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# Manhattan / Riley County Preservation Alliance Newsletter

February, 2003

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## THE ULTIMATE IN "BACK HOUSES": A HOUSE OF MEMORIES

Your editor saw this wonderful example of a "back house," while driving along Ft. Riley Blvd. recently, and stopped to get a photo. Les Powell of 512 S. 6th is constructing it for his 9-year-old son, Travis, with the help of his friend Alvin Alexander. One is reminded of childhood days, summertime, lemonade, and comic books, and how we always longed for such a castle in the air (which, by the way, has passed muster by the city planners). Best yet, instead of demolishing a tree to create a home, the tree becomes an integral part of the plan.



Les is holding the ladder.

## A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT—JIM SHEROW

Greetings, a warm invitation to join our next meeting of the Alliance at the Congregational Church this Thursday night at 7:30 p.m. Our organization is making great headway in many of its endeavors.

Dixie West is working to keep us informed about the work underway for the Traditional Neighborhood Overlays. Kate Watson is actively involved in representing us with the Chamber of Commerce and is also reporting on the development of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Mike and Judine Mecseri, along with Bonnie Lynn-Sherow, are putting the final touches to the planning for our sponsored Chamber Afterhours, which will be at the Houston Street Ballroom on March 12.

The Kansas Preservation Alliance (KPA), with our assistance, has finalized the program for its state-wide symposium scheduled for April 11 and 12 here in Manhattan. Elizabeth Smith, Bernd Foerster, and Marina Pecar-Krstic have

done an excellent job of submitting nominations to the KPA for its annual awards. We'll keep our fingers crossed that there will be a Manhattan winner this year. The Strecker-Nelson Art Gallery (332 Poyntz), Pat O'Brien's apartment (501 Houston), and Bonnie's and my place (529 Pierre St.) are part of the historic tour that the KPA and our Alliance is sponsoring on Saturday afternoon, April 12. This is an excellent opportunity for us to highlight our accomplishments, which are obviously more varied than simply fund raising for the depot. And yes, our fund raising effort continues for the depot, and we've recently received nice contributions from Commerce Bank and Cox Communications, and Karen McCulloh is working on our solicitation efforts.

Clearly, these tasks are only accomplished by all of us working together. That is the enduring strength of our organization. During this meeting we need to celebrate our accomplishments and

Continued on page 2

continue planning for the future. We will need to fill Marolyn Caldwell's position as treasurer and newsletter editor as we are all aware that her campaign for city commissioner will fill all of her waking hours. All of us will miss Marolyn's contributions as we all recognize and appreciate her valuable work in the Alliance. We also need to set into motion the advance planning for our biennial home tour, and the annual preservation awards. And at some point, and not necessarily at this meeting, I would like us to discuss and set our long-range goals for our Alliance.

Together, we have accomplished much, and I extend my sincere thanks to all of the people, named and unnamed, whose efforts promote the Alliance everyday. There is still much to do, and I hope to see you this Thursday.

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## **NEIGHBORHOOD OVERLAY DISTRICTS**

by Dixie West

On January 13th, I met with Ockert Fourie of the City's Planning Department to discuss the current status of the Traditional Neighborhood Overlay district (TNO) and the Multi-Family Rehabilitation Overlay district (M-FRO). For those unfamiliar with these terms, I offer the following history.

Approximately two years ago, concern rose among citizens living in the older parts of town as they watched developers tear down old houses in their neighborhoods (some admittedly in deplorable condition), and replace them with what were termed "super-duplexes," large student apartment buildings out of scale with the surrounding structures. Homeowners appealed to the Planning Board and a Conditional Use Amendment was quickly passed, which served to give residents notice of new construction, and allowed them to protest undesirable additions. This was a helpful step, but not the final answer.

City Staff then initiated a series of meetings with the impacted neighborhoods, the Manhattan Neighborhood Coalition, the Preservation Alliance, and the Builders, Realtors and Landlords Association (BRL). From these meetings the proposed structure of the overlay districts was developed. Staff proposed downzoning some current two-family residential districts (R2) and multifamily residential districts (MR) to single-family residential districts (R1), additionally offering Manhattan's traditional neighborhoods the protective design features of the TNO on new developments. These designations would involve neighborhoods located west of City Park, south of Poyntz, and east of KSU campus.

