

Strand Theatre Shelbyville, Inc.

Old Website Article Backup

Articles prior to December 5, 2018

Fond memories...

Written by David on September, 11 2009

The following article was submitted to the Strand:

Night at the Strand Tonight

I went to the Strand Theater to view the Michael Moore documentary film "Slacker Uprising". Having seen "Fahrenheit 911", I had an idea of what it may be like. After purchasing my ticket from David Finkel, he asked me if I knew what made their popcorn special. Having an insider's information, I answered "The coconut oil." He replied "Well, yes and the fact that the popcorn was made in a genuine old time popcorn machine." As I stepped into the concession area to look at it I recognized I knew that machine quite well. When I was in high school I was employed by the Switow Brothers of Chicago as a concessionaire and usher at the Strand. We turned in our hours worked to the manager of the theater, Mobe Honey, and the next week we received a small brown envelope with a cash payment enclosed. Mr. Honey's son, Ted, was a few years ahead of me in school and was an alpha male. He was a gifted athlete and very popular. As the movie crowd came in we would sell popcorn and candy. Once the movie started we became the enforcers of proper behavior in the theater. Armed with flashlights, we patrolled the aisles for troublemakers---those who annoyed their neighbors or who had their knees up against the seat in front of them. Mobe would confront these miscreants with the line, "Do you do this at home?" If the wise guy answered yes, Mobe would tell them, "Then, go home and do it." We also had to periodically check the restrooms for smokers. At that time the restrooms were in a section off the south side of the balcony. It was a dreary place and since it was situated outside the main part of the theater it wasn't heated with the rest of the building. It was not where you wanted to have to go in the wintertime. The popcorn and oil were stored in the area behind the screen and I recall finding a roll of tickets that were marked MATINEE 7 CENTS. They were probably left over from the days when nearly all of the school kids in town went on Saturday to see the cartoon shows and the serials like "Flash Gordon", "Hopalong Cassidy" and others. Sometimes, between features, the manager would take the stage for a drawing and give away a brand new bicycle. When the theater became the Cinema and the space was partitioned it broke my heart. The balcony was walled off and the atmosphere was gone. The end of an era. After watching the documentary from the restored balcony area I went back downstairs and only then did I realize that I was the sole patron of the evening. I thanked Mr. Finkel for showing such an obviously Democratically slanted piece in this bastion of Republicanism. He assured me that not all of the offerings will be well received by the general public here but they would offer what they considered to be a wide range of entertainment even if it were controversial. This kind of dedication and integrity is a rare and special thing. I will continue to support their efforts. I hope you will do the same.

Submitted by Randy Weingarh

Randy Weingarh at the Cretor Popcorn Machine...

Images on this post:



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