



Friends of the
Strand Theatre

2019-2020

ANNUAL
REPORT

MISSION STATEMENT

The historic Strand Theatre presents an innovative year-round program of films, live performances, and educational events that contribute to the growth of a strong artistic and cultural community in Maine.

Our mission is to serve as a gathering place for enrichment in the Midcoast area and as an anchor for Rockland's vibrant downtown.



Dear Friends,

Until six months ago a “screening” was what we offered nearly every night at the Strand Theatre. Now when you hear that word most likely it’s referring to a coronavirus test and not a movie.

The Strand shut its doors on March 16th and we can’t predict when we might be able to re-open them. But when we do, you can be sure it will be safe for the community to come through those doors again.

Meanwhile, the Friends of the Strand Theatre Board and Strand staff haven’t been waiting for the pandemic to end and life to return to normal. We’ve been drawing on our history and the lessons we’ve learned in all the years the Strand has been in Rockland — all 97 of them — in order to move forward.

One of those lessons that’s very much on my mind these days is that the Strand has consistently shown itself to be a resilient institution. This theater has successfully made several technological leaps — from silent film to talkies; from film to digital projection. It has survived the introduction of television, home video and streaming on demand.

We successfully transitioned from a for-profit business to a non-profit organization seven years ago. Our programming has blossomed to appeal to wide swaths of our community and the Strand continues to breathe creative life into a downtown it anchors.

One silver lining of this pandemic is that for some time the FOST Board has been talking about extending Strand programming beyond the four walls of the theater. In pivoting to meet this challenging moment and under the capable leadership of Executive Director Jessie Davis, we took a healthy stride in that direction and this summer went into the drive-in business. In partnership with the Owls Head Transportation Museum, we set up a big screen and projection booth and showed movies to a public seeking good entertainment and a night out. We established a virtual cinema allowing our audiences to access movies online that would have normally screened at the Strand. We started to publish two issues weekly of our STRANDED e-newsletter in order to keep our audiences connected to a broad cultural world and provide original content for children, families and educators. And we’ve become local radio broadcasters, producing monthly Strand On The Air programs and podcasts.

The response to our efforts has been heartening. Memberships are holding steady; community support is strong. We were able to get federal Paycheck Protection Program funding to help us retain staff. We’ve launched a planned giving program — the Strand Marquee — to build a strong foundation to ensure the Strand’s future viability and the FOST Board is very committed to increasing development support by ten percent this year in order to keep our losses, while closed, sustainable.

Even as our shared community space remains shuttered for the time being, we know we can and will, with your support and enthusiasm, keep fulfilling our mission throughout the long Maine winter. Our marquee still lights up Rockland’s main street. We’re not going anywhere and look forward to a time when we can all settle into the Strand’s comfortable seats with our popcorn and watch a movie on the big screen once again.

Best,



Jo Dondis, Chair,
Friends of the Strand Theatre



The Strand Theatre acknowledges, in a spirit of respect and appreciation, that we reside in the indigenous unceded territory of the Wabanaki People, the “People of the Dawn,” whose communities include the Penobscot, Maliseet, Micmac, and Passamaquoddy Nations, on land known as Ketawamteak, translated as “Great Carrying Place.”

Friends of the Strand Theatre Board of Directors:

Jo Dondis, <i>Chair</i>	John Bird William Black	Elisse Walter Joanne Billington
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Roy Hitchings, Jr., <i>Treasurer</i>	Ariel Hall Norman Thomas	

Strand Theatre Staff:

Jessie Davis, <i>Executive Director</i>	Brittany Parker, <i>Education Coordinator</i>	Matalena Carhart, <i>Concessions</i>
Liz McLeod, <i>House Manager</i>	Norrie Thompson, <i>Box Office Manager</i>	Ciara Murphy, <i>Concessions</i>
Jana Herbener, <i>Community Relations</i>	Andy LeBlanc, <i>Tech Director</i>	Olivia Vannah, <i>Concessions</i>
Jessica Ripley, <i>Membership Coordinator</i>	William Zall, <i>Asst. House Manager</i>	Galadria Scattaloni, <i>Concessions</i>
Dave Dailey, <i>Digital Media Manager</i>	Mary Batakis, <i>Bookkeeper</i>	

Volunteers: Susan McGovern, Dee Pepe, Lisa Breheny, Patrick and Marie Powell, Ellen Brown, Minda McVetty

Dear Friends,

It was an evening in late July when I took my 13-year-old daughter to the drive-in to see the 1989 classic, *FIELD OF DREAMS*, a film close to my heart as I remembered going to see it with my dad who I bonded with over our mutual love of baseball. To be introducing my child to the film felt very full-circle, albeit a tad melancholy given the circumstances we were living with during the pandemic, but nice, nonetheless to be able to enjoy a night out.

