

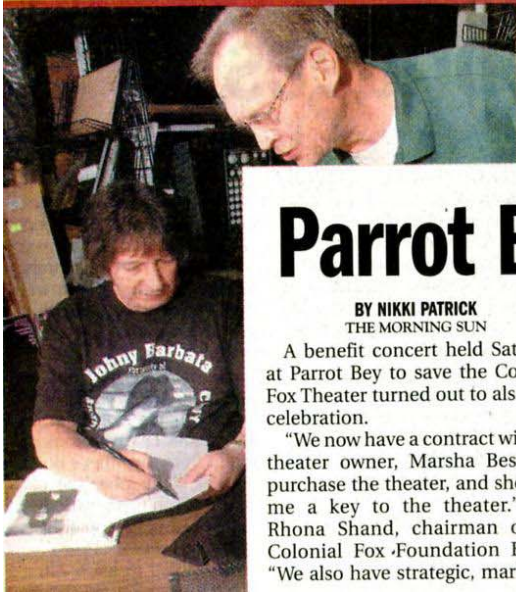


# THE MORNING SUN

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ONE DOLLAR



## PATRICK'S PEOPLE < OLD TIME ROCK 'N' ROLL

A Pittsburg resident looks back to his brush with rock and roll fame.  
PAGE 1C



## WEATHER SPRING WEATHER IS HERE

The forecast calls for partly sunny weather and highs in the 70s, as well as a 20 percent chance of rain and storms. | COMPLETE FORECAST, PAGE 2A

# Parrot Bey holds benefit for Fox Theatre

BY NIKKI PATRICK  
THE MORNING SUN

A benefit concert held Saturday at Parrot Bey to save the Colonial Fox Theater turned out to also be a celebration.

"We now have a contract with the theater owner, Marsha Besse, to purchase the theater, and she gave me a key to the theater," said Rhona Shand, chairman of the Colonial Fox Foundation Board. "We also have strategic, marketing

and business plans. I feel like everything is in place."

She said that she visited with Besse during spring break to work out arrangements, and also learned many interesting things about the theater. "The Fox was the first theater in Pittsburg, and possibly the first in Kansas, to allow African Americans to attend," Shand said. "It was also one of the first theaters in the United States to have stadium seating. That's because

Alexander Besse wanted to be sure that everybody in the theater would have a good view."

The main thing the foundation needs now is money. Approximately \$17,000 is needed to pay back taxes and keep the theater from being auctioned off on April 11. So far, not counting Saturday concert proceeds, about \$4,000 has been raised.

"We are going to be approaching major donors now, and have

already contacted some," Shand said.

Interest is high in saving the theater, according to Heather Horton, who is serving as chairman of public relations and promotion for the foundation. "I had four calls Friday asking about it," she said. "Getting this contract to buy the theater is a major step in the right direction."

Restoring the theater would be a

See FOX | PAGE 8A

## FROM PA

# FOX: Benefit turns to celebration

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

major step in revitalizing downtown Pittsburg, added Vonnie Corsini. "Right now there's nothing, other than bars, to attract people to downtown Pittsburg at night," she said. "Pittsburg State University students from out of town usually go home on the weekends because there's nothing for them to do. We are losing a lot of what could be downtown business with those kids leaving on the weekends."

She sees the Fox as becoming the site for art movies, vintage films and art workshops.

"We could have extended art workshops, running two or three weeks," Horton said.

Featured in the benefit were Lemuel Sheppard,

Pittsburg blues artist, and Frank Wyatt, who moved to Pittsburg in July with wife Suzie Butorac.

"When we visited friends in Pittsburg before, we saw that the Fox was for sale and we thought that would be a good opportunity for somebody to show art films," Butorac said. "I went to the University of Washington, and there were a lot of art houses there. I think the Fox would be a great venue for university students."

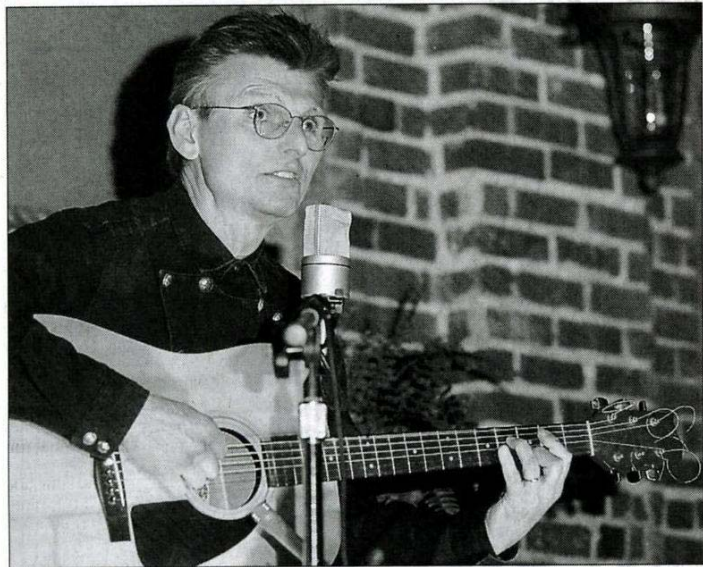
"I feel that performing is the least I can do to help, and I really believe the Fox can enhance the cultural atmosphere of Pittsburg," Sheppard said.

"I hope that this concert will give people a taste of the environment we're trying to save."

"We have been told by our structural engineer that the theater is stable and saving it is very doable," Shand said. "It's really up to the citizens of Pittsburg now."

She said she's very encouraged by the number of people who have become involved in trying to save the Fox. "There are people of all ages and all economic status, and we're glad about this, because we want everybody to have a sense of ownership in the theater," Shand said. "This is Pittsburg's theater, and if we lose it, we lose something we can't get back."

Donations may be sent to the Colonial Fox Foundation, P.O. Box 33, Pittsburg, Kan., 66762. Anyone wishing additional information may call 249-8982 or 620-875-6543.



Frank Wyatt, from Los Angeles, play songs from his CD in Parrot Bey in Pittsburg Saturday. Wyatt who recently relocated to the SEK area was playing for the Colonel Fox fundraiser dinner. KYLE DERODES/ THE MORNING SUN