
MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT, PAT O'BRIEN

MAY, 2009

May is National Preservation Month and this year's theme, same as last year's, is **This Place Matters**.

The Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance plans to celebrate Preservation Month with an awards ceremony to be held on Thursday, May 21st, 7:00 p.m. at Manhattan's Union Pacific Depot. We thank the preservation awards committee, Michael Mecseri, Kathy Dzewaltowski, Debbie Nuss, and Marina Pecar-Krstic for their hard work in organizing the event.

We also thank board member Michael Mecseri for organizing the road trip to Waterville on April 18th and for providing the photos for this newsletter.

We thank Dixie West for serving on Manhattan's rental inspection committee where she promoted the concept that historic buildings, including those not currently on the State or National Register, deserve special consideration and protection.

We thank Jim Sherow and Bonnie Lynn-Sherow for inviting Alliance members who joined at the Historical, Preservation, and Landmark levels to tour their newly restored house, soon to be a bed and breakfast, at 617 Colorado. Members who toured the house at the beginning of the restoration process will delight in the progress made.

It's time to register for the 2009 Kansas Historic Preservation Conference, June 3–6, in Topeka. This year's conference title is "Preservation in Times of Change."

Architect and nationally recognized author Sarah Susanka who wrote **The Not So Big House** and other books will speak at the conference banquet on Friday, June 5th.

Go to the Kansas Historical Society's website at www.ksks.org or call 785-368-3728 for more information.



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, historic preservation is an effective tool for managing growth, revitalizing neighborhoods, fostering local pride and maintaining community character while enhancing livability; and

WHEREAS, historic preservation is relevant for communities across the nation, both urban and rural, and for Americans of all ages, all walks of life and all ethnic backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, it is important to celebrate the role of history in our lives and the contributions made by dedicated individuals in helping to preserve the tangible aspects of the heritage that has shaped us as a people; and

WHEREAS, the Manhattan community continues to demonstrate its commitment to preservation through ongoing historic and archaeological surveys; the nomination of significant cultural resources to the National Register of Historic Places; the protection of its traditional neighborhoods; and the rehabilitation and restoration of historic properties; and

WHEREAS, "This Place Matters" is the theme for National Preservation Month 2009, co-sponsored by the Manhattan-Riley County Preservation Alliance, Inc., Historic Resources Board, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bob Strawn, Mayor of the City of Manhattan, Kansas, do hereby proclaim May 2009, as

National Preservation Month

and call upon the people of Manhattan to join their fellow citizens across the United States in recognizing and participating in this special observance.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the City of Manhattan, Kansas, to be affixed this 5th day of May, 2009.




Bob Strawn, Mayor

2008—2009 Officers & Directors

Barbara Anderson
 Kathy Dzewaltowski—*Secretary*
 Gary Ellis
 Sara Fisher
 Linda Glasgow
 Michael Mecseri
 Debbie Nuss—*Vice President*
 Pat O'Brien—*President*
 Marina Pecar-Krstic
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 La Barbara Wigfall

THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP 2008—2009

\$15 STUDENT
 Newsletter
 Education seminars

\$35 MAINTENANCE
 All of the above benefits

\$100 HISTORICAL
 All of the above benefits plus
 Invitation to special events

\$250 PRESERVATION
 All of the above benefits plus
 Invitation (for 2 people) to
 Frank Lloyd Wright presentation
 and reception, November 7th, at the
 Historic Grimes House

\$500 LANDMARK
 (\$450 tax-deductible)
 All of the above benefits plus
 An autographed copy of
*The Architects & Buildings of
 Manhattan, Kansas*
 By Dr. Patricia J. O'Brien

Contact us at info@preservemanhattan.org

Rental Inspection Update



Brad Claussen meeting with members of the Preservation Alliance board of directors, April 9, 2009, at Manhattan's U.P. Depot

Manhattan Building Official Brad Claussen met with the Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance board of directors at their monthly meeting on April 9th to give an overview of the rental inspection issue.

Over the years the topic of instituting a mandatory rental inspection program has come up repeatedly but without result. Recent discussions have come closer to setting up a program than ever before.

