

# THE GRIFFIN

NEWSLETTER OF THE HISTORIC IRONWOOD THEATRE

SUMMER 2020



Dear Friends,

I write you with so many emotions to describe the realities we face in our community. The challenges, fear, sadness and worry are a few of them. However, what I would rather focus

on are those things which make the arts persevere – joy, belief, endurance and hope. Hope that the theatre will continue to be a driving force in our lives and community. Hope that everyone views what is happening – not just to us but to everyone – as simply a pause button. A pause button that will allow us to come out whole on the other side. The arts have been, and will always be, the center where everyone can leave their troubles outside the door. HIT is committed to always being that place.

In an effort to follow the guidelines required of us, be responsible to and for our community, and to respect the health and safety of our patrons, crew, volunteers and staff, we have canceled all shows through June. Please watch our website and Facebook for further updates.

The theatre continues to incur utilities and other fixed costs. An unexpected cost is a \$6,600 HVAC heating coil that needs to be replaced this summer. A planned cost was to refurbish the big IRONWOOD marquee this spring. That beautiful sign is showing signs of wear, and the board deemed its maintenance a priority, to avoid serious damage. A repair bid of \$3,770 was delayed due to closed doors and loss of budgeted monies.

Volunteers have been working on many projects in the theatre. The remodeling of the green room began in February when Mark and Lynn of Chelsi's Corner donated a beautiful set of furniture. New toilet surrounds, new cabinets, paint and more have transformed a dreary room into a light, warm and welcoming space for our artists to gather before a show. A huge thank-you to our volunteers and community service workers for all their hard work.

The grant team continues to meet every Monday morning via Zoom. Their focus has changed to COVID 19 Disaster Relief Grants and Loans. Thus far they have successfully received the SBA Payroll Protection Program and are awaiting word on more. Through smart strategic and financial planning for the past two years, HIT can maintain

## PHILANTHROPIST HONORED FOR HIT CONTRIBUTIONS

The late Gus Swanson was admired for his selfless gifts as an educator and for his generosity and philanthropic spirit throughout the Ironwood community. He funded hundreds of scholarships for students to attend college over the years through the Ironwood Area Scholarship Foundation, Gogebic Community College Foundation and Stout University Foundation.



GUS SWANSON

Gus Swanson also supported many local organizations such as American Legion Post 5, Carnegie Library, Regional Hospice, HOPE Animal Shelter, Domestic Violence Escape Inc., the Salvation Army, *Historic Ironwood Theater*, Theater North, Ironwood High School music programs and other programs at the Luther L. Wright K-12 School.

Donations totaling \$34,350 were made to HIT between 1990 - 2015. Another \$10,000 was given in December 2019. An additional \$15,000 or more will be distributed in the near future, representing nearly \$60,000 in gifts to HIT.

Gus Swanson touched many people in many ways and made a significant difference in their lives. 🦋

a strong financial profile through the end of our fiscal year (9-30-2020) without ticket sale revenues and fundraising. But our savings won't last indefinitely and your support is always needed and appreciated. The good news is that your donation will be tax-deductible even if you do a simple tax form.

Keep the hope and faith, give what you are able and we look forward to seeing you soon. 🦋

Stay Healthy,

HIT Board President

# WELL-ROUNDED COMMUNITIES START WITH WELL-ROUNDED KIDS.

The arts open doors for children to walk through with confidence. At HIT we know there is an infinite amount of potential just waiting to be discovered in every kid. Our young adult programs are booked solid every time they are offered.

Leaving a legacy provides an important source of support towards safeguarding the work of HIT for future generations. Leaving a legacy is something that absolutely anyone can do and it will provide essential support for every aspect of HIT's work both on stage and off, from productions and projects to the development of community events.

Your gift will protect and nurture the work of the Historic Ironwood Theatre by:

- **Inspiring audiences** by showcasing local talent, The Awkward Stage Drama Club, HIT Idol talent show, Summer Children's Theatre, High School Band and Choir performances, local dance studios' recitals, and summer Brown Bag Concerts.



BETSY WESSELHOFT, FORMER HIT BOARD PRESIDENT WITH GRANDDAUGHTER, CAROLYN

- **Increasing public engagement and understanding** of theatre through community organizations' fundraising events, theatre rentals for presentations and private ceremonies, affordable ticket prices for quality entertainment — all of which contribute to the experience of seeing a performance.

- **Supporting the next generation of theatre practitioners** through providing apprenticeships and training seminars on behind-the-scenes theatrical productions for lighting and sound. These experiences enable participants of all ages to discover new skills and experience the excitement of theater-making through imaginative and innovative activities.

With contributed revenue accounting for our entire organizational budget, your support is more than appreciated – it is critical. You are our greatest advocates and partners in our mission to produce extraordinary theatre experiences that educate, challenge, and inspire young people and their communities. 📖

**MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY GIVING, IF NOT NOW, IN THE FUTURE. LEAVE A LEGACY.**

## HIT GHOST LIGHT IS ON

Have you ever heard of a "ghost light"?

In theatrical tradition, a ghost light is a small, single bulb light, usually a floor lamp of some sort, that shines on the dark stage throughout the night when the theater is closed and unoccupied.

It is said that every theater has a ghost. The ghost light provides light at night for any spirits to be able to see and even "perform" or dance on the stage.

Even though the impact of the coronavirus has reached our theatre, the arts themselves continue to function as a ghost light in this time of uncertainty, separation and grief. 📖

## MARQUEE MAINTENANCE

The May scheduled repair of the 1928 original iconic Ironwood marquee had to be postponed due to lack of ticket sales and fundraising this summer.

