

Jaffrey Historical Society to Feature The Park Theater in Month-Long Exhibit

The historic exhibit on The Park Theatre opens with a Reception on Friday, July 31 from 5 to 7 pm at the Jaffrey Civic Center on Main Street in Jaffrey. The exhibit is another in a series of unique historical presentations by the Jaffrey Historical Society. The public is invited to attend the Opening Presentation on July 31 which will include a video presentation, the Theatre model and a display of the original facility, the four WPA murals, along with the contemporary mural-mosaic and architectural plans for the future building.

The Park Theatre, first opened in 1922, was the creation of Italian immigrant Romolo Vanni. He expanded it once in 1935, renovated it completely in 1941 and reopened it as the “New Park Theatre”. The Theatre, featuring vaudeville and films, was a lively gathering spot for the town and a center of community life for more than 50 years. After Vanni’s death in 1954, the Theatre changed hands several times, finally going dark in 1976. Rediscovered in 2002, it has been the subject of a community-wide effort to rebuild and reopen it as a film and performing arts theater for the community and the region.

The historic exhibit will feature early photos of the Vanni family and downtown Jaffrey, Theatre artifacts, season programs, reproductions of the four WPA murals of Mount Monadnock, commissioned in 1941 by Vanni, and the 2009 mural-mosaic created by 120 artists throughout New England. Visitors will also get a preview of the Theatre’s upcoming reconstruction as a state-of-the-art facility presenting plays, children’s productions, concerts, movies, dinner theatre, “pop” concerts, touring companies and regional performing artists, as well as providing meeting and performance space for community, civic and school groups.

The Park Theatre is currently presenting its 9th Annual Movie Season with free movies every Thursday night at the Jaffrey Woman’s Club. Once a month, movies will be shown at La Mia Casa Pizzeria in Peterborough. Visit www.theparktheatre.org for schedules and details.