

AAUW Bellingham

Members tour landmark Mt. Baker Theatre



Close to a ghost??? Branch members Sharlene Joshua and Ruth Glaser react to tour guide Beth Seils (left) as she tells them that the ghost of a panther supposedly haunts the area of Mt. Baker Theatre where they have just been.

by Gwen Parker

Nearly 20 AAUW members and guests braved freezing temperatures to gather at Mt. Baker Theatre in downtown Bellingham on Jan. 12. In a change from our pattern of hosting a speaker at the YWCA, we put on our walking shoes to follow a volunteer through nearly every part of the theater.

None of us tried the series of metal ladders that would take us to the top of the landmark tower. However, branch member Louise Bjornson regaled us with the tale of how she made the climb when she was a member of Bellingham City Council, exiting onto the roof for an inspection.

That inspection showed a seriously leaking roof, with rain pouring onto electrical wiring and down inside walls. Louise recalled that it was a battle to get the Council to reroof the building. She got a spontaneous “thank you” from the tour group for her efforts to preserve what is now on the National Register of Historic Places. She, in turn, praised the community for supporting the theater.

Built at a time when movie theaters were called “movie palaces,” the theater was designed by architect Robert Reamer in an elaborate Moorish-Spanish style. Opened in April of 1927, it has of course undergone modernizations and renovations in its 86-year history. In the 1990’s, after the roof repair, \$1.6 million more was spent on building repair and restoration. It is owned by the city and managed by the non-profit MBT organization.

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Save The Date!

**Wine-Tasting
Fundraiser
June 8th
Samson Estates Winery
Everson**

Get your friends to mark their calendars, too!

We had so much fun last year with our wine-tasting and winery tour, that we are going to do it again! A different winery, but lets hope for the same delightful weather! With good friends and family it can be another memorable day. The tour contributed over \$1,000 to our scholarship fund last year.

This year we will invite our sister organization, CFUW, from Surrey/White Rock to join us. What a great way to end our year!

State Co-President to speak at February meeting

We will be privileged to have our state AAUW Co-President Kelvie Comer as our guest speaker on Saturday, Feb. 9. She will tell us what is going on at the state and national AAUW levels, and talk about Community/University connections.

Meeting begins at 10 a.m. at the YWCA, 1026 North Forest St.

We will also have our used book table set up, sporting a new crop of reading material.

Women's Discussion Group - rescheduled

January's meeting is postponed until Tuesday, February 19, 7-9 pm. The topic will be "**Simple**" *Living*; Questions were emailed prior to the January date and will be sent again the week before the meeting.

Information & RSVPs to Helene Berg-Kolin. Come and share your experiences.

Speaking of Successful Fundraisers

Our wreath sale netted our scholarship fund over \$1,200. Thank you everyone for supporting our mission. A huge thank you to Susan Moen and Dianne Davis for the lovely wreaths and all the work they accomplished. The wreaths were beautiful and fresh. Kudos to our branch.

Gift shopping and artists' talks make December meeting merry

We members of Bellingham Branch AAUW lived up to the stereotype of women who “shop ‘til they drop,” when we attended the annual Allied Arts holiday sale. In what is fast becoming a little tradition, members shared coffee and homemade Christmas cookies while listening to three local artists discuss their specialties, before heading into the temporary “mall” where nearly 100 booths displayed area arts and crafts.

The first artist to show her work was **Irene Lawson** of Custer, who makes a variety of ceramic



bowls, plates, bottle stoppers and more. However, she also is an accomplished quilt-maker and bead artist. She showed us a beautiful, prize-winning, hand-stitched quilt and some of her beadwork before launching into a discussion of her ceramics (which are available at Good Earth Pottery in Fairhaven).