The Alliance board of directors is on record as supporting a Manhattan rental inspection program but has concerns about the possible impact on historic structures. Mr. Claussen addressed those issues.

Special rules already apply to buildings on the National Register of Historic Places and the Register of Historic Kansas Places. Mr. Claussen stated that historic structures not on a register are already treated with sensitivity by his staff.

When it is necessary to retrofit an historic structure with a modern fire

safety improvement, every effort will be made to do so in an appropriate way. However, Mr. Claussen emphasized that life safety issues might occasionally trump historic considerations.

One option currently available when disputes arise is Manhattan's Housing Appeals Board

The concept of providing information for renters appears to have strong support from across the spectrum of opinions on rental inspection. Resources currently available include landlord and tenant information available from the Human Resources Department on the City of Manhattan's website. Kansas State University's Student Government Association (SGA) offers assistance. Samantha McGill is the SGA contact person. Mr. Claussen also stated that the City has the option of providing information for tenants and landlords in a water bill insert. Specific information is always available by calling Code Services at 785-587-4506.

Bala Pioneer Heritage Society News

Spring 2009

This information is reprinted, with permission, from a mailer sent by the Bala Pioneer Heritage Society. The town of Bala was located at the western edge of Riley County, near the border with Clay County.

The closing service for the Bala Presbyterian Church was held September 12, 1999, and shortly thereafter the Bala Pioneer Heritage Society was formed. In February of 2000 the Society purchased the church and surrounding lots from the Presbytery for a nominal fee and began having programs in the building.

This worked well. There were a variety of programs generating interest in preserving the recent history of the Bala area before the fort expansion as well as honoring the pioneers who sacrificed so much to break the land and establish families.

The core group of volunteers has met and agreed to work harder in generating enthusiasm for our cause of keeping the memory of Bala alive. The group will again plan on three or four programs a year with an emphasis on historical information. There is always a good response to the blue grass music we sponsor.

Last fall it was discovered that one

of the basement walls was becoming very weak and unsafe for a group to be in the church. The situation is grave. It is very expensive to restore the wall. Even if that was done, there would be repairs to the roof, re-siding the building, and replacing the windows. That is too much for four meetings a year. The church was a focal point of the community and it would be wonderful if we could save it and generate continuing interest in the community. With limited resources of time and money, the board of the Bala Pioneer Heritage Society feels the effort of preserving the memory of Bala is the chief goal. We need to abandon the building and will sell it at auction or by private treaty. The pulpit chairs, communion table, and altar furnishings will go to Fairview Church. Other contents will be sold at auction. We will continue to meet and have programs. Our last gathering was at Fairview Church. Leonardville and Riley also have

meeting places.

There is money in the treasury to pay insurance on the church to mid-July. Plans will need to be made before that time. This letter is to let our members and friends know the situation. We value your continued support and comments. Dues and gifts are welcome and we will use them wisely.

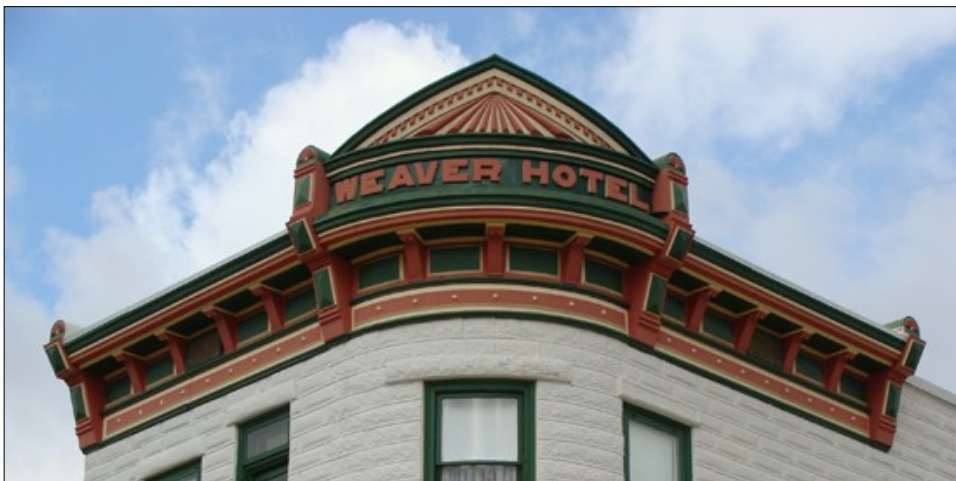
If you would like to visit with board members, please contact Phil and Myrna Parry at 785-485-2463; Richard Williams at 785-762-3335; George and Jan Woodyard at 785-485-2597; Jane Roth at 785-944-3380; Jeff and Lenice Frey at 785-485-2246; or Richard Renz at 785-485-2474.

