
P MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY, KANSAS RESERVATION ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2006

A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT, BONNIE LYNN-SHEROW

Dear Friends of Preservation,

This is my last newsletter as President of the Alliance and I want to thank everyone who helped make this past year so memorable. As we head into fall with a new slate of board members and officers, I thought it would be nice to re-cap the accomplishments of the Alliance members since our last annual meeting.

Some of the really important accomplishments of 2005-06 were the work of individual Alliance members who stepped up to the plate when needed.

For example, the Community Building, a city landmark, was added to the National Register of Historic Places and the Alliance was on hand to support that nomination with letters, phone calls and our presence at city commission meetings—long into the night.

Similarly, the Alliance opposed the construction of an enormous aquatic/recreational center in Manhattan's historic City Park. In addition to sending letters to the Commissioners, members attended community, Park Board, and Commission meetings to make it plain that the City should not neglect its responsibility to maintain our cultural resources. The result was that City Park has been spared from over-development and will get a new face-lift to enhance, rather than destroy, its historic features.

The new year, 2006, also brought new opportunities for the Alliance to increase its public presence by sponsoring, along with Downtown Manhattan Inc. (DMI), a presentation by representatives of Emporia's Main Street Program.

Emporia received a national Great American Main Street award in 2005 by stressing historic preservation's positive role in downtown economic development. For every public dollar spent on the restoration of Emporia's historic Granada Theater, the program generated \$33 in private money.

The possibility that Manhattan's downtown could be similarly energized was a message our own city commission, planning board, and citizens needed to hear, and, because of our sponsorship, they did! DMI and the Alliance are natural partners in preservation and this was a great first step in cementing that relationship.

To continue as an effective voice for preservation, it was noted by everyone that we desperately needed additional members. Thanks to Debbie Saroff, Jean Hill, Dixie West and Judine Mecseri, our membership committee, we had the most successful membership drive in the history of the organization.

The committee brought a fresh new perspective to the board, got us ramped up to play with the big boys, and organized the most enjoyable

party—the preview party at the depot—that I've attended in a long time! We are all grateful for the results of the committee's efforts.

We have made other changes to our structure to allow for more board members from a broader membership base.

Andy Glasgow was another ace-in-the-hole for our organization. He graciously took up the task of designing and maintaining a web site for the organization. It is difficult to overstate how important this was for the Alliance as we progress to the next level.

Jim Sherow and Michael Mecseri met with an officer at Central National Bank about financing our next project. The officer had checked out our credentials by looking us up on the web and reading our newsletters. He was impressed, as well he should be.

Of course the highlight of the year was the Depot Dedication. I'm still feeling warm and tingly about that, remembering the teamwork and coordination it took to pull it off.

The aftershocks are still in the air even as I write this. Jim is getting calls left and right to reprise his role as Teddy but has so far resisted the temptation to become a professional presidential impersonator. Certainly the whole event was a major success and put the Alliance into the spotlight like nothing else has.

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A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

And just like us, we didn't consider our work complete with the official opening of the depot. We pursued a Caroline Peine Foundation grant for interior furnishings, window coverings, and audio visual equipment. And guess what?!! We got it!!

The Peine Foundation, matched by \$6000 from the Alliance, has granted us \$24,814.71 which will make the depot a state-of-the-art facility. It was our status as a 501 (C) 3 organization that allowed us to compete for this grant.

We will continue to work towards depot enhancements and we are forming a permanent committee to watch over the depot's use and main-

tenance and to advocate for this important cultural resource.

So what is next for the Alliance? There is never a shortage of things we could or should be doing. I asked the group to start thinking about this back in December of 2005 and positive discussions have ensued ever since.

Certainly everyone wants to continue our preservation awards and that will happen this fall. The Marlatt Homestead register nomination is going forward this October and will need our support. Groundwork is still being laid on gaining possession of 617 Colorado with an eye to doing a very public restoration (yes

folks, we ARE getting closer), and I suspect that with a newly expanded board, other projects will come up for consideration in the very near future.

What are your thoughts? What are your dreams? What do you want Manhattan to look like in 10 years, in 20 years?

Bring your energy and your ideas with you to our annual membership meeting in September and we will all go forward together with the confidence that comes with knowing we can do just about anything we set our minds to.

Thanks for a banner year!

Bonnie

A Report from the Nominating Committee

Judine Mecseri ~ Debbie Saroff ~ Dixie West ~ Jean Hill

The nominating committee, in consultation with the president and board of directors, has decided to increase the number of directors for the future. This expansion will provide the number of working board members that we need to staff the various committees of the organization.

The Board of Directors voted to change the organization's by-laws at the August meeting. In the past directors were required to have been members of the organization for at least one year. The new requirement is that they be "members in good standing."

The annual meeting will take place on Thursday, September 14, 2006, at 7:30 p.m. at the Union Pacific Depot. All members are urged to attend. The treasurer will accept dues payments for the 2006-2007 membership year. See page 5 of this newsletter for additional dues information. Many members have already paid their dues to September of 2007 as a part of this spring's special membership drive.

A slate of directors will be offered for the consideration of the membership. Nominations may also be made from the floor. After the members have chosen their directors, the officers will be chosen.

Business will be conducted after the elections. The meeting will conclude with refreshments and social time.

Liz Harmon, program committee chair, is in charge of organizing the refreshments. Please call her at 913-909-2589 if you would like to provide a finger food dessert for this event.



July 13, 2006, Board Meeting at the Depot

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Annual Meeting
September 14th at the depot
7:30 p.m.

