The Egyptian Theatre Preservation Association Newsletter April—May 2012

The ETPA Wishes You A



What's Been Happening

We're Making Great Progress!!

The City has awarded a contract to Historic Theatre Consultants (HTC) to perform a market/feasibility study for the Egyptian Theatre. This study will help us determine what our community would like us to use the Egyptian Theatre for once it is re-opened, and will provide us information that will be invaluable when it comes to making a convincing case that will encourage grant funding agencies to provide us with the funds we will need. We expect to receive the results of the study in mid June.

The founder of HTC, Herb Stratford, will be doing much of the work himself. Herb is very experienced with restoring and operating historic theaters having successfully restored, re-opened, and run the 1,200 seat historic Fox Theatre in Tucson, AZ. Herb is also on the Board of Directors for the League of Historic American Theaters. The Egyptian Theatre Preservation Association is a member of this group. Herb will be assisted by Mary Bosch, a principal at Marketek, to perform the market analysis for the Egyptian Theatre. Mary does most of her work in Oregon and has assisted both Coos Bay and Coquille in past market analysis projects.

On March 22 Herb, George Kramer (our consultant), Rich Foster (the Managing Partner of Cascadia Consulting our chosen grant writing firm) and Nate Clausen (from the City of Coos Bay) had an opportunity to enter the Egyptian Theatre to perform a quick but thorough inspection of it. Our experts were very, very happy with what they saw. They came away feeling the interior of the Theatre was in great shape and that the City was maintaining it well for us during the closure period. Particularly exciting for us was their unanimous opinion that (1) the Theatre is well worth restoring -- a real gem, and (2) they believe it is possible that restoration could be done in phases and at a lower cost than originally reported. Though these folks have a wealth of historic theatre experience among them (and George has a strong historic building restoration and construction background) they are not licensed structural engineers. Our determining if we can proceed along this path must await our re-analyzing and further developing the design from the original engineering report prepared in early 2011. We are planning to engage a theater experienced structural engineering firm soon after the market/feasibility study is complete. We expect results from the engineering design development work sometime this Fall. We're keeping our fingers crossed -- we sure would like to see the Egyptian open for business once again within a few years and for a lower cost than originally estimated !!!

Grant Funding is On Track

We just received word that the National Historic Trust awarded us a $5,000 grant to cover a portion of the costs we will incur for the market/feasibility study. This is our 4th Theatre restoration project grant award so far -- for a total of $17,696 awarded to cover a portion of the costs we have been incurring for the preliminary work we must perform to get ready for our major capital fundraising campaign. The grants we have received so far have come from the Ford Family Foundation, the Coquille Tribal Community Fund, the Historic Preservation League of Oregon, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. We also received an $11,000 donation from one of our local supporters (who prefers to remain anonymous) to support this early work as well. That's 4 awards for 4 requests - way to go Bob More, our incomparable local grant writer, for these initial grants!

Welcome!

We would like to extend a hearty welcome to Lorry Fitzpatrick, who has agreed to serve as our Board Secretary, and Rachel Henke, who will be serving as the Co-Volunteer Coordinator with Kelly Gallagher. This gives us a local contact person as Kelly now resides in Portland.

Meet Your Board Members

In this issue we are featuring a home-grown talent, Susan Watson, charter Egyptian Board Member, Treasurer, *Golden Charioteer** volunteer, and… big game hunter!

. . . "But soft, what light through yonder window breaks? It is the 'west' and 'Susan' is the sun!" And (with a tweak of the Bard) nothing could be sunnier than Susan's smile when she greets you from behind the concessions stand at the Egyptian Theatre. Coming inside from a cold, dark, and dreary day, suddenly there is light, happiness, warmth and good cheer. The joy Susan radiates to every patron who enters our Theatre is a gift beyond price! All of this even before you step up to buy your popcorn, drink, and Dibs at bargain prices! In her own words, "Oh how I wish I could be behind the concessions stand down at the Egyptian right now, serving up coffee with a choice of special creamers. ... I dream of the day when we can be back inside greeting the public again. That will be such a happy day. All I've ever wanted is to keep the theatre open for the people of our town. I feel so deeply to my very core that we cannot let this special place be lost, and that is what keeps me going still, through all the meetings and all the reports and all the paperwork."
Susan could be found volunteering at the Theatre every weekend and many week days throughout the entire four and a half years that the ETPA ran the Egyptian.



