

Monday, October 11, 1982

# Periscope

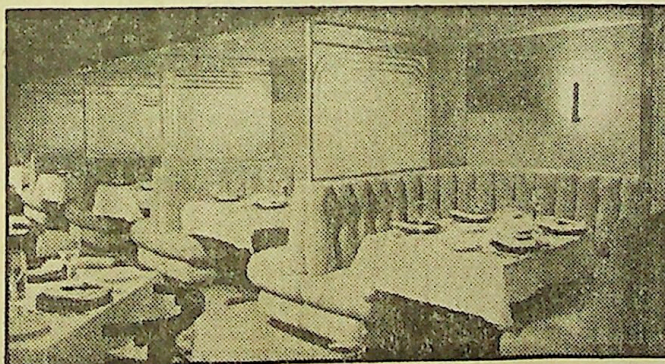
ON ENTERTAINMENT AND THE ARTS

**STATE THEATER REPORT DUE** — A report of the special subcommittee charged to "explore optimum means to acquire and rehabilitate the State Theater" will be heard when members of the State Theater Committee and other interested citizens gather Wednesday at 8 a.m., in the City Commission Chambers of City Hall.

*Michael Doleski* of the Community & Economic Development Division and State Theater Committee manager said results of a recent survey taken to determine potential usage for the downtown former movie palace also will be revealed at that time. He urged all individuals interested in the theater acquisition project to attend the session.

CHEF'S SPECIAL

## Angelina's Ristorante



Giving attention to the details which create a pleasurable dining experience, Angelina's offers exquisitely prepared veal, seafood, pasta and chicken entrees blended with gracious service and an elegant atmosphere. Housemade breads accompany each meal and specialty desserts provide the perfect ending. Weekend valet parking provided.

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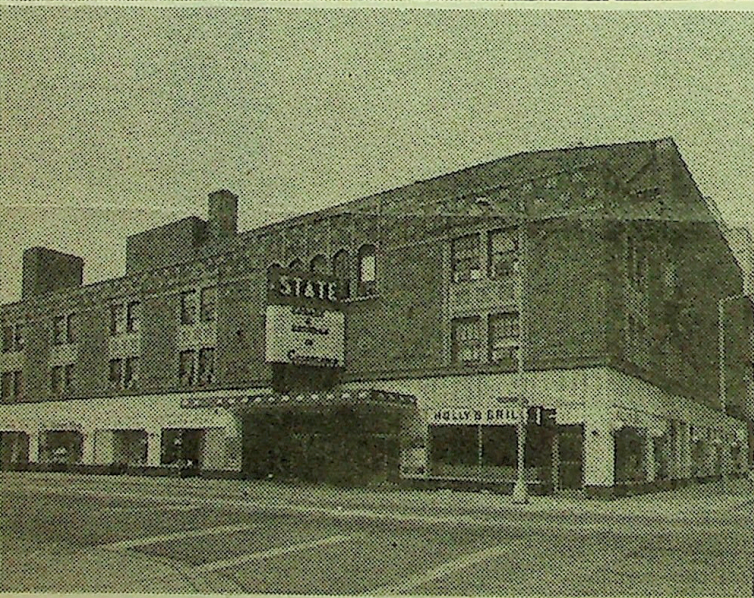
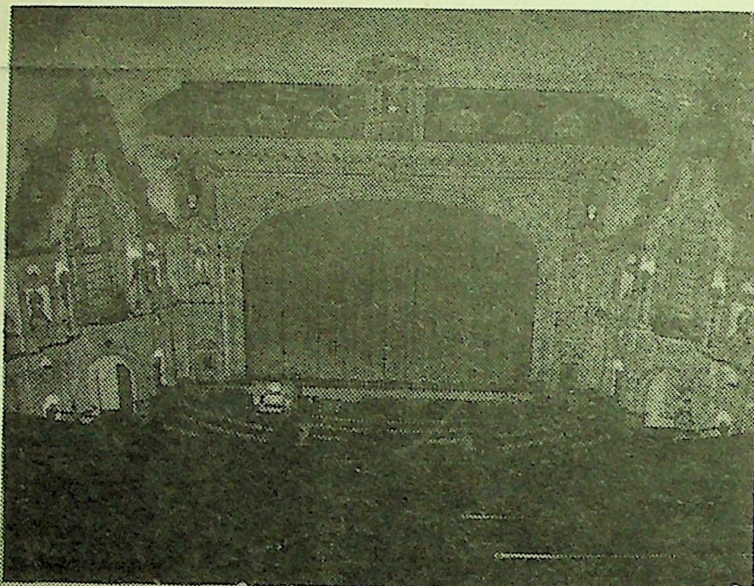
**fine dining**

### ANGELINA'S RISTORANTE

Angelina's Ristorante is in a class by itself, offering exquisitely prepared entrees representing favorite dishes from various regions of Italy. Exceptional wine selection and weekend valet parking provided for your convenience. Located downtown at 109 W. Lovell in The State Theatre. Serving lunch and dinner. Reservations accepted. Phone 344-2100. Banquet facilities available! Make your Valentine's Day reservations TODAY!

# Will the State turn concert palace?

*Group seeks to save old theater through conversion*



Once they played "moving pictures" at the State Theater, but now the venerable picture palace is in jeopardy. Local group Galleries Unlimited seeks to preserve the beautiful theater (interior and exterior shown above) by converting it to a concert and cultural center.

By **JAMES T. JONES IV**  
Entertainment Editor

Employees of the Status Galleries Limited, a retail art gallery in the Kalamazoo Center, are determined to prove that the downtown State Theatre can be revitalized as a culture center for the city.

The 55-year-old theatre located on Burdick and Lovell Streets, which had served as a vaudeville theatre and recently as a movie house, was closed last February.

Therefore, Status Galleries hired photographer James Bevins to photo-document the dramatic decorations of the interior and exterior during the summer.

"We wanted the documentation in case it goes to the wrecking ball and turns into a parking lot," said Robert Walker, marketing vice-president of Status Galleries. "There's always the possibility for that."

The decorations consist of palace facades, balconies, castles towers, a Spanish cathedral window fascimile and a Spanish patio which was constructed in the Hispano-Italian style.

"We've done over 250 photos of the interior and exterior," Walker said. "You can practically rebuild the building brick by brick from the photographs and slides we've takened."

Walker said the owners, Butterfield Theatres of Southfield, had closed the State Theatre, which sits over 2,700 people, because as a movie house, it couldn't compete against the suburban movie theatres.

Presently the building is on

the market for \$450,000 Walker said, but no one has made a bid for it.

A seven-member committee is now looking into the possibility of revitalizing it into a performing arts center and trying to determine how many groups would be interested in using it.

"...nothing definite has been decided," Walker said.

"There's always a good chance the building could be sold to someone who does not necessarily want to preserve it."

So Walker, along with Unicorn Stage Arts Limited, plan to prove the theatre's revitalization possibilities themselves.

