



# MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

December 2011

## A Message From Our President Kathy Dzewaltowski

The holidays are upon us, and no matter what holidays are celebrated in your household, the holidays always involve tradition. I especially love Halloween, so I've been in the holiday spirit since about Sept. 1, which I'll confess is when I start thinking about the graveyard I create in my yard and checking to see if the orange lights still work. Special foods, costumes, hay rides, the "good dishes," social gatherings, watching the ball or apple drop, and traveling to visit family and friends are just a few examples of the traditions many of us engage in this time of year.

Preservation, of course, goes hand in hand with tradition. If you do a little reading about tradition on a web site such as Wikipedia, you'll come across phrases such as "passed on to the next generation," "deep rooted," "safeguarded," "ritual," and find that "tradition" isn't limited to customs and beliefs, but rather, also can include objects, buildings, art, or tools. Tradition is also contrasted with modernity and progress. Doesn't that sound like historic preservation?

In the same manner that we pass on an activity, a narrative, or an heirloom decoration, preservationists strive to protect our built environment to pass on to the next generation. While it may seem that preservationists are opposed to progress and modernity, this is generally not the case. Preservationists tend to want to see a historic structure continue to have a useful purpose. Unless a structure is intended to be an unaltered museum,

most historic structures have been updated, which not only provides for comfortable living, but also helps to ensure that the structure continues to be used. If preservationists were completely opposed to modernizing historic structures, buildings without electricity and indoor plumbing would have ceased to be used long ago.

The trick is finding the right balance of moving forward while continuing to respect the historic features of a structure or neighborhood. On page 2 of this newsletter, you'll find an article about Kansas State architecture students struggling with this exact issue: how to maintain the Goodnow Park Cabin's historic integrity while making it useful in a modern world that requires handicapped accessibility. Page 4 features an article about future plans to redevelop the north side of the 1100 and 1200 blocks of Bluemont Avenue with new mixed-use buildings, which presumably means all of the houses on the north side

will be demolished.

Some of the houses on the north side of Bluemont Avenue date to 1910, so one could easily argue that the north side has traditionally been residential. Is the demolition of all of the houses on the north side progress or the destruction of a traditional neighborhood and cultural resource? Is there a way to create the desired defined entrance to Aggieville and incorporate the houses into the design, i.e. is there a way to maintain tradition while moving forward?

Many of us have found a way to keep family traditions while moving forward with modern society. For Thanksgiving, my grandmother always cooked the stuffing in the cavity of the turkey. Today's food safety standards no longer recommend doing that, but I can keep my family's stuffing tradition by continuing to use the family recipe and simply bake it outside of the turkey. If motivated, one can usually find a way to incorporate the old with the new.

### Winter Social

Is your December over-scheduled and hectic with shopping, wrapping, parties, and special events?

The M/RCPA board of directors is planning a relaxing, stress-free post-holiday social event for all members in January. Details to follow.

# Conceptual Plans for Goodnow Park Cabin

Kansas State University students in the College of Architecture, Planning, and Design's design-build studio have been charged with the task of developing a conceptual master plan that will create a connection between Bluemont Hill and Goodnow Park and also to develop a viable use for the Goodnow Park Cabin. Their client is the City of Manhattan. The students recently presented their ideas, and their goal is to actually build a component of the master plan by the end of the spring semester.



Goodnow Park Cabin

One of the ideas presented was to use the old concrete storage reservoir on the top of Bluemont Hill for an amphitheatre where live performances could be held or films could be shown. An overlook platform would be added to enhance the public's ability to enjoy the expansive view from the top of the hill and to also improve the viewing of the Manhattan sign.

Another student's suggestion was to connect the trails that rise up Bluemont Hill from their bases in Goodnow Park with the Linear Trail. The connection would be accomplished through a pedestrian bridge that would cross above Tuttle Creek Boulevard. Connecting to the Linear Trail would likely increase the use and enjoyment of Bluemont Hill and Goodnow Park.

