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Rosendale Theatre Collective in First Place for Pepsi Refresh Funds

By Rochelle Riservato

ROSENDALE ◆ When Richard "F-Stop" Minissali, renowned photographer and councilmember on the Rosendale Town Board, helped inaugurate a preservation group to mastermind ways to continue the cultural acuity of the Rosendale Theatre, he didn't realize they'd end up vying for a national win from the Pepsi Refresh Funds contest.

In the fall of 2009, when the theater went up for sale, Minissali and other residents worried it would be sold to developers who'd make it into apartments or a business that wouldn't nourish the town as the theater had for the past 61 years. As an anchor business and cultural center, "The Rosendale," as co-proprietor Michael Cacchio calls it, actually is the center of town businesses.

Theatre groupies suddenly realized what they actually had in the town ◆ a single-screen, family-owned theater with owners who knew their neighbors' names, took suggestions as to what to play, and basically treated patrons like family.

What would happen if some outsider came in and made the building,
once a vaudeville venue, into something that would change the face of the town? What if the landmark building was torn down and the theater footprint and its parking lot ended up being groundwork for condos? It seemed that, suddenly, people realized that, for just $6, an art, indie or a first-run movie could be seen with just a quick drive to town or even a stroll down Main Street. And for many, many years, the Cacchios have opened their hearts and doors to benefits for many causes from the local library and resident misfortunes to social issues and local politicians.

This was the spark initially igniting the formulation of the Rosendale Theatre Collective. Lisa and Uval Sterer of the Big Cheese, an business adjacent to the theater, had a preliminary meeting to see what could be done to save this cultural center. Minissali said, "I was invited to the second meeting with about six people in total; patrons of the theatre, Main Street neighbors, and film director, Nicole Quinn."

Word spread, meetings ensued, and even local celebrities had gotten on board, joining the collective's 17-seat advisory committee. Among them are actors Aidan Quinn, David Strathairn, Melissa Leo, and Denny Dillon; Philadelphia screenwriter Ron Nyswaner; and author Kim Wo zen craft, whose novel, Rush, was made into a film starring Jennifer Jason Leigh. And F-Stop Minissali became the chairman of the RTC.

Said Minissali, "I was sick last year and the community gave a lot of support to me, so I wanted to give back. I was not working fulltime so I had the time to do something like this wrestle the beast to the ground."

Since then, the Rosendale Theatre Collective, a seemingly ever-growing ad hoc group, set about obtaining nonprofit status and, gratefully, worked under the Children's Media Project's nonprofit status until they recently got their own 501 (c) (3). Donations to a nonprofit are lawfully tax-deductible and the RTC has been the recipient of $100,000 in donations and fundraising revenues so far towards the $160,000 needed to secure the mortgage to purchase the theater.

But they didn't stop there. On March 1, the Collective entered the Pepsi Refresh online contest, whose web site states: "We're looking for people, businesses, and non-profits with ideas that will have a positive impact. Look around your community and think about how you want to change it."

Perfect. And now, at the time of this writing, the Collective is "Number
One" in their category for the $50,000 prize. "We started out as number as number 18 and today, [April 12], we're number one," said Minissali.

So who thought of spreading-the-wings to enter a national contest?

"I think it was Eve Waltermaurer, co-chairperson of fundraising. She's has being doing most of the grant-writing and applications for the RTC and I think she found it," said Minissali. He explained that the 60-second video required to enter the Pepsi contest was put together by Waltermaurer. The video, a pictorial history of still photographs of former entertainment performances at the theatre, can be seen on the RTC web site at rosendaletheatre.org and also on the Pepsi Refresh page detailing the desires and goals of the Collective.

The next step was getting word out for people to vote on a daily basis to help the Collective win the contest funds. Minissali said, "We put a whole plan in place; a press release, a Facebook announcement, emails for people to vote daily," he said.

Minissali even turned to his kids for help. "I said to my kids, 'What can you do to help?' and they put it on their Facebook pages to tell their friends."

"Then a Facebook friend of my son asked if she could put it on her Facebook page to send out to 500 other friends, as she felt the cultural aspect was a good cause," he said. He strongly feels the new "social media" of internet presences such as Facebook and Twitter has made this process easier.

First place for $50,000! However, Minissali said his only regret is that they didn't apply for the $100,000 prize.

Nevertheless, with 15 more days to vote, he requested that everybody go to the Pepsi Refresh site at www.refresheverything.com/rosendaletheatrecollective. In addition, the Collective wishes to help other organizations to win for their respective causes by encouraging voters to also vote for the Hudson Valley Youth Wind Ensemble (HVYWE) and Lancaster Conservatory of Music that helps provide quality instruments to needy students. This collaboration of the three organizations requesting votes for each other will improve the chances of all three deserving groups by increasing their votes by reciprocity.

