

# Strand Theatre Shelbyville, Inc.

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## Strand Theatre Weekly Email: June 25, 2009

Written by David on June, 25 2009

The Strand is a treasure trove of local history. We have all had a collective experience inside the theatre for the past 90 years. A few weeks ago a couple attended a performance entering the Strand for the first time in decades. They told us they had met at the Strand 54 years ago, and hadn't been back in years. They sat in the balcony! It is thrilling for us at the theatre to help reconnect memories from days gone by.

We don't do it alone. Many of you out there have shared your Strand memorabilia with us. We have old ticket stubs, pictures and even old newspaper articles. While we enjoy all the items, some tend to shed more light on our history than others. The most significant artifacts to come our way are courtesy of the Dewitt family who owned the theatre for many years. Our current auditorium configuration is a direct result of the 1938 American Seating drawings given to us by the Dewitt's early in our project.

Another such gem came our way this week. Jim Dewitt dropped of a few things he thought we would like. There were two MAJOR items that we are still trying to comprehend the magnitude of the find. The first and most significant is the booking ledger for the Strand starting in 1951 and continuing through the decade. This lists every movie and show, date shown, time and the studio. Not only do we have for the Strand, but it also contains the activity for the Alhambra and the Ritz! Remember when we showed Fred Astaire in "Royal Wedding" this past May? It wasn't the first time that the movie played the Strand. It premiered on April 15, 1952 at the Strand. It later played the Ritz on August 13th of that year. This stuff is just too fun. Steve F. is putting all the information into a database. When finished, Shane our trusty web guru, will post it on our web site in a searchable fashion. We will include all our current performances as well. Next time you are curious, you will be able to go to our web site, search for Royal Wedding and find that it played in April '52 and May '09.

The second item has nothing to do with the Strand, but is of great interest. It is the installation drawing for the theatre pipe organ installed in the Princess Theatre in Rushville. We know that the theatre was to have had a Wurlitzer Style 135 organ. This is a small 4 rank organ with Glockenspiel, Chimes, and Xylophone. It would have played from a piano style console. The drawing, while not appearing to come from the Wurlitzer factory, is consistent with a 135. Carlton Smith who is providing the professional guidance for our Strand Organ Project is very knowledgeable about the different style for drawings produced by the different factories. He is actively involved with the American Theatre Organ Society's technical archives. He will take a look and let us know what he thinks. A copy of the drawing will be donated to the ATOS archives. I think a trip to Rushville is in our future!

The Blue River Community Foundation hosted their annual meeting at the Strand this week. We enjoy them using our facility for such an important event. This year we learned a few things (warning, tech talk ahead). They wanted to do a PowerPoint presentation. Not a big problem, except that the Strand does not own a computer, so we had to use their laptop into our projector. We have found it is very difficult to get the aspect ratio, or screen size, to match the 20' x 30' image size we use. Steve F. and Cody V. fought with that laptop trying to get it to size to the correct aspect ratio. We have learned that we need to get our own equipment that is configured for our unique venue. This is something that will float to the top of our "to do" list very shortly. We will use a desktop processor, not a laptop. It will be in our projection booth, which is still a bit hot. The desktop will have plenty of slots for different drives, and plenty of space for serious case fans. Oh the things we learn, sometimes the hard way. The event was still very nice, and their scrolling presentation filled the screen. Thanks to all our friends at the BRCF for having the event at the Strand.

This week is the long awaited showing of the sci-fi classic "Barbarella". This stars Jane Fonda. I am sure it has been years since most of us have seen this movie. It should be fun. Showtime is at 7:30 on Friday June, 25. On Saturday night brings the return of the first round of Shelbydol. You might remember that last year the producers, Energy2Action, LLC,

told us they expected 50 people. We had our first sellout! This year we are prepared. We have 360 tickets. The presale is the best yet. We will open the doors at 6:15pm. We are hopeful we sell out again this year. In July the competition returns for 2 dates as well. Come out and see your local talent.

Saturday night at 11:00 the cult classic "Dawn of the Dead" will show on our screen. It will be followed on Sunday by Danny Kaye in the "Inspector General" at 1:30. There is always something happening.

The Saturday night movie marks a milestone for our organization. Last year, our first, we had 59 programs. Saturday night's movie is the 59th Program of the 2009 Season! We are working hard to bring quality affordable entertainment to our community. Congratulations to all who helped us attain this mark.

We also have new addition to the Strand Family. Each and every event has a printed program, even our movies. Starting this month, the artwork for these programs has been taken over by Dede Allender of Deca Designs ([www.deca-designs.com](http://www.deca-designs.com)) She is from the Morristown area and has breathed new life into the look of our programs. As you can see, with almost 60 programs in the first 7 months, this is a big job. Thank you Dede!

Thank you for your support. We this project is yours and a monument to the accomplishments of hundreds of volunteers and well wishers. We look forward to seeing you at the theatre soon!

**Images on this post:**

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