Irene told us that she spent many years decorating Ukrainian Easter eggs, called Pysanky, which use traditional folk designs. She then decided that she wanted to translate the style of those eggs onto functional pottery, continuing to use and build on the geometric patterns that she loves. She begins with unfired clay, drawing her designs with pencil, and then using colored glazes to make the decorations. Many of her patterns include myriad small dots of paint, which she applies free-hand, with an amazingly swift and steady pace. While her unique style is unmistakable, she has expanded from the Ukrainian patterns into cheerful fruit and vegetable designs, and also a popular Day of the Dead series.

The next artist who took time to discuss her work was **Margaret Nathon** of The Creative Frog. She says she is always delighted when a friend or neighbor leaves a bag of old woolen sweaters on her

doorstep, because these are the raw materials that become her “Jabberwoolies” -- lovable soft dolls with one-of-a-kind wardrobes.

Obviously born with a strong creativity gene, Margaret can find a use for every sort of button, yarn or fabric. She also makes hand puppets at her home studio, and often fills custom orders. Every doll and creature gets a name.



Did you know that a “breathy”-sounding flute has a rough interior, while a smooth interior gives a flute a clear tone? This is



just one of the tidbits from **Doug Banner**, the third artist who spoke to our group. A man of many interests, Doug’s card lists him as a storyteller, but he is also an engineer, a researcher biologist and a maker of Native American flutes.

The engineering background sneaked in as he talked about formulas for spacing finger holes, the characteristics of different woods, and the usefulness of plastic flutes. The latter, he says, are great for taking along when hiking or camping, where a fine wooden instrument could be too easily damaged.

In memoriam



Margaret Miller

Phyllis Haberstroh

Two Bellingham Branch members who epitomized AAUW have passed away. We will sorely miss Phyllis Haberstroh and Margaret Miller. Both women had long careers focused on helping people: Phyllis practiced clinical psychotherapy and social work for more than 30 years, while Margaret had a similarly long career as a physical therapist, for many years at Shuksan Convalescent Center.

Both women were active in a wide variety of community groups, as well as their churches. Although she was not active in AAUW for a few years before her death, Margaret was branch president in 1972 and 1973. She passed away January 2, 2013, at the age of 90. Phyllis came to Bellingham in 1997, after she and her husband retired, and she wasted no time in making herself a vital part of the city. She passed away November 27, 2012, at the age of 83.

Adelante! Book Club

Meets at Arlis's Restaurant, 1525 Cornwall Ave. in downtown Bellingham, at noon.

Jan 31 book: *The Shallows*, by Nicholas Carr

Contact: Gwen Parker

PM Book Club

The Evening Book Group meets the second Thursday evening of each month downstairs in the Colophon Cafe in Fairhaven. We meet at 6:45 and welcome all comers. Here is our slate of titles through October 2013:

Feb - Louise Erdrich, *The Plague of Doves*

Mar - Myra MacPherson, *All Governments Lie!*

Apr - Steven Galloway, *The Cellist of Sarajevo*

May - Charles Mann, *1491*

Jun - David Liss, *A Conspiracy of Paper*

Jul - Paul Fussell, *Wartime*

Aug - Ann Patchett, *State of Wonder*

Sep - Lauren Kessler, *Stubborn Twig*

Oct - Rachel Joyce, *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*

Please join us.

Contact: Barb Craig

Women Who Walk & Wine

Walk on Wednesdays at 6:15 pm..

Locations vary.

Contact: Cindi Paffumi

Dames Who Dine

Contact: Lori Smiley

Women's Discussion Group

Contact: Helene Berg-Kolin

YOU ARE WELCOME







Our 60 members strong Bellingham AAUW branch offers scholarships to local area institutes of higher learning: WWU, WCC, and BTC. Throughout the year, we support local programs and events which help women and girls gain equity in all areas of life.

All women possessing a four-year bachelor's degree or a two-year associate's degree are welcome to become members. You may attend three events before deciding to join. Ask us what we do at local, state, and national levels to advance equity for women and girls.