The theater's co-proprietor, Michael Cacchio said, "The family is just thrilled that they [the RTC] are looking every place possible for innovative ways to make money. Not just their interesting list of
fundraisers they've been having; but even on a national scale. It really reinforces our optimism on their integrity to keep the theater a vital business in the community."

**COMMENTS about this article (0)**
Theater Theory: Restoring Downtown Bijou Is Sign of a Cool Place

By PETER APPLEBOME  APRIL 18, 2010

Rosendale, N.Y.

Does the world need the Rosendale Theater, a creaky, tin-ceilinged, century-old, single-screen movie theater that was once a vaudeville parlor, casino and gathering hall in a tiny rural cement town? Probably not.

But a fair number of people definitely seem to want it. Hence the blend of spontaneous combustion and brilliant calculation that’s likely to keep the theater going long after the myriad things that could have killed it — television, on-demand cable, VCRs, DVDs, Netflix, Redbox, etc. — have come and often gone.

Rosendale, population 6,400 or so over its 20 square miles, is what Woodstock, the town 18 miles away, would have been if there had been no Woodstock the concert.

Instead of an aggressively quaint place with businesses like Ye Olde Hippie Shoppe and Westchester-priced real estate, it’s got that exurban artsy thing going without much brand management. You can’t beat the Gouda or the Wensleydale with ginger at Big Cheese. Musicians like the great jazz bassist Ron Carter or the classic rocker Graham Parker play at the vegetarian Rosendale Cafe without much fanfare, and A-list actors show up at Market Market. When the Vision of Tibet store, a longtime fixture in Greenwich Village, lost its lease after 20 years, it moved last year to Rosendale.
People tend to have hyphenated job descriptions; say, contractor-massage therapist-sculptor-bassist for men or landscaper-vegan chef-painter-doula for women. A nice house can go for $250,000. Fashionable mom-wear around town is a “Rosendale Rocks” T-shirt with mismatched peace sign pajama bottoms. And then there’s the Rosendale Theater.

One of the best barometers of whether a small town has a pulse is the old downtown movie house. If it has been knocked down, boarded up or turned into a porno place, the omens are not good. If it is hanging in there, that’s promising. If it’s been refurbished or somehow morphed into a beloved institution, chances are the town is just fine. The Rosendale Theater is definitely behind Door No. 3.

Like the semi-shabby downtown, the 296-seat theater with the plain-brick facade, ancient candy machines and honor-system popcorn isn’t much to look at. It opened as a movie theater in 1949 (first film, the Western “Blood on the Moon” with Robert Mitchum), and the Cacchio family has owned it ever since. They’ve changed with the times, so that it’s now essentially an art house showing indie films, often with a progressive bent, plus local music or theater.

This was all well and good until Rocco Cacchio, the son of the founder and the father of Michael Cacchio, who runs it now, died in 2008, forcing the family to confront its own mortality and that of a business that, however beloved, was struggling to break even. They decided to put it up for sale, soon attracting interest from developers likely to turn it into apartments or anything more lucrative than a single-screen theater.

And almost immediately, as if by osmosis, the idea rose for the Rosendale Theater Collective to take it over and run it as a nonprofit institution. This was not startling. Such things exist. But they don’t necessarily exist in a rural town of 6,400 where $380,000 is needed to buy the local theater and perhaps $600,000 to fully restore and upgrade it. Nor do they necessarily work with an arty collective some of whose members have names like Fre Atlast and f-stop Fitzgerald.

But then, local characters aside, the collective also had lots of high-powered friends and advisers — performers like Aidan Quinn, Mandy Patinkin and Melissa Leo; heads of regional performing arts centers; local businesses. And Rosendale
turns out to be a lot less sleepy than it looks.

“You first come here and think it’s a ghost town,” said Eve Waltermaurer, a sociology professor at the State University College at New Paltz and a member of the collective’s board of directors. “But the longer you stay, the more you realize what an intricate, elaborate environment it is, with so many creative people. It’s like they’re hiding in the cracks in the woodwork, but when there’s a cause, it’s like they come pouring out of their homes to work on it.”

And so began fund-raisers and events galore, first at the annual pickle festival, then assorted theater and arts gatherings and online auctions. Through compulsive social networking and disciplined daily clicking at a site for online grants from Pepsi-Cola, the collective is near the top of contenders for a $50,000 grant that would put it within reach of the $160,000 needed for the down payment.

Everyone in town, both the art and culture crowd and the older, more conservative folks who remember the theater from way back when, is on the same page. Michael Cacchio and his Uncle Tony, known to all as Uncle Tony, would stay on to help with the new incarnation. It’s not ending global warming or saving the planet, but better small victories these days than none at all.

