christmas, of course.

Such a one is our friend and neighbor, Nate, who will be hosting our Christmas party/meeting on Saturday, December 6th at 4:00 p.m. His beautiful Victorian home is located at 126 Park Ave. and, if history is any judge, Nate will fill it with at least a couple dozen fully decorated trees plus other décor worthy to be seen in any house museum. So join us to spread some good cheer.

Another important holiday event is the Preserve Council Bluffs Holiday Homes Tour on Sunday, December 7th, which will feature a home in our neighborhood this time around. Sharon's Victorian cottage at 200 Park Ave. will be open for you to see and will also be bursting at the rafters and joists (we don't say "seams" when talking about old houses) with all manner of Christmas décor. There will be other homes on this important tour but this one is right in our own vicinity.

And, finally, the 5th annual Christmas Boutique will take place at 206 Park Ave. the weekend of December 5th-7th, and will feature the works of many area artists. Don't miss this one, especially if you're shopping for unusual handmade items for Christmas gifts for you and yours.

By now, you may have noticed that all these events take place *on the same weekend!!!* Well, that's just the way the cookie crumbled.

The President's Corner

Kyle Muschall

332 Glen Avenue

I had the opportunity to attend the first annual Iowa/Nebraska "In the Neighborhood Conference" in early October. The event started on a Friday Night with tours being given of Omaha and Council Bluffs with a focus on neighborhoods. A group from the Fairmount Park and Gibraltar Neighborhood Associations met the tour bus at Kirn Park in the evening to relate a little bit about our neighborhood. We also shared the story of the renovation of Kirn Park and how many groups, organizations and individuals came together to improve the park and ensure its continued use for future generations.

Saturday was an all-day conference at the south Omaha Metropolitan Community College Campus. This inaugural event was kicked off with speeches from Omaha and Council Bluffs Mayors Jean Stothert and Matt Walsh respectively. The next passionate speakers were representatives from the Neighborhoods USA national organizations. They told us about their organization and re-presented awards previously given at their national convention in Eugene Oregon to two local neighborhoods, Fairmount Park being one of them. Nate Watson and I accepted as finalists in the Neighborhood Newsletter Competition.

Kate Mahern was the morning's keynote speaker. She is the director of the Milton R. Abraham's Legal Clinic within the Creighton School of Law since 1992. Kate is an indefatigable advocate for the rights of the individual, especially those with limited means, so that the system that is supposed to be there to protect them doesn't harm them. Whether it is an unscrupulous landlord, a fly-by-night credit loan outfit or an un-caring government bureaucracy Kate imparted simple and direct tools that put the power back into the hands of the citizenry.

Conference attendees were then given a wide choice of breakout sessions for the morning's activities. The first session I attended was "Neighborhood Identity and Connectivity in a Regional Context". Clint Sloss, from Metro Area Planning Association (MAPA) was our speaker. He informed us of the Heartland 2050 work that is being done. This is an eight-county-wide needs-

assessment that mapped the demographics of the metro area along with feedback from the residents on what is important to them. They heard countless times from individuals, organizations and entire communities about the importance of maintaining strong neighborhoods. They showcased the various neighborhoods in the Omaha/Council Bluffs area and discussed their history. They also provided examples of other regions whose neighborhoods banded together to create vibrant, thriving areas and economies.

The second morning session I attended was "Measuring Social Capital to Strengthen Communities". Patty Carlson from the Grace Abbott School of Social Work at UNO and Christian Gray from the inCOMMON Community Development organization were our hosts. Their presentation provided an overview of the partnership to create social change in an at risk neighborhood. Their primary area of focus is the Park Avenue/Leavenworth neighborhood in Omaha. It is one of the most diverse neighborhoods in Omaha but also one of the poorest. The neighborhood finds itself in a state of gentrification with a number of re-developed, market-rate apartment complexes coming online and is also adjacent to Midtown Crossing which has seen an explosion of growth. Attendees learned about the costs and benefits of developing partnerships between neighborhoods, non-profits and anchor institutes like UNO. We were encouraged to take the information that was imparted and expound on ideas on how it could be useful to our own neighborhoods.

Lunch was served and attendees had a chance to network with other individuals, organizations and to visit the many booths and displays at the event. Our afternoon keynote speaker was Gus Newport. Gus is a nationally renowned community activist, former Mayor of Berkeley, California and is currently a program consultant to the Vanguard Public Foundation and Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation. He is also an MLK fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Gus' area of focus has included neighborhood planning and development and economic development. He has worked with many

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communities across the country, including Council Bluffs' Kainsville-Tinely Neighborhood Association, to ensure neighborhood planning and development happens from the "bottom up" rather than "top down".

