



# MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

April 2013

## A Message From Our President

Just when it seemed that H.B. 2118, the bill that would eliminate the historic environs review component of the state preservation statute, had died for the 2013 session, it resurfaced on April 1st, and it wasn't an April Fool's Day prank.

The bill had advanced out of the Kansas House and moved on to the Senate's Ethics, Elections, and Local Government Committee. Historic preservation advocates took action and contacted senators, encouraging them to not act in haste and to allow time for further discussion. The M/RCPA contributed to the effort by contacting the Senate committee members as well as Senator Tom Hawk. Intense advocacy coupled with senators' willingness to listen to arguments were having a positive effect.

Another important factor was the Kansas Historical Society's offer to

address concerns with the environs review process by revising the rules and regulations portion. As an example, proponents of the bill had expressed concerns that property owners within the 500 ft. (1,000 ft. in rural areas) historic environs are not notified when a property is going to be listed on a historic register. Rather than regard this concern as a reason to eliminate the review process in its entirety, a revision to the process would be a far less extreme way to address concerns. The potential of a compromise also seemed to be having a positive effect. The Senate didn't take further action on the bill, and it looked as though the bill had died.

Then came April 1st and the news that H.B. 2118 still had life. The Local Government Conference Committee, comprised of members from the corresponding House and Senate committees, planned to

discuss the bill again. The possibility existed that the bill would be included in the conference committee report of another bill and be able to advance.

For the past 25 years, the historic environs review process has been helping to ensure that changes to historic environs are done in a manner that is sensitive to and compatible with historic registered properties. The review process also provides some assurances for property owners and developers who have invested in rehabilitation projects that the surrounding area won't be significantly altered without a discussion and the opportunity for public input.

The M/RCPA hopes that legislators will not hastily eliminate the environs review process and will instead, allow time for revisions to the process to be developed that all parties will find to be reasonable.

*Kathy Dzewaltowski*

## 2013 Historic Preservation Building Awards

Thursday, May 9th, 7:00 p.m.

Union Pacific Depot

All M/RCPA members are invited to attend the Historic Preservation Building Awards. The program is open to the public, so bring a guest!

Parking is limited at the depot. Additional parking is available at the Flint Hills Discovery Center with easy access to the depot via the pedestrian underpass.

## New Downtown Lounge Opens In Historic Building

In its 125-year history, the historic commercial building, located at 105 North Third Street in the Downtown Manhattan Historic District, has housed a variety of businesses and weathered floods. The building is currently the home of the Veldt Lounge, which is a new local restaurant, and which features a full bar and live music performances.

Built in approximately 1888, the limestone two-story structure retains many of its original features. The ground floor consists of three sets of storefront bays framed by stone piers. The ground floor storefront bays have more modern glass and wood elements, but the original openings and proportions are the same (National). The upper floor still has the original three-panel arched windows with stained glass.

In the early 1900s, the building housed the offices of *The Nationalist*, which was an early Manhattan newspaper, and the building also housed Manhattan's post office. It was common for the post office to be housed inside another business, with the business benefitting from the increased traffic generated by people coming to pick up their mail in the days before home delivery.

According to Matt Hood, one of the owners of the Veldt Lounge, the business opened approximately six months ago, following interior and exterior improvements. Prior to the Veldt Lounge, Mel's Tavern had

occupied the space. The horseshoe-shaped bar was retained, which had been a part of Mel's Tavern in its various incarnations since the 1950s, but everything else in the space was renovated, with Mr. Hood doing the bulk of the work himself. All of the interior walls were redone, and sagging ceiling tiles were replaced. While removing wood paneling, burlap with the "Fishbowl" logo on it was found underneath. The Fishbowl had occupied the space prior to Mel's Tavern.

The Veldt Lounge offers live music, so performance space for a piano and for other live entertainment was created. Mr. Hood said he plans to expand the live music offerings in the near future.

