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New Rheem Theatre Anniversary Celebration

By *Sophie Braccini*

The New Rheem Theater will celebrate its first anniversary on June 25th with a party that will include food, celebrities and, of course, movies. The event will crown a full year of endless activities that have marked the renaissance of a theater that, a year ago, was closed with not much hope of ever reopening. The transformation is due to a new business model - a community-supported theater - and the very hard work of the team behind it all. Attendance is up, but renovating a theater is costly; the ongoing support of the community will be the key to success.

When the theater closed in early 2010, who would have guessed that Moraga could become a local cultural and entertainment center? Although many interested organizations rallied to save the theater, no one could come up with a way to salvage and reinvest in a movie theater plagued by old equipment and declining attendance. Since the theater was reopened by the California Independent Film Festival Association (CAIFFA) the theater has become an integral part of Moraga's cultural and recreational landscape; quite the makeover for a location that could have become a parking garage.

"The Theatre has done more to bring people together in this community for something positive than anything else," says long-time Moraga resident and Theater supporter Caroline Wood. "People here used to get together only to fight over land issues. Here we have something positive we can all embrace and that has created a whole new cultural environment for the town."

What makes CAIFFA different than previous operators? CAIFFA is a non-profit association, supported by members, which in addition to screening movies also presents events that serve the entire community. Beau Behan and Derek Zemrak have been the increasingly familiar faces of the New Rheem Theatre this past year. "I would like to thank the Moraga community for embracing and welcoming both the California Independent Film Festival and New Rheem Theatre to this wonderful town," said Zemrak, "A neighborhood theatre needs the support of the community to succeed and grow. So much has happened in one year, including but not limited to a successful 13th California Independent Film Festival, four new 35MM projectors, new seating (sofa, love seats and theater-seating rockers), new paint, new lobby counters and so much more." One of the movies that will be shown at the anniversary celebration is *The Majestic*, a film about a community coming together to reopen their local movie palace. "Sounds like Moraga and the New Rheem Theatre!" notes Zemrak.

The anniversary event will pull double-duty as a fundraiser for a new sound system and renovations to the elevator. The party kicks off at 3:00 p.m. for the younger crowd. 13-year old actor Zachari Gordon, who stars as Greg Heffley in the film *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, will be at the celebration to introduce the movie's sequel. The afternoon will include games, food and prizes. The catered evening celebration will start at 6:00 p.m.; in addition to a screening of *The Majestic*, special guest Michael Sloane, who wrote the screenplay, will share inside stories on the making of the movie.

Admission tickets are \$8 for the "The Diary of a Wimpy Kid 2," and \$25 for the evening reception with light refreshments and special screening of "The Majestic." Tickets may be purchased at the New Rheem Theatre Box Office, or on the theatre's website, (www.TheNewRheemTheatre.com). For more details, e-mail info@TheNewRheemTheatre.com or call (925) 388-0752.

New Rheem Theater Supports Fireworks Fundraising Effort

The Moraga Parks and Recreation Department is currently raising funds to offset the cost of the town's 4th of July fireworks; \$23,000 must be found. This year, the New Rheem Theatre is supporting the fundraising effort by showcasing donors on the big screen. "People who send a check to support the fireworks can add a message that will be displayed on the big screen at the theater," says Mary Coe of the Moraga Economic Development Team, "it can be a birthday message, a love note, or a few words of support or congratulations. It will be displayed in a slide show that appears before the movies." To support the fireworks and have your message of ten words or less appear on the big screen, send your check, made payable the Town of Moraga, to: Moraga Parks and Recreation, 2100 Donald Drive, Moraga, CA 94556.

A Year of Community Events at the New Rheem Theatre

Reopening as the New Rheem Theatre - June 25th, 2010

California Independent Film Festival (CAIFF) Classic Film Series:
 The Sound of Music (with guest Angela Cartwright) During the Sound of Music event, the theater unveiled its Wall of Fame, on which all visiting celebrities write an inscription.
 Old Yeller (with guest Beverly Washburn)
 The Spy Who Loved Me (with guest Richard Kiel)
 High Tea event with the film, "Eat Pray Love"
 Haunted House event - a haunted house was built on the back stage.

Teen Dances - attracting approximately 500 teens from all over the Bay Area

Jazz Band Concerts - Rossmoor Jazz Band and Mike Vax Jazz Band

Poetry Reading

Goats of Denmark production; cast mainly from Miramonte High

Private outings for local swim clubs

Birthday and engagement parties

13th Annual California Independent Film Festival-most successful

and most well-attended in the 13-year history of CAIFF

World Cup Soccer Finals in the Big Auditorium-attended by

600 patrons

Baseball World Series in the Big Auditorium

St Mary's Basketball Games in the Big Auditorium

Jan Wahl Reel Lecture Series

Christmas Party and Classic Films-presented by Charles Schwab

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