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## **Arena Theater Assn. Offers Seats To Pay Off Mortgage**

By J. Stephen McLaughlin

On Monday night, the Arena Theater Association announced plans to pay off its mortgage by “selling” 155 seats in the theater for a \$1,000 donation each.

Seventeen years ago, when the historic building was storm-damaged and red-tagged, more than 150 people stepped up with \$500 donations, and had their names inscribed on the bottoms of individual seats in the beautifully-restored theater.

Even with those and other donations and volunteer labor, the Association still owes a \$155,000 mortgage on the building, now carried by the City of Point Arena. That mortgage, which was interest-only up to now, will include principal payments beginning next year. To avoid that substantial outlay, at this week’s annual membership meeting, Lena Bullamore announced the drive to eliminate the mortgage entirely by honoring \$1,000 donors with a plaque on the arm of the seat of their choice. (The 1998 donor names will remain on the seats, too.)

A form for donations is published in this issue of the ICO, she announced, and a progress chart will be posted in the Arena Theater lobby to show which seats are still available. Choice of seats is first come, first served.

On Monday night, Bullamore said that 22 of the original 1998 donors had pledged \$1,000 each for seats already. Before the annual meeting was over, she reported two more \$1,000 pledges from the audience.

While memberships and other contributions go toward operating expenses of the theater (including interest on the mortgage), 100 percent of the donations for the theater seat fundraiser will go immediately and directly to pay down the mortgage, according to Bullamore. Arena Theater Association is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, [www.arenatheater.org](http://www.arenatheater.org).

The membership also elected three board members at Monday’s meeting: Kevin Gallagher and Hugh Brady were re-elected, and Todd Orenick will join the nine-member board of directors.