



## The Egyptian Theatre Preservation Association Newsletter August-September 2012

### What's Been Happening

The results of our Market/Feasibility Study are in. In the words of the report's primary author, Herb Stratford, President of Historic Theatre Consultants, the bottom-line findings are as follows:

*We believe that there is an opportunity for the Egyptian Theatre to operate and sustain itself through a combination of earned revenue and contributed income. An operation will succeed that focuses limited resources on "experiential" programming through film presentation, some live performances, rentals and special events. Smart, patient, phased rehabilitation along with quality "experiential" based programming that is supported by theatre patrons will ensure the long-term sustainability of the Egyptian Theatre for generations to come.*

The report provides evidence to support the conclusion that the Egyptian Theatre can, with careful planning, good management, and some recommended changes in its programming and operations, operate successfully once it is reopened. This study, with its positive conclusions by recognized theater experts, is an essential component of what we need to attract the grant funding we require to restore and reopen the theatre.

Herb presented the results of the study to the ETPA board, key city officials and interested members of the general public on June 13th. Among other things, he recommended the following:

- There remains much good-will and interest in the community to see the theatre back open and operating. To retain that interest and recapture an audience, the theatre should be reopened as soon as the required structural "safety" improvements are made. To the extent that non-safety related renovations and enhancements of the theatre are undertaken, they should be made in phases *after* the theatre is reopened.

- The Egyptian's ambiance is unmatched by any other performing arts facility in the area. On the other hand, the grandeur of its period construction and the lack of modern amenities for both audience and performer (like dressing rooms, etc.) present a liability for programming. The Egyptian's best bet is to expand the niche for programming that it had before closure and institute other unique "experience" programming that will allow the organization to grow revenue and audience over time.
- Though it is possible to expand the Egyptian to provide the facilities it would need to provide increased live performance programming (dressing rooms, modern stage lighting, etc.), these enhancements would be costly and, given other venues in the community for live performances, the theatre would face competition making it difficult to attract enough revenue to recover the funds invested.
- The ETPA is in need of growth in order to successfully operate the theatre, and this growth must occur prior to reopening. The ETPA's numbers and active volunteers are not large enough today to sustain the increased activities that the theatre will need once it is reopened. The ETPA needs to develop viable business, marketing and strategic plans for theatre operations and secure funding to hire a part-time theatre manager.

And now on to what needs to be done to reopen the Egyptian as soon as possible!

KPFF Consulting Engineers has been selected from many qualified engineering firms that responded to the Urban Renewal Agency's request for proposals to perform the next phase of engineering work needed to define what specific structural improvements need to be made. KPFF, working from Portland, was selected because of their strong structural engineering capabilities,

their reputation for design innovation and their considerable experience with renovating historic structures and theaters in particular (including the Holly Theatre in Medford). KPFF is currently performing an assessment of previously identified structural deficiencies, identifying the scope of repairs needed to prevent collapse, voluntarily implementing seismic upgrades, and developing cost-effective options for addressing the structural deficiencies found. They expect to complete this phase of their work by mid-August. Once the Urban Renewal Agency selects an approach from the options presented by KPFF, a contract will be negotiated to retain KPFF to develop the detailed engineering analyses, drawings, and documents necessary for both the construction bid and the issuance of the building permit.

On the funding front, the ETPA has been diligently working with Rich Foster, president of Cascadia Consulting Partnership, to complete a detailed capital campaign plan. We are making progress in the development of our grant request and community fundraising strategies together with producing the supporting studies and materials we will need to be successful in our fundraising efforts. We will shortly be issuing a round of grant requests for funding the restoration project.

Lastly, you will soon be seeing work progressing on the exterior of the Egyptian Theatre. We have rounded up contributions for paint, tile and other materials and volunteer craftsmen to repair the stucco siding, replace broken tiles, and paint the facade of the building. This work is intended to preserve the theatre until our major construction begins and demonstrate to our community that the ETPA is alive and well and, with our partner the City of Coos Bay, we are making good progress towards reopening the Egyptian. In addition, the city is developing a plan to address the drainage problems that affect the sidewalk in front of the theatre after heavy rains and is determined to address the issue before our next winter season -- no more sandbags lining the Egyptian!

## Did You Know?

By Helen Doving, ETPA Historian



“Graustark,” the movie selected for the opening of Marshfield’s grand new Egyptian Theatre in 1925, tells the all too familiar tale of an American guy meeting and falling desperately in love with a girl on a cross-country train—a Miss Guggendocker; she’s en route to sail to her home country of Graustark.

Years later, he finally decides he must track her down, and, with help from the Embassy, he does find the same Miss Guggendocker at a fancy state ball...you know the rest—she is a princess!

### Critics said:

- *Because it is all romance with never a tinge of sexiness, it is a great relief from the usual run of photoplays.*
- *It’s a nice romance for those who like long duets between the soprano and the tenor. (without a sound?)*
- *All folly and bathos.*
- *Ten-time leading man Eugene O’Brien... was rewarded with essentially the lead in the film.*

### Regarding the star:

- *Norma Talmadge never looked as beautiful. Her gowns are all creations and eye smashing.*
- *She gives a strangely unsatisfactory performance. Girlish vivacity did not come to her....she seems forced in the lighter parts of the picture, with excessive jumping about and clasping of hands. Dramatic scenes are reaction shots of her closing of eyes, leaning back her head, and clutching herself in various places.*

### From Photoplay magazine:

- *Here is your old friend, “Graustark,” with its face lifted and a lot of new clothes. Love conquers all, even our good sense!*

Along with “Graustark,” viewers were treated to the latest international news and topics of the day, several solos by a baritone, and a Charley Chase comedy, “The Uneasy Three.”

