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ALL THE NEWS THAT IS FIT TO PRINT

By Michelle Mutchler-Burns

407 Glen Avenue

Hello neighbors, Happy February. I'm guessing that you are as anxious for Spring as I am!

Thanks to Kyle and Cindy for once again, hosting our Annual Meeting on January 16th. We were treated to an amazing pasta bar, salad, relishes, fresh fruit and desserts in their still beautifully holiday-decorated home (those of you who have attended know what I'm talking about - See Photos on Page 4).

We named our Person of the Year, Ted Duitsman, who has also served as Vice President for the past two years. Ted, like so many others in the neighborhood, displays the epitome volunteerism; always there to lend a hand, whatever is asked of him (or in the case of a project last Spring, sent his oldest son Nolan to help when he couldn't be there. Ted was out of town on the 16th and his equally-amazing spouse, Lorraine accepted his award. Ted, we thank you for continuing to serve our neighborhood as well as our community and other nonprofits!

Our Volunteer of the Year, Brian Burns, had absolutely no idea that he was being considered for any type of award and I believe he was nearly speechless. Thanks to the Board for nominating him, as Brian has been my "partner in crime", loading and hauling plants and soil and watering flower baskets one or more times a week since we first started the project in 2008. In fact, until 2018 it was pretty much "just us". Then, Marilyn Abbott and family stepped in the past 2 years to water for a few weeks to give us a bit of a break. Thank you as well, Marilyn!

We shared our choice for our Holiday Decorating Award winners; Greg and Vicki at 311 Park Ave. The traveling plaque has been engraved with their names and address and is ready to be dropped off, along with their prize. Runners up were the homes at 303 Park Ave., and 232 Park Ave. Thank you to all who decorated the exterior of your home for all to see.

We also elected our Board members for 2020 and welcomed Tom O'Brien to the Board as well as taking the time to look back to our accomplishments of 2019.

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Two Letter State Abbreviations?

From The Straight Dope

By Cecil Adams

Dear Cecil: Why oh why did the USPS decree a two-letter abbreviation for states? With three letters you can not only have an unambiguous designation, but one that can be recognized as the state designated without memorizing an arbitrary two-letter code. Surely it isn't saving ink. What nefarious plot brought this plague upon us?

Cecil replies:

If you feel overwhelmed by two-letter state abbreviations, wait'll you hear about 13-letter city abbreviations. I pray you never have to use it, Richard, but yes, the United States Postal Service publishes a list of approved city-name truncations, for those emergencies when you need to send something to Rancho Santa Margarita, California, but your address template permits only so many spaces.

And that's the limiting factor here: it's not ink the USPS is worried about but mailing-label real estate. If need be, they figure, everything on the bottom line of an address should fit into 28 character positions: according to Publication 28, their addressing-standards bible, that's 13 characters for the city, a space afterward, two characters for the state, two spaces ("preferred") between state and ZIP, and ten characters (including hyphen) for the ZIP+4.

This wasn't always a concern, of course. In the abbreviation-happy 1800s, when every James or Robert was a Jas. or Robt., the Post Office Department (as it was then known) just needed some way of guessing where these people wanted their mail to go. Until the mid-20th century, the P.O. preferred that senders write out state names in full, but was willing to meet the abbreviating public halfway by providing an occasionally updated list of suggested short forms. These were all over the place lengthwise, from two or three letters on up: Massachusetts was "Ms." on the 1831 list, but had settled out at "Mass." by 1874; Michigan evolved from "Mic. T." (for "Michigan Territory") to "Mich." and stayed thus for 90 years.

Meanwhile, mail delivery tended to be circuitous and inefficient, because we lacked an orderly sorting method. A letter might be handled by as many as ten carriers

on its voyage from sender to recipient; one addressed to Charleston, South Carolina, could well make an errant stop in Charleston, West Virginia. And the mail system became taxed by ever-greater usage, booming along with everything else post-WWII: between 1940 and 1965, Americans' use of the mail grew by nearly 160 percent.

What nefarious plot was cooked up to solve this problem? The Zone Improvement Plan, introduced in 1963, in which geographical areas were assigned a numeric code for easier sorting and delivery. Along with this came the now-familiar all-caps, no-periods state abbreviations, which were actually rolled out twice that year. The first batch, in June, contained lots of three- and even four-letter entries: IDA, OKLA, MONT, etc. But by October the postal service, looking to preserve more character space for the new codes, published a revised list using a consistent two letters per state. It's been emended only once since: Under the second 1963 scheme Nebraska was given NB, which inspired objections — polite ones, we'll assume — from Canadian postal authorities fearing potential confusion with New Brunswick. In 1969 Nebraska became NE.