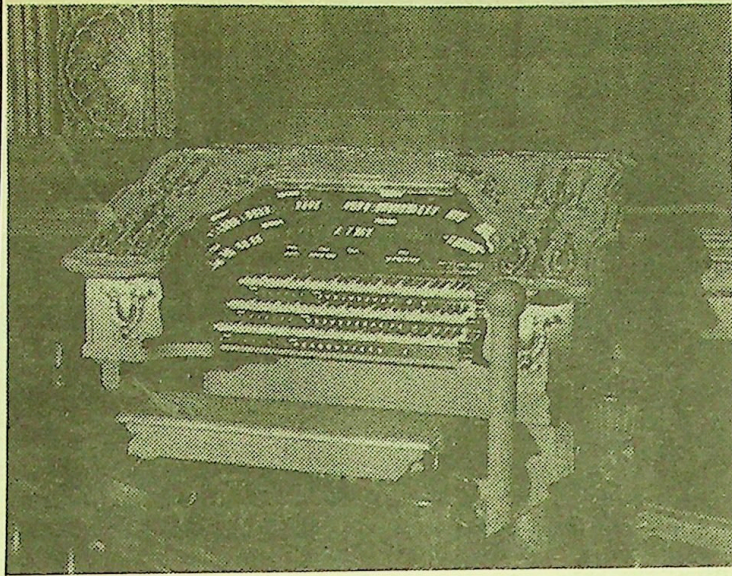
"We decided one of the best  
See STATE, Page 16

ways to sell the photographs and attract attention to the building is to show in one weekend, the State Theatre's versatility and viability as a performing arts building."

Walker, a professional theatrical producer, has put together a series of shows entitled "A Gala Evening At the State Theatre" for Friday and Saturday Oct. 22 and 23 at 8 pm.

It will include a performance of William Gibson's play, "American Primitive," starring Walker and Heidi Woodbury. Mark Brown, a WMU sophomore, is the assistant

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The Golden Voiced Barton Theatre Pipe Organ had been part of the State Theatre since it opened in 1927. It accompanied silent films and was played during intermissions.

Continued from Page 16

director of the play and Kitty Kachniewicz, a part-time WMU student is a cast member. Gail Lucht, a WMU theatre alumni, is also involved.

The Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra String Quartet will play opening night in the theatre's lobby between 7 pm and 8 pm. The lower and upper lobbies will be turned into an art gallery to show off Bevins'

documentation of the theatre and paintings of the interior by Craig Hendrix.

There will be a wine and cheese bar, a cocktail reception, tours of the theatre and a recital on the Golden Voiced Barton Theatre Pipe organ.

"If this is successful I will give more shows in that building," Walker said. "There's a lot of talent at

Western. And every student in theatre should have an opportunity to work in a building like that. The acoustics in that thing is perfect. You don't need a microphone.

"It will provide a great opportunity for Western to do something right in the heart of downtown Kalamazoo, reaching the city and the business people."

As an old historical theatre, Walker said it was a frequent touring stop for celebrities such as Jean Stapleton, Ethel Barrymore, Ernest Borgnine, James Dunne and Howard Fine, and for musicians such as Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong and Russ Morgan.

"If you tore that building down, you could never replace it," Walker said. "This building has a tremendous amount of performance and art possibilities. It could really give a boost to the downtown area."

Another reason why Walker wants to get the State Theatre functioning again is because as long as it is closed, the decorations will slowly deteriorate.

"There is a high degree of humidity that has already caused damage to the plaster," he said. "All that spanish decoration is beginning to peel. Boy, that will cost an arm and a leg today to try to get craftsmen to replace it."

# It's time to speak out on the

By DON W. CARLSON  
Gazette Entertainment Editor

## Seat/on the Aisle State

Perhaps now would be a good time to hear from the community's theater, music, ballet and other arts patrons on what should be done with Kalamazoo's imperiled State Theater.

We mean the people who buy the tickets — not the officials or others who are associated with or represent existing arts groups. Let's solicit the views of folks who plunk down the cold cash for the plays and concerts. Do they think this old but well preserved vaudeville and movie palace should be saved, and are they prepared to support the events which the theater could conceivably house?

That reaction is really the bottom line on the first organized move, launched here last week, to keep the venerable theater alive and functioning. Unless there is strong and visible support for the project, however worthy, it would be futile to push any save-the-State project with more than a ghost of a chance for success.

We're suggesting a "people speak out" approach because of an obvious division within the arts community on future use of the State.

From what we've gathered in numerous discussions about the downtown theater, there's strong support for saving the State as an alternative location for concerts and dance. There's substantially less support, possibly even quiet opposition, from existing theater groups, and that's not terribly surprising. When times are tough, as they are for the arts presently, who in their right mind wants some

competition down the street?

Still, on first hearing, it's a little shocking when Terry Williams, the new director of theater at Western Michigan University, says he wouldn't mind helping swing the wrecking ball on the State if he thought a new theater group might find a home there. On reflection, his honesty is refreshing, coming as it did in the midst of what some viewed as silence, double-talk or lip service on what's to be done about the theater.

From the very beginning, we've recognized that the principal reason the State's future is clouded is because the community really isn't hard-pressed for additional theater and concert facilities — we are better off by far than most communities of our size and larger. That fact cannot be ignored, and it looms large.

At the same time, we're also fully aware that every city that ever turned its back on a facility such as the State has ultimately regretted it. The State's future is irrevocably linked to the viability of the city center — and one doesn't have to go very far to find proof of that. How it can contribute to the central business area must be examined with the same diligence as any examination of its use as a performing arts center.

That brings the issue directly back to the city of Kalamazoo which, to our knowledge, has done little except to sponsor a meeting to try to get things rolling.

Use of the State has also raised an ancillary issue: With the continued development of theater, dance and other performing arts facilities at both Western Michigan University and Kalamazoo College, how far does the community really want to go in centering virtually all of its cultural life on campus?

As matters now stand, and despite honorable intentions, we don't think much of anything is going to come of the save-the-State efforts unless (a) there's a significant expression of support or (b) the arts and culture establishments and organizations can achieve a meeting of the mind on the matter.

# 10/13 \$600,000-plus State Theater plan boosted

A \$600,000-plus plan to buy and restore Kalamazoo's State Theater was given a major push this morning.

Meeting in the Kalamazoo City Commission chambers, the Save the State Theater Committee unanimously adopted a report recommending the purchase of the theater and its accompanying retail space. The theater would be used as a "special events center" beginning next September. The report is expected to be presented to the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo Thursday.

Under the plan, the Arts Council would operate the theater and hire a staff to run it.

The "loosely organized" committee is already negotiating a purchase price for the City of Kalamazoo to buy the old moviehouse from Butterfield Theaters. Committee member Duwain Hunt said the theater chain has sold 12 of its moviehouses in the last five years.

The new proposal envisions turning the 54-year-old downtown movie palace into a special events center to help draw people down-

town. The plan was drawn up by a special six-member committee named several weeks ago to assess the theater's future.

But there was already some opposition to a part of the plan. Committee member Robert Walker, and Harry Burns, owner of Status Galleries, criticized the plan saying that taxpayers could be subsidizing low rent for the small businesses in the theater building, and that the city would be criticized by other downtown merchants.

There was also a question whether the community would put

up the money for the effort. However, Barry Ross, concertmaster of the Kalamazoo Symphony, recalled that the community saved the tower at the Kalamazoo Regional Psychiatric Hospital "and they can't show a movie there."

Hunt said there's been "a tremendous outcry" within the community over the past six years to do something to save the theater, particularly after Butterfield chose to stop showing films.

