
Manhattan / Riley County Preservation Alliance Newsletter

February, 2001



617 HOUSTON ST. THE MORNING STAR BED & BREAKFAST

One of Bill Kaszer's first major projects after he and Laurie Pieper acquired the very late Dr. Colt's old house was to install the fountain in the front yard. Once it's filled with water—100 gallons worth—its recirculating pump keeps the action going throughout those sweet, hot summer days, when all you want to do is sit and listen to the cicadas. For guests relaxing in the wicker chairs on the big front porch, cooled by breezes wafting from porch fans, the effect is magical.

Bill and Laurie have had the three-storey house since the end of June 2000, and business is booming. For four years they ran the Morning Star B&B on 14th Street west of the park. There they had three guest rooms sharing two baths. But when they contemplated subdividing the

spacious upstairs bedroom in that house for needed expansion, they balked. Fortunately the Colt House came on the market, and the 14th Street bedroom was spared. There are five guest-rooms in the new Morning Star, and each room has its own bath—complete with jacuzzi tub.

Like most of the grand old houses in this town, 617 Houston has a history—a little glory here, a little scandal there. Laurie hears bits and snatches of that history as local visitors come through the house. Originally it was a doctor's home, built in 1906 for entertaining; there are hints of misbehavior and divorce, resulting in its subsequent conversion to an office; it may have served as a pool hall; ultimately it was subdivided into five apartments, including kitchens, since removed. Laurie has a few hints of the original floor plan. The bathroom under the steps on the main floor was originally a hallway to the kitchen, for instance. Some design elements have been added more recently, such as the front stairway to the Kaszer's third floor living quarters. They have also upgraded and renewed since they acquired the property, replacing the balusters on the grand staircase, rebuilding and retiling the fireplace, making sure the wiring was up to code. Walls in every room have been repaired, then repainted or papered. The wonderful chandelier at the top of the stairs was their idea, as well as the porch fans, and they are still replacing lights and installing fans. At some point Laurie wants to revamp the kitchen to her needs, as well as the butler's pantry. The garage, once a barn for horse and carriage, also needs work.

Bill and Laurie have seen old photos of the house in its early years. The most noticeable lack, in Bill's eyes, is gardens. He has set out to remedy that situation in the new millennium. Take a look come spring, he says. Flowing garden beds now adorn the yards. He has already thrown away his lawn mower.

Check out www.morningstaronthepark.com

MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE, INC.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, February 15, 7:30 p.m., First Congregational Church, Juliette and Poyntz, Manhattan, KS. After our business meeting (hopefully a short one) we will tour **Pat O'Brien's apartment building**, located at 501 Houston. This and other planned tours are invitational, for members of M/RCPA only.

Upcoming Tours:

February: Pat O'Brien's apartment building located at 501 Houston, undergoing renovation.

March but more likely April: Marolyn Caldwell's late-40s cement block and brick home located at 1115 Colorado (wine and cheese included).

Other surprises down the road.

If anyone has news to put in future M/RCPA newsletters, please contact the Editor, Marolyn Caldwell, at 776-4862, or email marolync@flinthills.com.

NEXT MEETING: NOTE REVISED DATE—FEBRUARY 15

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION FOR MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE, INC.

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 and \$20 for a family. 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.

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