ZIP codes evolved more significantly: ZIP+4 was added in 1983 to identify a particular side of the street, or an office building; starting in '93, 11-digit ZIPs allowed for mail to be sorted in order of the carrier's route. As demanding as some may find those two-letter abbreviations, AL, AK, and the rest are really the least significant facet of the Zone Improvement Plan, which transformed the way mail was delivered in the United States.

For a deeper dive on this subject, I'll refer you to a 2013 report by the USPS's Office of the Inspector General, *The Untold Story of the ZIP Code*. If that's even a slightly punchier title than you'd expect from an IG report, blame it on enthusiasm: these guys, it quickly becomes apparent, are really proud of their little mail-sorting system and its "positive spillover effects" on the nation as a whole. ZIP codes are nonproprietary, we're reminded, and so have been available for societally beneficial use by demographers, public-health officials, emergency workers, and



ACT NOW! Discounted Membership Offer for Downtown Area Neighbors!

Over the years, when out-of-town guests would visit our Gibraltar home, one of the first things I'd say is, "You need to see the Historic General Dodge House!" With my membership in hand, admission was somewhere between discounted to free, and everyone loved touring the house. After many years of enjoying the Dodge House as a *guest*, I now have the pleasure of working there.

That's why I want YOU to be able to WOW your guests, too... and what a better way than with membership benefits at the General Dodge House! To make it easy for you, the Dodge House is offering **20% off memberships** if you buy a **two-year** membership.

Benefits include:

- > Free admission to the House
- > 20% off rental of the Third Floor Ballroom
- > 10% off at the General's Store
- > Quarterly member's only newsletter, and
- > Regular discounts to most programs and events

More importantly, you'll have the satisfaction of supporting the most important Historic National Landmark in our region.

We're so sure you'll love being a Dodge House member, we're making this a "no risk" proposition for you: if, after one year you are not happy with your membership, we'll refund your money! But please act soon. Deadline for the two-year discounted two-year membership offer is **March 31**.

Warmly,

Tom Emmett - Dodge House Director & Gibraltar Neighborhood Resident

Please complete this form and mail it with payment to:
Dodge House, 605 S. 3rd St, Council Bluffs, IA, 51503

Name: _____ Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Two-Year Memberships (**check your preference**):

- Individual: \$50, now \$40
- Dual: \$80, now \$65
- Family: \$110, now \$90
- Sustainer: \$150, now \$120 + 8 passes
- Century: \$200, now \$160 + 10 passes
- Donor's Circle: \$500, now \$400 + 20 passes

Please email Tom Emmett if you have any questions at: tomemmett@dodgehouse.org or call the House at 712-322-2406. Thank you! (*Your personal information will not be shared with anyone, ever. If you include your email you will receive our monthly e-newsletter.*)

JANUARY 2020



From Left:
Lorraine Duitsman
Terri Allen
Cindy Muschall
Tali Washburn
Brian Burns



From Left:
Kyle Muschall
John Huggins
Lorraine Duitsman



From Left:
Tom O'Brien
Dave Huggins
Terri Dowell



From Left:
Ben Washburn
Karl Allen
Tom O'Brien



Michelle Mutchler and Brian Burns

Photos by Marie Huggins

Two Letter State Abbreviations?

