



COLONIAL FOX THEATRE FOUNDATION

Green Room Newsletter

Fall 2008 - Volume 2, Issue 3

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FESTIVAL CELEBRATES ARTS & FILM

by Scott Sims

Two big movies at two successful events have given the Colonial Fox Theatre Foundation something to applaud.



High School students Andrew Moore, Gabby Murnan and Megan Peters create chalk drawings during the Festival on Broadway in the Old Armory.

The Foundation hosted its first Festival on Broadway, on September 12. The festivities were moved from the parking lot outside the Grand Old Lady to the old National Guard Armory due to rainy weather but the rain didn't keep members of the community away.

Approximately five hundred children and adults made the Festival on Broadway an astounding success. Activities ran from 4:00 p.m. to past midnight with over a hundred children participating at the Kids' Fair which included a football toss, a "fishing pond," spin art, and an inflatable jumper. Throughout the fair kids munched on popcorn, snow cones, and cotton candy. A sidewalk chalk-drawing

contest was one of the earlier features of the festival, which drew teams of artists from several area schools.

Francesca Murnan, one of the winning team members, commented, "We enjoy the Colonial Fox Theatre project and we want to see it renovated and restored, we want to help promote it. It is very exciting." Gabrielle Murnan and Megan Peters were the other two members of the team with Megan noting, "I think it is important for the community to get involved in activities that are going on. These kinds of events inspire community spirit."

After the Kids' Fair, many enjoyed the polkas and waltzes of the Johnnie Zibert Band, the bluegrass tunes of Fresh Grass

see **FESTIVAL** pg 3

Visioning Sessions Predict Positive Future for City

by Scott Sims

In mid-October, local residents and business leaders came together to participate in a visioning session for the Colonial Fox Theatre. These local "stakeholders" were asked questions as to what the vision of the Colonial Fox should be.

Andrea Springer, Springer Coaching and Consultants, Hutchinson, facilitated the session by involving the participants in the following discussion points:

- What are the good things about Pittsburg?
- What things about Pittsburg should be changed or improved?
- Imagine this day five years in the future: Pittsburg's success story appears in a national magazine. As a group, outline the details of the article, including the description of principal accomplishments, community impact, and community leadership.

- Based on what you know about the Colonial Fox, what part could the theatre play in helping to accomplish the vision outlined in the previous exercise? What resources will be needed to realize this vision? What relationships may be important for the vision to develop and be nurtured? What other ideas and issues should be considered?

Diverse as the attendees were and although the sessions were held on different days, the concerns and the conclusions of both groups had a common ring. Both groups concluded that:

- Pittsburg is a good place to live.
- The community has great support systems.
- Citizens possess deep pride in the heritage of the area.
- The Colonial Fox could be a neutral gathering place for the community.

see **VISION** pg 2

A note from:

Vonnie Corsini, President

Ubuntu (Oo-boonn'-tu)

"I Am Because You Are"

My great honor this summer was to represent the Colonial Fox Theatre Foundation at the 32nd Annual Conference of the League of Historic American Theatres in Atlanta, Georgia. What an amazing experience! Amazing because I, at once, realized that the hundreds of historic theatre managers, consultants, and vendors were all in attendance to help one another preserve some of our most treasured memories – those hours spent in a theatre.

A variety of informative workshops and lectures were offered including:

- *Generational Marketing*
- *The Envelope Please (who knew that "the envelope" meant the exterior walls and roofs?)*
- *Energy Strategies for the Historic Theatre*
- *Creative Local Programming*
- *Fundraising in Today's Economy*

The keynote speaker introduced us to the Zulu word, *ubuntu*, to illustrate the potential that art institutions, like the Colonial Fox Theatre, have for making a profound difference in the life of a community. He challenged us to erase the word "outreach" from our vocabularies and to



replace it with "engage" as outreach implies a separation between those who are able to provide and those who are in need while engage implies an invitation to work toward mutual goals.

Ubuntu translates, roughly, as humanity or human-ness. It is more a way of being: A person is a person by people. It means that we cannot hope to reach our full potential until we all have the opportunity to do so. It means asking the question: Who is my neighbor and how can my neighbor and I engage in this journey to success? It means partnering with our neighborhoods and communities in ways that meet all of our needs so, together, we can reach our full potential.

Possibly, the most informative part of the conference was the time spent networking with the several hundred attendees while touring historic theatres in and around Atlanta. I visited with theatre managers who enjoy a unique partnership in their communities. They described historic districts that are keenly involved with both their city management and institutions of higher education. Leaders in each of these areas have discovered the financial (not to mention social) gain by fulfilling their space needs through the restoration and utilization of local historic structures rather than building anew. This appreciative world view of existing resources nurtures a collaborative spirit which weaves a thread of social pride throughout the community.

My goal for our community and the Colonial Fox Theatre Foundation is *Ubuntu*.