Recognizing the ongoing need for student housing, City Staff also proposed that an area of

land located between North 9th on the east, North Manhattan on the west, Claflin on the north, and Osage on the south (i.e. the area roughly adjacent to KSU and Aggieville on the east) be upzoned to an M-FRO district. On November 19 the TNO/M-FRO proposals went before the City Commission for approval. After much discussion, City Commissioners passed the TNO proposal, but in response to BRL's insistence that the design guidelines in the multifamily district were too restrictive, the M-FRO wording was sent back to the Planning Board for further study.

On March 3 members of BRL and the Neighborhood Coalition are invited to attend a work session with the Planning Board to discuss the design guidelines stipulated in the current M-FRO proposal. Once wording is hammered out, a public hearing will follow.

City Staff will then begin the process of downzoning and creating TNO boundaries. Since such a large area is affected, with numerous property owners, this will be done in stages. The area west of City Park will go through the process first, then the area south of Poyntz, and finally the area east of the KSU campus. During the process of downzoning, each property owner will be identified using GIS and Court Records, and personally notified, and an ad will be placed in the Manhattan Mercury describing the process. The first public hearing for TNO designation to the neighborhood west of City Park will be held either by the end of February or the beginning of March.

Although Ockert Fourie does not anticipate that the boundaries of the TNO districts will change from those proposed by City Staff, our

Continued on page 3

Preservation Alliance members must remain vigilant. It is important also that the Preservation Alliance be represented in any meetings concerning the M-FRO among City Staff, the BRL, and the Manhattan Neighborhood Coalition.

### **WHISTLESTOP CAMPAIGN NEWS**

by Judine Mecseri

The Whistlestop Campaign is still going full force. We are hosting the Chamber of Commerce After Hours on Wednesday, March 12 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the Houston Street Ballroom. This will garner corporate exposure for the M/RCPA and also the Whistlestop Campaign. Capers Café and Bakery from Salina will be catering the event and Heartland Beverage will be providing drinks. The expected attendance is in the neighborhood of 250 people from Manhattan's business community.

Our goals in hosting this event are to provide a broad exposure of the MRCPA, to encourage additional membership and to advertise the Whistlestop Campaign. We are hoping to have a good attendance of Alliance members to answer questions or help out in selling merchandise, greeting people, etc. We will be setting up for the event during the day and could use help. If you are able to lend your assistance on March 12, please let us know at the meeting on February 13, or if you are unable to attend the meeting, please call Michael or Judine Mecseri at 776-4735.

We are very excited about this Event and are looking forward to seeing you there as well!

### **ADVERTISING ON RADIO KANSAS?**

Now that we have achieved 501(c)(3) status, some members of the Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance are planning to pool their contributions to Radio Kansas. Tax deductible donations made to the M/RCPA, designated "Radio Kansas," would be applied towards an underwriting contract, thus allowing us to send a preservation message to a large portion of the state. We would like to gauge the membership's interest in this plan. If you would consider participating, please send an email to Jim Sherow at [blynn6@cox.net](mailto:blynn6@cox.net).

### **MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE**

**Meetings:** Second Thursday of each month,  
7:30 p.m.  
**Location:** First Congregational Church,  
Juliette and Poyntz  
**President:** Jim Sherow  
**Vice-President:** Michael Mecseri  
**Secretary:** Linda Glasgow  
**Treasurer:** Marolyn Caldwell

### **MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**

Dues date from the Annual Meeting in September. Dues paid mid-year confer membership status until the next Annual Meeting. Dues are \$15 for an individual, \$20 for a family, and \$60 for a sponsor. Checks should be made out to the Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance, Inc. c/o P.O. Box 1893, Manhattan, Kansas 66505. Questions? Call Linda Glasgow at 785-565-6490.

If anyone has contributions for future M/RCPA newsletters, please contact the Editor, Marolyn Caldwell, at 776-4862, or email [marolync@flinthills.com](mailto:marolync@flinthills.com).



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The businesses and members featured in the Preservation Alliance newsletter are helping to defray our mailing and printing costs by contributing \$5 per issue. We welcome any and all new sponsors.

**M/RCPA QUICK ANNOUNCEMENTS**

★ **You can now contribute to the Depot Fund by credit card.**  
Jason Hilgers at Manhattan City Hall will tell you how.

★ **NEXT MEETING: Thursday, February 13, 2003, 7:30, First Congregational Church.**

M/RCPA  
P.O. Box 1893  
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