

# There Is A Way!

by Tom B'hend

Picture this situation — your chapter knows of an old, but structurally sound, theatre building that can be purchased for a most reasonable figure. The owner is willing to sell to your non-profit organization because of the attractive tax situation available to him. This is all to the good, but in addition to securing title to the structure, it will need extensive refurbishing. Your treasury is not brimming with the amount needed to close the deal, and the idea of borrowing money has not been considered. Club officials regretfully decide to shelve purchase plans. They really do not have to do this! There is a way!

More than \$8 billion each year is available from corporations and foundations in the form of grants. Even municipalities have money to grant to worthy projects. After learning how to rope in what would be an infinitesimal amount of the yearly largesse, it is not unreasonable to predict that your chapter could obtain a grant of sufficient size to own your own theatre building (or clubhouse, if preferred). Getting a grant entails more than asking for a handout. It is a major effort, but well worth the time involved.

ATOS member Bob Maes has recently received \$190,000 in a grant and interest-free loan for the non-profit Granada Theatre Historical Society which he helped organize. The society will use the money to refurbish the Granada Theatre in Kansas City, Kansas, and to install a large theatre organ there. More about his story later.

ATOS has several projects stowed on the "no money" shelf which may well benefit from this corporate and foundation "gold mine." Its Library and Archives is a case in point. Without knowing how to proceed, however, all the projects are merely wishful thinking.

One chapter, Los Angeles, has accomplished that goal to a limited degree. When the group contracted to install its 3/12 Barton organ in the Wilshire Ebell Theatre, club officials sponsored several fund-raising programs and realized a fair amount of money. But they needed much more to complete the project. Fortunately, their need was the concern of one of the members involved in the installation, whose family's corporation has a foundation which makes numerous grants for worthy causes. Chapter officials were advised about making a presentation of a proposal. Because the organization had already campaigned and raised limited funds, they established their request as a matching-funds grant — they were not asking for the total installation cost. The corporate foundation granted Los Angeles Chapter the sum of \$10,000.

It must be acknowledged, however, that this request entailed limited effort on the part of the club because of the particular situation where a member was in a position to champion the request in a most friendly manner. Nevertheless, considerable planning and preparation were involved in presenting the request.

Any group can create its own Gifts and Funding Committee, but aside from planning occasional fund-raising projects, committee members seldom have knowledge about procedures for tapping "big money." Yet, within each geographical area there is a fairly accessible source of information about ways and means. Most public libraries have reference departments where books and pamphlets can be researched, and there are well-established firms and schools which conduct classes in all phases of obtaining grants and funding.

One outstanding organization which teaches groups how to campaign for big-time funding is the Grantsmanship Center, 1031 South Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90015-1492. National in scope, Grantsmanship conducts training programs in cities all across the country. Designed for both the beginner and the experienced fund-raiser, the workshops cover foundation, corporate and government funding, and the preparation of grant proposals. Schedules of workshops may be obtained by writing to the Center. For chapters unable to send members to the workshops, the Center also has books and pamphlets available.

In one library source, *A Guide to Corporate Giving in The Arts*, which is published by the American Council for the Arts (1978), one can find explanatory guidelines for approaching corporations and lists of every business in the U.S. that makes grants to the cultural arts. Information about this publication may be obtained by writing ACA Publications, 570 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10018.

ACA also has *Corporate Fund Raising — A Practical Plan of Action*. Its introduction notes: "Soliciting corporations for contributions is a selling process. Like any marketing effort, it must be directed at the potential customer — with the customer's needs, likes and dislikes in mind. Customers must be convinced that the 'product' presented to them is worthy of their support and will produce benefits that outweigh investments." Author W. Grant Brownrigg then proceeds to take the reader step-by-step through a complete campaign program.

A smaller publication, *Grassroots Fund-raising Book*, by Joan Flanagan, is published by Contemporary Books, Inc., 180 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60601.

A softcover book, *Do or Die — Survival for Non-Profits*, by James C. Lee, is designed to guide non-profit organizations into developing an organization within their groups to

Bob Maes seated at the console of the Barton organ which is now being installed in the Granada Theatre, Kansas City, Kansas, under direction of David L. Junchen. (Granada photo)





go after grants and funding. It is published by Taft Products, Inc., 1000 Vermont Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20005. Another Taft helper is *The Proposal Writer's Swipe File*, edited by Jean Brodshy, which contains 12 proposals — prototypes or approaches, styles and structures. Each is a complete proposal with budgets included to illustrate what must be done to present a request for funding to a foundation or corporation.