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Donations grow to preserve Rosendale Theatre

Supporters hope for big grant

ROSENDALE — During the second week of November, Uncle Tony and Michael Caccio received an offer from a real estate developer for their Main Street property, the Rosendale Theatre — an inconspicuous brick building, but a hub for the Ulster County town.

Richard "F-Stop" Minissali, left, who heads the Rosendale Theatre Collective, theater owner Michael Caccio, Eve Woltema, member of the fundraising committee chat Thursday outside the theater.

How to help

- Pepsi Refresh Project, Rosendale Theatre: www.refresheverything.com/rosendaletheatrecollective

- Rosendale Theatre Collective: www.rosendale-theatre.org, info@rosendale-theatre.org

- Read more

By Timothy Malcom

ROSENDALE — During the second week of November, Uncle Tony and Michael Caccio received an offer from a real estate developer for their Main Street property, the Rosendale Theatre — an inconspicuous brick building, but a hub for the Ulster County town.

When a few local people heard about the offer, they jumped in and started raising funds so they could buy and preserve the theatre. In two weeks, just after Thanksgiving and coinciding with the time of Rosendale's International Pickle Festival, this group — the Rosendale Theatre Collective — had raised $20,000, enough for a binder on the property.
The push began with a goal of $160,000 — the down payment amount due May 15 for the building. They have about $100,000 and are closing in on a big $50,000 grant — all in the name of preserving a local arts institution.

"Besides being an anchor business on Main Street because it’s been here for 60 years through three generations, it’s also a cultural center," said Richard "F-Stop" Minissali, chairman of the Rosendale Theatre Collective.

The theatre hosts movie screenings, performances and concerts; it’s the focal point of a cozy Main Street that houses eateries, a bakery, a drum shop and an acting studio — points of interest for "a pretty creative town and region," Minissali continued.

"The thought of losing the theatre in the community and being turned into condos or whatever people might dream of kind of was unbearable for us," said Anissa Kapsales, who joined the Collective and is co-chair of its committee to raise funds.

"Most of it is $100 checks, $50 checks," said Eve Waltemauer, co-chair of the Collective’s fundraising committee, "so it’s a pretty broad base of support."

The Collective is near to gaining a huge victory. It submitted its idea — "Preserve a local movie theater and revitalize our main street" — into the Pepsi Refresh Project, a monthly national competition in which the top 10 voted-on ideas, among hundreds in four categories, win a specified amount of grant money.

The Collective enrolled in the $50,000 grant competition and, as of Friday, led all ideas. If it closes April in the top 10, it wins the grant money and will practically hit its down payment goal.

"Someone estimated that to be No. 1, you have to have well over 200,000 votes a day," Waltemauer said. "The fact that so many people are going to bat for us is awe-inspiring."

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Rosendale Theatre restored to it's glory

Posted: Tuesday, July 27, 2010

Rosendale Theatre

This nondescript building is a space that endears by dint of its history rather than any theatrical architectural flourish. Operated by the Caccio family since 1949, the building has been up for sale recently, and the Rosendale Theatre Collective has been formed to buy the theater, restore it and run a wide variety of entertainment and other programs for Rosendale and Ulster County residents. In April, the group won $50,000 from the Pepsi Refresh Project, putting them over the top in their efforts to come up with the down payment.

More amazing than the grant, according to collective member and chair F-Stop Fitzgerald, is the $110,000 raised by local residents and businesses, which for the most part came in amounts of $10, $25, $50, $100. This reflects the community nature of the effort, from the cooperation of the owners, who are still running the theater but allowing the cooperative to schedule events, to the two local banks, Rondout Savings and Ulster Savings, that are sharing the mortgage. The group expects to close by this month.

A Kids Summer Fan Club is scheduled for July and August, says Fitzgerald. “The idea came from lifelong resident Kevin Cahill, who remembers the fan club when he was growing up. For a nickel, members would get admittance to a movie, a cartoon, maybe even a live performance from a clown.” Today’s club members get a t-shirt, a membership card, and entry to six classic kids movies, each featuring a live component as well.

The theater will offer support to independent and mainstream filmmakers, emerging and established artists, students and educators, and community arts organizations, all in an inclusive, diverse, vibrant, and welcoming atmosphere. In addition to continuing the Caccio family tradition of presenting both independent and mainstream films, the group plans to expand its relationship with the Woodstock Film Festival. In the realm of theater, the initial plan will be to rent the facility to local theatrical producers. In the future, it will evolve toward a local repertory production group.

Other uses will be music, dance, and children’s production. It is also envisioned as a venue for public speaking events that address the critical issues of our times.

Continue [here](#) to learn about the Newburgh Train Station's revival.