Susan is a native Oregonian, born in Coos Bay and raised on her family's property in Allegany. Her parents moved to Oregon from southern California in 1948, bought property along the banks of the Millicoma River, and raised Easter lily bulbs. They teamed up with John Bergen--one of the better known florists at the time who was raising daffodils across the river--to ship bulbs back east. Susan's dad, Cecil, later worked at the DMV and many readers may recall having received their licenses from him.

A theme of pairing theater and the arts with business training runs consistently through Susan's life story. After attending Marshfield High (Go Pirates!) she received an Art Talent Grant from Marshfield that paid for her first year's college tuition. Subsequent to receiving an Associate degree at SWOCC in Business Technology-Accounting, Susan continued on to earn her Bachelor of Science in Business Administration graduating Cum Laude from Southern Oregon State College in Ashland with a minor in the humanities. Back home in Coos Bay she discovered she had a special aptitude for preparing income taxes which led her to take the exam to become an Oregon Licensed Tax Consultant. Since that time she has made income taxes her specialty and is now in the midst of her 27th tax season. Currently she works for Michael Gordon, CPA (Not Your Basic Bean Counter) where she is a highly valued member of the staff and has been our "go to gal" for all things to do with accounting and business as Treasurer for the ETPA since its inception.

Beyond all this, Susan writes thank you letters that sing from the page! If you have not received a singing thank you from Susan yet… give a little more… it is worth it just for the experience of receiving one of her letters! It has always mattered to Susan to let our members and donors know just how much they are appreciated. To her, the people who love the Egyptian are part of a big family, and that family is our community. This lies at the heart of why Susan took up the banner to save the Theatre in the first place.

And how did we attract such a valuable volunteer? It all started in December 2005 with a very special letter published in the World written by Martha Houghton. Martha's passionate, urgent, direct appeal to all who loved the Egyptian resonated with Susan and she knew she must answer the call to action. Susan's earliest memories of the Theatre came from when her parents took her to see "Gone With the Wind" when she was five or six years old. How grand the main auditorium looked to her! She remembers standing in lines that stretched around the block to see the newest Disney movie, and seeing all of the Star Wars movies there. The Egyptian was such a special place that kids would wait for a glimpse of the marquee every Friday morning to see what movies were playing for the weekend. Pure joy was finding out that your favorite new movie was being shown on the main screen, the best screen in town!

So it was in December of 2005 that Susan, along with a group of concerned citizens, met in the Visitor Center parking lot and marched down the street carrying signs that declared "Save the Egyptian". The march ended out in front of the theatre. It was the day of the annual Christmas Concert, and Lee Littlefield was playing the Mighty Wurlitzer organ to a standing-room-only crowd. Many people feared this would be the organ's final concert. The group

then formed the ETPA with the mission of saving the theatre. That mission is just as alive today as it was almost seven years ago for all of us who care about the Egyptian.

What more can we say about our Susan of the golden smile and gilded pen? Susan is one of 3 ETPA directors who serves on the joint City & ETPA Egyptian Theatre Restoration Steering Committee. She chairs the Community Support Committee of the ETPA which is charged with keeping the Egyptian Theatre in the minds of our community during the period of closure for restoration. This latter committee includes keeping our community informed of progress through vehicles like this newsletter, organizing and sponsoring entertainment events in the name of the ETPA at alternate venues, and keeping the marquee and display cases at the Theatre current and attractive. By the way, if you would like to volunteer to work with this committee, give Susan a call at 541 404-6779 or send her an e-mail at susan@mikegordoncpa.com.



