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# Manhattan / Riley County Preservation Alliance Newsletter

June, 2001

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## PRESERVATION IN MINIATURE

### Tracy Perrotta Gives New Meaning to "Cottage Industry"

Serendipity can strike anywhere. Even in Germany, during a husband's military tour of duty. When Tracy Perrotta's family was living there several years ago, her 6th grade daughter Emily enrolled in an innovative problem-solving program started at Iowa State called "Odyssey of the Mind." Emily's "Odyssey" teacher had become acquainted with a Lithuanian "Odyssey" teacher at one of the international meetings of that group. As a result of that chance meeting, 14 students from Lithuania came as exchange students to Emily's school in Germany. The Perrottas hosted one of the students, and in due course Emily became an exchange student the other direction. So because of Emily, Tracy, who likely would not otherwise have ventured so far behind the former Iron Curtain, entered an exciting new phase of her life.

Tracy had seen ceramic "candle houses" in Germany, which entranced her, though they were rather too expensive. But at a art consignment store in the seaport town of Klaipeda, Lithuania, she saw several delightfully unique ceramic houses, and at a price she could afford! She tried to find out something about the artist, a medical doctor in real life, and finally caught up with him, quite literally, at a wide spot in the middle of the Lithuanian equivalent of an interstate highway. Through an interpreter she asked him if she could sell his houses in the United States. The answer was "yes." He gave her his fax number, and Candlehouse, Inc. came into being. There were problems at first. Of the first 100 houses he sent

to her, 97 were shattered. Now, thankfully, the breakage rate has reversed itself.



Tracy works with three Lithuanian artists at present. She sells her miniatures not only at the Saturday morning Farmer's Market in Manhattan, but at Renaissance Fests, and at artists fairs such as Pumpkin Patch. This summer she will be exhibiting her miniatures at the Finger Lakes Wine Festival in upper New York State.

Her idea for reproductions of places she has seen came when she returned to the States. She sends designs and photos to her artists, who respond with different visions. From the same photos came two different versions of the Manhattan's First Presbyterian Church (see below).

Besides marketing her little houses, Tracy sometimes commissions reproductions to be made for money raising events. To that end, the Preservation Alliance suggested she try a model of the Manhattan Depot. Pictured above is the second version. It is being modified still further, and will, upon completion, be used to assist the Alliance in its efforts to bring the old Manhattan Depot back to life.



The following article is reproduced from the current issue of *Neighborhood News* published by the City of Manhattan, and is printed here with permission:

## *Neighborhood Planning Initiative*

A number of residents and neighborhood associations representing portions of the older Ward districts, recently raised concerns about the development of larger duplex structures in their neighborhoods. The residents have concerns that these larger structures adversely impact older neighborhoods in various ways. Citizens expressed concern about the stability and future sustainability of the older neighborhoods as a desirable location for families and those interested in rehabilitation of existing homes. Others expressed the need for redevelopment of some of the older areas.

The older neighborhoods represent an important record of the development and settlement history of the City. Not only does it encompass unique sites and structures of historic, architectural, or cultural significance, but also represents a built environment that tells us about the cultural past of Manhattan. Our traditional neighborhood areas are important locations for helping to address some of the community's housing needs. These areas are desirable due to central location, less expensive land costs, and existing infrastructure. The lower entry costs present investment opportunities for families and others.

There is a range of alternatives that can work towards addressing the broader issues involving the protection of neighborhood integrity and infill development. Due to the many issues involved, the Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board and the City Commission have adopted a short-term measure to deal with infill duplex development (Conditional Use process with the Board of Zoning Appeals) and also proposed further investigation of possible longer-term approaches to address broader issues more comprehensively.

With this in mind, the Planning Division has initiated discussions with the different neighborhood groups to commence planning initiatives for the traditional neighborhoods of Manhattan. The Planning Division has started to collect and analyze information about the older neighborhoods, including an inventory of current zoning, ownership patterns, homes with historic or architectural merit, structural conditions, and the location of infill development.

As an initial step, neighborhood groups will be asked to assist in evaluating the background information that has been assembled by the Planning Division. The neighborhood groups will be encouraged to use the information to determine the elements that truly define their neighborhood. It is proposed that the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (*SWOT analysis*) of the neighborhoods be identified and analyzed. The analysis need not be an extensive task, but should at least include clear and concise answers to the following questions:

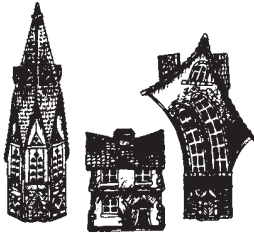
- What is significant about the area?
- What are the physical characteristics and the special qualities that make it significant?
- What do we want to preserve?
- What do we need to add or improve in this area that will keep us here?
- What potential exists in this area that can benefit this neighborhood in particular and the broader community in general?
- What has, and is expected, to put neighborhood integrity at risk?

Once there is a clear understanding of the assets and liabilities of the area, it is proposed that the neighborhood groups develop *goals* and *objectives* for their districts. Planning staff will then assist the neighborhood groups in identifying and developing long-term approaches that are best suited to maintain and improve the integrity of the traditional neighborhoods.

For any additional information contact, Eric Cattell, Assistant Director for Planning, ([ca1tell@ci.manhattan.ks.us](mailto:ca1tell@ci.manhattan.ks.us)) or Ockert Fourie, Senior Planner, ([fourie@ci.manhattan.ks.us](mailto:fourie@ci.manhattan.ks.us)). Eric and Ockert can be reached via telephone at 587-2412.



The Beecher Bible and Rifle Church



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**WHERE IS THIS HOUSE?**



Your editor scanned this picture into the newsletter from the 1931 edition of the Royal Purple. At that time it was the TKE house. Does anyone know the address? Anything else about it? For your amusement, a different fraternity or sorority house will be featured each month.

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**MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE, INC.**

**Next Meeting:**

**Thursday, June 21**, 7:30 p.m. Meet in front of the old stone house on North Manhattan north of Claflin. We will be touring the house before the business meeting begins. Our guide will be Carol Kellett, Dean of the College of Human Ecology.

**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.

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](mailto:marolync@flinthills.com).

**NOTE: CHANGE OF DATE AND PLACE FOR NEXT MEETING: JUNE 21, 7:30 PM**

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