For those of you not familiar with the movie, it is at its essence about following your inner voice, the one that guides you towards **creating opportunities to allow for meaningful connections to be made through the magic of shared experiences**. THIS. This is also the heart and soul of the Strand's mission. So, in March, when our ability to serve the community in such a way was upended essentially overnight, we immediately began looking for creative ways to keep the magic going, to "gather" and connect safely.

Remember those famous whispered words from out in the cornfield, "If you build it they will come"? Build it we did. With a whole lot of heart, spirit, and some good ol' yankee ingenuity, we built a drive-in out of nothing in a field in Owls Head, and invited our beloved community to come out to, as Liz loves to say, "See the Stars under the stars!"

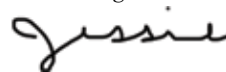
The challenge served up by this pandemic is another hurdle the Strand has met, in its near century of operation, with resourcefulness, resiliency, and sound planning. A challenge that we will overcome as long as we do it the same way we have built the Strand to be the vibrant, dynamic, and sustainable organization it is today, together.

The last shot in *FIELD OF DREAMS* sweeps out wide to a baseball field lit up at night, with a trail of car headlights reaching back to the horizon. The camera pans up and the screen fills with an image of the night sky, and in that

enchanting moment the film merged seamlessly with our starry night sky above midcoast Maine, so that we were held suspended between worlds. The credits rolled and the sustained sounding of an applause of car horns rang out, reminding me that while we are all tucked safely away in our own vehicles we had just engaged in a shared experience that connected each of us to one another. The realization brought me to tears. After so many months of distance and isolation and hard work and reinvention, there was still a way for us to feel together, united, and less alone. That IS the magic and the beauty of the Strand.

As we drove home that night I was reciting lines from the film aloud. "Ray, is this heaven?" Then my daughter piped in, "No, it's the Strand Drive-In."

Close enough.



Jessie Davis, Executive Director



Close the theater doors for a while?

We set to work developing new ways to fulfill our mission of offering films, performances and cultural education to our community...

Virtual Cinema

Drive-In Movies

STRANDED
e-newsletters

STRAND ON THE AIR
Radio Show:
Social Distancing
Editions

Strand Youth Film
Festival

SOCIAL DISTANCING
Blog



STRAND AT HOME Virtual Cinema

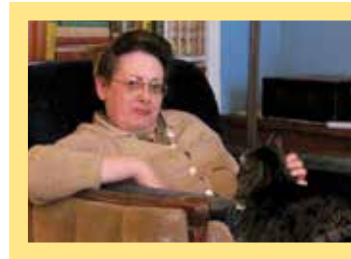


**JUST A FEW OF
THE RESPONSES TO
RECEIVING STRANDED
e-newsletter...**

**Fabulous!! Thank you
This is TERRIFIC. Thank you.**

**Super great idea! Thanks.
Very needed at this time.**

**An idea Grand
Comes from the Strand....
Thanks**



***That social
distancing-
blog is
SO Liz!***

***Thank you
Liz for a
wonderful
belly laugh!***



Friends of the Strand Theatre

Annual Financial Report

Fiscal year 2020

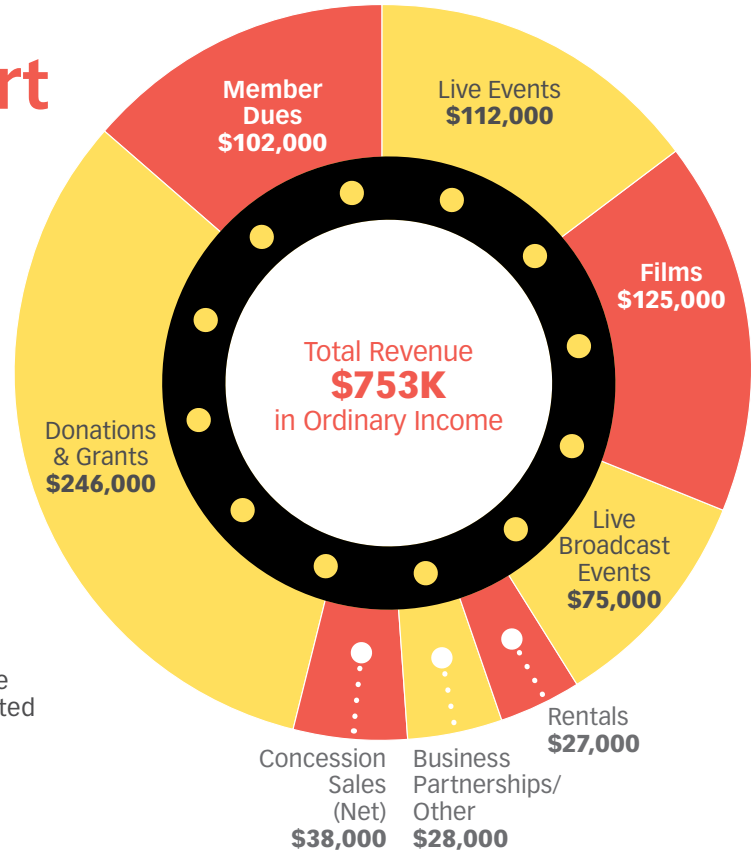
July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

