

2021-J701

Senate Resolution No. 701

BY: Senator BIAGGI

COMMEMORATING the 100th Anniversary of the Pelham
Picture House of Pelham, New York

WHEREAS, The arts, in whatever form depicted, are central to human expression; they are truly a universal language and their contribution to the development of friendship and understanding among all peoples cannot be overestimated; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend those illustrious organizations that have brought entertainment and cultural enrichment to the citizens of the great State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Pelham Picture House of Pelham, New York; and

WHEREAS, The Pelham Picture House is a community-based, mission-driven, non-profit alternative to commercial movie theaters, presenting the best in independent, international, documentary, and classic cinema; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, the Pelham Picture House offers weeklong

theatrical runs of popular, independent, art house and classic films, in addition to curated series, retrospectives, and sneak previews; its special events, some featuring visits from well-known industry professionals, provide an insider's view of the magic of the movies; and

WHEREAS, The history, the heritage, and the lives of the people of all countries and all cultures are portrayed in their music and dance; the art and act of sharing them enriches us altogether; the Pelham Picture House opened to the public on September 10, 1921, featuring the silent film, "Passing Thru", a comedy-drama by Agnes Christine Johnston; and

WHEREAS, In 1927, the theater closed for 11 months due to competition from larger theaters in neighboring communities; one year later, a real estate firm petitioned the Village of Pelham for permission to reopen the theater; they were successful, and the theater reopened on August 18, 1928, with a screening of, "King Vidor's The Crowd"; and

WHEREAS, The Rogowsky Family purchased and refurbished the theater in 1936, and in the 1940s, before television, children flocked to the theater to watch cartoons on Saturday morning; an 11-speaker Dolby stereo sound system plus a new screen and curtain were added in 1987; and

WHEREAS, In 2001, the Pelham Picture House, which has been continuously operating as a movie theater for more than a century, was set to be demolished and replaced by a retail bank when a group of citizens established the nonprofit organization, Pelham Picture House Preservation, to purchase and preserve the theater; and

WHEREAS, The Pelham Picture House was nominated for listing on the New York State Register of Historic Places in 2004, and in 2008, the Picture House begins an ambitious programmatic build-out that includes the organization's first original education initiatives; and

WHEREAS, One year later, in 2009, the Picture House launched its first two original film series: "Reel Insider" and the classic series "Sunday Essentials"; the inaugural Summer 2009 season of "Reel Insider" saw a slew of exciting new films and talent, inspiring Westchester Magazine to name Reel Insider as one of its "52 Reasons to Love Westchester"; and

WHEREAS, Today, this vital nonprofit is known as the Picture House Regional Film Center, and has preserved and restored one of the few surviving and still operating single-screen theaters; and

WHEREAS, Throughout its distinguished 100-year history, the Pelham Picture House has remained true to its mission to create a shared community experience for diverse audiences through film, education programming, and unique cultural offerings; and

WHEREAS, This extraordinary historically preserved and restored theater continues to offer a unique gathering place dedicated to entertaining, enriching, and inspiring a sense of wonder for all ages; and

WHEREAS, The success of the Pelham Picture House is in direct correlation to the efforts of its dedicated staff, members and volunteers, whose involvement is, and always has been, characterized by an impressive commitment, an unbridled enthusiasm, and an uncompromising standard of excellence in all endeavors on behalf of the organization and the community it serves; and

WHEREAS, It is most fitting that we take time to celebrate the arts of our Nation, to honor our artists, and to express our appreciation to everyone who patronizes the arts; and as we celebrate the arts, we celebrate and give thanks to our American freedom, the only atmosphere in which artists can truly create and in which art is truly the expression of the soul; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Pelham Picture House in Pelham, New York, fully confident that it will continue to enjoy the sparkling success which has so characterized its past; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Pelham Picture House.