From The Straight Dope

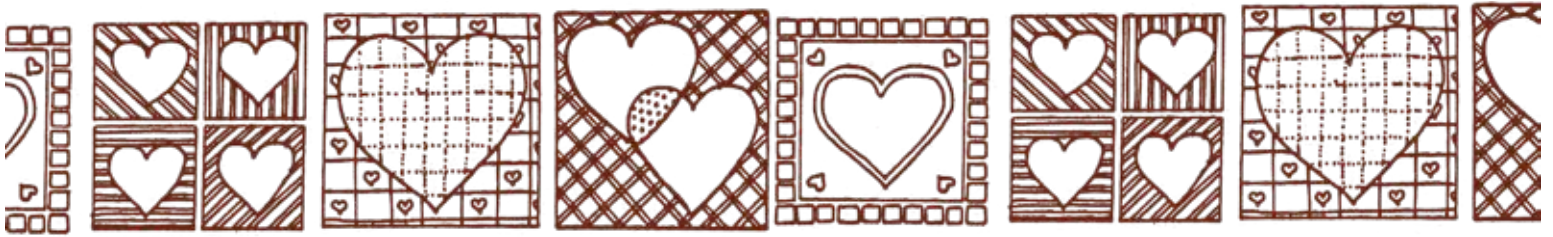
By Cecil Adams

Continued From Pg.1

insurance providers alike. (Plus schlock-TV producers — Beverly Hills, 90210 rates a mention in the report's third sentence.) As calculated by the authors, the ZIP scheme adds about \$10 billion annually to the economy, and yet it exists only "out of pure good will." Seriously, you will never love anything as much as the USPS Inspector General's office loves ZIP codes.

The report also suggests avenues for future growth — notably linking ZIPs with geocoding (latitude and longitude coordinates), to make delivery routes yet more efficient and facilitate better communication with people in high-risk areas like flood or wildfire zones. "This is the opportunity to innovate anew on an old innovation frontier," the IG's office says: "This is our 1963." Which seems to me like kind of a weird call to arms. I mean, innovation's great and all, but the invention of the ZIP isn't exactly the first thing that year's remembered for.

Cecil Adams



Overnight Blueberry French Toast

by Kyle Muschall 332 Glen Avenue

12 slices day-old bread, cut into 1-inch cubes	1/3 cup maple syrup
2 (8 ounce) packages cream cheese, cut into 1 inch cubes	1 cup white sugar
1 cup fresh blueberries	2 tablespoons cornstarch
12 eggs, beaten	1 cup water
2 cups milk	1 cup fresh blueberries
1 teaspoon vanilla extract	1 tablespoon butter

-Lightly grease a 9x13 inch baking dish. Arrange half the bread cubes in the dish, and top with cream cheese cubes. Sprinkle 1 cup blueberries over the cream cheese, and top with remaining bread cubes.

-In a large bowl, mix the eggs, milk, vanilla extract, and syrup. Pour over the bread cubes. Cover, and refrigerate overnight.

Remove the bread cube mixture from the refrigerator about 30 minutes before baking. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

-Cover, and bake 30 minutes. Uncover, and continue baking 25 to 30 minutes, until center is firm and surface is lightly browned.

In a medium saucepan, mix the sugar, cornstarch, and water. Bring to a boil. Stirring constantly, cook 3 to 4 minutes. Mix in the remaining 1 cup blueberries. Reduce heat, and simmer 10 minutes, until the blueberries burst. Stir in the butter, and pour over the baked French toast

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By Michelle Mutchler-Burns

407 Park Avenue

Continued From Pg.1

Reflecting....We began January 2019 with our annual meeting and election/re-election of officers, Tali, Ryan, Toni, Ted and Cindy. The Board met at Tali's in February for a marvelous meal to choose officers and set our calendar.

In March, we took down the holiday wreaths (finally, since the weather had not cooperated) and we published a newsletter. In April, we held our annual clean-up at lookout point, with the neighborhood supplying donuts and beverages. As usual, we managed to clear out several bags of debris.

May was busy, as usual, although we added an activity in early May. Seeing a neighbor with a need and always looking for a project, we found one; our neighbor at 407 Park Ave., had an eroding bank in front of her home, and Kyle and Cindy and Sharon's properties each had an abundance of Fiddlehead Ferns begging to be transplanted, so we did. Close to a dozen neighbors set out to carefully remove and transplant the ferns (close to 75 of them) up the street. They seemed to establish themselves well, and we will see in the next couple of months. We celebrated with a photo session with our homeowner and donuts.

As usual, our flower baskets were planted and up on the poles for Mother's Day and we again participated in Clean Sweep, cleaning up trash and debris from the public rights-of-way in our neighborhood. This is an annual City-wide activity that culminates in Bayliss Park with a hot dog feed served by our Mayor and City Council members.

We again participated in Omaha Gives! and our neighbor John revamped the Pollination Garden by adding four large, circular beds in which the wildflowers now grow, and keeping the remainder of the garden mowed. This has tamed-down the garden and proved to please the City, as well as the neighbors. Tali shared that the Iowa State Capitol has a very similar Pollination Garden on their grounds, as well.