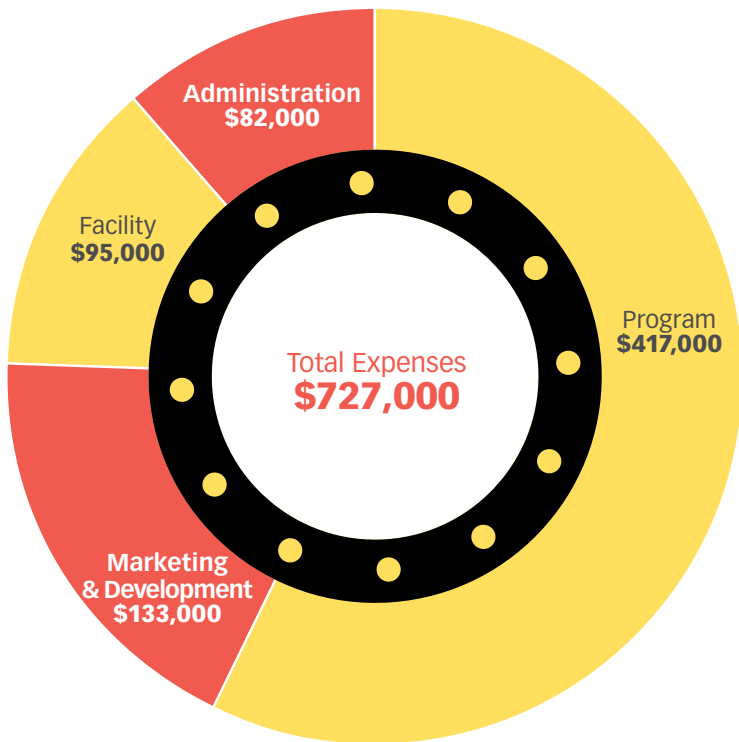
Development Revenue, including Member Dues, Donations and Grants, grew **30%** over last year, exceeding our budget goals by **\$44K**.

General Operating Expenses came in **\$36K** below budget, due in part to expense controls put in place to offset the loss of revenue due to Covid-19

The theater closed to in-person performances on March 16th and lost an average of **\$18k/month** for the last 4 months of our fiscal year (March-June)

Even though the theater lost almost all its program revenue in the fourth quarter, due to the pandemic, the Strand closed out the fiscal year in the black, with Net Ordinary Operating Income totaling **\$26K**. In addition, the Strand added **\$133K** to its limited reserves, monies that included both an individual bequest and investment income.





JOIN THE STRAND MARQUEE



The Strand Marquee recognizes the loyal and committed supporters of the Strand Theatre who have made an important commitment to its future through generous gift planning by bequest or charitable trust.

“We are happy to be the first Strand Marquee Members! We love the Strand, our kids love it, and it’s important that it be here for their kids to love too. We’re thankful for the opportunity to do what we can to keep the marquee lit for another 100 years.”

— Norman and Susan Thomas, Owls Head

“I remember when the Strand closed and I don’t want that ever to happen again. So I’ve made the Strand a beneficiary of my estate and by letting the Strand know what I’ve done, my legacy—which I hope will not result in a transfer for quite a while—provides strength and stability to the Strand today.”

— Ellen Seidman, Portland

If you are considering including the Strand in your estate plans, or if you have already named the Strand as a future beneficiary, please contact Executive Director Jessie Davis at Jessie@rocklandstrand.com for more information.



A STANDING OVATION FOR OUR GENEROUS DONORS!

