

Media Clips

Friends of the Drexel, Inc.

Columbus Dispatch
June 24, 2010

Filmmakers set for Drexel event

Friends of the Drexel, a nonprofit organization formed last year to "secure the future" of the Drexel Theatre in Bexley, is planning a Sept. 1 fundraising gala, featuring a visit from two Ohio-born filmmakers. Josh Radnor, star of television's *How I Met Your Mother*, and producer Jesse Hara -- both Bexley natives -- are set to attend the central Ohio premiere of *HappyThankYouMorePlease*, written and directed by Radnor, who also stars.

Parties are planned before and after the screening at the Drexel, 2254 E. Main St. The film, a coming-of-age drama set in New York, won an Audience Award in January at the Sundance Film Festival.

The movie's distributor, Hannover House, plans to release it Sept. 3 in more than 30 cities, including Columbus.

The event will benefit Friends of the Drexel, headed by Richard Stoff, president of the Ohio Business Roundtable.

The Friends' 14-member board of directors includes E. Gordon Gee, president of Ohio State University; Don Casto, a real-estate developer; and Robert Lazarus Jr., a former executive for the department store.

The Drexel, which has struggled during the economic downturn, has been owned and operated by Jeff and Kathy Frank since 1981.

Friends of the Drexel eventually hopes to renovate the movie house, which opened in 1937, and establish nonprofit status for the theater.

"Sometimes, these things have a little bit more of a gestation period," Stoff said.

"As we have discussed with the Franks and other stakeholders, the Friends of the Drexel would effectively become the successor corporation to the Drexel management company.

"The theater itself would convert to nonprofit status."

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Infobox

Ticket details

Tickets to the Friends of the Drexel gala -- \$125 and \$500 -- include a post-screening "back lot" party attended by Josh Radnor and Jesse Hara. The more-expensive ticket includes premium seating and admission to a pre-movie gathering with the filmmakers. Sponsorship packages, starting at \$2,500, are also available. Those interested should e-mail friendsofthedrexel@gmail.com.

This Week In Bexley

July 1, 2010

Bexley natives to premiere award-winning film at Drexel

The Sundance audience award-winning film "happythankyoumoreplease," written, directed and starring Josh Radnor and produced by Jesse Hara, who grew up together in Bexley, will hold its premiere at the Drexel Theatre. Radnor, best known as the star in the CBS television series "How I Met Your Mother," is the son of Bexley residents Alan and Carol Radnor. Donna and Abe (Hani) Hara, also of Bexley, are the parents of Hara, the film's producer.

The premiere will benefit Friends of the Drexel, the new independent nonprofit organization whose mission is to secure and sustain the future of the historic Drexel Theatre as a distinctive cultural asset to Bexley and the greater Columbus community.

The coming-of-age tale follows six lives in modern-day New York, highlighted by a 20-something aspiring novelist who accidentally adopts a 6-year-old African-American child. The film was presented at this year's Sundance Film Festival and won the Sundance Audience Award. It will open in theatres around the country after Labor Day.

The Friends of the Drexel Premiere event will be held Wednesday, Sept. 1 at the Drexel. Both Radnor and Hara are expected to attend.

A committee chaired by Bonnie Milenthal has been formed to plan the activities for the evening and to encourage support for Friends of the Drexel, Inc.

Sponsorships are available and individual tickets are \$500 per ticket and \$125 per ticket. Guests will have the opportunity to be among the first to view the film and to attend a gala "Back Lot" party immediately following with Radnor and Hara.

"Once Josh heard about the Friends of the Drexel effort, he wanted to be part of its mission to help stabilize the theatre he so loved during his growing up years," said Carol Radnor, Josh's mom. Jesse Hara noted, "It's truly a dream come true to see something we both created on the marquee of the Drexel and to feel the support from our home town."

"We are grateful to Josh, Jesse and their wonderful families for helping us launch our campaign to secure the future of the Drexel," said Friends of the Drexel board chairman Richard Stoff. "With our business planning effort almost complete, we imagine the Drexel of the future as a sustainable provider of unique arts content and a vibrant community meeting place, preserving the charm and eclectic, neighborhood film-going experience of the theatre, in a warm and inviting yet technologically-advanced facility."

The board of Friends of the Drexel, Inc. was formed last summer and is led by Business Roundtable president Stoff and his wife, Carol Zelizer Stoff, an attorney and Bexley native. The board is comprised of other civic leaders who have joined hands on behalf of the Drexel: Mike Canter, Don Casto, Gordon Gee, Babette

Gorman, Artie Isaac, Lucinda Kirk, Robert Lazarus Jr., Thomas Mack, Bonnie Milenthal, Susan Quintenz, Mari Sunami, and Miriam Yenkin. The board is independent of but coordinates closely with the Drexel's current owners -- Jeff and Kathy Frank.