**We support girls' equity
in all endeavors.**

Don't miss this
opportunity to join us:
Membership matters

National AAUW is currently running a mid-year dues special - new members may join for one-half the usual rate (\$24.50 instead of \$49). With the \$10 State dues and \$11 Branch dues, that is a total of \$45.50 instead of the usual \$70. This makes now a great time to join! Have your friends contact Helene for membership information.

We had 4 visitors for our Mt. Baker Theater tour. Invite a friend or a like minded acquaintance to a meeting. Let's reach our goal of having 70 members by June.

AAUW BELLINGHAM EXECUTIVE BOARD 2012-2013

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Members tour historic local theater

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Today, the old-fashioned-looking light fixtures are the originals, with some subtle modern lighting added. The carpet is a replica of the original, made by the same company that made the first one, using a sample they still had after all those years. Many of the upholstered benches in the lobby and mezzanine also are original. What looks like a wooden ceiling in the lobby area is actually painted concrete, some of it restored.

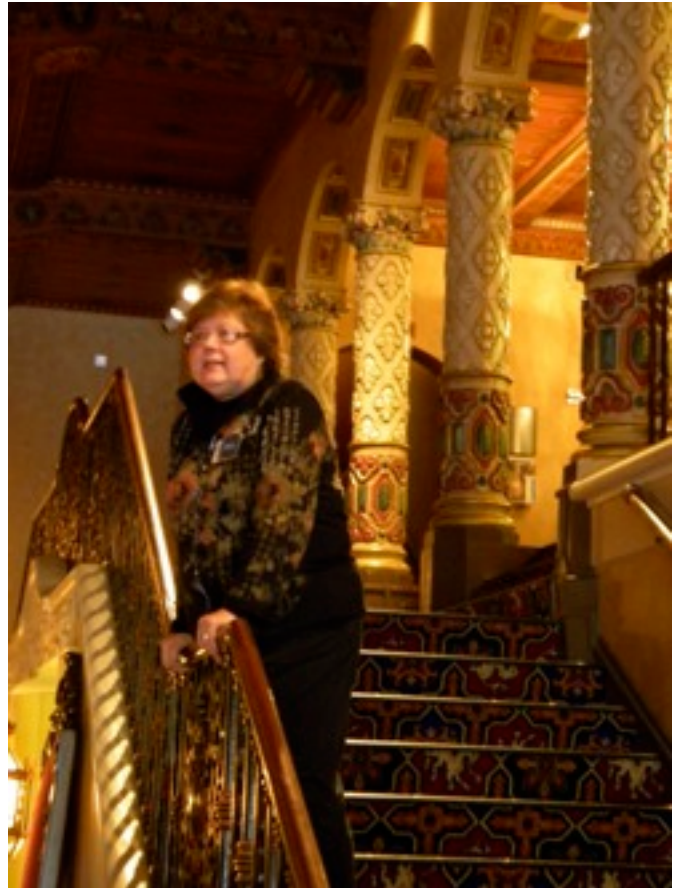
The historic pipe organ sits in the orchestra pit, and when you are on the stage itself, you can see, on one side, the old-fashioned



The restroom signs on the MBT's mezzanine are the originals.

counterweight system used to raise and lower lights, scenery or the movie screen. The theater is host to professional productions, concerts, community theater, comedy groups and more. The Encore Room and Walton Theater add more performance and meeting spaces.

There are tales of ghosts in nearly every nook and cranny of the theater, but like the value of a performance, you'll have to decide the truth of those for yourself.



Our MBT tour guide stands on the stairs to the mezzanine, surrounded by the rich decor of the 86-year-old theater.

Happy Birthday, Bellingham Branch!

Bellingham AAUW was a thriving eight-year-old when the Mt. Baker Theatre was opened in April of 1927. The official charter was submitted in September of 1918. We have just received recognition for our longevity from the national board, citing our 95 years of "exceptional service and demonstrated commitment to education and equity for women and girls."