She is also one tough Western woman! When her favorite apple trees were under attack by bears, she drove them off with her .22 rifle blasting, some fancy off-road driving and lots of horn honking… be sure to ask her for more details!

*The designation *Golden Charioteer* is an honor awarded by the Egyptian Theatre Preservation Association to those few members whose devotion, length and quality of service to the Egyptian has been truly exceptional. There are currently six Golden Charioteers whose names and picture will be featured in a plaque at the Theatre.

Calendars now only $12.00

We still have calendars available, so if you have not gotten yours yet, please check out Cone 9 at Pony Village, Fat Cat Antiques in North Bend, Charleytown in Charleston, Oregon Wine Cellars in Coos Bay, Antiques and Collectables of Coos Bay. You can also order one on the website on the Upcoming Events page. If you're out of town we'll mail you one for an additional small shipping and handling fee.



Did You Know? By Helen Doving, ETPA Historian

Although its original use as a garage before the theatre's grand opening in 1925 is well known, you might be surprised to learn that behind that fancy façade, there are still a couple more secrets.

When the horrendous July 23, 1922 fire broke out on Front Street, it consumed the Marshfield City Hall, numerous downtown businesses, and several residences, all located along the waterfront.

At their August meeting, the City Council passed an ordinance to sign a lease with Conje Noble to house the fire department and the police department in his brand new highway garage. The lease was for one year, renewable for one year, at a cost of $100 per month. The fire apparatus occupied one side of the garage with a guaranteed unobstructed way to get out of one of the Broadway exits. The chief's office and firemen facilities were at the rear of the building. A 12'x14' addition was erected on the northwest corner of the structure to accommodate Police Chief Jack Carter's local inmates. It was constructed of concrete blocks and 2'x4' timbers, with all plumbing and fixtures furnished by the city. Windows were barred, with adequate ventilation a prerequisite. All access to the jail was by way of the alley—not through the garage.

Fortunately, the temporary occupants were able to move to quarters in the new city hall in plenty of time for the planned transformation of the garage into the fabulous new Egyptian Theatre on the Oregon Coast and its grand opening in November, 1925.

Multiple ways to Donate

The ETPA is now the proud owner of a brokerage account at Morgan Stanley Smith Barney in our own city of Coos Bay. Anyone with a hankering to donate appreciated stock to the Egyptian Theatre can now do so with ease, thanks to the efforts of the Fundraising and Process Improvements Committees. The ETPA is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, so your donations to this worthy cause are tax deductible! See Susan Watson, Treasurer, for details.

You can contact Susan by leaving a voice message at (541) 404-6779, or sending an e-mail to susan@mikegordoncpa.com.

We're also in the process of setting up a PayPal account for on-line donations. More information on that will be forthcoming. As always, you are welcome to send your checks to the ETPA office at 255 N. Broadway in Coos Bay. Any and all donations are greatly appreciated.

Upcoming Events

April 6th - Wine Walk 5:00PM - 7:00PM

April 7th - 7:00 PM - Movie at the Shark Bites Café -
"On Any Sunday" - by Bruce Brown
$4.00 Members, $5 General Admission

Coming Events continued from page 3

April 21st - 7:00 PM Benefit Concert and Silent Auction will be presented by the Oregon Coast Lab Band. This will be held at the Hales Center on the SWOCC campus. Proceeds will benefit the Lab Band and the Egyptian Theatre. There are lots of great items to bid on in the silent auction. Tickets are $10.00 General Admission, $5.00 for Seniors (65 and older), children 12 and under - Free. See website for more info.