Rex Stratton valiantly accompanied this whole silent caboodle, besides playing several selections of the period, on the very same Wurlitzer pipe organ you may have heard in concerts and at Christmas Time. It's a fabulous instrument!

**Next time:** More about the Grand Opening.

### Recent Events

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, we screened the movie "Sometimes a Great Notion," based on the novel by Ken Kesey. It played to a full house at the Broadway Theatre. We also had Matt Love, author of "Sometimes a Great Movie" signing his book and introducing the film with a brief history. The movie was thoroughly enjoyed by the entire crowd.

On July 12<sup>th</sup>, we screened "Here and Now," a surfing film by Taylor Steele. This was co-sponsored by the ETPA, the Coos Bay Surfriders and Waxer's Surf Shop.

On July 20<sup>th</sup>, we sponsored the 234<sup>th</sup> Army Band at the Hales Center for the Performing Arts as part of the Oregon Coast Music Festival.

Our monthly events are posted on the Theatre Marquee and on our web site. [www.egyptian-theatre.com](http://www.egyptian-theatre.com). We continue to provide entertainment as a way of raising funds for our restoration efforts.



### Upcoming Events

Come visit our booth at the Blackberry Arts Festival on August 25th and 26th, and during the Bay Area Fun Festival on September 15th and 16th. We have brand new Egyptian T-shirts and mugs, and we will soon be selling our 2013 Egyptian Theatre Calendar.

### ETPA Volunteer Update

As you all know, volunteers run the ETPA. The physical closing of the Theatre impacted the jobs for which volunteers are needed. During this period in which we cannot use the Theatre, it is very important to keep the Theatre alive in the minds of our community. The ways we accomplish this goal require active volunteers. Some of the ways you can join us:

- ◆ Help staff the booth at the Wednesday Farmer's Market
- ◆ Assist with special event planning and the implementation of those plans
- ◆ Participate on the Membership or Volunteer Committees
- ◆ Offer artistic help with the poster cases in front of the Theatre
- ◆ Staff the ETPA office

For more information or to volunteer, email Kelly Gallagher at [kellygallagher@yahoo.com](mailto:kellygallagher@yahoo.com).

### Challenge to Current Members of the Egyptian Theatre Preservation Association!

An essential element of our efforts to reopen and renovate the Egyptian Theatre is to be able to show that our public supports this project. A great way to quantify this public support is to add to our current membership rolls. Many of you have been members of the organization since its inception in 2006, and hold the special "founding member" designation. For that we salute you! You have our deepest gratitude for your commitment to the success of the organization all these years. Our thanks also to those who have joined the membership team along the way. You have made the mission to save the theatre your own as well, and without your support we couldn't have accomplished what we have so far.

**Now we need your help. Our challenge to you: help us bring in additional members!**

We will soon be launching a major capital campaign to bring in the money needed for the reopening of the theatre. While the lion's share of these funds will be sought from large foundations outside our area, those foundations also require that we show a local match of community interest and funding dollars. That's where you, our current members, come in. One of the best ways to show these foundations that our local citizens are behind the project is to increase our membership numbers! We challenge you to talk to your family, friends, co-workers and acquaintances who are not currently members and tell them about our project. Remind them what a treasure the Egyptian Theatre has always been to our community and what it can do in the future for the revitalization of our downtown when reopened. Urge them to invest in a piece of their local history. Your goal: recruit three new members to our organization by December 2012. Membership information and our current membership form can be found on our website at: [www.egyptian-theatre.com](http://www.egyptian-theatre.com), or by calling our membership chairman, Rick Shearer, at 541-297-8659. By working together we can accomplish so much more! We thank you for your help.

**Meet Your Board Members  
Anella Dumas**

This newsletter article will introduce you to one of our California transplants, Anella Dumas. Anella has served on the Egyptian Theatre Board since its inception, first as the board's vice-president, and now as its president. She is also a member of the joint City of Coos Bay/ETPA Steering Committee, working as a part of that team to reopen the theatre. Anella has given her time and talent to all the stages of our organization's life cycle, from inception, to operation of the theatre, and now into the restoration



phase. She has certainly earned her special title as a "Golden Charioteer."

In her own words – "I can't imagine our town without the Egyptian Theatre. I have people from out of the area come into my store (Antiques and Collectables of Coos Bay) and ask about the theatre when they see our calendars for sale. It gives me an opening every day to explain our situation and our progress. It also allows me to show them Egyptian merchandise and donated items for sale to help support the theatre. In case you are interested in donating items for resale (one item or a house full) call me at 541-808-2168, or the Egyptian Theatre office at 541-269-8650.

No one is interested in ancient history, not mine at least. I moved to Coos Bay in June of 2005, and friends back in Sacramento called to encourage me to get involved with the group to save the Egyptian because it had a pipe organ. I had been involved with the American Theatre Organ Society there (the Sierra and Nor-Cal Chapters). Here I am today, seven years later, still at it.

I've been procrastinating writing this article. I pulled out Dr. Scott Peck's book, *The Road Less Traveled*, (required reading for my Psychology class 30 plus years ago) to analyze why I have put this off and found the words "Just do it." It didn't help. Recently one of our members told us that she has cancer. That report changed a lot of realities for all of us. The fact is, we're all getting older and wish to see the Egyptian open and functioning before our warranty runs out. We, as members of the ETPA, are holding on to this dream, and are wholeheartedly expecting to make it a reality!"

**Notice to ETPA Members**

The Egyptian Theatre Preservation Association invites members interested in a board position to submit letters of interest and resumes to the ETPA office by September 1, 2012.

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