In late May, your Board met with then City Council member Nate Watson to discuss the Park Ave. vacant lots; 401, 409-441. A total of six lots (a single-family home at 401 and five duplexes on the remaining lots, being eyed for re-development by Bryan Yoder of Yoder Construction. Nate keyed us in on the project and worked with us to arrange a meeting with Yoder, as your Board wanted to share our thoughts regarding "infill" in a Historic District. Our focus, to talk about our neighborhood and Historic District, its homes and our neighbors, and after many attempts, the meeting finally took place in July, at the Library.

At the meeting, we learned that he was unaware that the lots he planned to develop were within the boundary of the Park/Glen Historic District and our main message to him became that we wanted to offer our support and request that each of the units appear diverse "unlike another", as there are no two homes exactly alike in our neighborhood. Tali put together a beautiful brochure depicting the details found on homes in ours and adjacent neighborhoods; Victorian, Craftsman, Four Square, etc., and that things such as windows, doors, garage doors, etc., to reflect the style of the home are readily available and would complete the look. We requested that no two units be painted identically, to lend a "row house" feel, and it seems that he was on board with our suggestions. The City Council is to follow the National Park Service guidelines for infill in a Historic District, as they approve Yoder's plans for re-development.

At the end of July, Nate Watson hosted a neighborhood meeting, complete with a few City Council Candidates and Mayor Walsh. Since the meeting was late in July, we moved our Block Party to the 19th of August. We again blocked off High School Ave. between Park and Glen Aves. and utilized the 712 Initiative's Block Party trailer. We shared a meal with about 50 in attendance, including members of the Council Bluffs Fire Department who brought and demon

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strated an aerial fire truck, and a media representative from the Iowa West Foundation.

In September, we were asked to host a City Council Candidate Forum, which we organized along with help from other downtown neighborhood associations and Turner with the 712 Initiative. We polled neighborhoods about what they felt was important, invited all 6 of the then, City Council candidates, wrote questions, then met at the Library on October 22nd. There were about 75 residents in attendance, as well as “vloggers” who offered both recording and live feed, as well as Joe from The Daily Nonpareil, who photographed and reported on our forum. It was stated more than once, and by both attendees and candidates, that it was the most organized forum they had attended that election. To end October, we met at Ryan and Elizabeth’s for a neighborhood meeting on the 30th.

November brought the City Council election (and we know the outcome of that). Neighbors in close proximity of the lots in Yoder’s re-development project received a letter citing that he had requested a variance for each of the lots. His request was to add a parking pad adjacent to each driveway and the Board agreed that this was favorable. We drafted a letter of support and delivered it to the City.

In early December, our volunteers put the holiday wreaths up on the basket arm of our poles. Our neighbor and past-President Sharon once again organized “Another Holiday Boutique” at 206 Park Ave. and decorated her home (beautifully as usual) for the Preserve Council Bluffs’ Historic Homes for the Holidays tour, held on December 8th; more tickets were sold at Sharon’s home than any other site (indicating there were many who were excited to see her home). And finally, on December 15th, we met at Dave and Marie’s for our annual Holiday party. We had plenty of food and fellowship and afterward, your Board toured the neighborhood, making our choice for the Holiday Decorating contest winner and runners up.

I guess you could say we accomplished quite a bit in 2019.

What’s next? The Board will get together, choose officers and set our 2020 calendar and talk about what we would like to accomplish in 2020.

What projects would you like to see? Please let us know!

Michelle 712-314-7123

A special thanks for those FPNA members who have paid their membership dues already for 2020. We look forward to another exciting year.

Ed and Lorraine Hassett
Ted and Lorraine Duitsman
Rob and Georgie Hoag
Michelle Mutchler and Brian Burns
Toni Allen
Dave and Marie Huggins
Tom and Stephanie O’Brien
Kyle and Cindy Muschall

THE Fairmount Press

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332 Glen Avenue Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503
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Ryan Pozzi	Board Member (2021)
Tali Washburn	Board Member (2021)
Toni Allen	Board Member (2020)

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. Please Contact the Publisher:
Kyle Muschall : kmuschall@cox.net

**"Courage is
resistance to fear,
mastery of fear.
Not the absence of
Fear"**

Mark Twain



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, 332 Glen Avenue Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503 or
Dave Huggins, Treasurer, 150 Park Avenue Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503