Late May or early June - Poker Tournament
Check the website for more information on this event. www-egyptian-theatre.com

An ETPA Board Member Gets "Snowed"
...and Lives to Tell the Tale!!!! By Susan Watson

On Oregon's south coast, winter is a time for rain. We rarely get snow, so when we were hit by the sudden snow on March 12th and 13th, the storm caught everyone by surprise. That night freezing levels weren't supposed to drop below 1,100 feet in Allegany, where I live, so I was expecting rain the rest of the night. At about 10:35 p.m. big snowflakes started falling outside my house! They were quickly piling up on the ground and I was in a quandary. Knowing what I know now, I should never have gone out in the storm, but all I could think of was that if I stayed put I would be snowed in for a week! I could **not** let that happen with all the tax returns piled up on my desk (I work for a CPA) and all the tasks I had pending for the ETPA! I decided to pack a bag and get out of my driveway and into town before things got too bad. I fully expected to drive out of the snow when I got a few miles down the road. After all it hardly ever snowed in Coos Bay.

No more than 15 minutes later there was already more than an inch piled up on my car, but the tracks of the driveway were still visible so off I went into the night. By the time I got to the main road I felt as if I was driving inside a snow globe. Snow was coming down so fast and thick that I had to alternate between my fog lights and high beams to get a good view of the road. But I just kept thinking that it would get better when I got closer to town, so I pushed on. I crept along slowly, and a couple times the snow let up a little, giving me hope to drive ahead. I made it about 8 or 9 miles (about half way to town) when I met two four-wheel drive pickups coming from the direction of Coos Bay. They slowed up, and the driver of the first truck gave me news about the road ahead that I could hardly believe. He told me that I should turn around and go back because the snow was worse in town!

Now I was starting to get frightened. Not only would I not be driving out of the snow as I had hoped, but I would have to retrace my steps and go through snow that had gotten even deeper on the road behind me! I decided that the safest thing to do was to make it to the Allegany School, several miles back, and get off the road. There was an overhanging roof there that I could drive under. I had a wool blanket and extra clothes with me in the car, so I could bundle up and wait out the storm. My plan would have worked except that the heavy snow was starting to take its toll. I got within a mile of the school and found myself blocked by a tree that had fallen across the road. Now I was really in a pickle! The two trucks that I had met before had driven around the tree. I could see that there was almost a car's width of a gap between the end of the tree and the edge of the road. Thinking I might be able to drive through the gap I pulled my car closer to get a better look, but my tires started to slide. There was now about 4 inches of snow on the road! I hesitated driving forward, because I couldn't tell how large the end of the tree was. It was a myrtle, and its branches and leaves were blocking my view. As I rolled down my window to get a better look I heard trees on the hill right above me start to groan and crack. The snow was getting too heavy! I started to back up, but my wheels slipped again. I was really scared now, but knew I had to move quickly. I sent up a prayer, an inner voice said, "Don't panic." I slowly backed up, turned around and drove out from under the creaking trees.

Now I knew I was stuck for sure. It was definitely not safe to be on the road. I found a place to pull off in an open area that had no trees nearby. There were three houses there and the middle house had some lights on. I had no idea who lived there, but I got out my flashlight and with some misgivings, made my way through the snow and up to the front door. A man came out on the porch and to my great relief it was someone I knew. We had attended junior high and high school together! Brian took me in out of the storm and kept me safe. In about 15 minutes the power went off, but he had a wood stove and oil lanterns and candles. At this point the snow was still coming down hard. Both of us were too freaked out to sleep, so we sat up all night talking and listening to trees come crashing down on both sides of us. Thankfully no trees touched his house.

The next morning it was an hour after daylight before there was any movement at all on the main road. Then three trucks came down river from Allegany, and the men cut a path through the tree that had blocked my way--only now there were four more trees beside it that had fallen right in the spot where I had been the night before!! Brian and I knew the road toward town must be pretty bad because soon after we saw the three trucks coming back. Then, much to our relief, it started to rain. We waited until close to noon when we could see that the snow had turned mostly to slush and made our way toward Allegany and another neighbor's house. Roger and his wife Dorothy took us in and served us hot coffee, and even made us grilled cheese sandwiches, all cooked on top of their wood stove since the power was still out. We spent the afternoon sharing stories about the storm and looking at old pictures until they were sure that the road was safe enough for me to head for home. Tuesday night found me safe at home, thanks to the kindness of my neighbors. I was overwhelmed with gratitude.