Categories: Profiles

Tags: historical buildings, community fundraisers, Hudson Valley theaters
The End of an Era

The Credits Roll for the Rosendale Theatre

By Rochelle Riservato

ROSENDALE ✆ It's been a long time. A lifetime of over six decades that the Cacchio family has owned a single-screen theater called The Rosendale Theatre on Main Street, Rosendale. Factually, it's probably one of the few family-owned theaters left ✆ especially one abundant with nostalgia. Wooden floors sans polyurethane, popcorn served in paper bags, mirror-topped candy vending machines accepting quarters, and comfy velvet seats with elbow room. Ah, the nostalgia of it all.

But as they say, "All good things must come to an end" ✆ but do they?

Not in this case. Thursday, August 19, 2010, marks the real estate closing for the sale of the Rosendale Theatre ✆ and the "opening" of the Rosendale Collective's ownership of this Main Street icon.

"We have always strived to play good films," said Anthony Cacchio, Jr., son of the original owners, Fanny and Anthony Cacchio, Sr. who bought and started the theatre in February of 1949.

And according to "Uncle Tony," as everyone calls him, 1949's Blood on the Moon, starring Robert Mitchum, Barbara Bel Geddes and Robert Preston, which screened on their opening night, is the kind of film he favors. "A nice old time western," he said.

Uncle Tony particularly liked movies where people clap at the end while he was at the helm of his 35mm Strong projector.

If walls could talk, those at 408 Main Street have many stories to tell, from the hustle of firemen jumping on fire trucks, when the building doubled as a make-shift fire department, while movies were projected on the screen; to the many entertainers of the building's vaudeville days ✆ dancers, singers and musicians ✆ performing on a stage that still provides the platform for the Theatre's most recent live shows; to the cheers of winners and cries of losers during the 20s and 30s, when the building housed The Rosendale Casino.
As the Cacchios make their final curtain call on their family's legacy, Michael Cacchio said, "Initially I was a little saddened and melancholy that the family would be selling the Theatre, but it is being taken over by what I consider an extended family and people who love and respect what my grandmother and grandfather started 61 years ago. They [the Collective] share the same ideals and sensitivity towards providing inexpensive and quality entertainment to the local community. Uncle Tony and I plan on remaining actively involved and we hope that the public will respond to them with the same loyalty and respect that they showed us for the past six decades."

Brian Cafferty, a close friend of the Cacchio family, said, "They're not just buying bricks and mortar; they're buying the good will created by the Cacchio family over the past 61 years. [The Cacchios] have earned the hearts and loyalty of the community and because of that the Collective was able to generate a huge outpouring of donations from the public to purchase the theater."

And as the Rosendale Theatre Collective gathered, prior to the Cacchios turning their family legacy over to them, it was said that it was appropriate and poignant that they were having their final meeting where it all began in The Big Cheese, next-door to the Theatre.

Collective members had much to say about this landmark event.

Chairman, Richard (F-Stop) Minissali said, "It's a great pleasure to be able to say that the Collective has reached the goal of acquiring the Rosendale Theatre to retain for our community. There have been contributions of all sorts from hundreds of people and we look forward to many years of keeping the tradition alive."

Leslee Rachel Cooper wanted to thank everyone who had donated their time.

"Every single contribution has been incredibly important, and we're all celebrating this together," she said.

And Gale McGovern's shout-out was to every single person in Orange, Ulster and Dutchess Counties with, "Come to the movies!"

Fern Revzin, who had a milestone birthday in March, said she asked for donations to the Collective as her birthday present, but feels she's really getting her birthday present with the new ownership taking over.

Edward Schoelwer remarked that everyone should be "totally thrilled" and felt the entire community pulled itself together to make this happen, adding "Now the challenge is to keep it going."
It's all so bittersweet in a way change sometimes is hard to bear. But remember, they say when one door closes another opens and thus the Rosendale Collective will open their door to continue the Cacchio family's tradition of supporting independent filmmakers, community arts groups, and will continue the Theatre's relationship with the Woodstock Film Festival with expansive goals for this annual event.

Be it known that this article is dedicated to the late Fanny, Tony Sr. and Rocco Cacchio may your dreams live on forever.

COMMENTS about this article (0)
Rosendale Theatre Collective achieves control of landmark facility

The Rosendale Theatre Collective has done it: The group has bought the Rosendale Theatre from the Caccio family and will assume total control of the facility.

The Rosendale Theatre Collective has done it: The group has bought the Rosendale Theatre from the Caccio family and will assume total control of the facility.

"We're absolutely delighted that we're able to carry on the work of keeping this important venue for movies and live performances alive," said Richard "F-Stop" Minissali, the outgoing chair of the Rosendale Theatre Collective's board of directors. "The Caccio family created a wonderful focal point for locals to express and experience art as a community, and we are thrilled to continue this important mission to serve the Rosendale community."}

The Collective in May secured the down payment of the theater after fundraisers, donations and a victory in the Pepsi Refresh Project. Ticket prices will remain at $6, while the theater will continue to show Hollywood and independent films, plus new programming down the road.

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