Gus shared many of his experiences and wisdom gained over the years about getting individuals and groups with diverse make up and goals to work together. My favorite story or more appropriately a cautionary tale concerned an international aid organization. This aid organization performed a study in Eastern Africa for an area that had generations of poor farmers and villagers. The intent was to see what local assets the area contained that could be used to their advantage. Soil samples were taken from across the region and the amazing discovery was that this was the absolute best soil on earth to grow tomatoes. They found the cure, the solution. The infrastructure was put in place and assistance given to local village pilot programs to grow and cultivate tomatoes. The world-wide press came to visit at the inaugural event to see how large and bountiful the tomatoes were growing on the vine. A local economy was springing up before the eyes of the public. Photos and video were taken but the strange thing was that the villagers didn't look that pleased, perplexed even. Well the press moved on as they do and the International aid organization came back when the tomato crop was due to be harvested. To their horror and dismay the entire crop was devastated, trampled, not a single tomato to be had. What possible calamity could have been the cause of the depredation of the once bumper crop. They went to the villagers for answers. Hippopotamus was the answer. Hippos ate the tomatoes and ruined the crops in the fields before they could bring in the harvest. The aid organization failed to consult the locals or they would have known at the height of the growing season the Hippos move thru and would eat all the tomatoes. This is a cogent example of not involving the people who live and work in the area, who have the greatest stake in the solution and can contribute the most to the success of the outcome.

The first breakout session for the afternoon was "CPR – Stimulating our Communities to Thrive". Our highly energetic host was Apostle Vanessa Ward from the Central Park Neighborhood in Omaha. The session was designed to help people visualize what they can accomplish to promote a connected, protected and revitalized (CPR) neighborhood. The true inspiration for the session was Vanessa sharing her struggles and triumphs to raise-up her neighborhood and rid the area of violence. Her simple solution was to re-launch the

block parties she knew as a child so people could get to know one another again and feel connected. This led to an increased sense of security and neighbors wanting to protect the gains they made. Revitalization came next as Vanessa partnered with the Boy Scouts of America to create a memorial garden for the neighborhood. Vanessa wrote a book about her experience "Somebody Do Something" which details her efforts to turn her neighborhood around. For her heroic efforts Vanessa has been recognized as a "Hero in the Heartland" by the American Red Cross and was the recipient of the NUSA 2014 award for people who make a difference.

The second and final breakout session for the afternoon was "Common Fund: Community Involvement to Community Impact" led by Judi Martin from OPPD. The session explored the process for leading a community change initiative by breaking down industry barriers and allowing people to work together. Strategic Planning techniques for community change were demonstrated so attendees could learn how to deal with the good, that bad and the difficult conversations.

Our last speaker of the day was Willie Barney. Willie is the founder of the Empowerment Network, a united group of residents, leaders, and organizations working to facilitate positive change in our community. Launched in 2006, the Empowerment Network works to improve the quality of life for African-Americans, North Omaha and the Greater Omaha area. The goal is to transform Omaha and the surrounding metro area into a thriving and prosperous community where citizens are actively engaged and have full access to employment, education and quality housing options to build a strong and healthy family. I particularly enjoyed how Willie hit perfectly on key themes that were expressed previously in earlier sessions and with earlier speakers. This brought the conference to a rousing conclusion.

My take away from all of this is that everyone can be an agent of change and if you are looking for someone to do something, that someone is you.

LET US CELEBRATE

the Holidays with the Fairmount Park Christmas Party
Please Join Us

SAT DEC. 6TH 4:00 P.M.
126 PARK AVENUE

This is a Potluck so bring that dish, dessert or side that
You want folks to enjoy.



HOLIDAYS ARE FOR FOOD

The Bluffs Arts Council is hosting a cooking event for KIDS!!!! Saturday November 22nd from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Broadway Methodist Church (11 South 1st. Street). The class is for Boys and Girls ages 9-12. Registration fee is \$20.00 (BAC members \$18.00). Margarite Goodenow will teach kids the art of making holiday appetizers and sweet treats; impressive food like painted cookies, cream puffs, pita triangles with nutty chicken salad, s'mores and mini bagel pizzas. Sound yummy? The students will also learn about the icing on the cake, that is, food display and serving; table covers, serving pieces, centerpieces and more. Yes, there will be eating too. Class size is limited to 15 and will fill up quickly, so sign up now. Call the Bluffs Arts Council office at 712.328.4993. No sack lunch is necessary. No open-toed shoes and hair must be pulled back.

