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Showing postings 1 - 33 of 33 in the thread: The Strand.

Posting: The Strand Poster: Dagmar Noll Date: 19 August 2006 8:02 AM	Posting 1
<p>Yet another theatre in Willimantic, wow.</p> <p>When about was the Strand built? Was it built for movies or for stage? Was it destroyed during redevelopment, or earlier?</p> <p>Dagmar</p>	
Posting: Re: The Strand Poster: William Brainard Date: 20 August 2006 11:12 AM	Posting 2
<p>I think I went there as a child to see "20,000 Leagues Under The Sea"; I knew I threw a fit because I lost my red and white beanie cap there and Mother phoned the box office about it. It was either the Strand or the Gem. I know one of the theatres was called the "scratch-house". Anyone tell us what that meant? I know it wasn't the Capitol. That was the theatre supreme in Willimantic, northeast Connecticut for that matter in those days. I was about five years old when I lost my cap so had to have been 1959-60.</p>	
Posting: Re: The Strand Poster: John Tormey Date: 20 August 2006 12:21 AM	Posting 3
<p>We called the Strand "the scratch house" because (supposedly) it was infested with body lice and other vermin. The rumor was you came away from that place scratching all over. We frequented the Capitol and Gem theaters only.</p>	
Posting: Re: The Strand Poster: John Ferreri Date: 20 August 2006 6:48 PM	Posting 4
<p>It was an old theater but my favorite. Saturday always drew a line of kids waiting for the box office to open. Tickets were 12 cents and candy was a nickel. There was always an intermission show where the kids participated up on the stage and were given a bag of goodies. The manager was always on patrol looking for smuggled weapons, (water pistols).</p> <p>I don't ever remember having an itch while watching the double features there.</p>	
Posting: Re: The Strand Poster: William Brainard Date: 20 August 2006 8:20 PM	Posting 5
<p>I stand corrected; lost my cap at the Gem after seeing "20,000 Leagues Under The Sea". I never went to the Strand or "scratch-house" but my father spoke of it. Always with a little snicker.</p>	
Posting: Re: The Strand Poster: r d Date: 21 August 2006 8:21 AM	Posting 6
<p>The Strand was the last choice to watch a movie. However, it was a nickel cheaper than the Gem or Capital. Also, remember when the lights dimmed they had a guy down in front who hand-cranked the curtain away from the screen. Also, on weekends they offered free dinner ware to adults attending the movie. Then there was the Mansfield drive-in theater which I understand is still operational. Great movies and memories!!</p>	
Posting: Re: The Strand Poster: Ada Kerachsky Albright Date: 21 August 2006 2:20 PM	Posting 7
<p>20,000 Leagues Under the Sea was at the Gem or the Capitol. I had to take my younger sibilings to see it one Saturday afternoon and had to leave after the giant squid scene because they were so freaked out. I guess it was repayment for my Mom having to take me out of Bambi after the fire scene when I was about four. As for the Strand: it was less than a block from my Grandmother's little grocery store, and when I was about five and six, my parents or grandmother would give me a quarter for the Saturday matinee and Veronica Elliot and I would go watch Roy Rogers, Hopalong Cassidy, the Three Stooges, and a bunch of cartoons. I really did not appreciate the Three Stooges, but the rest was OK.</p>	
Posting: Re: The Strand Poster: Dagmar Noll Date: 22 August 2006 5:39 PM	Posting 8

Thanks for all the memories of local theatres!

I love the image of someone cranking open the curtain, giving film a bit of the feel of performance theater, opening another world for the audience.

No curtains nowadays, except at [Cinestudio](#) in Hartford.

Dagmar

Posting: Re: The Strand
 Poster: Dagmar Noll
 Date: 22 August 2006 5:40 PM

Posting 9

If the Stranc was last choice for seeing a picture, which was first choice, the Gem or the Capitol?

Dagmar

Posting: Re: The Strand
 Poster: r d
 Date: 23 August 2006 8:52 AM

Posting 10

I think the Capital was first choice hands down! Just the physical aspects of the Capital made it a first class theater. For those who experienced a movie at the Capital in its heyday and compare it to todays movie houses its like the difference between the Kennedy Center and Jillison Sq movie theaters. The Capial had a lot of elegance to its interior. I may be wrong but I believe it was original designed and built for live theater--hence the band pit and big stage & curtains. Maybe Chas B. knows. Also Iwould guess there were dressing rooms for the actors, etc.