(See STATE on Page A-7)

## State

(Continued from Page A-1)

The plan suggests a private and public sector fund drive to acquire the 1,589-seat theater, which stopped showing first-run movies last February.

Committee spokesman Gordon Smith said it would take \$600,000 to \$650,000 to buy the structure from Butterfield, make needed repairs and improvements and get the project rolling.

Asked how would the community benefit from the project, committee member Michael Doleski said it would be another step in revitalizing the downtown and would bring additional people into the central city. Doleski is the manager of the city's Community and Economic Development Division.

Doleski also said the subcommittee viewed the plan as "a community project, as distinguished from a City of Kalamazoo project," though he said the city would provide "some form of financial assistance" still to be ironed out.

The facility's best uses in the plan are seen as concerts, art exhibits, dance, lectures, social events such as fashion shows,

noontime brown bag concerts, meetings and as a convention auxiliary. Doleski said there could be senior citizen activities scheduled in the morning, organ concerts and noon and conventions at night.

Of 45 surveys sent out to local arts organizations, Doleski reported that as a result "48 to 64" events could be scheduled a year initially in the old theater. In response to a questioner, he hinted that the facility could report a deficit the first year.

The report said present tenants — eight stores and numerous offices — are encouraged to stay; they would be bringing in an estimated \$50,000 in revenue annually. Office space would be available to arts groups at a nominal fee.

Also suggested was a preliminary annual budget of \$97,000 to operate the theater. That would include \$59,000 in salaries and services, and \$38,000 for power, water, heat and trash.

Another \$30,000 in support funds would be needed to break even.

Other members of the special committee are Paul Ferrone and Diane Smusz.

## We stand corrected 10/4

When errors occur in the news columns of The Gazette, we want to correct them promptly and conspicuously. When errors of fact are brought to our attention, they will be corrected on this page.

A statement criticizing a plan to save the State Theater which was attributed to State Theater committee member Robert Walker and Status Galleries owner Harry Burns in Wednesday's Gazette should have only been attributed to Burns, Walker said.

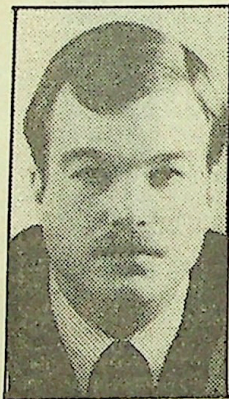
# Legitimate theater returns to the State

By DON W. CARLSON  
Gazette Entertainment Editor

## Seat/on the Aisle

Eric Benedict, Tim Benedict, Corene M. Kuffa, Stacey Haughton, Steve Kachniewicz and Beth Kachniewicz in supporting roles.

It's been ever so long since a real, live play was on stage at Kalamazoo's State Theater — long enough, certainly, for many Kalamazooans never to have seen a play there. Available records suggest the last "legitimate theater"



**Walker**

at the downtown movie palace was in 1950 when film star James Dunne starred in a touring production of "Harvey." That long absence will come to an end when the William Gibson play, "American Primitive," gets its first Kalamazoo staging Oct. 22-23 at the State. It is part of "A Gala Evening of Theater" being sponsored by Status Galleries, Ltd., and Unicorn Stages Art for the unveiling of Craig Hendrix's large painting of the theater's interior and a full-scale showing of Jim

Bevin's "photographic documentation" of the Kalamazoo landmark.

Since the death of vaudeville and the advent of talking pictures, the State has operated almost entirely as a movie theater. There have been occasional special stage presentations, the most recent being the annual summer vaudeville shows. Its career as a movie theater came to an end last February, and it is now being used sporadically as a site for concerts as efforts continue to turn it in a performing arts center.

Robert C. Walker, who is associated with Harry Burns in Status Galleries Ltd., is producing, directing and performing in "American Primitive" with his wife, Heidi Woodbury, as co-star. Both are well-known performers here, having had numerous roles in the past several years, but the Gibson play is a vital part of their theatrical background.

The complete title is "American Primitive (John and Abigail)" and is based on the letters of John and Abigail Adams which Gibson, author of "The Miracle Worker" and "A Cry of Players" put into a "sequential script for the theater, with an addenda in rhyme."

It was first produced at the Berkshire Theater Festival in Stockbridge, Mass., and later at Ford's Theater, Washington. Original productions starred Anne Bancroft as Abigail and James Broderick as John. The script was acclaimed by national critics as "bringing history to life," and Julius Novak of The New York Times hailed it as a play "full of humanity and love."

Walker and Woodbury starred in the show at a summer theater in Maine and subsequently toured the state in a production of it. Jeff Pillars and Gail Lucht also will be featured, with Mike Matusiak, Kitty Kachniewicz, Laura Chester,

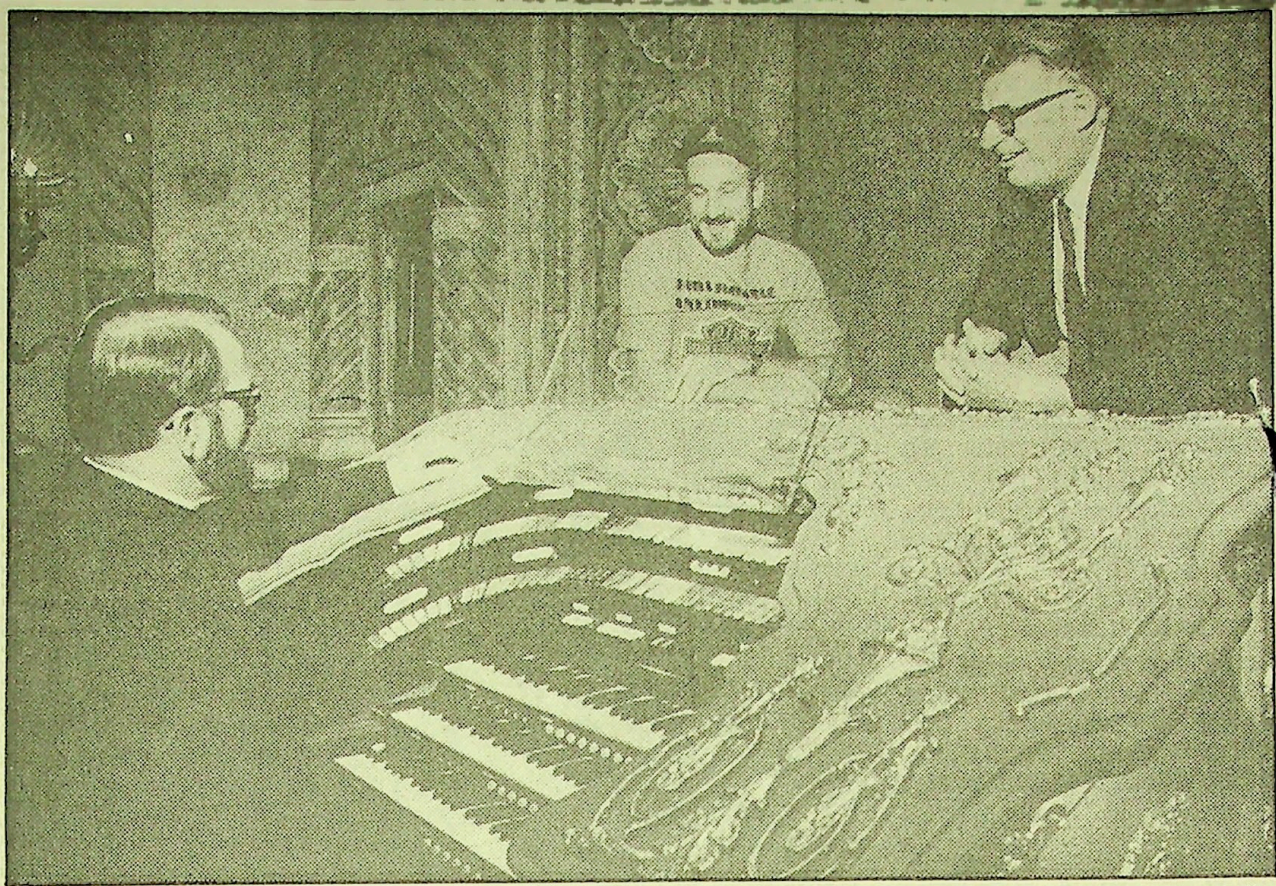
Walker will be making his Kalamazoo directing debut, assisted by Mark Brown and Jean Kenz. Karrie Benedict of the Kalamazoo Ballet Company is choreographer, the production also was designed by Walker, with graphic designs by James Dracy. Burns is serving as producer.