In addition to national corporations and foundations that grant funds to the arts, individual states also have grants and funding information. In California, for example, the California Community Foundation produces a yearbook which lists funds and what they will consider for making grants. All communications to this organization are addressed to 1151 West Sixth Street, Los Angeles, California 90017.

A firm devoted to teaching the uninitiated how to apply for grants is The Fund Raising School, Hank A. Rosso, Director, P.O. Box 3237, San Raphael, California 94912-3237. Basics and advanced concepts of fund raising are taught.

In the ATOS office of Publicity and Promotions is a file of directories of state and local grantmakers. It was taken from the Ninth Edition of the *National Data Book*, published by the Foundation Center and available for \$55 (total price). Address inquiries to: 79 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10003. This volume is also available in public libraries.

Additional information on grants may be obtained from the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, 2001 S Street N.W., Suite 620, Washington D.C. 20009. From the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C., can be ordered the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* at a cost of \$36 annually, or *The Federal Register* which costs \$150 for six months or \$300 per year. This is a daily publication of up-to-date information on specific new grants as they become available, when and where to apply, deadlines and other pertinent information.

It must be noted here that all of the above sources have not been contacted by this writer. They are listed only for the purpose of advising where information may be obtained. It is important that inquiries be made concerning prices of books, special courses, etc. before placing orders. With all the input by so many authors, company and school groups, it is evident that the way to corporate and foundation gold is not necessarily simple, but it is definitely within the realm of any interested chapter to traverse this particular avenue most successfully.

#### How Bob Maes Did It

When Robert Maes discovered a quietly kept piece of information, he was able to obtain a \$90,000 grant, plus a \$100,000 interest-free loan, for the Granada Theatre which is located at 1015 Minnesota Avenue in the central city area of Kansas City, Kansas.

Prior to his involvement in finding funding, Maes and a friend, Wade Williams, a local theatre man, decided to purchase the theatre building, form a non-profit corporation,

administer its operation and develop it into a performing arts center. The Granada was the only remaining theatre in town with stage facilities when the two men purchased the structure in 1983. The next two years were spent unraveling the legal status of the 1050-seat house and getting clear title to it.

Immediately upon receiving title, the two men started refurbishing the theatre building. They repaired the roof, hauled out loads of debris and cleaned the entire structure. New plumbing was installed in rest rooms and the lobby area, replacing pipes that had frozen and burst during the several years the theatre had been shuttered and left without proper heating.

They also organized the Granada Theatre Historical Society, Inc., a non-profit corporation, and secured the necessary tax number from the Internal Revenue Service which permits the corporation to receive donations and grant tax write-offs.

When the theatre was in presentable condition, but far from being cosmetically acceptable for regular theatrical performances, various ideas were discussed about how to raise money and how to get the citizens of Kansas City to visit the theatre and become interested in its future. Wine and cheese parties brought curious people into the house, and some money was raised. Another idea was a Granada-sponsored auction where townspeople donated items which were picked up by local high school students and sold by a local auction firm without cost to the theatre. The most



Kansas City Mayor Jack Reardon talks to local citizens who attended money-raising wine and cheese party at the Granada Theatre. Party was one of several ideas to interest public and campaign for donations to refurbish the atmospheric-style movie palace. (Granada photo)

successful scheme was one which is used by many performing arts centers, that is the sale of the chairs in the theatre for \$250. All who donate in this manner have their names listed on a large plaque in the lobby and are allowed

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**◆ TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AND STILL GROWING STRONG ◆**





Curious citizens mill around lobby during wine and cheese party at the Granada Theatre. Bob Maes, who promoted the grant and loan described in accompanying story, is seen just right of center (with cigarette) talking to one of those who attended party.

(Granada photo)



Chests, reservoirs, percussions and pipework are stacked across Granada Theatre seats awaiting installation in chambers formerly occupied by a Robert-Morton organ. The incoming Barton has been leased for 20 years from Kansas City Theatre Organ, Inc. It will be increased from 11 to 20 ranks.

(Granada photo)

to enjoy certain exclusive programs at the theatre; for example, if an organ concert is scheduled, the donors will be entertained by the artist at a special program. Selling individual theatre chairs offers excellent results and brings in substantial funds. Maes noted that a local attorney was listed as a donor in this category and has been serving as the "legal eagle" for the corporation since the project got underway.