Posting: Re: The Strand
 Poster: John Boudreau
 Date: 23 August 2006 5:55 PM

Posting 11

RD ,

I barely remember The Gem , but The Capital is etched in my memory forever . Compare The Capital to modern , sterile Japanese movie theaters , many of which you can't even eat or drink in , and man it makes me happy I grew up when and WHERE I did .

Posting: Re: The Strand
 Poster: William Brainard
 Date: 23 August 2006 7:20 PM

Posting 12

The Capitol Theatre was built for vaudeville. My dad remembered the old dressing rooms AND showers that could handle a Broadway ensemble. It was a BIG thing for Eastern Connecticut and they came from New York and Boston and Providence to little Willimantic. Frank Kamplain who with his wife Ann (still living at 101!) and his partners did a Gay '90s revue which was recorded on the Victor and Brunswick labels. Ann wasn't an actress but she handled bookings, etc. They travelled all over the USA. Ann once told me of a couple who they roomed with on the "circuit". The husband had the band and the wife was the band's singer. His name was Nelson as in Ozzie fame and his wife was Harriet Hilliard. Their sons grew up on radio and tv; David and Ricky in "The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet", on ABC, 1952-1966. Annie and Frank built a home in Gerald Park on the lake in South Coventry in 1938 and after Frank died in 1971, Ann continued to live in the lovely cape cod until 2001 when she sold it and went into assisted living. Ann gave up driving in 1999.

Posting: Re: The Strand
 Poster: chas barrett
 Date: 23 August 2006 10:25 PM

Posting 13

Hi Rd, Wm Brainerd, et al:

Yes, The Capitol was built for LIVE performances...as a vaudeville theatre actually, opening in January 1926.

When Tom B ran this web site he had several stories on the theatre , in fact I wrote one for him that was used for several years called CAPITOL DAYS...my memories and recall of growing up inside that grand movie palace.

My pop, Russell Barrett and I thank you all for your kind words onf our lovely ole movie palace...Willimantic lost big time when it let EastConn take it down. Shame on them at EastConn and then to even name the theatre inside the school after the EastConn mogul himself. Shameless

Chas

Posting: Re: The Strand
 Poster: r d
 Date: 24 August 2006 8:42 AM

Posting 14

Hey John--My parents lived on Jackson St when first married. It was an apartment in one of those big houses and I think it was near Summit and Jackson sts. After a couple of years they moved to 88 Oak St next to the Lutheran Church and in early 50's built a house at 173 North St. The Ferrigno's lived next door.

My recollection of the Gem theater is that it was movie theater only with little style like the Capital. It did have a balcony, small foyer

or whatever you call it when you walk in. The seats as I remember were not too comfortable---I think they were wood with like a leather cushion (thin) in the middle. The Capital had plush seats that were metal but with cushioned fabric on the back of the seat and thick cushioned seats. The outside rows had several vertical strips of lighting for the aisles.

I believe George Haddad was the manager at the Gem. I delivered the Hartford Courant and George gave me free access to the movies in exchange for the daily Courant.

Posting: Re: The Strand Posting 15
 Poster: John Tormey
 Date: 24 August 2006 11:24 AM

The Capitol was the king. Large backstage area and many dressing rooms. The cleanest backstage area I've ever seen. Spotless. Mr Barrett would have it no other way. As a student of Evelyn Macfarlane's Dance Studio I performed many recitals there. 1945-1952. Lots of kids backstage but it never seemed crowded. Big band (Les Foster's) in the pit. It was like being on Broadway.

Posting: Re: The Strand Posting 16
 Poster: Francis Sellars
 Date: 24 August 2006 2:02 PM

To RD,
 Was your fathers first name James,did he work as a clerk for the willimantic public works dept. That 173 north st. address rang a bell for me.

