



COLONIAL FOX THEATRE FOUNDATION

Green Room Newsletter

Summer 2008 - Volume 2, Issue 2

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A NEW HAT FOR THE GRAND OLD LADY

by Scott Sims

The Colonial Fox Theatre Foundation was recently awarded a \$90,000 Heritage Trust Fund Grant that will help give the grand old lady a brand new hat.

The Kansas State Historical Society selected twenty-two projects in Kansas out of sixty-five eligible applicants to receive grants this year. Of the more than \$1.2 million in

grant monies awarded in 2008, only five received the \$90,000 maximum. "It's so highly competitive," CFTF president Vonnie Corsini said in a *Morning Sun* article. "I was confident, but I also knew that organizations almost never get this grant on their first try. The fact that we were funded the full amount was amazing." The grant money will be distributed in July. The CFTF plans to use the funds to help replace the roof and stabilize two of the exterior walls at an estimated cost of \$125,000. For more information about the Kansas State Historical Society or the Heritage Trust Fund Grant, visit: www.kshs.org.

Four other projects will receive the maximum of \$90,000 Heritage Trust Fund Grants in 2008.

**Anderson County Courthouse
 Atchison County Memorial Hall
 Lincoln School in Atchison
 Topeka High School**

Grants will be given to the recipients in July.

Second Sunday Theatre Tours Begin

by Scott Sims

Pittsburg held its annual Spring Art Walk on April 25 and the Colonial Fox Theatre Foundation (CFTF) used the event to kick off regular tours of the grand old lady.

The event gave Colonial Fox Theatre (CFT) volunteers a chance to get ready for what have become regular tours on the second Sunday of every month.

The Second Sunday Theatre Tours officially began on May 11, Mother's Day.

CFT volunteer Kevin Bolte said, "After they have taken the tour, they seem to be pretty excited about it [the theatre]," he said. "People get excited just waiting in the lobby to take the tour because they can see some of the original ceiling that has been uncovered, and we talk about what it might have looked like when it first opened. Once they go inside, then the memories start coming back and even if they are not from around here, the theatre triggers memories of an old theatre from their hometown."

Along with the Second Sunday Theatre Tours, the CFTF is holding cleanup days every second Saturday to prepare the building for the tours. Anyone who is interested in helping during monthly cleanup days is welcome. Working the cleanup days gives volunteers a chance to see parts of the theatre that are not on the

regular tour. "The Second Sunday Theatre Tours, and especially the second Saturday cleanup days, are great because it allows the public to get into the theatre and maybe see something they didn't know was there," Bolte said.

The next Second Sunday Theatre Tour of the Colonial Fox is August 10th, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., and the next cleanup day is scheduled for August 9th.

For more information about the tours or cleanup days, contact the CFT office or go www.colonialfoxtheatre.org.



Pat Jones explains the history of the Colonial Fox Theatre during the Art Walk, April 25. The CFTF now offers theatre tours from 2-4 p.m. on the second Sunday of each month.

A note from:

Gina Pinamonti

Board Member, Colonial Fox Theatre Foundation

Until the Colonial Fox Theatre Foundation organized to save the theatre, the property was a source of embarrassment and disappointment to the downtown area. It is at the very center of our downtown, but we who once enjoyed its entertainment were watching it slowly deteriorate.

I am a lifelong resident of Pittsburg, and I have many wonderful memories of attending the theatre as a child. I returned to Pittsburg after dental school to practice orthodontics, and I look forward to enjoying the experience of attending the Colonial Fox again. I have great hopes and expectations for this lovely landmark. Most of all, I want to enjoy classic movies and children's theatre with my three young daughters. I hope to have dental meetings in the facility and go on dates with my husband to the theatre. With your support, I believe these dreams can become a reality.

Earlier attempts to restore the theatre failed, but this Foundation has taken the task of restoration planning and commitment to a different level. Through a community survey, the Foundation received the strong backing of local citizens, and it has heeded their mandate



to raise the theatre from the ashes to restore it to its rightful place as the center of community life. Directed by a competent Board of Trustees and Executive Committee,

the Foundation also sought advice and information from a restoration architect. This input has provided the Foundation with the information needed to seek grant funding and complete the restoration professionally.

The community's hard work and dedication caught the attention of the Pritchett Trust, the Heritage Trust Fund, and the Kansas Arts Council. These prominent funding bodies recognize the merit of the project and have had the confidence to award money toward the restoration.

For the Colonial Fox Theatre project to be completed at the level of sophistication Pittsburg demands, we still need to raise

a great deal of money. We are seeking the financial support of the Timmons Foundation, The City of Pittsburg Façade Grant program, and the Crawford County Historical Fund, as well as many private donors

Most importantly, we seek the sustaining support for the Foundation from you, the community at large. Your patronage will make the Colonial Fox Theatre the spark of rejuvenation for Pittsburg's downtown, and I am confident that we will find the funding needed to complete this important task. However, you are the lifeblood of the project. Through your donations, you will not simply fund the one-time cost of bricks and mortar; you will help sustain the ongoing daily life of the theater. Your assistance will keep the spirit of the Colonial Fox Theatre alive for generations of Pittsburg citizens to enjoy.

Through your input, your presence at tours of the building, and through sharing your memories of our beloved old theatre, you have already shown that you understand the importance of this project. I invite you now to join me as a sustaining member of the Colonial Fox Theatre Foundation.