Exterior improvements primarily involved a fresh coat of paint, following the same red and black color scheme as the interior. The upper floor windows are in need

of small amounts of wood repair,  
(continued on  
pg. 3)



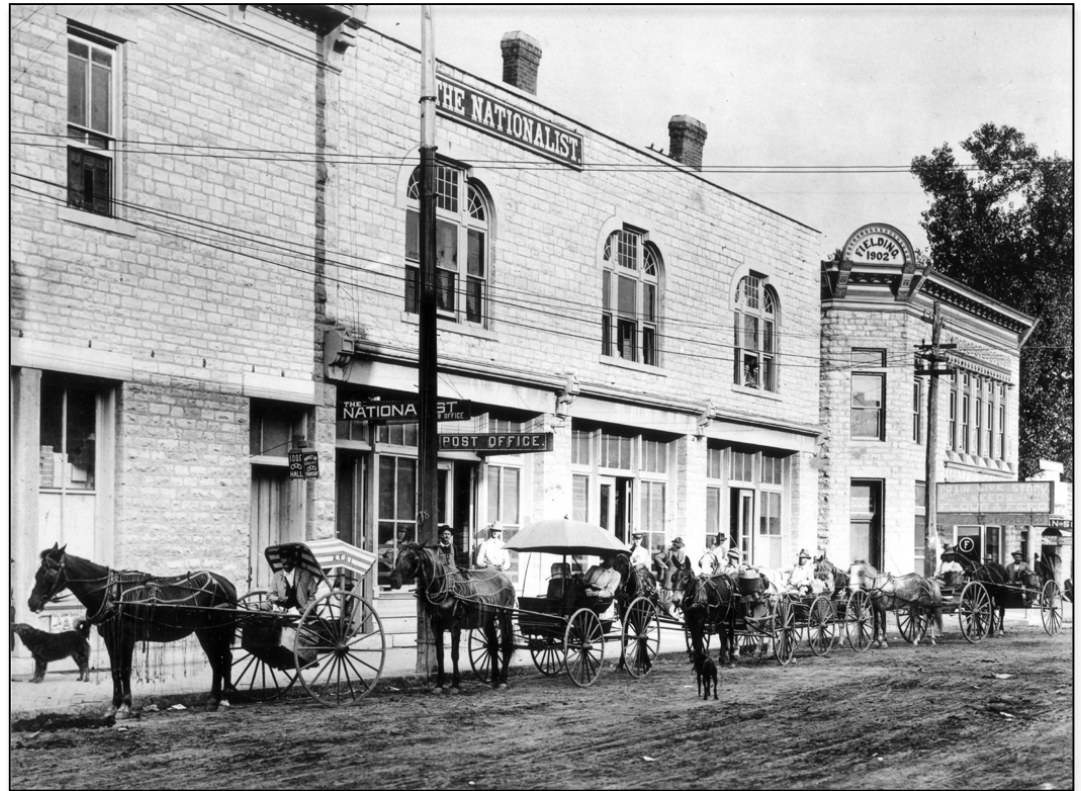
All three photos show the newly renovated black and red interior of the Veldt Lounge. At center, the horseshoe-shaped bar from the Mel's Tavern days remains and has been incorporated into the new design.



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but Mr. Hood said there are no plans to alter the striking original windows with the stained glass transoms.

When considering where to locate the new business, Mr. Hood said the ongoing downtown revitalization resulting from the redevelopment was one of the main reasons the business owners chose downtown. The addition of more residential housing in the downtown area was another draw, as they hope to attract young professionals who live or work downtown.

In the months since the Veldt Lounge opened, Mr. Hood says the business has continued to grow, and plans are in the works to begin offering a tapas menu and also Sunday brunch.



Above, the commercial building located at 105 North Third Street as it appeared in the early 1900s when it housed *The Nationalist* and the post office. The line of horses and buggies is the rural mail carriers getting ready to head out on their routes. The building at the far right is now a parking lot. The photo is courtesy of the Riley County Historical Society.

National Register of Historic Places, Downtown Manhattan Historic District, Manhattan, Riley County, Kansas, National Register #06001240.



At left is a close-up one of the original upper floor three-panel arched windows with stained glass transoms. At right, the new Veldt Lounge, located in a historic commercial building in the Downtown Manhattan Historic District.

## Demolition Plans for Historic Structure at Rock Springs

It's recently come to light that the Kansas 4-H Foundation has plans to demolish the historic Water Wheel Ranch House at the Rock Springs 4-H Center, which is near Junction City. The 4-H Foundation plans to demolish the structure and construct a plaza on the site. The Kansas Preservation Alliance (KPA) has added the ranch house to the state's Endangered Historic Places list and has offered to provide assistance to the Kansas 4-H Foundation to develop plans to restore the ranch house.