Bexley News

January 5, 2010

Community group comes together to support Bexley theater

By LAURA ENGLEHART

Published: Tuesday, January 5, 2010 5:27 PM EST

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A group of Bexley residents is uniting to help support the city's Drexel Theatre. Friends of the Drexel Inc. has filed for nonprofit status.

Following a tough year for the Drexel Theatre in Bexley, a group of patrons has formed to keep its marquee bright in the future.

This summer, community members in Bexley met with Jeff Frank, president of the Drexel Theatres Group, to work out a plan for the movie theater, 2254 E. Main St.

Frank said the economy and changes in the movie industry had clipped business. He and his wife, Kathy Frank, have co-owned and operated the theater for 29

years. Their second location in Grandview Heights closed in September 2008.

The Bexley facility remains open, though the difficult economy has taken a toll on it.

Since the summer, Richard Stoff and his wife, Carol Stoff, have led efforts to revitalize the Bexley landmark, which is more than 70 years old.

"The Drexel Theatre is part of the fabric of the community. It's what makes Bexley very unique," said Mr. Stoff, who has lived with his wife in the city for 35 years. Mrs. Stoff grew up in Bexley. Other community members, such as E. Gordon Gee, president of the Ohio State University, have joined to form a board of directors for Friends of the Drexel Inc., and the group has filed for nonprofit status.

Bonnie Milenthal, a board member and 33-year resident of Bexley, said as a nonprofit, the group potentially could attract supporters and enlist the help of area resources on a pro bono basis, much like it has already.

Board members, with help from consultants, have studied the theater's finances to understand its future needs.

"Before, we were really trying to get our arms around this enterprise to see what makes it tick and get under the hood. We now have an understanding of the business, and that's a great head start in determining where we need to go," Mr. Stoff said.

So far, the group has met to review the completed analysis.

"The next step is to take this outstanding analysis that's been done and use it to put a really comprehensive business plan in place," Mr. Stoff said.

The theater will need repairs to its roof and heating, ventilation and air conditioning units and other improvements, such as new seating. It also can better promote its status as a neighborhood theater to attract patrons.

"The real opportunity here is building on what makes the Drexel unique -- it's art deco, it's eclectic, it's historic, and it's a neighborhood film-going experience," Mr. Stoff said, adding it's much different from the multiplex theaters in the area.

Mr. Stoff said the group plans to explore more artistic expressions available, such as live performances, lectures and streaming video of events from throughout the country.

"There are a number of things that we might want to consider, but all of this needs to be fleshed out in the next six to nine months," he said.

Mr. Stoff said the group will launch a fundraising campaign, but no goal has been established.

"The Drexel is in need some some capital improvements, it's in need of some operating improvements. We'll need some fuel in the tank," he said.

The Franks have worked closely with the board since it formed, and Mr. Frank said he's excited to continue.

"We're very excited about the formation of the Friends of the Drexel group and what it will mean to the future of the theater," Mr. Frank said.

"The Drexel Theatre is part of the fabric of the community.

Columbus Dispatch December 16, 2009

Business

Nonprofit created to assist theater

Wednesday, December 16, 2009 3:06 AM

By [Nick Chordas](#)

THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH



FILE PHOTO

The Bexley movie house, which opened in 1937 on E. Main Street

A nonprofit organization has been formed to "secure the future" of the struggling Drexel Theatre, which has offered art-house and specialty programming to central Ohio cinema fans for almost three decades.

Friends of the Drexel Inc. is being headed by Bexley resident Richard Stoff, president of the Ohio Business Roundtable.

Jeff Frank, who has owned and operated the Bexley theater with wife Kathy since 1981, declined to detail the venue's financial status but said it doesn't face an immediate danger of closing.

Among the first orders of business for Friends of the Drexel: to explore a nonprofit status for the theater.

"It opens all sorts of possibilities," said Stoff, citing tax-exempt contributions and grants.

His wife, lawyer Carol Zelizer Stoff, serves as vice chairwoman and secretary of the group.

The 14-member board of trustees includes E. Gordon Gee, president of Ohio State University; Bonnie Milenthal of the marketing company Milenthal Group; Don Casto, a commercial real-estate developer; and Robert Lazarus Jr., a former executive for the department store.

In May, the Franks met with supporters to discuss the theater's difficulties -- a result of the economy and a light slate of "good, solid art films," Jeff Frank said at the time.

Friends of the Drexel emerged from the discussions.

"It's been very inspiring to us to see the response," Kathy Frank said.

The organization, Stoff said, is committed to action, including a possible renovation of the three-screen theater.

Karlsberger Architecture is donating design concepts.

"I think a six-month timetable is fair to really put a plan in place," Stoff said. "Then we're about execution. It's not just a study effort."