Bala Pioneer Heritage Society dues are \$10 for an individual and \$15 for a family. Two books are available for sale, **Bala Heritage** and **Era of the One Room School**. Each book costs \$12.00. Dues and book orders may be sent to Richard Renz, 11340 Homestead Road, Riley, Kansas 66531.

You are invited to the
2009 Preservation Awards Ceremony
Thursday, May 21st, 7:00 p.m.
at Manhattan's Union Pacific Depot.

Refreshments to follow.

A Memorable Visit to Waterville's Weaver Hotel



Weaver Hotel photos courtesy of Michael Mecseri

Preservation Alliance board member Michael Mecseri arranged a very special tour of Waterville's Weaver Hotel for April 18th. The general public's first glimpse of the project took place on Saturday, April 25th, at

miere historic resources.

LueAnn Roepke greeted the group and served as tour guide through the public rooms, catering kitchen, food prep area, and other service areas necessary for a functioning hotel. Two

were on the job on a sunny Saturday morning, the building was filled with industrious volunteers applying elbow grease to the massive task of preparing four floors for an official grand opening (May 23rd) and for the Victorian Days high tea (April 25th). The quiet streets of Waterville were sharply contrasted by the buzz of activity within. It was a tremendous act of generosity for the Waterville Preservation Society to provide a behind-the-scenes tour for our group when such important deadlines were looming.

The restoration of the Weaver Hotel, now on the National Register of Historic Places, has been one of those "somebody really ought to do it" projects for a long time. The timing was right several years ago when twenty-six couples each donated \$2,000 and formed the Waterville Preservation Society to begin the Weaver Hotel restoration project. A local donor provided additional, substantial funding and there were two successful grant applications, one tapping federal highway dollars set aside for historic railroad-related projects, similar to what was done for Manhattan's Union Pacific depot.

The Weaver Hotel was built in 1905 and was located directly across the street from the railroad tracks along East Front Street. Its front parlor pro-



Waterville's 19th annual Victorian Days when high tea was served in the hotel's dining room.

Nine Preservation Alliance members took advantage of the opportunity to see the Waterville community's extraordinary grassroots investment in one of Marshall County's pre-

party rooms will be available for rent and a visitor center/gift shop is near completion. Ten unique hotel rooms, most already sponsored by financial gifts from people with a Waterville connection, were being prepared for the hotel's opening.

In addition to the craftsmen who

vided travelers on the Central Branch Union Pacific Railroad with a place to wait for the train. Known as the "Pride of the Central Line," the Weaver Hotel's dining room provided meals and its guest rooms provided lodging for railroad travelers, construction workers on the line further to the west, and train crews.

Entertainment was readily available at the opera house, right across from the Weaver on Kansas Street. Performers at the opera house arrived by train and stayed at the Weaver as did the traveling salesmen known as "drummers" who set up merchandise displays in the hotel.

The restored Weaver Hotel will provide an experience that is historic but with modern comforts. Each guest room has a private bath, high-speed Internet wireless broadband service, cable TV, and central heating and air conditioning.

Rooms will be furnished with conventional hotel beds set against antique headboards. Additional historic furniture pieces will make each room unique. Reproduction lighting fixtures have been installed throughout the hotel.

Some of the project's challenges came from the need to please the State Historic Preservation Office and the need to comply with fire safety codes. For instance, transom windows were allowed to remain in place, preserving the hotel's historic character, but they were made inoperable. The retention of the historic transoms was made possible because the building is equipped with a modern sprinkler system throughout. LueAnn Roepke

joked that the exterior fire escape that serves the guest lodging floors is probably, "sturdy enough to support the combined weight of Waterville's entire population."

