



From the President

Spring is sprung (finally) and many of our members are fully engaged in activities for preservation, education and



furthering the mission of ORHPA. Be sure to join us this Thursday night for our April monthly meeting. Our guests will be the new owners of the Grove Theater - High Places Community Church. They are doing some exciting things with the historic building for the future and I am looking forward to hearing about their plans (read article to the right). Also, several of our committee chairs will give updates on their efforts. So let's all be in attendance to see what each of us can do to help our group.

Don't forget, our own Bill Wilcox will be featured on FOX News this Sunday night, April 15th. Bill recently hosted Col. Oliver North in Oak Ridge. Col. North interviewed Bill about the Manhattan Project and his interview will be featured on the program "War Stories with Oliver North" this Sunday night at 10 pm on FOX News. Bill's efforts are invaluable and I want to thank him on all he does for our community!

Keith McDaniel
ORHPA President

Grove Theater renovation and plans to be featured at ORHPA April 12 meeting

Rev. Martin Fischer and Liz Batchelor, of High Places Community Church, will be the guest speakers for the April 12 meeting of the Oak Ridge Heritage and Preservation Association. High Places Community Church purchased the Grove Theater on February 27, 2004 and is currently renovating the historic building. They will report on their progress and future plans for the Grove. The ORHPA monthly meeting will begin at 7pm and is open to the public.

An Article from the Grove Theater/High Places Community Church website

The Grove Theater in Oak Ridge, Tennessee is a place of history that holds many wonderful memories for Oak Ridgers. A review of ownership indicates that the federal government built the original theater in 1942. Oak Ridge Theaters, Inc. purchased the theater in 1957 when the government started selling homes to the residents and some government-held property to private enterprise. Additional theaters were added to the complex in 1977, 1979 and in 1998. Cinemark Inc. of Dallas, Texas purchased the Grove Theater from Oak Ridge Theaters, Inc. in conjunction with the construction of the Tinseltown Theater in the city center area. Because Cinemark bought the Grove Theater to eliminate competition in Oak Ridge, the building remained unoccupied until it was purchased by High Places Community Church on February 27, 2004.

High Places Community Church is a non-denominational church that was formed in 1990. As a native Oak Ridger, the church pastor, Reverend Martin Fischer, frequented the Grove Theater. Although it is not practical for the church to renovate and use the entire space as theaters, there is a strong interest in retaining at least part of the Grove Theater's historical value. Preliminary plans are to renovate in such a way that the building could be used for both church and community purposes, particularly (but not exclusively) in serving the needs of youth and children.

Currently, the Grove Theater hosts numerous community activities and groups, including the Sound Company Youth Choir, guitar lessons, yoga, Aikijutsu training, and much more. In the fall of 2006, the church was approached by members of the community regarding its unfinished 600 seat auditorium. With the high school auditorium undergoing renovation in 2007, the church was asked to consider a partnership with local representatives from the performing arts. This relationship would entail renovating the large auditorium and working together with the arts community to schedule and host performances, practices, and special events—particularly during the high school renovation when many of these groups will be without space, but also with a steady eye toward the future and opportunities for collaboration.

At present, High Places Community Church is not large enough to complete the renovation process in its entirety, and funding is being sought to make this community performing arts auditorium a reality. Labor has been secured and donated free of charge through Morgan County Correctional Center. To date, many portions of this project have been donated or promised, with more assistance being sought currently.