VISION from front page

- *The Colonial Fox Theatre is a leader for a revitalized downtown.*

Concerns shared by both groups were:

- *the dilapidation of neglected properties*
- *the need for incorporation of green technology in city and business planning*
- *the lack of a central communication source regarding local entertainment*
- *the migration from the city proper to the county*

The participants were asked to imagine a future Pittsburg and what they envisioned a reopened Colonial Fox could do to help the town grow and attract new businesses and residents. One of the groups wrote a mock press release for October 14, 2013, that summarized the general thoughts of all the participants:

"Beginning with downtown revitalization and the development of Immigrant Park, Pittsburg began to grow – adding the Colonial Fox Theatre, downtown apartments and parking. Small businesses like the Little Room Art Center and a variety of computer cafés are

flourishing. Moving outward from the downtown, the city began to eliminate rental slum properties through strict code enforcement. Many of the unsightly structures were removed, opening up community green spaces. Walking and bike paths were expanded throughout the city. This flourishing cultural and "green" community began attracting a variety of technical and Internet industries, including plastics, engineering, and construction as well as a variety of businesses that need only the Internet for successes."

The Colonial Fox Theatre Foundation



Andrea Springer records suggestions from participants during a visioning session for the Colonial Fox Theatre. Local residents were asked to think about what goals they would like to see the theatre achieve in the next five years and how those goals would impact the community.

will use information gathered from these sessions in their strategic planning for the theatre's future. The sessions were made possible through a grant from Kansas Arts Commission.

FESTIVAL from front page

and the award-winning talents of Shane Duling and the 11:11 Band.

As midnight approached, anticipation of giant red lips drew more and more people into the Armory until nearly 300 (many in costume) joined in the warm-up for the finale of the evening, a showing of *Rocky Horror Picture Show*, by participating in the Time Warp Dance. It was a hoot!



As an extension of that success, and as rain prevented the use of the movie screen that volunteers had painted on the outside wall of the theatre for the Festival, the CFTF held another party in conjunction with Pittsburg's Annual Fall Art Walk. Over a hundred community members participated in theatre tours and the "Give Us A Hand" campaign by donating a dollar to apply their handprints to the north outside wall of the theatre as a show of support.

The culmination of the evening was the special outdoor showing of *Ghostbusters* which was attended by a large audience of happy, hot chocolate-drinking, popcorn-eating children and adults snuggled up in lawn chairs and blankets.

Sixteen-year-old Braden Parsons, who helped prepare for both events by hanging posters and cleaning the parking lot, commented, "It is fun to have a place to go and hang out with friends and to help people. These kinds of things are more important in a small town, to bring neighbors around you."

To those who attended the events and to those who volunteered, we thank you. Special thanks to All Quip Rental, Sherwin Williams Paint, Girard Tarps, Heckert Construction, the Kansas National Guard, and the Kansas Arts Commission.

CFTF RECEIVES GRANTS

The CFTF has received \$7,500 from the Bess Spiva Timmons Foundation which will be used to help restore the east facade of the theatre. This family foundation was established by Mrs. Timmons in 1967, to enable her children and grandchildren to carry on existing programs of assistance in the areas of education, health, medical research, the arts, and others with a special emphasis on minority groups, social services, and ecology.

Also received was a grant of \$1,155 from The Community Foundation of Southeast Kansas which serves the region in the fulfillment of philanthropic goals that benefit the common good and improve the quality of life. This grant will help fund the 2009 CFTF Festival on Broadway.



Tim Spears, trustee of the Bess Spiva Timmons Foundation, hands Vonnie Corsini a \$7,500 grant check during the CFTF's quarterly Trustees meeting on October 14. Spears is the grandson of Bess Spiva Timmons.

Baby, It's Cold Outside!!

And, baby, it's so cold inside our beloved old theatre that further winter-month tours will be suspended until the return of warm weather. Private tours, however, can be arranged, at any time, by calling the theatre office at 235-0622, Monday through Friday from 3:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.

PSU STUDENTS ASSIST CFTF

During the fall 2008 semester three teams of PSU students are assisting the CFTF develop marketing materials that will help generate continued community involvement and increased membership as the Foundation begins Stage 3 of its restoration plans.

The participating students are enrolled in Entertainment Marketing, a special top-

ics course taught by Dr. Linden Dalecki at PSU's Kelce College of Business.

Each of the three student teams will present their marketing materials on Wednesday, December 10, 2008, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in Kelce, Room 224. All members of the CFTF community are encouraged to attend to provide moral support and feedback.

LOOK UP!

A New "Hat" for Our Grand Old Lady!

The next time you are near the theatre, don't forget to look up as MidAmerica Roofing and Heikes Masonry have begun the process of replacing the roof. Weather permitting, the project should take only a couple of months to complete. During this time the south end of the alley, behind the theatre, will be closed.



Community members placed their handprints on the north wall of the theatre during Pittsburg's Annual Fall Art Walk. Each paid \$1 to participate in the CFTF "Give Us A Hand" campaign. (Zack Fields)



FOX

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Theatre Vocabulary **Apron**

An apron -- that lowly and humble article of kitchen wear -- has become a symbol of hospitality and warmth as it welcomes visitors into the center of the home itself.

This is exactly why the stages of Elizabethan England's public theatres were extended into the audience and came to be known as thrust stages or, more commonly, as aprons. This extension, beyond the proscenium arch, was created to diminish the distance between the performer and the audience leaving the main stage as a backdrop to the story being told.

The apron was peculiar to English theatres. It was incorporated into Elizabethan stage design as Shakespeare believed that the story was in the words which should be spoken directly to, and from a point as close, to the audience, as possible; hence, the apron can be seen as a symbol of welcome in the theatre, as in the home, to enter into the center of the play itself.

We are fortunate that our theatre has both a proscenium arch, as noted in the last newsletter, and an apron upon which the performers will one day welcome us back to the Colonial Fox.

*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.