A four floor elevator has been added, making every public area and

cutting, speeches, a champagne toast, and tours.

Memorial Day weekend holds a special significance for Waterville as it is alumni weekend for all students of Waterville High School (which has been closed for decades), regardless



guest room handicapped accessible. Room for a modern dumbwaiter between the food prep room on the lowest level and the catering kitchen on the main level has been provided, should the budget eventually allow for one.

The Manhattan firm of Bruce McMillan AIA Architects has guided the restoration process.

The Weaver Hotel's grand opening event will take place Memorial Day weekend on Saturday, May 23, 2009, at 12:00 noon. There will be a ribbon

of their year of graduation. Needless to say, the Weaver Hotel is fully booked for its grand opening weekend.

Fundraising continues for the hotel project. The building that shares a party wall with the Weaver is also owned by the Waterville Preservation Society. A back wall suffered a collapse, causing the building to be gutted although the front façade has been saved and stabilized. It is possible that this building might sometime serve as living quarters for the Weaver Hotel's management.

The Waterville Preservation Society is to be commended for taking on this project. All of Marshall County can take pride in Waterville's achievement. More information is available at www.weaverhotel.com. The Waterville Preservation Society can be reached by emailing Sandy Harding at weaverhotel@yahoo.com.



Protecting the Pioneer Log Cabin In City Park

Information for this article came from the Riley County Historical Society's book **Log Cabin Days**, published in 1929.



Photo courtesy of the Riley County Historical Society
Dedication of the Pioneer Log Cabin in City Park, 1916

The Riley County Historical Association—now known as the Riley County Historical Society—was founded on May 28, 1914. Its objective was “to promote interest in and preservation of written or printed records of our history and also to collect relics for a museum.”

Early on the Association met nearly every month at the county courthouse and papers were read by early settlers. Two picnics were held yearly in City Park.

The Association planned a museum, but lacking funds “for anything more pretentious,” they chose to build a log cabin to house an historical collection. Permission was given to place the log cabin museum in City Park. Logs, labor, and material were donated.

On October 12, 1915, following “the most brilliant and colorful parade in Manhattan's history,” consisting of 102 floats depicting the history the county beginning with the Spanish explorers, the cornerstone was laid.

That stone was taken from the walls of the first building of the Kansas State Agricultural College when it was torn down. Historical papers were placed in that cornerstone. A second cornerstone was taken from the old government bridge at Juniata which served the Fort Leavenworth to

Fort Riley military trail in the 1850's.

Another ceremony was held on October 5, 1916, after the cabin was completed. After a picnic, musical presentations, and speeches, the cabin was open for visitors. The melodeon brought to Kansas by Mrs. Ella Child Carroll (Seth Child's daughter) accompanied the singing of old songs.

By 1916 the original settlers were mostly gone. Many of those who remained had been children during the pioneering time. The message that they sent forward to the future was that “our history is a sacred trust inherited from the pioneers, let us never cease our efforts to preserve it.”

A representative of the Preservation Alliance, immediate past president Linda Glasgow, spoke on behalf of the organization on April 21st before the Manhattan City Commission during deliberations on a replacement for City Park's pool. She asked that the citizens who pioneered this community not be forgotten and that the Pioneer Log Cabin be protected by providing it with enough room for its aesthetic enjoyment and with proper drainage to ensure its preservation.

Two other Alliance members also addressed the Commission. Cheryl Collins, Riley County Historical Museum director, spoke on behalf of the

Riley County Historical Society and the Museum. Alliance board member and treasurer Barbara Poresky, who had not planned to speak, pointed out that the Log Cabin could be touched from the replacement pool area's perimeter—too close!

The Log Cabin is a tangible connection to those who went before us and by preserving it they and we will be connected to those who come after us.

The Commission chose to replace the seventy year old 50 meter pool with another 50 meter pool that might, in the future, be covered for year-round use. The pool project will include additional water features with specialized areas designed to enhance the community's enjoyment of City Park. The expanded amenities will cause the pool area's footprint to expand. The question is will the expansion harm the Log Cabin?