The movie house, which opened in 1937 at 2254 E. Main St., is the sole theater being operated by the Franks, who once owned the single-screen Drexel Grandview and managed the multi-screen Arena Grand and Drexel Gateway theaters.

Although attendance has improved at the Drexel in the past five or six months, Jeff Frank said, business is "still not where we'd like it to be."

"The landscape of small, independent movie theaters has changed -- especially art theaters," he said. "When you're in a midsize city like Columbus and a lot of other cities, the nonprofit route seems to be a model that's being followed."

Stoff called the group's efforts a "labor of love."

"(The Drexel) is a really distinctive aspect in this community -- the charm of it, the historic nature of it, the neighborhood filmgoing experience," he said.

"It has been part of the fabric of this community for 30 years."

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This Week in Bexley

December 16, 2009

Nonprofit group assisting Drexel Theatre
Wednesday, December 16, 2009 2:21 PM
By [TARA STUBBS-FIGURSKI](#)
ThisWeek Staff Writer

A group of Bexley-area residents has formed a nonprofit organization "to help secure the future" of the Drexel Theatre.

Ohio Business Roundtable president Richard Stoff and his wife, attorney and Bexley native Carol Zelizer Stoff, are leading the effort as chairman and vice chairwoman of the group Friends of the Drexel Inc.

"Friends of the Drexel Inc. is currently examining a range of strategic options to create a sustainable business model for the Drexel and will soon be engaged in discussions with key stakeholders, among them city officials, the landlords, neighboring educational and cultural institutions and, of course, the community at large," Richard Stoff said in a statement Dec. 11.

Initial meetings were held last spring to assess the condition of the Drexel Theatre, 2254 E. Main St., and examine its future, Stoff said. Articles to form the nonprofit were filed over the summer.

"We are quite delighted at the interest that has been shown," he said in an interview.

Stoff said the theater is a cultural asset for Bexley and central Ohio, so "it was not a hard sell in terms of getting involved and engaged in the effort to help secure the future of the Drexel."

Other board members are: Mike Canter, Don Casto, Ohio State University president Gordon Gee, Babette Gorman, Artie Isaac, Lucinda Kirk, Robert Lazarus, Thomas Mack, Bonnie Milenthal, Susan Quintenz, Mari Sunami and Miriam Yenkin.

While it's an independent entity, the nonprofit group is working closely with Drexel owners Jeff and Kathy Frank, Stoff said.

"We are enormously grateful for the leadership of so many key people and organizations on behalf of the Drexel, as this effort is the springboard to take the theater to the next level," Jeff Frank said in a statement.

Quintenz said several studies have shown that only 9 percent of the people who visit the Drexel are Bexley residents. Residents are not supporting the theater that drives traffic to the city and contributes to the city's economic viability, she said.

"(The Drexel) gives people a chance to see Bexley who might not otherwise come here," she said.

Several central Ohio businesses have contributed to the work being done by the nonprofit. Accounting and management consulting firm Deloitte donated more than 700 hours to conduct an analysis of the Drexel's finances and operations, Stoff said.

Architectural firm Karlsberger is assisting with design concepts and construction cost estimates to refurbish the Drexel, and attorneys from Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease helped Friends of the Drexel gain its nonprofit status.

Business First of Columbus December 16, 2009

Wednesday, December 16, 2009, 11:24am EST

Drexel getting help with new nonprofit

Business First of Columbus

A group of business and community leaders have banded together and are seeking nonprofit status to help to help the struggling Drexel Theater in Bexley.

WFriends of the Drexel Inc. is being led by Richard Stoff, a resident of Bexley and president of the Ohio **W**Business Roundtable, and his wife, Carol. Among the other members of the 14-person organization are **W**Ohio State University President Gordon Gee and developer Don Casto.

The group said it's working on securing the future of the theater, run by Jeff and Kathy Frank since 1981. Efforts so far have included pro bono renovation consultations by Columbus-based [W](#)**Karlsberger Cos.** and a free financial analysis conducted by [W](#)**Deloitte LLP**. Friends of the Drexel is working with Central Ohio's largest law firm, Vorys Sater Seymour and Pease LLP, on securing official nonprofit status with the [W](#)**Internal Revenue Service**.

"Friends of the Drexel Inc. is currently examining a range of strategic options to create a sustainable business model for the Drexel and will soon be engaged in discussions with key stakeholders, among them city officials, the landlords, neighboring educational and cultural institutions and, of course, the community at large," Stoff said in a release.

The Drexel in recent years has suffered from the economic downturn, competition from other theaters and the collapse of some art film distributors. The once-expanded reach of the Drexel name has paralleled those challenges. Over the past few years, Drexel managers lost contracts to run movie theaters in the Arena District and South Campus Gateway as the sites' owners focused on hosting conferences and events. Last year, Drexel's single-screen Grandview Heights location shut down and is now under new management.