Posting: Re: The Strand Posting 17
 Poster: chas barrett
 Date: 24 August 2006 2:12 PM

John Tormey:

I remember you dancing and singing in the recitals at The Capitol as part of Ms McFarland's troupe. You wore a hi-hat and tails and had a cane tucked under your arm in some of the numbers, right ?

Charlie Barrett

Posting: Re: The Strand Posting 18
 Poster: John Tormey
 Date: 24 August 2006 6:51 PM

Yeah. With my sister, Carol. The old "high hat and cane" numbers. One year they used Strobelight on us. The canes and hats were painted with a special kind of gunk that lit up when the lights blacked out and the strobes were focused.

My regards to the other Coast!
 jt

Posting: Re: The Strand Posting 19
 Poster: vince cerreto
 Date: 24 August 2006 7:35 PM

The other thing about the scratch house was the serials of all the good westerns. Roy Rodgers, Gene Autry, Tom Mix ect.....

Posting: Re: The Strand Posting 20
 Poster: chas barrett
 Date: 24 August 2006 11:00 PM

john:

you were quite the wimtc entertainer in those days. and i remember your sister carol...how is she?? ...are you stil working in TV these days??

i am getting by tux dusted off for sunday nite's emmy awards out here...i am working for CBS now.

charlie barrett

Posting: Re: The Strand Posting 21
 Poster: John Tormey
 Date: 25 August 2006 11:45 AM

Carol's fine. Lives in Mansfield Center.

I'm still doing stuff. Feature films and commercials. Google me for titles.

Going to a wrap party for a very funny film on Saturday. Never had a better time on a set. It's called "The Ten" (Think Ten Commandments.) and they plan to open at Sundance.

Black tux in the summer? or not?
 jt

Posting: Re: The Strand Posting 22
 Poster: chas barrett
 Date: 25 August 2006 11:42 PM

john:

yes....my blk. tux is already to go on the red carpet...i am still a publicist and also have a music/talk radio show heard each friday nite across the USA called ' sinatra & co' on friday nites out of caifornia over CABLE RADIO NETWORK, from 11pm-4AM pacific time. it can be heard on the net too via www.crni.net on CRN 1, they stream very well (see crni.net home page to click on it; use MSN explorer to access site is best).

i am involved with the TV shows THE AMAZING RACE and SURVIVOR. and the new film called SCOOP from woody allen.

chers

charlie

Posting: Re: The Strand Posting 23
 Poster: chas barrett
 Date: 31 August 2006 11:30 PM

john tormey:

emmys were nice to us again this year..we won another top emmy for THE AMAZING RACE. the red carpet was red hot...temps topped 100 there sunday afternoon from 2-4pm...show went LIVE to east coast at 5pm LA time.

check out US, PEOPLE, etc. mags for all the gorgeous tv ladies (julia louis-dreyfus, et al) on the red carpet and their fashionable attire.

i will watch for your movie THE TEN....i wil be at sundance in january i suspect. am handling marketing on a new documentary feature coming called EVER AGAIN, about rise of terrorism...the new anti-semitism, produced by simon weisenthal center here.

chas

Posting: Re: The Strand Posting 24
 Poster: John Tormey
 Date: 4 September 2006 6:49 PM

Anti-semitism you say. Then you'll enjoy my segment based on "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." I play a 65-year-old strung out, white-bearded, drug addict with a Yiddish accent. The film is an equal opportunity insulter of just about everybody. Politically incorrect in every way. Loved every second of it.

Posting: Re: The Strand Posting 25
 Poster: Steve Starger
 Date: 19 September 2006 1:55 PM

I might as well jump in on this Strand Theatre conversation too. I certainly remember the little manager with the crushed fedora hand-opening the curtain, but he also admonished the rowdy crowd to bring up any "weapons" -- who knows what he was thinking? == and put them on the stage until the show was over! I remember the prize drawings using half a ticket stub. The prize was a bag with maybe 2 or 3 comic books and a couple of candy bars. The Strand was cool for budding movie geeks because it showed old movies on double bills, but the Capitol was definitely the class act for screen entertainment in town in the 40's and 50s, when I was growing up and coming of age.

