



Vandals Damage Haskell Playhouse Lights, Officials Seek Help

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - The Haskell Playhouse is one of Alton's treasures and many have invested their hearts to preserve it and make it a place that draws people from far and wide. Some hoodlums in the Alton area must have other ideas about the beautiful house, built for young Lucy Jane Haskell by her grandfather, John Hayner, a legendary financier, and philanthropist.



Lucy died four years after the playhouse was given to her on her fifth birthday in 1885 in Alton. The playhouse was added to the National Register of Historic Places on July 30, 1974.

Multiple times since Blue Ribbon Lighting installed some beautiful lights at the playhouse for the night, vandals have damaged the display installed by Kyle Batson.

Margaret Hopkins of Alton, speaking for the Playhouse, and other board members, are highly upset with the vandalism that has occurred at the playhouse. First, they want Alton Police to be able to catch who is responsible and stop the acts from happening. Hopkins urged anyone who sees anything out of the ordinary at the playhouse at night, to contact the Alton Police at (618) 463-3505. If anyone knows anything about the vandalism acts that have occurred, also please contact the police, Hopkins said.

Kyle Batson of Blue Ribbon Lighting did a brilliant job on the light project, Hopkins said. He also came back and placed the lights around the playhouse in concrete after the first vandalism acts, but Hopkins said recently someone yanked the lights and the concrete out.

At this point, the Haskell Playhouse officials are considering outside cameras, which are expensive, and possible ornamental fencing around it that might help prevent vandals from entering the premises. The Haskell Playhouse already has an elaborate inside camera system, Hopkins said.

Anyone wishing to contribute to help with the costs of fixing the lights or repairs to the Haskell Playhouse should visit <https://haskellplayhouse.org/donate/>

Again, Hopkins hopes someone who knows something about the vandals will come forward and these acts to the playhouse will be forever stopped.

“We just don’t understand the thinking of those responsible,” Hopkins said. “The playhouse means a lot to the citizens of Alton, to children and people who visit. We hope they can find out who actually has committed these acts and stop them.”

