

New life for old theater

By JAMI LEMKE
OF THE PRESS STAFF

The nearly 70-year-old Sheboygan Theater was to have been sold this morning to a private foundation interested in restoring the building.

Marcus Corp., which has owned the theater at 826 N. Eighth St. for 30 years, planned to sell the building to the Sheboygan Community Theater Foundation Inc. Terms of the sale were not available.

The building that was home to both movies and live performances has been closed since 1992 as Marcus expanded its

Group plans to restore building to its former grandeur

movie complex on Sheboygan's west side.

The foundation intends to restore the theater and make it available to various groups as a performing arts center, said John Becker, president of the organization.

"This is probably the last

effort to save the theater," he added.

According to the foundation's articles of incorporation, filed in September, the group will be "devoted primarily to the preservation and maintenance of the Sheboygan Theater Building as a community center to promote the arts and to provide facilities for the support of community musical organizations."

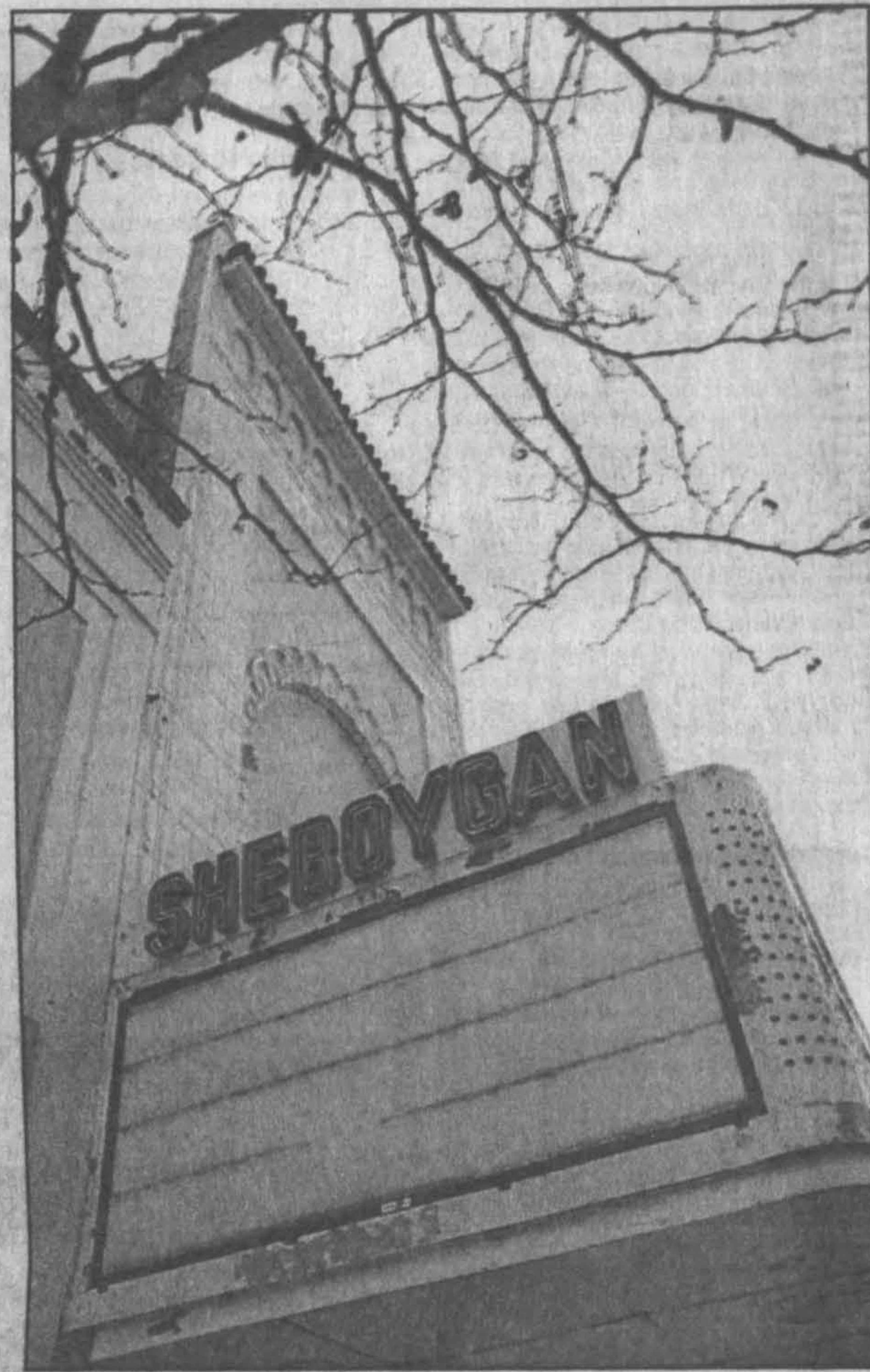
Original directors of the theater group include Becker, Mary Garton, Pamela Garton, Reynolds Honold, Karl Grube,

Turn to THEATER/A8



Press file photo

The interior of the Sheboygan Theater once featured a Spanish castle motif and a star-studded ceiling. Marcus Corp., which owned the building for 30 years, has said the walls and ceiling remain intact.



Press photo by Jeffrey Machtig

The Sheboygan Theater, closed since 1992, has been sold to a private foundation which wants to restore it to its former grandeur.

Theater/ Marcus selling building to community group

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Lois Pauls, Don Zastrow and Richard Meyer.

A different group, including some of the same people, made a similar effort to restore the theater about five years ago. The price tag at that time for buying and remodeling the building was \$1 million to \$1.5 million.

Those plans never materialized because of a lack of money and an absence of someone to lead the effort.

The Sheboygan Theatre opened in February 1928, a 1,600-seat "theater palace." It featured a Spanish castle decor, a star-covered ceiling and a Mighty Wurlitzer organ.

Warner Bros. bought the theater in 1930, and sold it in 1953

to the Stanley Warner Corp., which sold it to Marcus Theaters Management Co. in 1966.

In conjunction with the Plaza 8 effort downtown, Marcus closed the theater for several months in 1980 to "twin" the theater — that is, split the inside into two theaters.

When the "new" Plaza 8 Cinemas opened, the star-covered ceiling was covered. However,

Marcus said the original ceiling and walls remain intact.

Marcus closed the theater in February 1992, in order to study the possibility of creating four screens within the building.

No reopening date was set, and water damage three weeks later compounded the situation.