Several members of the governing body pledged to protect the Log Cabin going forward.

Normally open every Sunday, 2 to 5 p.m., from April through October, the Log Cabin is experiencing a late start this year due to interrupted electrical service from a downed tree and a park construction project. The cabin will open again as soon as electrical service is restored.

M/RCPA Membership Roster 2008-2009

\$15+ Student Level – Hillary Glasgow, Lance Klein.

\$35+ Maintenance Level – Mary Dean Apel, Charlene Brownson, Marolyn Caldwell, , John & Sydney Carlin, Carol Chalmers, D. Cheryl Collins, Margaret & Kenneth Conrow, Abigail Crouse, Lelah Dushkin, Glee Eggers, Rev. H. Wayne & Beverly Fink, Sara Fisher, Endacott Lighting, Jana Fallin, Janice L. Flanary, Mary Ann Fleming, David & Karen Gustafson, Rod Harms & Stephanie Rolley, Grant Haun, Robin Higham, Corina & Cornelius Hugo, Jean Hulbert, Eileen & Brad Koehn, Robert D. Linder, David & Laurel Littrell, Marilyn McCord, William H. Pallett, Lawrence & Mary H. Pollack, Gerald & Martha Powell, Christopher Renner, Lauren Ritterbush & Family, Doug & Rachelle Routh, Jim Sherow & Bonnie Lynn-Sherow, Susanne Siepl-Coates & Gary Coates, Geri & Todd Simon, Richard & Kimberly Smith, Brenda Spencer, Carolee Stark, Stephen Stover, Julia & Bob Strawn, Joan Strickler, K Taylor, S.G. & J.A. Tilley, Cheryl Walters, Patricia & Ray Weisenburger, Alyn Pennington West, Warren & Georganne White, La Barbara Wigfall, Alvin & Edna Williams, Barbara Withee.

\$100+ Historical Level— Barbara G. Anderson, Mimi Balderson, Bowman Bowman Novick, Inc., Adam Brooks, Diana Chapel, Commerce Bank—Manhattan, Dan & Latane Donelin, David & Kathy Dzewaltowski, Frances Ellis, Gary & Paula Ellis, Chuck & Charlotte Herr, Marjorie Heyne, Pat & Rita Keating, Mark & E. Ann Knackendoffel, John & Cindy LaBarge, Eugene J. Laughlin, Master Landscape (Al Alspach, June Schnittker, Jeff Chaffee), John & Karen McCulloh, McCullough Development, Michael & Judine Mecseri, Brian & Jayme Morris-Hardeman, Marina Pecar-Krstic, Barbara & Ernie Peck, Virginia Quiring, Dan & Mitzi Richards, Tom & Karen Roberts, Mike & Karen Sheffield, George & Julie Strecker, Charles & Marsha Tannehill, Karin Westman & Philip Nel, The Wilson Company, Inc.

\$250+ Preservation Level— Burke & Margery Bayer, Mel & Jan Borst, Mick Charney, Jan Gibbs, Andrew & Rebekah Glasgow, Linda & Larry Glasgow, Susan R. Grier, Jean Hill, Hittle Landscape Architects, Debbie Nuss, Pat O'Brien, Mr. & Mrs. Perry C. Peine, Barbara Poresky, Gwyn & Gina Riffel, Steve & Debbie Saroff, Steve & Whitney Short, Ron & Dixie West, Gary & Sharon Younger.

\$500+ Landmark Level— John & Sheri Adams.

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MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

ANNUAL (2008-2009) MEMBERSHIP ACCEPTANCE

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☐ \$35+ MAINTENANCE
☐ \$100+ HISTORICAL
☐ \$250+ PRESERVATION
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Photo Courtesy of the Carolyn Hoerner Witt Collection

Where is this house?

Historic photos offer a wealth of valuable information to preservationists. The foreground of this image shows Elenora Strong and her beloved horse, Dandy, circa 1910. It is believed the house in the background was located in Manhattan. Does this house still exist and where is it located? Please contact us via email at info@preservemanhattan.org with any information.