Two options were presented for uses for the Goodnow Park Cabin, and both options called for making the cabin open to the public as a park shelter type of facility. Both options added restrooms to the interior, which would make the cabin a convenient rest stop for trail and park users.

One of the options added an outdoor covered area on the east side

of the cabin that could incorporate benches or picnic tables. The cabin's chimney would be opened on the east side to create a fireplace for roasting marshmallows or to build a fire on a chilly evening. A small kitchen would be created in the interior that would be beneficial for catered events at the cabin. With this option, access to the cabin's interior would involve reserving and renting the facility.

The second option would have the cabin open for continual use by trail and park patrons and would open the roof with a skylight at the west end. On the east, outdoor stairs would be added to access the hillside, and they could also be used for seating. On the west side, another set of stairs would be added to connect to the trail on Bluemont Hill.

For both options, the best way to make the cabin handicapped accessible was difficult to determine, given the steep slope where the cabin is sited. The steep grade makes creating parking close to the cabin and reducing the distance one would have to travel almost impossible.

Not only is this a problem for persons with accessibility concerns, but it also decreases the cabin's desirability to be used for activities that involve carrying supplies to the location, such as catered events or even simple picnics. To make the cabin accessible, a series of ramped

switchbacks with landings was proposed. The ramped switchbacks would work, but they would consume much of the site and would greatly impact the current picturesque nature of the front elevation of the cabin. The students planned to continue to examine how to make the site accessible.

Another aspect of the Goodnow Park Cabin site is its close proximity to Manhattan's water treatment facility. The students were also charged with incorporating the water treatment facility into the overall master plan and to take into account its relationship with the cabin. The students' suggestions included beautifying the exterior of the water treatment facility by creating falling walls of water that would be accessible to the public as an outdoor water play area. Another suggestion was to surround the water treatment facility and the cabin with a swale that would capture water runoff from Bluemont Hill and promote soil conservation. The swale could incorporate plantings that would enhance and soften the site.

The students will be making another presentation of their ideas in December as they continue to refine them.

## Historic Farm Tour

In every membership year, the M/RCPA offers a special tour of a historic residence as a benefit for providing financial support to our organization. This year's special event was a tour of Mike and Janet Danenberg's farmstead, located a few miles west of Keats, Kansas.

The most striking feature of the farmstead is easily the stone barn. The Danenbergs were recognized this past spring during the 2011 Historic Preservation Building Awards for their thoughtful restoration of the barn. The barn's walls were sagging, and its mortar needed repair. The walls were slowly and carefully straightened, and its mortar and masonry were faithfully repointed and repaired to match the original. The restoration work was completed by Hartman Masonry.

In addition to the barn, M/RCPA members toured other structures original to the farm, including the original stone house, corn crib, and handmade "cave." The Danenbergs have converted the corn crib to their tack room, which sheltered the



experienced what it was like in the days before indoor plumbing by trying their hands at pumping water from the outdoor hand pump. In addition, attendees under the age of five were treated to a horse ride!

The M/RCPA would like to thank the Danenbergs for their willingness to host the event and to share their historic farm.

buffet during the event.

The Danenbergs are currently in the process of building an addition to the stone farmhouse and plan to leave the old house's stone walls exposed in the new interior.

The "cave" was carved below ground by the original settlers. The interior walls are lined with stone, and it features a small fireplace. The settlers lived in the cave while the barn and the house were being built, and most likely, the cave was later used as a root cellar and storm shelter.

M/RCPA members also



Pictured at the top is the restored barn. The photos above and below right show the barn's interior. Far left is the cave's interior, and bottom center is the pump.