Doors and box office will open at 6 both Friday and Saturday, the art display and soda bar will open at 7. Pre-show entertainment both evenings will begin at 7 with the Colden String Quartet performing Friday and WMU Honors String Quartet playing Saturday. Both performances will start at 8:15, followed by a wine bar and hors d'oeuvres reception in the upper lobby, a slide show of theater photos by Bevin, display of Hendrix's acrylic painting and organ concert starting at 10:40. Yvonne Lowry will play Friday, William Mollema will be at the console Saturday.

*The Way We Were*

The San Antonio Siamese Twins vaudeville act shared the bill with a Norma Shearer film when this 1927 photo was taken of Kalamazoo's new State Theater building. Begun in 1926 and completed in 1927, the theater at Burdick and Lovell served downtown Kalamazoo until last March, when the movie operation was closed by W.S. Butterfield Theaters of Southfield. A local committee is studying ways to salvage the ornate theater. This view, looking west across Burdick Street, shows the building soon after it opened. Note the cardboard cutouts of the twins decorating the old-style marquee which was replaced during a 1964 remodeling program. The penny scale at right marks the entrance to Jack Dold's drugstore. The space is occupied by Holly's Grill today. Mounted on the corner of the building out of sight to the right is the 45-foot lighted sign which flashed the name of the theater until 1964.





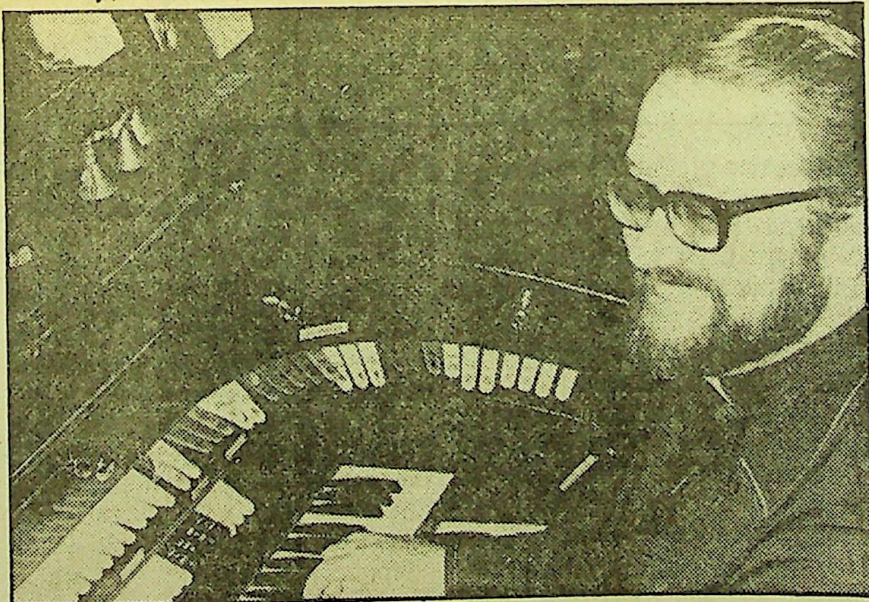
—Gazette photo by Jerry Campbell

## *Tuning up for tonight's show at State*

William Mollema (center) and Ken Butela listen approvingly as Father James Miller, a Ukrainian Orthodox priest from Fenton "tunes up" for tonight's Halloween show of silent comedies with organ accompaniment, singalong and organ concert at the State Theater. Miller offers a lively pro-

gram of popular organ music, wringing out all the extra theatrical gimmicks from the instrument which was lovingly restored by Mollema. Butela planned tonight's program which is being sponsored by the State Theater Vaudeville Committee. Nearly 150 theater organ enthusiasts from a wide area will be in the audience.

Sunday, October 24, 1982



### *Organ buffs coming for State show*

About 80 theater organ buffs from Michigan and Indiana are expected for the State Theater Vaudeville Committee's Gala Halloween Show to be held Saturday at 8 in the downtown movie palace — a program featuring Fr. James Miller, a Ukrainian Orthodox priest from Fenton at the console of the theater's Barton organ. Miller also will provide organ accompaniment for a singalong and two silent comedies, "Habeus Corpus" with Laurel and Hardy, and "Haunted Spooks," with Harold Lloyd.





# City asked to delay decision on theater

By MIKE MAGNER, Gazette Staff Writer

Kalamazoo city commissioners have been asked to postpone their decision on whether to take an option to purchase the State Theater at 404 S. Burdick.

Two weeks ago, commissioners said they would decide Monday whether to sign an option with W.S. Butterfield Theaters Inc. that would allow them to buy the 55-year-old theater for \$400,000.

The Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo said that if the city signed the option and later bought the property, it would agree to operate the theater, which was closed last February, as a "community special events center."

And a special "Save the State Theater Committee" agreed that if the city took an option on the theater, it would immediately begin a drive to raise \$650,000 to cover the purchase price and future operating costs.

City commissioners said they would consider signing the option agreement as long as it was understood that no city funds would be used to either buy or operate the theater.

Gordon Smith, chairman of the Save the State Theater Committee, wrote to commissioners last week and said members of the committee and the Arts Council's board of directors have decided they need more time "to discuss alternative approaches" to the theater project.

"At the outset, it should be noted that the Arts Council understands the commission's reluctance to acquire the theater and to be faced with the prospect of some operating subsidy," Smith wrote. "Clearly these are very difficult times with municipal budgets already being hard pressed to provide even essential services.

"Very simply stated, the Arts Council has determined that it needs additional time to explore in detail its own capacity to own and operate the theater or whether some other entity will need to be used for this purpose," he said.

"It is therefore requested that the City Commission defer any action on the option agreement which was recently presented to you until such time as the Arts Council has had sufficient opportunity to evaluate what its new course of action should be," Smith said. "I would expect that the Arts Council can file a progress report with you by the March 14 commission meeting."