October Meeting
Date and Place to be announced
7:30 p.m.

Preservation Awards
October 19th at the public library
7:00 p.m.

On the web: www.preservemanhattan.org

Contact us: info@preservemanhattan.org

The Legacy of Caroline F. Peine

Born to Arthur F. and Josephine C. Peine in 1925, Caroline F. Peine was shaped by her childhood in Manhattan, her educational experiences at Carleton College in Minnesota, and her employment in the insurance business in Wausau, Wisconsin.

She eventually returned to Manhattan and served for many years as the assistant dean of students at Kansas State University. She remained a resident of Manhattan in her retirement until her death in 2004.

Ms. Peine implemented her desire to benefit the community by planning The Manhattan Fund. Her trust designates a five-person grants committee

which is charged to consider the social, cultural, recreational, and historic needs of the City of Manhattan, the community of Keats, and the Konza Prairie.

In 2005, the first year of The Manhattan Fund, a total of \$182,648 was disbursed to eight community recipients. Grant requests far outnumbered the funds available.

The Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance, Inc. submitted a funding request in 2006 that was granted. The M/RCPA will provide \$6,000 in matching funds. As a result of the grant plus the match, the Manhattan Parks and Recreation Depart-

ment will be reimbursed for the roughly \$23,000 it spent to furnish the depot. In addition, a high definition television, DVD player, and other audio-visual enhancements will be provided for the depot along with room-darkening shades to facilitate viewing.

Our community has been given a perpetual gift by a person of remarkable character who is no longer available for us to thank personally.

Therefore we express our thanks to Caroline Peine in our remembrance of her as an independent woman and in our respect for her vision for the community. Caroline wanted the best for her community, as do we.

Honoring Veterans

The Flint Hills Veterans Coalition will honor war veterans who departed from and returned to the community through Manhattan's Union Pacific depot. A permanent plaque in the depot's vestibule will be unveiled during a ceremony that will take place on Thursday, November 9th, at 2:00 p.m. The public is invited to attend. Honored veterans are asked to wear their military uniforms. Additional information can be obtained by contacting Lowell Jack at 785-539-4072.



The Riley County Historical Society's quarterly dinner meeting at the Union Pacific depot on July 11th, 2006 featured Jim Sherow & Michael Mecseri of the Preservation Alliance who detailed the history of the depot and the process of its rehabilitation.

2006

Preservation Awards

Mark your calendar for Thursday, October 19th, 7:00 p.m., at the Public Library. The M/RCPA will once again host an evening of awards that honor the outstanding buildings, architects, contractors, and owners who have enhanced our community with their projects. Refreshments and social time will follow. If you would like to nominate a building project, contact Liz Harmon at 913-909-2589 or at mrcpanewletter@gmail.com.

These traditional homes, along with many others, are scheduled to be razed for north end redevelopment.



Yesterday and Today

612 Houston

608 Houston

600 Houston



The Riley County Historical Society

A Panoramic View of Houses on "Cut Glass Avenue" Early in the Twentieth Century

Manhattan's Houston Street was once called "Cut Glass Avenue" in reference to the many fine homes that lined the street. This part of Houston Street was paved in 1910, even before Poyntz Avenue downtown. The neighborhood's distinctive limestone curbing has been retained into the present.

The historic photograph above shows the houses at 612, 608, and 600 Houston as they stood in the early part of the Twentieth Century.

Although eligible for placement on The National Register, the historic house at 612 Houston was moved in 1995 for Public Library parking lot expansion.

The house at 608 Houston, built in 1897 and known as the "E.A. & Ura Wharton House," was placed on the National Register in 1995.

The house at 600 Houston that appears in the historic photo was moved to the north half of its lot (facing South Sixth Street) by its new owner prior to construction in 1928 of the current house with the 600 Houston address. Today's house at the 600 Houston address, known as the "Mattie M. Elliot House" once served as the Episcopal Church's parsonage. It was placed on the National Register in 1995.



The Riley County Historical Society

Houston Street Looking East



608 Houston



Once 600 Houston, now 114 South Sixth



600 Houston



The historic house at 2300 Claflin Road, known as the "Wells-Aberle House," was owned by the Delta Upsilon Fraternity, whose chapter house is located across the parking lot to the north.

The fraternity had turned the once useful house into an eyesore. The yard

was littered with trash and paint had been poured on the porch and down into the yard.

Despite its sad appearance the house was determined by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to be a contributing structure to the environs of the Goodnow House Museum, a National Register property and State Historic Site.

Local attorney Joe Knopp argued on behalf of the owners that there was no reasonable or prudent alternative to demolition.

Although the SHPO and the Riley County Historical Museum recommended that the house be retained, the Manhattan city commission voted to issue a demolition permit. Demolition took place this summer.



Sad farewell to the Wells-Aberle House

In Memoriam—816, 810, 808, 804 Moro



816 Moro



810 Moro



808 Moro



804 Moro

The eight-hundred block of Moro Street has lost three modest houses and one substantial house for a large architect-designed townhouse project. All of the houses were in sad condition due to lack of maintenance. The loss of 804 Moro, a gracious stone residence built in 1903 that sat on two lots, was particularly heartbreaking. The owners of the stone house believed the structure to be beyond redemption, an opinion not shared by members of the Preservation Alliance who have had experience in successfully rescuing and restoring houses in far worse condition.

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE, INC.

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Liz Harmon, our program committee chair, is calling for volunteers to provide finger food dessert items for our annual meeting on September 14th, 2006. If you are able to help, please call Liz on her cell phone at 913-909-2589. Thank you!

M/RCPA
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