

## Astor Street Opry Company Reaches Goal to Buy Building

*The Daily Astorian, September 16, 2010*

The Astor Street Opry Company has announced the successful completion of its capital campaign to purchase the ASOC Playhouse at 129 W. Bond St. as the permanent theatrical home for the nonprofit community organization.

Judith Niland, managing director, was ecstatic at the news. "After 26 years, the dream of owning our own Theater has finally happened," she said.

"All who have been involved in this process realize this could never have happened without the dedication of this wonderful community to the homegrown 'Shanghaied in Astoria.' Now 'Shanghaied' and all of ASOC productions have a permanent home and will remain available for all North Coast community members and its visitors, now and in the future."

In spring 2007, the ASOC was once again homeless after being in four locations since 1983. After a year of planning, using funding from a Ford Family Institute grant under the guidance of independent consultant Rich Foster of Cascadia Consulting, ASOC set on a course to raise \$500,000 to complete the purchase and basic remodeling of a new theater, with a completion goal set for fall 2010.

By fall 2007, the company succeeded in finding building and negotiating a three-year lease option. Then, thanks to a grant from Meyer Memorial Trust and donations, plus hours donated by L.J. Allen Construction of Knappa and Brady's Plumbing of Astoria, ASOC opened the 24th season of "Shanghaied in Astoria" on schedule in July 2008.

Throughout 2008, ASOC continued fundraising and added additional programming to the annual show calendar. By June 2009, ASOC secured a commercial bank mortgage from Clatsop Community Bank for \$300,000, and began to submit grants to raise the additional funds needed to complete the purchase.

By this spring, grants had come in from Collins, U.S. Bancorp, Samuel S. Johnson, Henry Lea Hillman Jr., Autzman, Oregon Community Foundations, along with contributions from the Astoria Sunday Market, the city of Astoria and more than 300 personal donations from around the country. Recently, the M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust Foundation awarded ASOC \$50,000, setting the ASOC beyond the target goal.

Ownership papers for the building on West Bond Street were signed Aug. 30.

The Astor Street Opry Company invites all capital campaign donors to be guests at the opening night reception of its fall production of "Arsenic and Old Lace," directed by Markus Brown, at 7 p.m. Oct. 14. The celebration will also feature food and drink. Call (503) 325-6104 to reserve a seat.



**ALEX PAJUNAS — *The Daily Astorian***

From left, 2010 director of "Shanghaied In Astoria," Jayne Osborn, president and CEO of Clatsop Community Bank Steve Ferber, Astor Street Opry Company Secretary Cindy Howe, ASOC Treasurer Chuck Meyer, ASOC Board Member Jim Coffee, ASOC adviser and founder Del Corbett, ASOC Board Members Ron Woltjer and Roger Rocka, ASOC Board President Paula Fisher, ASOC Board Member Anne MacGregor and ASOC Managing Director Judith Niland.