City commissioners will still hold a special 4 p.m. meeting Monday, at which the theater option was originally scheduled to be discussed.

Items on the agenda will be a discussion of the role of citizen advisory boards and a discussion of membership on the Kalamazoo Municipal Golf Association.

**FOCUS: THEATER ORGANS** — A club with a special interest in theater organs is forming, with an organizational meeting planned for Friday at 8 p.m. at the Keyboard Center, 6125 S. Westnedge Ave.

Persons interested in theater, pipe and electronic organs and music are invited to attend. Future activities will include tours of theater organs in southwest Michigan and northern Indiana as well as tours to Chicago and Detroit. Concerts and social activities are also planned. The club will also assist in continued restoration of the State Theater's Barton organ. Further information is available from *Ken Butela* at 329-0500.

**SO THEY SAY** — "One nice thing about television is, it's a completely self-contained medium. It not only gives you a headache, but sells you cures for it, as well." — *Randolph Scott*, actor.

— *Compiled by Don W. Carlson*

## City ponders purchase of State Theater

A five-month option to purchase the State Theater at 404 S. Burdick will be considered by Kalamazoo city commissioners during a special 4 p.m. meeting Monday.

City Manager Robert Bobb is recommending that the city sign an option agreement to buy the theater building for \$400,000.

"The State Theater building is significantly important to the continued development of the central business district," Bobb said. "When marketed properly, the State Theater will help facilitate the importance of attractions to the vitality of the CBD."

Butterfield Theaters Inc. stopped showing first-run films in the 54-year-old downtown movie palace last February, but the company has been unable to line up a purchaser for the property.

Bobb admits there would be some risks for the city if it buys the theater, but he says he's hopeful that city ownership could be a "successful venture."

City commissioners will also consider a cemetery-marketing program during Monday afternoon's meeting.

## \$650,000 campaign being considered for State Theater

By MIKE MAGNER  
Gazette Staff Writer

A plan to save the State Theater at 404 S. Burdick was endorsed by Kalamazoo city commissioners Monday with the understanding that no city money will be committed to the project.

Commissioners agreed to consider signing an option to buy the 55-year-old theater building for \$400,000, as long as all funds for the purchase and future operation of the theater come from private sources.

The Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo has already agreed to operate the theater as a "community special events center" if the city agrees to buy it.

A special committee will also try to raise \$650,000 to cover the purchase price and future operating and renovation costs if the city signs the option to buy the theater, commissioners were told at a special afternoon meeting.

The commission voted 7-0 to have City Attorney Don Schmidt negotiate some changes in the proposed five-month option

agreement before final action is taken in two weeks. But commissioners stipulated that even if they sign the option agreement, no city funds will be used to purchase the theater or operate it in future years.

W.S. Butterfield Theaters Inc. stopped showing first-run movies in the State Theater last February, citing an inability to make a profit on the operation. Butterfield announced plans to sell the building, but no acceptable purchase offers were made.

Local arts groups and city officials then organized a "Save the State Theater Committee" last summer and began exploring ways to preserve the theater, which opened in 1927.

Butterfield officials have said they are willing to sell the theater to a non-profit organization like the Arts Council, but they would prefer to sell it to the city, said Gordon Smith, chairman of the theater committee, in a letter to commissioners.

(Continued from Page A-1)

Committee member Duwain Hunt noted that Butterfield has sold several of its theaters to cities in Michigan and those cities have contracted with private groups to handle the operations. Butterfield would prefer to work out a similar arrangement here, he said.

City commissioners suggested that the city could buy the theater with funds raised by the theater committee, then deed the building to the Arts Council later. They asked Schmidt to discuss that possibility with Butterfield officials.

Hunt said if the city signs the five-month option to buy the property, it would prevent Butterfield from selling it to someone else while the "Save the State" committee conducts a drive to raise \$650,000. The Arts Council is willing to pay the \$500 option fee, he said.

The theater committee is prepared to begin a fund-raising drive as soon as the option is signed, Hunt said. "Frankly, we'll know within a month (after an option is secured) if the funding is going to be available," he said.

If the fund-drive goal is met, \$400,000 would be used to buy the

theater and \$150,000 would be set aside for capital improvements, Hunt said.

The remaining \$100,000 would be used to meet the first year's operating costs and to hire a staff to develop a program for the theater, he said.

Hunt noted that the proposed option agreement would prohibit the new owner from showing first-run commercial movies at the State Theater for eight years, but "public release" films, including old Hollywood "classics," could be shown.

City Manager Robert Bobb said that about \$72,400 a year could be generated by the theater operation, with \$52,400 coming from businesses that lease space in the building, \$12,500 from auditorium rentals and \$7,500 from concessions.

However, operating expenses would be about \$118,300 per year, assuming that \$59,000 would go for a staff to operate the "special events center," Bobb said.

The commission's decision Monday not to commit any city funds for the project means that private sources would have to cover that operating deficit, even if the city buys the building, he said.



— Gazette photo by Jerry Campbell

## Senior services yule party draws big crowd to State

Hundreds of senior citizens Wednesday attended a Christmas party at the State Theater hosted by Senior Services Inc. Above, the group enjoys singing Christmas carols after Dr. Paul L. Maier, an author and professor of ancient history at Western Michigan University, finished telling a Christmas story titled "New Light on the Nativity." The program also

featured an organ recital by William Mollema and a program by the Kalamazoo Oratorio Society, which sang selections from "The Messiah." Richard Fink, executive director of Senior Services, was master of ceremonies. Several local florists donated poinsettias for the occasion.

# Holiday gala set for seniors

"Holidays With Friends" will be the title of a gala Christmas party for senior citizens Wednesday at the State Theatre.

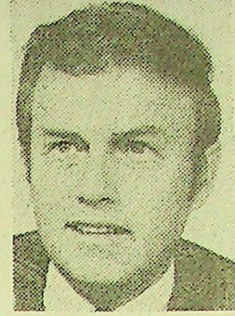
The party is Senior Services Inc.'s annual Christmas celebration for senior citizens. It is scheduled for 2 p.m. at the 406 S. Burdick theater. The program will begin with a recital by organist William Mollema.

A story of the first Christmas, entitled "New Light On The Nativity," will be presented by Dr. Paul L. Maier, an author and a professor of ancient history at Western Michigan University.

Maier, who holds a doctorate in philosophy, is the author of several books, including "First Christmas," a documentary on the Nativity. He is expected to relate little-known facts about the Nativity, using documentary photographs of Palestine.

Senior Services is encouraging senior citizens to take their noon meal at any of 14 meal sites that Senior Services maintains at area churches and community centers.

Paul Maier



A list of those sites is available from the agency.

The program will end with the Kalamazoo Oratorio Society singing selections from "The Messiah."

Richard Fink, executive director of Senior Services, will be master of ceremonies. Parking will be available at Bronson Methodist Hospital's new lot at Crosstown and Burdick. Shuttle buses will be provided to transport people to the theater.

Senior Services invites Kalamazoo County residents age 60 or older to attend. Reservations for lunch and the program can be made by contacting Senior Services at 616 Locust.

