

## McDonald Theatre renovation defies trend

By Scott McFetridge  
Of the Emerald

After 50 years in operation, the McDonald Theatre has showcased its share of star attractions. On May 8, 1925, when the theater opened, it was Gloria Swanson, starring in "Madame Sans Gene," and today it is Robert Redford and Meryl Streep, appearing in one of the year's biggest films, "Out of Africa."

First-run films still play at the McDonald, located at 1010 Willamette St., but the building has become more of a financial liability in the last decade, says Larry Lawrence, a development specialist with the Eugene Development Department.

"It's economically more feasible to operate four or five of the shopping mall cinemas as it is to operate and maintain one of the old theaters," Lawrence says. "There's just not a lot of money in old theaters."

Because of this financial liability, nearly all of the theaters that competed with the McDonald in the 1920s and 1930s are gone. Once well-known theaters such as the State, the Furs, the Heilig and the Rex, all have been destroyed, and the trend will continue with the removal of the Mayflower Theatre this spring.

But through a joint effort by the McDonald Theatre Associates, a group of California investors, and the city of Eugene, the McDonald Theatre will not meet a similar fate, says Rich Weinman, downtown project coordinator. The city loaned the group \$90,000 to buy the structure, which it did at a total cost of \$691,500.

The group plans to renovate the facade of the theater, now covered by plywood and corrugated metal sheathing. The theater associates also plan to renovate stores located in the building, most of which are vacant. Kinko's Copies already has agreed to open a new shop in the structure, Weinman says.

If the California group presents a feasible plan for the restoration of the building's facade, Weinman says

the city has agreed to loan the group \$90,000 more to aid renovation.

"(The theatre associates) could see what was coming," Weinman says. "They could see that Willamette Street has been reopened and that the athletic club (across the street from the McDonald) was bringing a lot of people into the area. I think they're banking on a good investment."

The McDonald Theatre was not Eugene's first theater, but it was by far the city's most elegant. According to the May 9, 1925, Eugene Morning Register, the theater's grand opening was an exciting event for many area residents.

"Very probably the evening meal was a hurried affair in more than one block in the city, for everyone was interested and movie fans were agog," the paper reported.

"The placards and the signs and the ads said 'Gloria Swanson in Madame Sans Gene.' But the throngs of interested Eugene folk who waited in the attractive lobby of Eugene's new playhouse last night didn't care a rap for Gloria and her devil-may-care role," the Register story said. "They went to view the newly opened theater and to take in its colorful and unique detail; to enjoy its comfort and its beauty; to revel in the pleasure of seeing a picture produced in a setting artistic and up-to-date."

But five decades of use have taken its toll on the ornate structure. The hand-painted murals on the interior of the theater have been painted and plastered over; the four chandeliers have been replaced with modern fixtures, the Wurlitzer organ has been given away and the orchestra pit has been filled with sand and covered.

However, the original stage, designed for both live theater and films, remains intact, and the organ grills

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Photo by Kamila Al-Najjar

The McDonald Theatre Associates, a group of California investors, plan to renovate McDonald Theatre and the stores in its building this spring.

### Students around state honor King's birthday

Although few state college students had Monday off from class to honor slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., many students had the opportunity to celebrate his birthday by attending lectures, readings and rallies.

Students at Lewis and Clark College were asked to join members of the college's South Africa Action Group in fasting for the day to remember King and to protest the college's investment in South African businesses.

Several members of the group are fasting the entire week to draw attention to current civil rights struggles. The group also is sponsoring silent vigils throughout the week.

"The student body has been very supportive of the fasts and silent vigils," said Molly Stureges, a member of SAAG.

Stureges said the group has gained increased support the past two weeks because of a recent decision of the college's Board of Trustees on Jan. 6. The board decided the college would continue doing business with South African companies that follow the work-place reforms known as the Sullivan Principles.

Aside from anti-apartheid activities, two lectures and several human rights movies were presented to the college's students in honor of King.

Speakers also lectured at Portland State University, Western Oregon State College, Southern Oregon State College, Oregon State University and the Oregon Institute of Technology. In addition, a film series about King was offered at PSU.

"I think there's a general feeling of the students here that it was important to recognize him today," said Lee McKnight, president of the Associated Students of Portland State University.

McKnight joined with other student leaders in leading a student boycott of classes, but despite their efforts most students attended classes, she said.

### Groups unite to prevent problem

## 'Date rape' task force planned

By Mary Lichtenwalner  
Of the Emerald

An idea for a task force to prevent acquaintance rape or "date rape" on campus is becoming a reality, Sgt. Chuck Tilby, of the Eugene Police Department, said Monday.

said.

Although acquaintance rape may occur on campus, Housing Director Marjorie Ramey said the issue shouldn't be blown out of proportion without adequate statistics.

"I don't want this to be seen as a

**'We probably never will be able to quantify it accurately because of the stigma of reporting it.'**

— Sgt. Chuck Tilby

Representatives from various campus organizations met Monday to discuss the possibility of forming a steering group to direct a proposed project addressing the issue of acquaintance rape. Tilby said the task force should be formed by mid-February.

Although it is difficult to tell what the statistics are of such rapes committed on campus, Eugene police officer April Norman said prevention of acquaintance rape has become a popular topic on campuses nationwide. Norman is assigned to patrol the University campus.

"There's just no way to tell how many people have been victims," Norman said. She said that she knows of only two such accounts on the campus.

Lien Shutt, coordinator of the Women's Task Force, said the reason that statistics are not helpful in this area is that date rape doesn't get reported very often.

"We probably never will be able to quantify it accurately because of the stigma of reporting it," Tilby

response to a huge problem. It's a national concern and not a crisis on campus," Ramey said.

Prevention will be the task force's goal and education will be the tool, Tilby said. Education will be distributed campus-wide through presentations at freshman orientation, dormitories, fraternities, sororities and classrooms.

Norman said the program will encourage women to take self-defense classes, and may offer assertiveness training for men and women. Continuity and momentum is crucial to keep the task force alive, she said.

"I don't want it to get going and then die when I get transferred off campus," she said.

The group drew up a list of possible task force members, which included representatives from women's and men's groups on campus and in the community, as well as various campus service organizations.

Norman said she is amazed at the amount of enthusiasm the University administration and community has shown for the project. She said

that while she was at a national conference given on the issue, many other directors of such university programs said they were discouraged at the lack of support they received on their campuses.

"I'm very excited to see so much interest for it here on campus," Norman said.

Shutt said the Women's Task Force will present a rape awareness symposium in February that will focus on date rapes and marital rape.

The group will meet again next Monday to decide what groups will be represented in the task force.



Sgt. Chuck Tilby