

November 24, 2010



Dear Friends of the Craterian:

If you watch or read the local news, you've probably heard the Craterian mentioned a number of times in relation to the just announced proposal to open another theater in downtown Medford: the Holly. Some of the information that has been reported is inaccurate or misleading, and may have left you with the wrong impression. So I want to set the record straight, and also share with you the position of the Craterian board on this proposed project.

From its beginning, the Craterian has been committed to offering a variety of programs to a variety of audiences, both young and old. But also from its beginning, the Craterian has depended on generous business sponsors, memberships, and enthusiastic ticket-buyers to defray the cost of the performances we present and reduce ticket prices. It is this local support from businesses, members, and patrons that has allowed the Craterian to meet our mission to enhance the cultural opportunities available in the Rogue Valley in this state-of-the-art facility. It saddens me to think that two very similar facilities could one day be competing for the same sponsors, donors, and programs.

In its editorial about the proposal to renovate the Holly, the Mail Tribune suggested that "Renovating the theater is a good idea, but not at the cost of the Craterian." That is why the Craterian Board of Directors does not support the Holly project. We believe it will adversely affect the Craterian, because we do not believe it is viable for two performing arts centers to be successfully supported in this market.

On the reverse side of this letter you will find some helpful information in a "Question & Answer" format. Please let us know if you have additional questions or comments.

Thank you for making time to read this letter. Now let's get back to the real work of the Craterian: improving and enhancing our community through the arts!

I'll see you at the theater,

Kingsley Kelley
President, Craterian Performances Board

Board of Directors

Kingsley Kelley, *President*
Steve Erb, *President Elect*
Ron Silverman, *Past President*
Judy Gambee, *Vice President*
John Dailey, *Treasurer*
Lisa James, *Secretary*

Judy Barr
Bud Bergstrom
Kathy Budge
Judy Chiosso-Glass
Mark Eisenstein
Norman Fincher
Karen Foster
Mary Hanenburg
Mike Heverly
Rich Karchmer
Carolyn Kingsnorth
Judy Lininger
Don Mackin
Monte Mendenhall
Gary Newland
Ruth Rabinovitch
Don Skundrick
Natalie Smith
Gregg Sorensen

Jim Root, *Distinguished Director*

Executive Director

Stephen McCandless

23 South Central
Medford, Oregon 97501
Administration (541) 779-8195
Box Office (541) 779-3000
Fax (541) 779-8175
www.craterian.org

Some Questions and Answers About the Craterian

Is the Craterian opposed to the development of the Holly?

The Craterian is wholly dedicated to supporting and presenting the arts in the Rogue Valley. We believe that the Holly project as proposed by developer Jefferson Public Radio (JPR) would duplicate offerings and services, and exhaust available resources.

How many events are presented at the Craterian each year?

On average, we host about 90 events a year on our stage including children's and family shows, Broadway musicals, comedy acts, and a wide variety of dance and music programs. We are the Medford performance home of the Rogue Valley Symphony, Rogue Opera, Rogue Valley Chorale, Youth Symphony of Southern Oregon, Community Concert Series, American Band College, and others. It should also be noted that there are many more days that are used to prepare for those shows, to rehearse and stage our Children's and Teen Musical Theater of Oregon productions, to host non-theater events, to welcome the community to the GingerBread Jubilee Tour, and to repair and maintain our facilities and equipment, etc.

Does the Craterian have enough seating?

Yes. Our average attendance for Craterian Performances events peaked at 84% of capacity in 2007. The last two years it has averaged 76 %. For those who rent the theater, the average attendance was 58% of capacity. And for those events that require more seating, the high school auditoriums have more capacity than the Craterian.

Are ticket prices at the Craterian too high, and would they be less expensive if there was another option?

This season, our ticket prices range from free community events - \$68, (less than top tickets at the Oregon Shakespeare and Britt Festivals) and are based on how much we have to pay the artists and how much it costs to stage their shows. A higher ticket price is the direct result of the artist fees and/or production expense. Another theater option won't reduce ticket prices; it just means the venues will be competing with each other for the same programs. As virtually any independent arts organization will explain, ticket prices alone do not cover the cost of performances, we rely on the ongoing support of our members and sponsors.

Is the Craterian losing money?

Since reopening in 1997, the Craterian has only had three seasons that didn't "break-even," the last being 2001. As a not-for-profit organization, our goal is to cover our expenses, which we have done 10 of the past 13 years. Because we are an independent non-profit theater and own our building, our financial reports include the cost of building depreciation. As a formally chosen project of the Medford Urban Renewal Agency (MURA), our capital campaign received MURA grants 15 years ago, but our annual operations are not subsidized from any government/tax base.

Is the Craterian over-staffed?

The Craterian staff is similar in size to other independent theaters that offer the number of presentations we do, such as the Ross Ragland Theater in Klamath Falls and the Elsinore Theater in Salem. Locally, we have a much smaller staff than the Britt Festival. The Craterian staff may be small in numbers, but they are large in talent and big in heart! We are additionally grateful to over 100 volunteers who help us meet our mission every year by serving in a wide variety of roles.

How can we show our support of the Craterian?

Continue to support us by coming to our shows and bringing your friends and families! Become a member if you aren't one already, make a donation, and if you are a business owner or manager, please consider sponsoring a show this coming season.