According to information provided by KPA and Manhattan resident Mel Borst, the ranch house was built in approximately 1883, and is located on the site where a log cabin had been constructed by the original landowner in 1857. The Water Wheel Ranch House gets its name from a natural spring that supplies 1,000 gallons of water per minute to power a water wheel. The ranch house was purchased by Kansas 4-H in 1946 and was primarily used for offices and staff housing through 1978. After 1978, the house was restored to depict the typical farmhouse of the period 1890-1910 and was furnished appropriately. Since 1946, visitors to Rock Springs have had the opportunity to be engaged with the Water Wheel Ranch House in some form or another, impacting the lives of countless numbers of Kansans.

In recent years, the use and maintenance of the building have declined. In a letter to the editor sent to *The Daily Union*, Gordon Hibbard, president of the Kansas 4-H Foundation, described the ranch house as "old" but "not historic." Mr. Hibbard wrote that the house's foundation and support beams have

failed, and restoring the house would not be a good economic investment for the organization.

The ranch house is not listed on a historic register, which means it has no historic protections to prevent its demolition or to allow for public input regarding the proposed plans. The structure is more than likely eligible for historic registry listing, and if it were listed, in addition to providing the house some protection, historic registry listing would make the ranch house eligible for funding opportunities in the form of grants and tax credits, which could help with restoration costs.



In the fall of 2011, Mel Borst, local historic preservation expert, prepared an estimate for the needed repairs. The estimate was \$240,000, which included additional repairs to nearby structures so that they could contribute to the ranch house's use. The estimate also included adapting a pond to make it handicapped accessible. If the ranch house were listed on a historic register, a restoration project could be eligible for state rehabilitation tax credits totaling 25%, which would amount to \$60,000. The property would also be eligible for Heritage Trust Fund grants up to \$90,000. If the property was income producing and if it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, restoration work would qualify for an additional 20% in federal rehabilitation tax credits.

At the maximum, a restoration project could potentially be eligible for \$198,000 in grants and tax credits of the estimated \$240,000.

The Kansas 4-H Foundation is in the midst of a "Growing Kansas Leaders Campaign," with the goal of raising \$10 million. The funds will be used for creating new clubs and programs, leadership activities, supporting scholarships, and improving Rock Springs' facilities, with \$5.5 million dedicated to facility improvements (Campaign).

The Water Wheel Ranch House is an irreplaceable piece of Rock Springs' and Kansas's history.

Advocates for preserving the ranch house suggest future uses for the restored ranch house could include a guest house, headquarters for group leaders, and for camps or conferences for water resource groups, local history, preservation, or bicycle touring groups.

While it's understandable that the Kansas 4-H

Foundation wants Rock Springs to continue to be a well-maintained facility, what's not clear is why the site of the Water Wheel Ranch House is the only available location to construct the proposed plaza. Rock Springs includes more than 700 acres, so another location could likely be identified. The KPA has offered to assist the Kansas 4-H Foundation in developing plans to stabilize and restore the ranch house.

"Campaign Goals and Priorities." *Kansas 4-H Foundation*. Web. 29 March 2013. <<http://www.kansas4hfoundation.org/Growing-Kansas-Leaders/campaign-goals.htm>>

Hibbard, Gordon. Letter. *The Daily Union* 16 March 2013. <[http://www.thedailyunion.net/NewsSearchDetails.asp?article\\_id=17913&SearchWord=Hibbard](http://www.thedailyunion.net/NewsSearchDetails.asp?article_id=17913&SearchWord=Hibbard)> (accessed March 27, 2013).

The photo of the ranch house is from the Advocates of Rock Springs Water Wheel Ranch House's Facebook page.



## Demolished

The house at 1300 Fremont was recently demolished. The New Hope Church plans to construct a new building on the site for office and meeting space.



The top two photos show 1300 Fremont with demolition in progress, Oct. 2012. In the bottom photo from March 2013, demolition is complete.

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Web site: [www.preservemanhattan.org](http://www.preservemanhattan.org)  
Facebook: Visit our web site and click the Facebook "Like" button at the bottom of the home page.