Wow, the Case gym and swimming class! I hated gym because I was a spas and couldn't play sports at all. I agree with SKip Barrett that Charles "Chuck" Smith was not a nice man at all. In fact, he was a bit of a fascist and totally self-impressed. I've talked a lobt with Skip over the past year or so about old Willimantic. As weird as it was (at least for me) growing up there, I think it sharpened my imagination and helped turn me into a writer.

Posting: Re: The Strand Posting 26
 Poster: John Boudreau
 Date: 19 September 2006 5:25 PM

Steve wrote :

" As weird as it was (at least for me) growing up there, I think it sharpened my imagination and helped turn me into a writer."

I've always thought of Willimantic as a miniature Lowell , Massachusetts , the hometown of Jack Keroauc , and inspiration for some of Jack's novels (Dr. Sax the best example) , so I understand what you're saying man . I was born at Windham Hospital in 1952 and live in Willi/North Windham until 1971 ...

Posting: Re: The Strand Posting 27
 Poster: John Tormey
 Date: 20 September 2006 8:00 PM

Amen on Kerouac, John. I was into him in the Fifties, when Celia Mahoney, our very old English teacher tried to keep my interest in Ye Olde English Poets and I was reading the Beat Poets and writing in their style. We didn't get along at all. I mean, she'd read Chaucer with half-closed eyes in the olde English and it would put her in some kind of sexual trance. I'd laugh and she'd say, What's

funny. I'd say I didn't understand one word of it, Was he putting us on or what? Ah well
jt

Posting: Re: The Strand Posting 28
Poster: John Boudreau
Date: 24 September 2006 8:29 AM

John ,

Never got to meet Jack (he died in 1969 as you probably know) , but I did get to meet William Burroughs once in a punk rock club in NYC back in 1982 . Also met Ginsberg at the Iron Horse in Northampton MA where he was performing back in 1991 . I have visited Jack's very humble gravesite at the Edson Cemetary up in Lowell .

Posting: Re: The Strand Posting 29
Poster: chas barrett
Date: 25 September 2006 11:54 PM

John:

As Jack K one asked....." Is God really Pooh Bear?" Who knows...

Neal Cassidy lives.....

Chas

Posting: Re: The Strand Posting 30
Poster: John Boudreau
Date: 26 September 2006 8:48 AM

Chas ,

Let's see how well I do from memory ...

" ...and don't you know that God is Pooh Bear ? The evening star must be drooping and shedding her sparkler dims on the prairie which is just before the coming of night that blesses our earth , and darkens all the rivers and cups the peaks and folds the final shore in and nobody knows what's going to happen to anyone besides the forlorn rags of growing old ...I think of Dean Moriarty I even think of old Dean Moriarty the father we never found . I think of Dean Moriarty .

Posting: Re: The Strand Posting 31
Poster: chas barrett
Date: 29 September 2006 11:39 PM

john:

very good...very good indeed ! ... kerouac was a marvelous spirited writer. he was so influenced by thomas wolfe. i preferred kerouac to wolfe though, who could be over the top and verbose.

ever read kerouac's TOWN & THE CITY??...earliest work i believe, while he went to columbia, or just after. when i lived in NYC in the 1960s i used to go to many of the bars kerouac went too, i suppose looking for him and the rest of them. i was quite a 'disciple of ole jack and the beat movement in 1960 when i was a young kid in willimantic. i had a good pal named steve starger who was my wmtc compatriate in wmtc's ' beat movement' as well as now deceased pal named dick 'scoop' bellavance who was a reporter for the chronicle at the time.

"and quite flows the merrimac in the dark envelope of night "

jack kerouac
1953

Chas

Posting: Re: The Strand Posting 32
Poster: John Boudreau
Date: 30 September 2006 8:34 PM

Chas ,

I was born in June 1952 , the month Jack was down in Mexico putting the final touches to Dr. Sax ...I've got all of Jack's novels inc. Town and the City . Also have some books of his poetry and dreams , CDs of his recordings , as well as bios , DVDs , etc. etc...about Jack .

Posting: Re: The Strand Posting 33

Poster: Steve Starger
Date: 6 October 2006 1:57 PM

Skip, John and John:

The only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn, like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars and in the middle you see the blue centerlight pop and everybody goes "Awww!"
"On the Road" - 1957

Couldn't have said it better.

Steve