The repair bid is \$3,770 for new LED lights, new paint and neon. If you would like to see the lights remain on in downtown Ironwood, your cash, check, or credit card donation would be appreciated. 📖



**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the ARTS**  
arts.gov

Operation of the Historic Ironwood Theatre is supported in part by a grant from the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs and the National Endowment for the Arts.

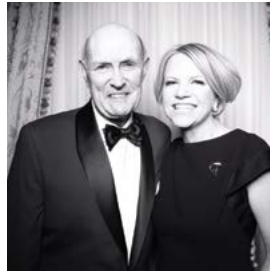
Griffin layout/design by SHARPGRAPHICDESIGN.COM

# Amazing Grace HOW SWEET THE SOUND

by Bruce Greenhill, Ops Manager



KENT LAABS OF SOUNDWORKS SYSTEMS  
INSTALLING THE CENTER CLUSTER



DON AND ABBY FUNK



DOUG AND JOAN BORCHERDT

In January of this year we completed the installation of our state-of-the-art sound system, a project that was supported in part by a Capital Improvement grant from the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs (MCACA).

The equipment is by Danley Labs and installation by Soundworks Systems of Stevens Point, WI. Planning took more than two years, which included blueprint reviews, engineering consultation, and extensive computer modeling. The system consists of main left and right house speakers, three speakers along the stage lip, a center cluster for even sound disbursement into the balcony, a large sub-woofer in the pit, and amplifiers and processors which are mounted in the basement. The installation took an entire week of 12+ hour days after weeks of preparation including shelf and conduit installation and provision of new electrical supply points.

We were determined that HIT's beauty would not be compromised, while assuring great, precision sound. We are grateful for the MCACA grant, for Don and Abby Funk for their challenge match, for Doug and Joan Borcherdt's

generous contribution, and for all who donated to the fundraising effort. Thanks to great planning, the right equipment, patient, professional installation, and hundreds of volunteer hours, we believe we achieved what we set out to provide – a system that offers unmatched sound yet with no compromise to the visual aesthetics of our beautiful theatre.

Anyone who heard the system debut at the ABBA Mania concert will no doubt agree - but don't take our word for it, read what Larry had to say: *"OMG! What an amazingly excellent sound system at the HIT! Almost unbelievable it is so good. Not just good, but GREAT. It's clear, precise, with true precision, clarity, and full sound spectrum definition the likes of which would be hard to surpass. And yet for all of its full range of the sound perspective it is NOT shrill or piercing. Nor is its precision diminished at lower volumes. Absolutely astonishing! The transformation of sound quality is almost unbelievable. The HIT never sounded so precise and marvelous!"* Quote from Larry Sands after he attended the Abba Mania show January 30, 2020. 🎧

## IN MEMORY OF HIT VOLUNTEER DOUG DOXEY

Doug recently passed away in Milwaukee, WI following a short illness. Doug was the theatre's head concessionaire these past several years. He was one of those dependable volunteers every organization wishes was part of their team. Doug was our chief popcorn-maker and kept our water and soda cooler filled and made sure that we never ran out of candy.

We were blessed to have him as a volunteer and as a friend. The Historic Ironwood Theatre will miss his services. Thank you, Doug, for all you did; but more importantly - for being our friend. RIP 🎧



DOUG DOXEY

## CARES ACT TO AID THEATRE DONORS

We received some guidance from National Endowment for the Arts on charitable giving impact on your taxes for this year.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) was signed into law on March 27, 2020, providing unprecedented government relief in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The law contains provisions that are relevant to charitable giving, both directly and indirectly.

For the 2020 tax year, individuals can deduct any cash contributions made to qualified charitable organizations, up to 100% of their adjusted gross income (AGI). Deductions for cash donations were previously limited to 60% of the taxpayer's AGI.



Individuals who take the standard deduction can claim an above-the-line tax deduction for cash donations to qualified charitable organizations, up to \$300. Always check with your tax advisor and thank you for your generosity! 🎧



# TICKETS & OTHER INFO



## THEATRE BOX OFFICE

906-932-0618

PLEASE CALL BOX OFFICE AND LEAVE A MESSAGE.  
WE WILL RETURN YOUR CALL.

IRONWOOD THEATRE, INC.  
PO Box 187  
IRONWOOD MI 49938



[www.ironwoodtheatre.net](http://www.ironwoodtheatre.net)



[info@ironwoodtheatre.net](mailto:info@ironwoodtheatre.net)



Non-Profit Org  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
Ironwood, MI  
Permit #9

The theatre is so endlessly fascinating because it's so accidental. It's so much like life."

*Arthur Miller, American playwright*

## GETTING IT DONE IN THE DARK

If it be true that idle hands are the devil's workshop then we at HIT are doing our bit to keep the dark one away.

While the theatre is dark, our staff and volunteers continue to tackle projects that are difficult to do when the theatre is functioning normally. Engaging just one person at any given time, we have so far:

- shampooed auditorium carpet
- polished chair backs and arm rests
- painted the Green Room
- added Green Room cabinets and shelves
- created an extra artist dressing room
- continued basement clean-up

- organized and labeled microphone and other sound equipment storage
- replaced light bulbs and cleaned lighting fixtures
- painted the office. The office project did involve two volunteers - office manager Lori Hendges and her husband Rich. Since they are from the same household, and we isolated them from all others, we figured it was safe to proceed.

**THANKS** to all the volunteers who continually help us maintain this remarkable 92-year-old gem. We couldn't do it without you!



BRUCE GREENHILL



RICH HENDGES



LORI HENDGES