July 1, 2019 –
June 30, 2020

Leadership Level: BALCONY

► \$10,000+

Anonymous Fund at
Amalgamated Charitable
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Mary Ann Carey
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Ellen Seidman
Ellen C.L. Simmons & Family
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Leadership Level: SILVER SCREEN

► \$5000+

Anonimo Foundation
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Leadership Level: STRAND STAGE

► \$2500+

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Raymond Family Foundation
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Leadership Level: BOX OFFICE

► \$1000+

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EVENT & SEASON SPONSORS 2019-2020

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► **\$500-\$999**

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► **\$100-\$499**

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Skip Hoblin &
Mimi Benedict
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Kathleen Thornton
Cynthia Hyde &
Jim Kinnealey
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Thomas &
Hillary Jackson

*Continued on
following page*

*“Just wanted to say, as a member,
how much we appreciate the
creative, informative ways you’re
keeping us connected to the arts in
these crazy times. It can’t be easy,
and we thank you.”*

— Jane and Larry

*“Had to send a message to you at
The Strand to thank you for showing
the Pavarotti film. Ron Howard at
his best. What a magnificent film.
Brought smiles and tears to me as
I watched this evening. Thank you
everyone at The Strand!!”*

— Sally

*“We are members and we cannot
wait to see you open again when
it is safe. Stay well!!!!!!”*

— Ann & Andy

CONTINUED APPLAUSE FOR OUR GENEROUS DONORS!

continued from previous page

E. Daniel Johnson &
Christina Young
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Christine Armstrong
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Gail & Bruce Kilgour
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Mimi & Gerry Zwick



Members are the heart
of the Strand Community,
making EVERYTHING we do possible.

TOGETHER, WE ARE THE STRAND!

*“Thank you for letting us see the Strand!
It was the best field trip yet.”*

— Jacob, Friendship School student

*“What a great idea and service
to our community! My wife was able to sit
down with our youngest and go through
several of the links, plus the older kids and I
listened to one of the audio books.*

*We appreciate all that the Strand
offers for our small community.”*

— Matt, local parent, in response to our
STRANDED Family Newsletter

The STRAND's Education Program:

ENGAGED

It was a rainy afternoon last November, and the artists behind the dance concert, *Mother Kofi: The Tale of an African Princess*, were giving a tap workshop to high-school students from Rockland's Studio Red. Before they started, the dancers circled up to hear from the choreographer, Oludará. In a beautiful and inspiring speech, he talked about the origins of tap dancing and the importance of learning its history —

“When we say ‘respecting the journey,’ it’s really understanding the environment out of which these dance forms are born, and why they are born. They were born to help save Black people’s lives. So, you will be functioning as an ally in singing this song, in bringing light to an African descendent’s story.”

I watched the dancers’ energies shift — from nervous excitability to

an empowered, passionate focus. They understood the responsibility of their artistic expression, and the bond that was born between the artists and students was beautifully uplifting. It was a moment I will not soon forget.

We were lucky to have memorable moments like this throughout our truncated 2019–2020 education program season. The young boy dancing his heart out in the front row of the Jazzy Ash and the Leaping Lizards concert. The group of 4th graders acting out their ideal Maine summer for their bicentennial film project. An audience of nearly 300 people erupting in laughter over a flying banana during the Frogtown Mountain Puppeteers show.

It’s moments like these that keep us going through difficult times, and inspire us to find innovative ways to connect with each other. We have several new education and family initiatives planned for the coming year, with flexible options to keep everyone’s health and safety a top priority. We look forward to creating more moments with you in new and memorable ways!

Brittany Parker,
Education Coordinator

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

2019–2020 was gearing up to be our furthest-reaching education program to date! Even with nearly half of our programs cancelled due to the pandemic, we’re proud of what we were able to offer the community:

10 different programs offered

13 schools and youth groups served

114 suggested videos and activities through the STRANDED Family Edition

1001 students engaged

554 attendees for our Strand Family Series (Pay-What-You-Can: \$0–20)



"I've never done this in rural Maine, so it's a great experience! Being able to be a part of this story, and seeing the culture — it gives me another perspective on things."

— Emma, Studio Red dancer

"Thank you so much for giving us a tour of the Strand! I really liked seeing the projectors and the green room. I hope I can perform there someday!"

— Grace, Friendship School student

The Strand Theatre is grateful for grant support from the following:
Maine Arts Commission, Maine Community Foundation, the Anonimo Foundation, the Mattina R. Proctor Foundation, and Ellen C.L. Simmons and family



STRAND THEATRE

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