# STATE REMEMBRANCE DAYS!!! TONIGHT THRU SUNDAY!...

JOIN US AS WE RE-CREATE 55 YEARS OF ENTERTAINMENT WHEN GOING TO THE MOVIES WAS A MEMORABLE EVENT... THIS COULD BE YOUR LAST CHANCE TO VISIT THIS ELEGANT MOVIE PALACE!

FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS BY SCHAFFER FLOWERS

EVENINGS ADULTS 2.50 — CHILD 1.50 • AFTERNOONS ALL SEATS 1.50  
TICKETS AVAILABLE AT BOX OFFICE AS LATE AS SHOWTIME

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OLD TIME NEWS REEL — 25¢ POPCORN & SOFT DRINKS

THE SKY CLOUDS AND STARS SHINE FROM THE CEILING. THE ELEGANT FOUNTAIN SPARKLE WITH WATER. THE ORIGINAL SCENERY & DRAPES FROM THE VAUDEVILLE DAYS.

BILL MOLLEMA ROCK THE PLASTER WALLS WITH THE MAJESTIC BARTON THEATRE PIPE ORGAN.

AREAS OF THE THEATRE NEVER OPEN TO THE PUBLIC BEFORE. TOURS CONDUCTED BY THE "STATE THEATRE VAUDEVILLE COMMITTEE."

# SEE! HEAR! TOUR!

TONIGHT AT 7:00 P.M.

A NOSTALGIC MUSICAL-DRAMA (1938)

STARRING  
ALICE FAYE — DON AMECHE  
TYRONE POWER

# "IN OLD CHICAGO"

TOMORROW  
NIGHT  
PROGRAM STARTS  
7:00 P.M.

# STATE FAIR

ORIGINAL  
1938 VERSION

WILL ROGERS  
JANET GAYNOR

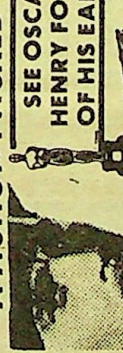
SUNDAY  
AT 2:00 P.M.

1938 MUSICAL DRAMA STARRING ALICE FAYE — DON AMECHE — TYRONE POWER  
"IN OLD CHICAGO" ALL SEATS \$1.50

TOMORROW AT 1:30 P.M.

KIDS & FAMILY MATINEE  
A ACTION PACKED WESTERN

SEE OSCAR WINNER  
HENRY FONDA IN ONE  
OF HIS EARLIEST FILMS



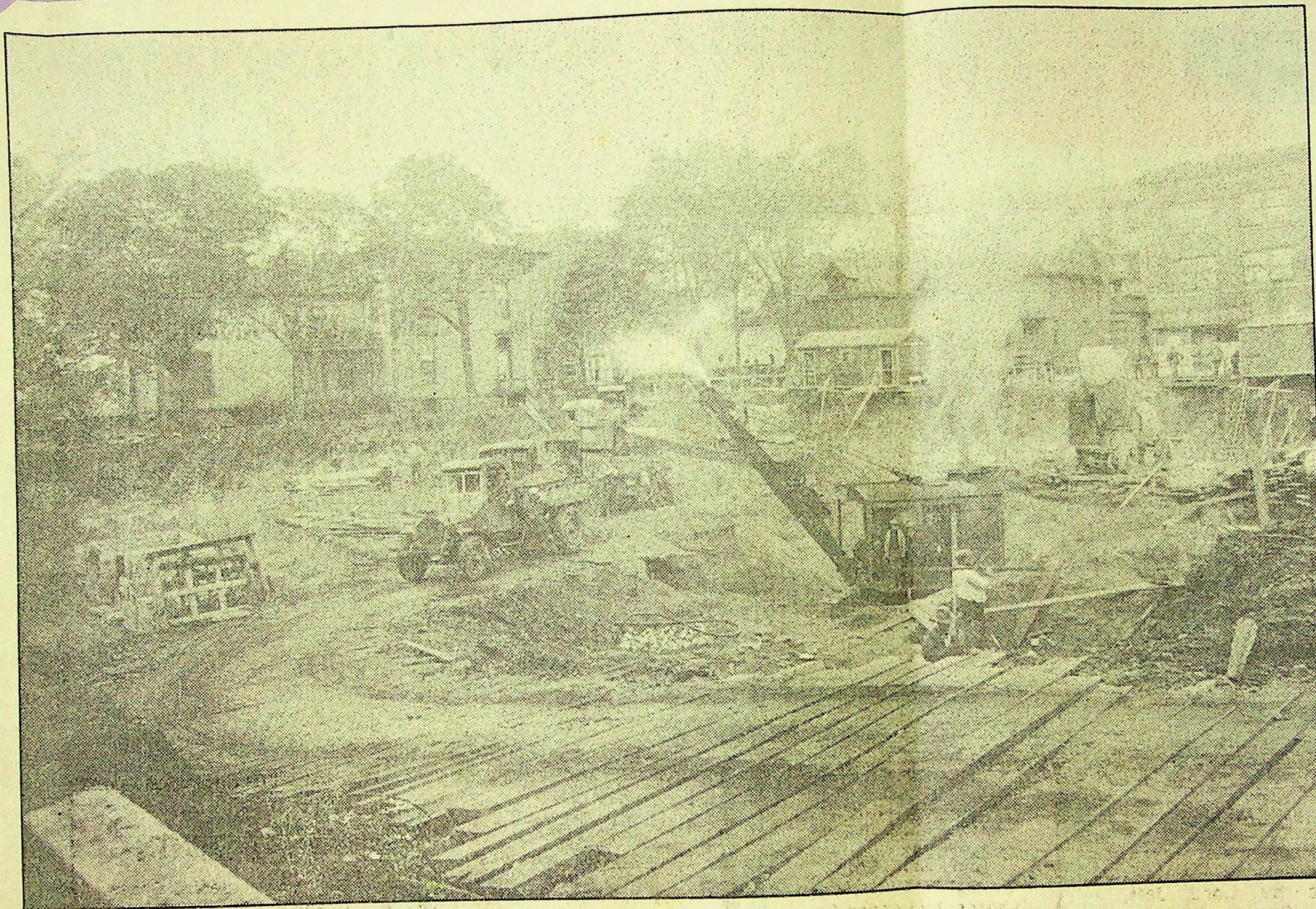
HENRY FONDA  
"THE RETURN OF  
FRANK JAMES"

ALL SEATS \$1.50  
25¢ POPCORN & SOFT DRINKS (1939)

GENE TIERNEY  
JACKIE COOPER  
HENRY HULL  
IT TOPS "JESSIE JAMES"  
IN ALL THE THRILLS OF  
AMERICA'S MOST  
LAWLESS ERA!

## The Way We Were

2-27-83



Back in the days when steam shovels were really powered with steam instead of diesel engines, a crew labored long and hard in the fall of 1926 to prepare the site at Burdick and Lovell streets for the State Theater Building.

Besides a view of some of the equipment used for heavy construction in the 1920s, the photograph also provides a rare unobstructed view of Lovell Street buildings.

In the background at right is the McNair Building and partly obscured by smoke is the brick house which today forms the nucleus of Cooper's Perfume & Handbag Shop.