NEW PAR OFFICER

Mark Alba has retired as our Police Area Representative (PAR) officer. Mark has served many years in this capacity along with his other duties with the C.B.P.D. Matt Brinkman is taking over Mark's PAR officer duties. Mark can be reached at mjbrinkman@councilbluffs-ia.gov or by calling 712-329-1825. Please do not hesitate to call if you have any questions or concerns.

"Everything has beauty, but not everyone sees it"

Confucius

SAVE MONEY THIS HOLIDAY WHEN COOKING

Holiday meals are an important part of the celebrations you share with family and friends. All of that cooking and baking, however, can add a significant amount to your utility bills! These simple, cost-saving tips will help you enjoy the festivities while trimming your energy budget:

Preheat the oven to the exact temperature required; preheating is not necessary for foods that cook for several hours.

Limit the number of times the oven door is opened; opening the door lowers the temperature as much as 25°F.

Glass and ceramic baking dishes retain heat better than metal. If you cook with glass or ceramic dishes, you can reduce the oven temperature by 25°F.

Conserve energy by baking several batches of cookies, or more than one pie, at a time.

For range top cooking, match the size of the pan to the size of the burner; using a small pan on a large burner wastes energy.

Keep pots and pans covered to prevent heat loss and reduce cooking time.

Clean burners after every use. A clean burner heats more efficiently, using less energy.

Additional energy-saving cooking options for leftovers

Slow cookers, electric skillets, and toaster ovens are great for heating leftovers, and use a lot less energy than conventional ovens and range tops.

Microwave ovens also use 50 percent less energy than conventional ovens. To save energy, reheat food in the microwave instead of on the range top or in the oven.

Visit www.midamericanenergy.com/ee to 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.

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200 Park Avenue

Continued From Pg.1

SO LONG FLOWER BASKETS AND HELLO CHRISTMAS WREATHS

You may have realized that those beautiful flower baskets hanging on our poles have gone away. They were spectacular while they lasted and thanks to Michelle and her family for all the planting, hanging, watering and removing they did over the growing season. Thanks, too, to those homeowners who stepped up and watered as well. Mother Nature gave them a big boost also. Sometime during the next month, holiday wreaths will sprout on our poles and will remain until after the New Year. They have been created by Linda, Cindy M. and Kyle. They will certainly identify FPNA as a neighborhood to be proud of.

PARIS HAS CALLED HER NAME

Our neighbor, Margaret LaBounty, has been invited to a prestigious exhibition in Paris, France, called Exposition at the Eiffel Tower. This invitation only event is part of the 125th celebration of the Eiffel Tower. Margaret's painting entitled "Color my World" will be displayed alongside works from other world-renowned artists from 26 countries. This will be the third time Margaret has exhibited her work in Paris.

WE PAID OUR DUES

During the past few weeks, the following folks paid their dues:

Steve Beck

Dick and Lucy Graeme

Thanks for your support of the FPNA. We are building up our treasury after the expenses of the recent poles project. Dues remain \$20, as they were from the beginning. Remit to Treasurer Dave Huggins, 150 Park, or drop it in his mailbox.

WORDS TO LIVE BY

"The greenest building is the one already built."

School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC)

ANOTHER READER ALERT

Soon the newsletter you're reading will be delivered electronically to everyone who's e-mail address is in our records. If you have an e-mail address and we don't know it, you may not receive neighborhood news as you do today. Please let Kyle know your e-mail kmuschall@cox.net. If you are receiving notifications on-line, that means we have your information. If you don't have a computer (many don't), please let someone know and you and you alone will still receive print copies. It's important to keep connected and this is our way of accomplishing that. Thank you.



Brought to you by the Council of Concerned Turkeys

Tom Turkey - "I approve this Message"

Iced Pumpkin Cookies

by Kyle Muschall 332 Glen Avenue

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour	1 cup canned pumpkin puree
1 teaspoon baking powder	1 egg
1 teaspoon baking soda	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon	Icing
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg	2 cups confectioners' sugar
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves	3 tablespoons milk
1/2 teaspoon salt	1 tablespoon melted butter
1/2 cup butter, softened	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 1/2 cups white sugar	

-Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, ground cloves, and salt; set aside.

-In a medium bowl, cream together the 1/2 cup of butter and white sugar. Add pumpkin, egg, and 1 teaspoon vanilla to butter mixture, and beat until creamy. Mix in dry ingredients. Drop on cookie sheet by tablespoonfuls; flatten slightly.

-Bake for 15 to 20 minutes in the preheated oven. Cool cookies, then drizzle glaze with fork.

-To Make Icing Glaze: Combine confectioners' sugar, milk, 1 tablespoon melted butter, and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Add milk as needed, to achieve drizzling consistency.

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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.



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