About this same time, Maes learned about a local woman who had managed to get a \$75,000 grant from the city to restore one of the town's historic buildings. He investigated and discovered that the woman had "wined and dined" the six city council members and the mayor as part of her campaign to get the appropriation. Further investigation revealed that each of the six council members receives one million dollars each year from sales tax revenues, and they are empowered to spend it on any public improvement which will benefit the citizens within their districts or any part of the town. This was all the information he needed. He realized that it would not be possible to simply go before the council and ask for a handout, so a detailed graphic presentation was developed along with the public relations that were necessary to make the public aware of the project. Maes made it his business to become well-acquainted with local media people — the press, radio and television personnel. Since non-profit status normally permits media acceptance, whenever help was needed to announce events at the theatre Maes or one of the Granada people would contact the fourth-estates and ask their assistance. They have never been turned down by any of the news outlets.

In the interim, a special brochure was compiled detailing the history of the Granada Theatre, a feasibility study projecting various types of entertainment possibilities, how the general public would benefit and how reopening the theatre would aid restoration of the downtown area. In its new role, the Granada would be a cultural asset to Kansas City.

Then, one fine day, Maes moseyed into the political arena — city hall — and met the mayor. He talked about the Granada Theatre in the office and, later, over lunch. His enthusiasm "made" his sale; in fact, it made a convert of the mayor who even suggested that Maes should consider running for a city office! Following this happy session, Bob courted each of the council members in a like manner. His presentation to each man included a request for \$15,000, and all six contributed to make the \$90,000 grant. From another source available to the city came the \$100,000 interest-free loan. Maes explained that it was important to present his plan to each councilman and ask each one for one-sixth of what he needed. He also noted that he made it very clear that he was only asking for part of what he needed. "I let them know that it would cost about \$300,000 to complete the job, and the Granada Theatre Historical Society was busy raising funds, that we were deeply involved in aiding our own project. It was also important to let them know we were saving one of the historic sites and a theatre organ, too, for the cultural benefit of the public. Politicians understand the value of enhancing cultural improvements and additions for a community even though they might not have attended a theatre or heard a theatre organ in years."

The organ now being installed in the Granada has an interesting history. Originally in the Paramount Theatre in Newport News, Virginia, it was a 3/10 Barton, the last instrument built by this famous midwest firm and one of three Bartons with French-style consoles. Its second home was the Virginia Theatre in Arlington where ATOS member Woody Wise was responsible for its installation. When the theatre was slated to be razed, the organ was sold to Cedar Rapids Chapter and taken to the Englert Theatre in Iowa City. It was almost completely installed when the management decided to twin the house. The organ had to come out. Lacking another location for it, the chapter donated the instrument to Kansas City (Missouri) Theatre Organ,

Inc., a group which was looking for an organ to erect in the ornate Midland Theatre. Shortly after its arrival, however, Marion Cook, a well-known ATOS member, donated the Robert-Morton Wonder organ from the former Loew's Paradise Theatre in the Bronx, New York, to the group. This box of whistles far overshadowed the smaller Barton and the decision was made to use the big Morton in its place. The Barton was put in storage until the Granada Theatre Historical Society negotiated a contract to lease it for 20 years at \$1 per year.

The Barton is being increased from 10 to 20 ranks and will sport one of the new Devtronix computer relays. The installation is being done under the capable direction of David Junchen, West Coast organman and noted author of *The Encyclopedia of the American Theatre Organ*.

Wade Williams, Maes' partner in the venture, has donated two RCA projectors with 4000-watt Xenon lamp houses. Complete stage rigging, curtains and much of the furniture from the Mainstreet (later Empire) Theatre in Kansas City, Missouri, across the river, was donated to the project by the American Multi-Cinema Corporation. Maes and his crew spent three days at the Mainstreet removing whatever they could use before wrecking crews started razing the big movie palace.

Reviewing his efforts in obtaining the grant and loan, Maes said, "Anyone can do what we have done here in Kansas City. It wasn't easy — nothing worthwhile is — but it wasn't all that difficult, and it has been a challenge to all of us in the society. I would say that most municipalities in this country have similar funds available. Those groups that are willing to devote time and effort in planning and making presentations for funds, as we did, might be pleasantly surprised to discover that their involvement was well worth it. And once you get city officials on your side, there are other money doors that can be opened to contribute to your success." □