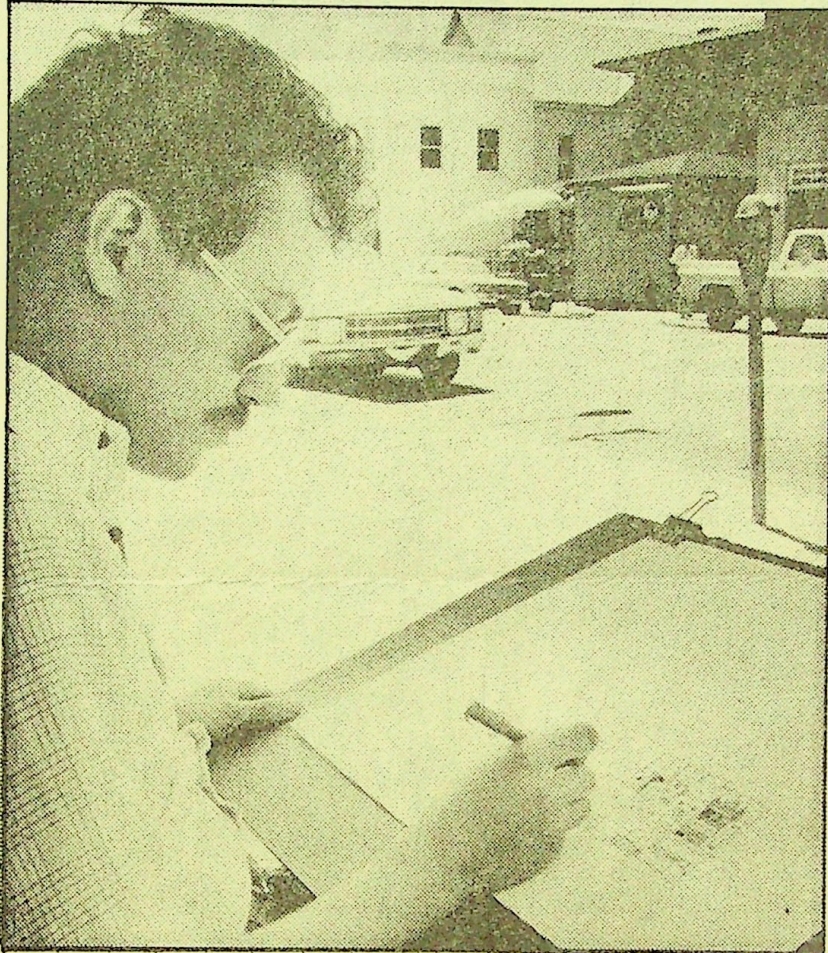
This example of southwestern Michigan's photographic memories is in the collection of Edgar Olson, retired vice president of Hastings Truck Co.

Olson said his firm hauled bricks and helped erect the boiler for the theater building.

If you have a photo from the past to share, contact the Gazette's Sunday editor.



Wednesday, August 10, 1983



— Gazette photo by Jerry Campbell

## *Stated objective*

Former Kalamazooan Paul McNally, at home on vacation from his studies at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, Calif., pauses on Burdick Street to ink a drawing of Kalamazoo's landmark State Theater Tuesday afternoon. McNally, the son of Kenneth and Geraldine McNally, 3316 St. Joseph, ushered and cashiered at the State when first-run films were shown there. He said he wants to include the drawing in a book.

STATE THEATRE "REMEMBRANCE DAYS", APRIL 2, 3, & 4

The State Theatre, which has been dark since March 14, 1982, will turn on its lights for what could be the last time on April 2, 3, and 4, when W. S. Butterfield Theatres will present a tribute to the old time movie palace. As the lights go on one more time, patrons will have an opportunity to go back 55 years to a time when going to the movies was a real event, to a time when half of the show was just walking into the theatre itself.



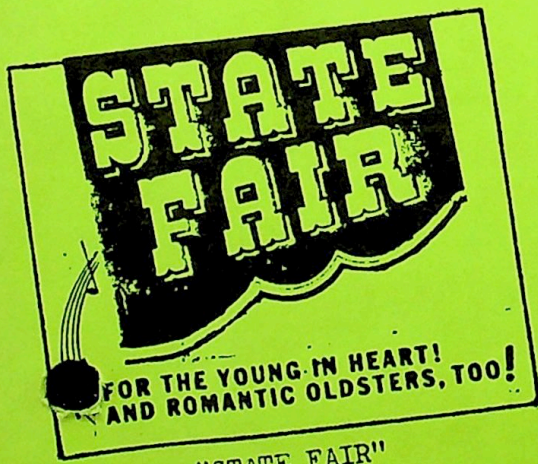
The State, located on the corner of Burdick and Lovell Streets, on the south end of the Kalamazoo Mall, opened on July 19, 1927, and operated continuously until early March. Unlike many other old downtown theatres, the State has not become rundown and tawdry, nor has it been extensively remodeled. The original scenery and drapes still hang on the stage from the old vaudeville days. Live organ music still shakes the plaster walls. The sky clouds and stars still shine from the ceiling, and the elegant fountain in the auditorium still sparkles with water.

The special program on April 2, 3, and 4 will feature the films STATE FAIR (1933) starring Will Rogers, Janet Gaynor, and Louise Dresser - THE RETURN OF FRANK JAMES (1940), starring Henry Fonda, Gene Tierney and Jackie Cooper and IN OLD CHICAGO (1938), starring Alice Faye, Don Ameche and Tyrone Power.

Live organ concerts will precede and follow each film showing, and patrons will be able to gaze at the many backdrops, the clouds and stars, and the statesque fountain. A final highpoint will be behind the scenes guided tours of the theatre following each film. Patrons will be able to step into the dressing rooms used by such great stars as Helen Hayes and Ethel Barrymore. Tread the boards, and stand in the spotlight where Blackstone once performed miracles.

The Friday and Saturday evening programs will be \$2.50 for adults and \$1.50 for children. On Saturday and Sunday afternoons, all seats will be \$1.50.

Advance tickets go on sale Wed. March 31. Boxoffice open Wed. & Thurs. 11:30 - 5:30, Fri., 11:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m., Sat. boxoffice 1:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m., Sun. 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. Special 25¢ popcorn & 25¢ soft drinks will be available at the concession stand.