## Welcome Sign Planned for Bridge Pier

Plans are underway to add a "Manhattan Welcomes You" sign atop the east Pillsbury Viaduct bridge pier. The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), which owns the piers, recently granted the community permission to add a sign.

The Pillsbury Viaduct was constructed in 1937 at a cost of approximately \$250,000 and was named for Josiah Pillsbury, who was an early area settler. In 1996, KDOT removed the viaduct following the completion of the new Kansas River bridge, but the rare Art Deco style piers were left intact.

Blaine Thomas, of the Thomas Sign Company, had watched the Pillsbury Viaduct

being constructed when he was a young boy. When the new bridge was constructed and the old viaduct removed, Mr. Thomas was one of the advocates who requested that the Art Deco style piers be saved because of their artistic significance and history.

The sign will be in the Art Deco style and will feature raised red letters. The welcome sign is estimated to cost \$50,000, with all of the funding coming from private donations. Leading the fundraising efforts are Phil Anderson, Bart Thomas, and Jim Williams. For more information or if you would like to contribute to the welcome sign project, contact Phil Anderson at [phil@k-state.edu](mailto:phil@k-state.edu), or 785-341-0531.



The artist's rendering of the proposed welcome sign is courtesy of the Thomas Sign Company.

M/RCPA P.O. Box 1893 MANHATTAN, KS 66505-1893
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## *M/RCPA Membership Roster 2012-13*

### **\$35 Historic Level**

Phil & Dawn Anderson, Gordon & Mary Anne Andrews, Donna M. Bark, Charlene Brownson, Wally Cash, Wayne (Mick) Charney, Susanne Siepl-Coates & Gary Coates, D. Cheryl Collins, Margaret Conrow, Michael & Janet Danenberg, Clark & Nancy Danner, Michael Dudek, Cam & Britt Feltner, Rev. H. Wayne & Beverly A. Fink, Sara Fisher, Mary Ann Fleming, Ron Fowles Construction, Joe & Janette Gelroth, Charles Gillum, Larry & Linda Glasgow, Brian Hardeman & Jayme Morris-Hardeman, Fred & Katherine Hasler, Julie Hostetler, Corina Hugo, Gloria Juhl Raney, Lowell & Stacy Kohlmeier, Camille & Phillip Korenek, Ann Kosch, Dr. Robert D. (Bob) Linder, Katie Lovewell, Bonnie Lynn-Sherow, Bill Meredith, Robert & Elaine Mohr, Janet & Tony Nichols, Ed & Kay Olson, Mary H. Pollack, Jerry & Martha Powell, Linda Rice, Lauren Ritterbush, Tom & Karen Roberts, James E. Roper, Catherine Roy-Tremblay, Allana Saenger, Sharlin Sargent, Mike & Karen Sheffield, Geri Simon, Kimberly & Richard Smith, Brenda Spencer, Maurice & Carolee Stark, Joan & John Strickler, Bria Taddiken-Williams, Erma Verhage, Walter Remodeling Inc., Patricia & Ray Weisenburger, Ron & Dixie West, Edna Williams, Judith M. Willingham, Barbara E. Withee.

### **\$100 Preservation Level**

Barbara G. Anderson, Mimi Balderson, Bowman Bowman Novick Inc., Jacqueline Brewer, Capstone3D Construction Services, Frances Ellis, Gary & Paula Ellis, Tom Giller/Commerce Bank, Marjorie Heyne, Nancy Holmes, Roger T. Johnson, Claudia Jones, John & Cindy La Barge/J & C Imaging, John & Karen McCulloh, McCullough Development Inc., Richard & Marge McKittrick, Michael & Judine Mecseri, Dori Milldyke, Marina Pecar-Krstic, Schrum Rentals LLC, Riley Construction Co. Inc., Deborah Saroff, Bob & Mary Stamey, George & Julie Strecker, Chuck & Marsha Tannehill, Jerry & Linda Weis/ Weis Real Estate Co.

### **\$250 Landmark Level**

Mary Dean Appel, David & Kathy Dzewaltowski, Debbie Nuss & Brad Fenwick, GJL Real Estate, Griffith Lumber Co., Master Landscape Inc., Dr. Patricia J. O'Brien, Barbara Poresky, Gwyn & Gina Riffel, Tim & Adena Weiser, Kevin S. & Alyn Pennington West.

### **Honorary Lifetime Members**

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