

BOHF Changes Name, Mission

Now Gold Camp Arts Foundation

by Judith McPherson

In a process that has covered almost 2 years, the Board of Directors of the Butte Opera House Foundation has taken steps to change the operating name of the organization, along with its mission focus.

The BOHF was established in November of 2000 with the goal to restore the tradition of classic melodrama to the Pikes Peak region, and to oversee the renovation and use of the historic Butte Opera House in Cripple Creek.

Since its renovation and opening in 2000, there have been three entities involved in the operation of the Butte Opera House - the City, a professional theater production company, and the Butte Opera House Foundation.

As a 501(c)3 non-profit, BOHF solicited donations and sponsorships to assist in funding the production and promotion of classic melodramas and community theater at the Butte.

As the actual owner of the Butte Theater, The City of Cripple Creek oversees the finances and general operations of the facility. They now provide a full-time staff of two employees - the department manager, and one technical staff member. They also provide utility, insurance, marketing, and administrative costs. The City also maintains the contract with a professional production company to physically manage and mount the on-stage shows.

Now going into its third full season of shows, the Thin Air Theater Company is the professional production company currently under contract with the City. They are solely responsible for all aspects of production for the "professional theater" shows each season at the Butte. This year they will produce three shows - *Godspell*, *The Fantasticks*, and *Lost Soul of Cripple Creek*.

But that is not all they do. TATC also partners with the City and the BOHF to produce the Christmas melodrama - which uses a combination of professional and community actors. TATC also assists the BOHF in the production of a Spring Community Play (this year it was *Arsenic and Old Lace*). Members and/or employees of TATC have also volunteered to produce special programs such as April's Shakespeare workshop at Cresson Elementary.

In fact, there is an ever-expanding calendar of events at the Butte Theater. All of these events are produced, managed, or sponsored in some way by BOHF, the City, or TATC - either individually or in some combination of two or three.

For example, the City has used the Butte for meetings such as the



Master Plan project, and the Alzheimer's Awareness Seminar this coming weekend. More fundraiser programs such as "So You Think You Can Dance?" and the 4-H Love Letter are being held at the Butte. The Cresson Elementary Drama Club performed *Charlottes Web* at the Butte in March, and "Toys for Tots" will again use the theater in December.

With this expanding role of the Butte Theater in the community, the BOHF Board of Directors also saw their actual and potential role changing and expanding. To better reflect and promote this new role, the Directors recently voted to change the operating name of the Foundation to "The Gold Camp Arts Foundation." The new mission statement is "To provide support and resources to establish and promote the arts within our community."

While continuing the sponsorship of the Community Theater productions at the Butte, and support in raising donations and sponsorships for the Professional Theater, the Gold Camp Arts Foundation will expand its endeavors by supporting the region's arts community as a whole.

Plans include new activities such as a College Scholarship program for graduating high school seniors and undergraduates, and an activities scholarship program to provide young people an opportunity to attend extra summer arts or performing arts classes and programs.

The Board is developing plans for several new promotions such as a One Act Play Festival to give high school theater programs a chance to showcase themselves and their work. Watch for more information on these new endeavors in the coming weeks.

With an expanded mission and focus, the Board invites you to grow with them by becoming a member of the Foundation. Visit www.butteoperahouse.com to see how you can become a part of the arts community in Cripple Creek.

Also, with this new focus, the Board is interested in talking to members of the community who would be interested in volunteering to serve on the Board as it moves forward with this new vision. The main requirement for service on the board is a desire to spark creativity, to support current and future artists, and a commitment to making the Arts a positive force in our community.

If you are interested, please send a letter of interest to the Foundation in care of The Gold Camp Journal at POB 807, Cripple Creek, 80813.