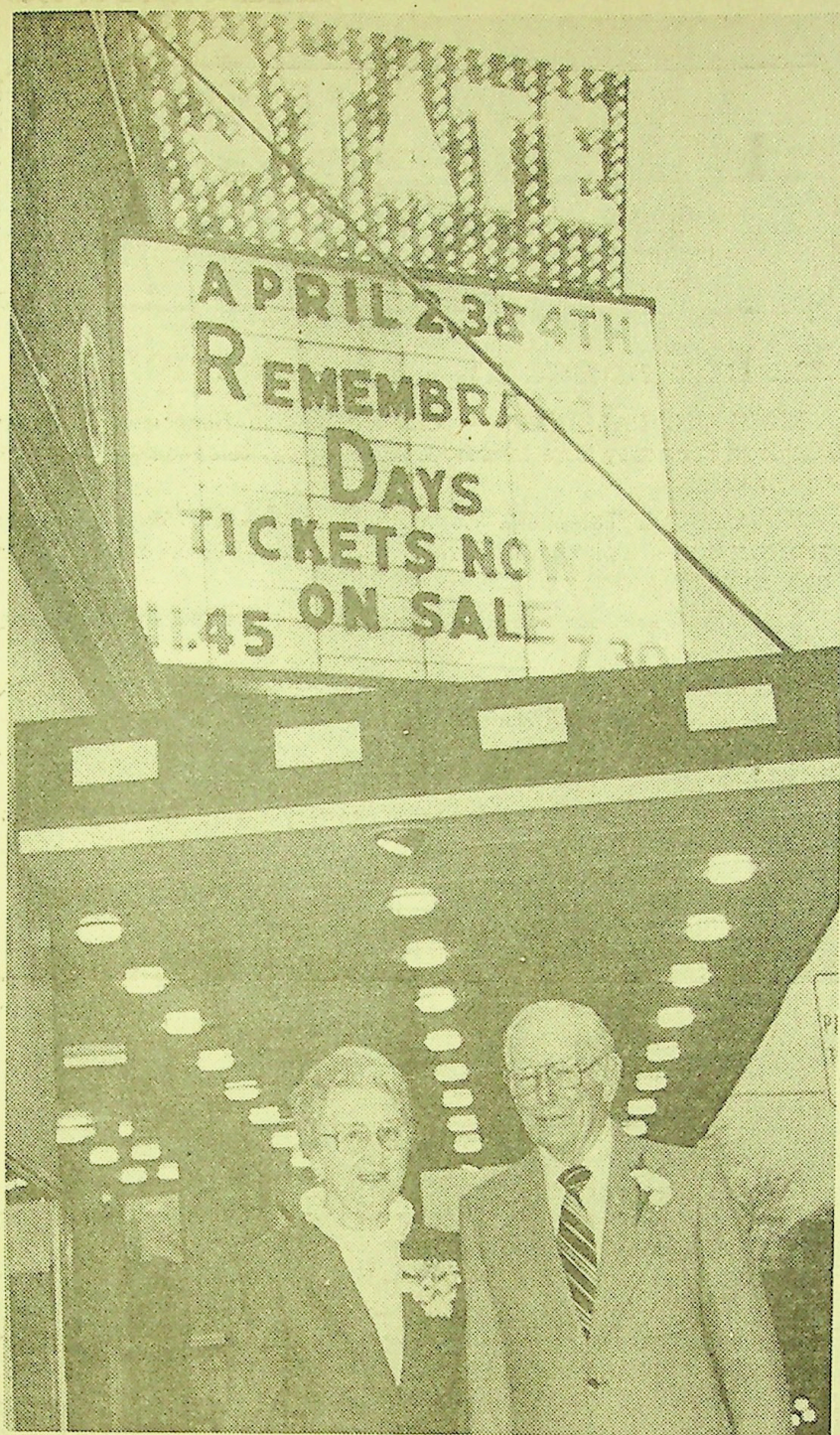
"STATE FAIR"  
SHOWN SATURDAY EVENING  
ONLY AT 7:00 P.M.



"IN OLD CHICAGO"  
SHOWN FRIDAY AT 7:00 P.M.  
& SUNDAY AT 2:00 P.M.



"THE RETURN OF FRANK JAMES"  
SHOWN SATURDAY MATINEE ONLY  
AT 1:30 P.M.



—Gazette photo by Bucky Mitchell

## *They recall opening night*

Bernadine Koerts and Glenn J. Endsley were dating when the State Theater opened its doors on July 19, 1927, and attended the opening night at Kalamazoo's elegant new movie palace. Later, both were wed to other people, Bernadine to Sheridan Sugden for 40 years. Three years ago, after both had lost their mates, Bernadine and Glenn married. Last night they came back to the State for its first "Remembrance Days" programs this weekend. Now residing in the Marlborough Apartments, Mrs. Endsley reported they enjoyed the visit to the "lovely old theater immensely." The downtown landmark recently ended nearly 55 years as a regularly operating vaudeville, legitimate and movie theater. The remembrance programs will continue through Sunday afternoon.

## Theater Page Mailbag

Theater Page Editor:

I was born and reared in Kalamazoo and the great State Theater was an important part of my environment.

Remembering the beauty of the building, dancing on the stage, the "gold" organ rising from the floor and played by Clarence L. and Buddy Taylor, Heath the stage manager and Weiss the projectionist and many more memories, I must urge you and the people of Kalamazoo to help preserve the beautiful historical building.

The Kalamazoo Gazette sponsored the great prizes to the first born Leap Year Baby in 1920. I won! So you see, I have confidence and pride in Kalamazoo, the Kalamazoo Gazette and the people of Kalamazoo.

Please save the State Theater.

Geraldine Walker Firme, 2821 Stanford Lane  
El Dorado Hills, Calif. 95630.

## The State's final curtain

To the Editor:

I have been reading about the demise of the State Theater and it brought sadness to me and of course memories of the many, many times I attended movies and other events there. I was there on opening day. So many great movies with great acting people appeared on the screen.

There was an era when big bands appeared on the stage, such as Little Jack Little and Charles Buddy Rogers.

Then there was the time I was in the gallery with my opera glasses trained on that wonderful actress Ethel Barrymore performing in "The Corn is Green." And still another time when an announcement of the winning number of a ticket on a new car was called out. The woman in the audience who held the ticket just went wild with exhilaration.

Let's not forget the wonderful organ music with the words flashing on the screen and audience singing along. Also those fine magicians who performed such wonderful feats.

I took my nephew to the State and he said: "This place doesn't have a roof." With all these memories I bid the State a fond adieu.  
RAYMOND PETTUS, 3931 Adams.

## State can be saved

To the Editor:

Recently I read in the Gazette of the planned closing of the State Theater. I must admit that this angers me greatly. Some of my fondest childhood memories were about the State.

I can remember standing in a long line in pouring rain with my brothers and sisters waiting to see an Elvis Presley movie. The last time I remember a crowd like that was for "The Poseidon Adventure."

Since then I've been to the State several times, and the thing that always strikes me the most is how beautiful it is. I can't imagine Kalamazoo without it! I know hard times have befallen her, but she's like a fine old ship and it would be a sin to put her in mothballs.

I feel anyone with half a brain can save her. I ask not only the people of Kalamazoo, but the city commissioners and the mayor of Kalamazoo to help any way they can.

To the Butterfield Theater Corp., I suggest a wider array of entertainment. Why just show movies and an occasional event? Try more live entertainment with big name stars. Don't say it can't be done, because if Wings Stadium, Miller Auditorium and Read Field House can do it, then so can you!

Also try not showing the same thing at two theaters, such as "Mommie Dearest." Use a better selection of movies and material. Maybe try having an organist play during intermission and use part of the upper floor as a museum showing how the State was built and some of the entertainers who played there.

To Mayor Annen and the city commissioners, I suggest an immediate tax break for the State Theater. In order to survive, all downtown businesses must consider staying open longer, preferably until 9 p.m. Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.

It is my belief that this is why the downtown business district is slowly dying. If you are having problems with hookers and unlikables then it's up to you, and only you as owners, to run these people out of the area.

As my final comment to the people of Kalamazoo and the business people of Kalamazoo, if the State closes its doors, which business will go next? Yours! Some day I would like as a part of the great American Dream, to write the great American novel, have it made into a greater movie and have its premiere at the State Theater! DENNY OLSON, 7675 Whispering Brook, Portage.