# Bluemont Avenue Project

The two-block stretch of Bluemont Avenue between North Manhattan Avenue and 11<sup>th</sup> Street sees frequent accidents. Attempts have been made to improve the safety along this corridor by restricting turns at the 12<sup>th</sup> Street intersection, but the area has continued to be hazardous. In an effort to better address the problem, the City of Manhattan applied for and has received federal grant money to improve traffic and pedestrian safety. The grant funds will be administered by the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT). The Bluemont Avenue Project will be consistent with the Aggieville-Campus Edge District Plan, which was adopted by the City Commission in 2005 to guide redevelopment in the Aggieville area.

SMH and Bartlett and West developed four possible options for reducing accidents. Option 1 would add a median to the center of Bluemont Avenue to restrict left turns. Option 2 would eliminate eastbound left turns onto 12<sup>th</sup> Street and would add a “pedestrian refuge island.” Option 3 would create a two-way shared center turning lane. With this option, KDOT would require a reduction in the number of driveway entrances on the south side of the street, which could be accomplished by consolidating and



sharing driveways. Option 4 would add a larger pedestrian refuge island to the center of Bluemont Avenue and also close some of the driveway entrances on the south side.

At the November 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board, representatives of SMH and Bartlett and West reported that the majority of the businesses along the south side of Bluemont Avenue preferred Option 3 that would consolidate driveways and add a center turning lane. The consolidation of driveways will result in the loss of some parking spaces for the businesses on the south side. The center turning lane would also allow a median to be easily added in its place if that were desired in the future.

For some of the proposed options, Bluemont Avenue would need to be widened, with the plan to acquire 6-8 feet of both the north and south sides to accomplish it. Improvements will also include curbs and gutters, traffic signals, and lighting, with the plan to retain as many of the trees along the north side as possible.

The Bluemont Avenue Project will accomplish some of the goals of the Aggieville-Campus Edge

District Plan, including better control of vehicle traffic while providing safer crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists. The district plan also includes plans for future redevelopment on the north side. Along the two-block corridor, the north side has historically been

residential, and the south side has been commercial. The district plan encourages the construction of mixed-use structures on the north side that will include commercial uses on the ground floor and residential units on upper floors.

Presumably, the existing older houses on the north side of Bluemont Avenue will be removed at some point to make way for the new mixed-use buildings. The houses along the north side were built during 1910-1930 and are rental properties for the most part. As the Aggieville-Campus Edge District Plan progresses, the M/RCPA hopes that efforts will be made to respect Manhattan’s historic resources, including investigating incorporating



the houses into the design or relocating them rather than automatically making the assumption that demolition is the only option.

All three photos show the houses on the north side of Bluemont Ave., slated to be replaced by future redevelopment.



## Depot Artifacts Follow-Up

Featured in the October 2011 newsletter was an article about the Means family donating artifacts from the depot to the City of Manhattan. Using social media, M/RCPA President Kathy Dzewaltowski was able to connect with Harry (Skip) Means, son of Harry W. Means and grandson of Harry L. Means. Skip provided biographical information about his father and grandfather that were so interesting that they had to be shared with a follow-up article. Skip's biographical information also helps us to understand what it was like to work for the railroad when our depot was an active station.

### Harry W. Means

Harry W. began serving the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) on March 20, 1941, as a station helper. He worked as a station helper in numerous places for the UPRR, including Detroit, Topeka, Chapman, Lindsborg, Salina, Solomon, and Wilson. He was initially hired as the agent and operator in Junction City, on Feb. 4, 1942. He held several positions while serving the UPRR, including telegrapher, ticket agent, printer mechanic, and freight agent. He received a medical retirement from UPRR in 1978.

Harry W. loved to watch the trains even as a child. He learned Morse code as a Boy Scout in Wamego. He was granted a UPRR "leave of absence" in March of 1944 for military service. In April 1944, he went to radio school at the University of Idaho and became a Navy radio operator before serving on the Cape Gloucester ship in the South Pacific during World War II. When the war was over, he returned to Junction City and was again the telegraph operator for the UPRR.

