



Marshall, Missouri

Claudia, Kitty and Chris

9 May 2010

Claudia Peterson (left) and Chris Nelson (right) pose with their mother Kathleen "Kitty" Nelson in 2010. Claudia and Chris now run Kitty's Corner, which Kitty had developed with her husband, Tim. (Contributed image)

They sat on the front porch of a cottage laughing, trading stories about what it's like to work with each other.

For brother and sister Chris Nelson and Claudia Peterson, running several guest cottages was not what they had imagined for themselves when they were Marshall high schoolers. But decades later, after inheriting their mother's legacy, it's become a hobby and business fitting to them both.

"It was pretty much a fresh start," Nelson said. "We inherited Kitty's Corner" and have been learning along the way.

Kitty's Corner -- a grouping of guest homes and cottages in Marshall's historic North Street neighborhood -- started off with Kathleen and Tim Nelson's purchase of her mother's house. The two began with the Bell Street Guest House, and a purpose developed from there.

"It worked pretty well," Nelson said. "They liked entertaining. A good segment of Marshall that moved here ... stayed at Kitty's Corner before they found what house they were going to stay in."

This two-story home boasts a guest suite on each floor. This is just one of the Kitty's Corner properties located on North Street in Marshall.
(Sarah Reed/Democrat-News)



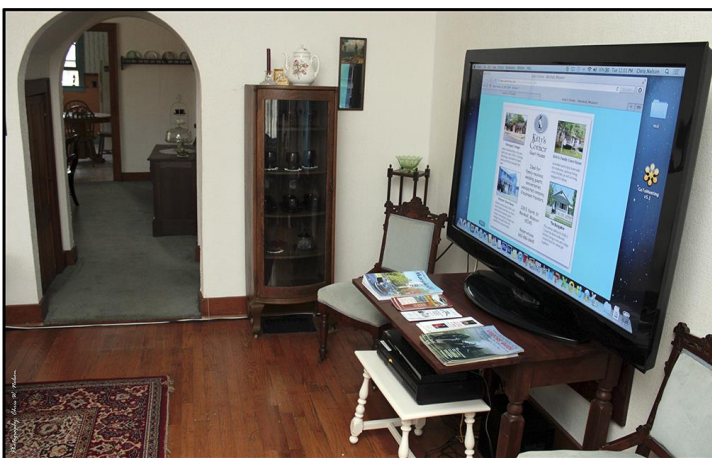
The couple had initially planned to go into antiques, much like their friends Bill and Cora Lee Miller, who operated one of the first antique stores in Arrow Rock. Operating a B&B, though, proved to suit

them like a well-placed stained glass window, offering details and colors that change with light of the day.

The operation grew in later years when several historic homes were at risk of demolition for parking lot space. Kitty and Tim took on the task of purchasing the structures and paved a way to keep them functioning and their history alive. Now, Kitty's Corner also includes an additional house, a cottage with two guest suites and a bungalow.

"Kitty's Corner is a very providential event," Nelson said. "It's here. It's established."

Nelson and Peterson began to oversee the properties after their mother passed away Aug. 8, 2011. It was a transition that was stitched nearly as neatly as the draperies hanging in the picture windows. Nelson now acts as an on-site manager while Peterson typically stays behind the scenes.



Marshall, Missouri Kitty's Corner Reception Area 25 September 2012

A reception area in one of the Kitty's Corner guest homes offers a 65-inch television monitor. The suites are available for workshops and meetings in addition to area guests. (Photo courtesy of Chris Nelson)

"She has mom's eyes for things that I appreciate more all the time," Nelson said of his sister while she comments on changing the pillows that adorn the porch seating.

Each of the houses holds a unique charm that provides a sense of home for their guests. Woven rugs warm up the original wooden floors, guests get a glimpse of fully functioning kitchens through arched doorways and furnishings speak to the relaxing nature of the homes.

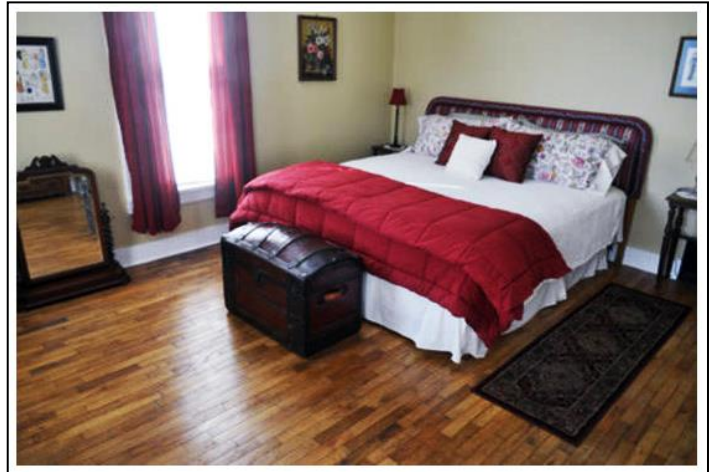
Rather than a hotel stay, guests have the privilege of living in a home. They take advantage of the porches, barbecue and can enjoy intricately blooming gardens.

"You're not staying in a hotel, for the same amount of money," Peterson said. "It's like you actually get to go home. That's the neat part. That's my idea ... to make it feel like when you walk in the door you're home. And people feel that way."

Peterson's own experience of restoring a Victorian home on the same street has lent itself to her work at Kitty's Corner. She and her husband purchased the house at auction and have been restoring it for more than a year. This week, a witch's hat will be constructed on top of a second floor sunroom.

"I enjoy working hard, so (Kitty's Corner is) actually a good thing for me," she continued. "I'm always thinking what mom would want. What would her picture have been of this?"

Kitty's Corner offers comfortable accommodations and up-to-date amenities surrounded by design that nods to North Street's history. (Sarah Reed/Democrat-News)



The brother and sister duo have their own ideas about the guesthouses, which primarily involve the future of Kitty's Corner. Currently, one of the homes hosts monthly meetings for area organizations, such as several Bob James Jazz Festival meetings. The organization is also partnering with neighboring churches and businesses to provide short and long-term service, as well as providing workshop space.

Those endeavors are part of a vision to accommodate visitors to the region. Kitty's Corner is a member of Marshall Chamber of Commerce and participates with the Old Trails Regional Tourism Partnership.

Those familiar with a B&B stay may enjoy the privacy of renting a guest cottage, still knowing they have current amenities and freshly baked goods. Those who've not experienced it may be surprised to learn they don't have to share a living space with strangers.

For Nelson, Kitty's Corner exhibits the essence of what a charming, small town is: inviting, friendly and relaxing.

"For me, it's contemplative," he said. "You can sit (on the porch) for half an hour, and it's amazing what happens. (From running) into somebody you haven't seen since the first grade" to noticing what others in the community are doing around you."

The homes complement the rest of North Street, reaching back toward the culture of the 1800s. They seem to have become more than neighboring properties. They share stories like siblings. And that's something none of the Nelson family may have anticipated -- it's a feeling that develops over time, through careful work at the hands of two generations.

Nelson and Peterson walk through the houses, touching trinkets and reminiscing about pieces in the home -- a cradle, a child-sized bed and claw foot bathtubs. They've taken the reins carefully in their hands, and they've done it with enthusiasm to preserve, not only history, but family history.

"We've been keeping really on track with what (our mom's) vision was," Peterson continued. "There's just so much to this place."

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