INSPIRING A VISION FOR THE CFTF

Trustees visit the Gillioz Theatre in Springfield, Missouri

by Talaat and Marie Yagmour

The Colonial Fox Theatre trustees' visit to the Gillioz Theater was a treat and a great learning experience. The Gillioz is amazing. As soon as we entered, we were struck by the beauty and magnificence of the place. It was like stepping back into time. One could almost hear the hustle and bustle of opening night and imagine the people all dressed up, coming to attend a concert or watch a play.

The Gillioz is a great facility because it combines the opulence of the past with the efficiency and practicality of our modern time. Its many uses make it a wonderful asset for the community. We could not help thinking that Pittsburg could duplicate such a project with our own Colonial Fox Theatre.

Preservation and renovation is what

is needed to restore the Colonial Fox to its memorable past. As proud citizens of Pittsburg, we feel compelled to follow the example of the Gillioz Theatre project.

We do appreciate all the efforts and time spent to set the restoration of the Colonial Fox in motion, and feel that all of us need to stand behind it as part of our stewardship to our proud Pittsburg community.

The past can inspire the present and help build a future – that's what a community needs to remain strong. Wonderful examples in Pittsburg are the Stillwell Hotel, Immigrant Park, and Miners Memorial, which are all dreams come true. Now we have the opportunity to realize another dream by restoring the jewel of the Colonial Fox Theatre as the crown of Pittsburg.



Student Filmmakers Inspired by the Restoration Project

by Scott Sims

Pittsburg State University students Michael Admire and Gabe Mader, both television and broadcasting freshmen, decided to make a film about the Colonial Fox Restoration as a final project for their documentary film class. "Neither one of us knew much about the theatre," Admire said. "We thought it would be kind of interesting and decided to go check it out. Once we started talking to Vonnie and the crew, we knew that this was something we wanted to be part of."

They started filming the twenty-minute documentary in March. The project was not exactly what Admire said the pair was expecting. "We were really taken back by how much work goes into making it [a documentary]," he said. "But it was

definitely worth it." Admire said getting to meet the people involved with the Colonial Fox Theatre restoration project was the best part of the experience.

"It is always cool to get in and talk to people that do things you wouldn't normally know about," he said. "It is fun to find the story and getting to tell the story. It was great to have the opportunity to tell the story about a great foundation and the people involved. It has been rewarding for me."

In the last few months, the students have learned what the Colonial Fox Foundation has gone through to get the project off the ground, learned about the changes in the theatre in the eighty-eight years of the building's existence and, more

importantly to Admire, what the building could be in the future. "As a freshman at Pitt State, I want it to be completed before I graduate," Admire said. "I want to be able to see the first show that is in there."

I really hope people do get involved with the theatre," Admire added, "because it can become so much. It could really be something, but without people helping it's not going to happen."

Admire said he hopes to continue making documentaries. The project has even inspired him to volunteer. "If it takes putting on the hard hat and getting in there, I'll do whatever I need to do to help get the theatre finished," he said. "I have a new-found respect for the theatre."

Thank You!

The CFTF would like to thank everyone who helped to make the 88 Candles Birthday Bash on April 5 such a success. Approximately 300 people attended the celebration and, while the purpose of this event was not primarily fundraising, over \$2,000 was received. The birthday cake contest added to the festivities as attendees marveled at each of the creations prior to casting their ballots.

Volunteer help made the evening special.

Special thanks to all of the sponsors and to Shane Duling and the 11:11 Band for a great concert!

The CFTF is planning several events this year, including more tours, cleanup days, and another celebration this fall. Stay tuned to the CFTF newsletter, Web site, and marquee for updates. To see more photos from the 88 Candles Birthday Bash, visit www.colonialfoxtheatre.org.



CAKE CONTEST PARTICIPANTS

Professional Division

Sweet Designs Cakery: *Most Creative! & Best Decoration!*

Sweet Greens Coffee Shop: *Taste Test Winner!*

Celebrations by Lori

Just Desserts Café

Wendi Piccini

Ron's IGA

Amateur Division

Stephen Sealey: *Best Decoration!*

Wendy Strukel: *Most Creative!*

Joann Triplett: *Taste Test Winner!*

Berna Bolte

Thanks also to Kim Verga and Lesia McLeod for providing additional cakes for the party!





FOX

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Proscenium

Pro-SEE-nee-um

The term *proscenium*, as used today, developed from the Greek *proskenion* (front of the building forming the background for a dramatic performance). At first it referred to a row of columns supporting a raised platform, but in time it came to include the entire acting area which was separated from the audience area by a proscenium arch.

A Parma, Italy, theatre (1618) was the first to install a “modern” proscenium; that is, a stage area framed by an arch which enhanced the viewer’s perception of secretly viewing the lives of others.

The opening through the proscenium arch was immensely important to 19th century playwrights such as Henrik Ibsen, who wished to create an imaginary fourth wall, giving the audience the illusion of spying on characters who were behaving as if they were unobserved.

As theatres in the round became popular during the 20th century the use of the proscenium arch in theatre architecture became rare. The term is used today to describe, loosely, any theatre space in which the audience faces the stage directly, as they do in our Colonial Fox Theatre. We are fortunate in preserving not only our theatre building, but also an ancient architectural idea in the form of our elegant proscenium.

*T*he mission of the Colonial Fox Theatre Foundation is to enhance and encourage the spirit of the Pittsburg area through the preservation and utilization of the Colonial Fox Theatre.