Harry W.'s life was the railroad,

just like his dad's had been. He accumulated many items of railroad memorabilia over the years. Many of these items were treasures to those who attended the Harry W. and Charlotte J. Means' estate auction in the summer of 2010 in Manhattan.

### Harry L. Means

Harry L. Means gave up his farm near Paxico to work for the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) in the mid 1920s. Harry L. was the night operator at the Hayes, Kansas UPRR passenger station in June 1930 when he was robbed of \$64.25 by two bandits. The bandits were expecting more than \$250, but that money had left on a previous train several hours earlier. Following the robbery, Harry L. was forced into their Model A Ford and dropped off at the state park at the edge of town, and he had been bound, gagged, and blindfolded. After using his pocket knife to cut himself loose, he walked

to the nearby Brunswick Hotel and called the police. One of the robbers was an escaped convict.

Harry L. was robbed a second time by two men during his night shift at the UPRR station. Harry L. and the baggage man were just returning from a meal at 2:00 a.m. at the time of the robbery. The bandits took \$159.10 in currency and silver. One of the robbers climbed into a Ford coupe, and the other fell on the ground in his haste and ran into the dense shrubbery. Later, the sheriff and Harry L. were able to find the get-away vehicle as the bandit had returned to locate his fallen accomplice who had all of the loot.

Many of Harry L.'s railroad memorabilia were included in the Harry W. and Charlotte J. Means' estate auction, and some of the items donated to the City of Manhattan may have belonged to Harry L. Means.

## Douglass Community Center Open House

9<sup>th</sup> & Yuma Street

Thursday, Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>, 4:30 – 7:00 p.m.

The Douglass Center Advisory Board invites the community to come and take a look at improvements made to the Douglass Community Center.

## Kansas Water Tower Survey

The Kansas Historical Society is asking for the public's help in identifying Kansas's diverse water towers. The Society plans to document water towers beginning in early 2012. Anyone who would like to recommend a water tower for the survey should contact Amanda Loughlin at 785-272-8681, ext. 257, or by e-mail at [survey@kshs.org](mailto:survey@kshs.org).

In Riley County, two unusual water towers come to mind: the water tower in Manhattan located near the intersection of Sunset Avenue and Evergreen Avenue, and also the stone water tower in north Ogdon. If you know of others, be sure to respond to the survey and also let the M/RCPA know by e-mail at [mrcpanewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:mrcpanewsletter@gmail.com).

M/RCPA  
P.O. Box 1893  
MANHATTAN, KS  
66505-1893

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*M/RCPA Membership Roster 2011-12*

**\$35 Historic Level**

Mary Elizabeth & Tom Atwood, Diana Chapel, Wayne M. Charney, D. Cheryl Collins, Kenneth & Margaret Conrow, Michael & Janet Danenberg, Nancy & Clark Danner, Glee Eggers, Sara Fisher, Mary Ann Fleming, Ron Fowles Construction, Linda Glasgow, Charles S. & Charlotte B. Herr, Angie Hickel, Robin D. S. Higham, Jean Bigbee Hill, Corina Hugo, Jean Hulbert, Camille & Phillip Korenek, Marianne Korten, Robert D. Linder, Judith K. Major, Robert & Elaine Mohr, Janet & Tony Nichols, Ed & Kay Olson, Kevin G. W. Olson, Jerry & Martha Powell, Virginia Quiring, Dr. M. C. Reay, Marcia Rozell, Sharlin Sargent, Todd & Geri Simon, Connie Sink, Kimberly & Richard Smith, Maurice & Carolee Stark, Gary Stowe (Stowe Property LLC), Joan & John Strickler, Walter Remodeling Inc., Weis Realty Executives, Patricia & Ray Weisenburger, Alvin & Edna Williams, Judith M. Willingham.

**\$100 Preservation Level**

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**\$250 Landmark Level**

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**Honorary Lifetime Members**

Rose M. Bissey (in memory of Charles Bissey), Enell Foerster (in memory of Bernd Foerster), Dr. Patricia J. O'Brien.