

Whatcom Middle School fire: Figuring out the next step

Many of us were awakened by alarming sounds in the early hours of November 5, 2009. For some, it was the shrill scream of smoke alarms going off in our homes near Whatcom Middle School. For others, it was the unusual *thump-thump-thump* of helicopters circling overhead. For those who stepped out to investigate, the sight was horrifying. Whatcom Middle School, flames clearly visible on the roof and through the second-floor windows, was on fire.

Thanks to the efforts of local firefighters, the fire was eventually put out. But efforts to assess the damage done to the historic 1903 building have only just begun.

Bellingham school officials have stated their strong hope to be able to repair or rebuild Whatcom Middle School, but until a damage assessment is completed sometime in January there can be no solid planning. So the question of how to best serve Whatcom students—presently relocated to four different schools, along with their faculty—into Fall 2010 and beyond remains.

School officials asked for input from the families of students and any interested community members. An online survey at <http://www.bham.wednet.edu> closed on Jan. 4. *If you missed the Jan. 4 survey deadline, another survey will go up on the site approximately Jan. 11-18, presenting the top options from the earlier survey for public input.*

In the meantime, the Bellingham Public Schools site is keeping its Whatcom Middle School page updated with factual information. To visit, go to <http://www.bham.wednet.edu>. Click on Families, then click on Whatcom Middle School Updates.

—Rebecca Gleason



PHOTO: DIANGO FROM MERCH BOT

Firefighters worked through the early morning of November 5 battling the blaze at Whatcom Middle School on Halleck between E and F Streets.



Lettered Streets Potluck!

When: Tuesday, Jan. 12, starting 6:30 p.m.

Where: First Congregational Church, 2401 Cornwall Ave.

Bring: Food item to share

Please join us on **Tuesday, January 12** for the annual Lettered Streets potluck!

Last year's gathering was a notable success, with dozens of neighbors—families, college students, retirees and everyone in between—all chatting and noshing

together. People brought a wide variety of dishes, from hot casseroles to hummus to cookies to a takeout pizza. All were eaten with relish!

This year at the potluck we'll also be nominating candidates for the four open

neighborhood association positions: Chair, secretary, Area 1 rep and Area 4 rep. Nominating Committee members Chris Eltrich and Becky Hutchins will be available to meet with anyone interested in the positions.



Corner of F Street
& Dupont
Park on G Street

Featuring local fare
(with vegan and
gluten-free options),
free WiFi, and
locally roasted coffee.

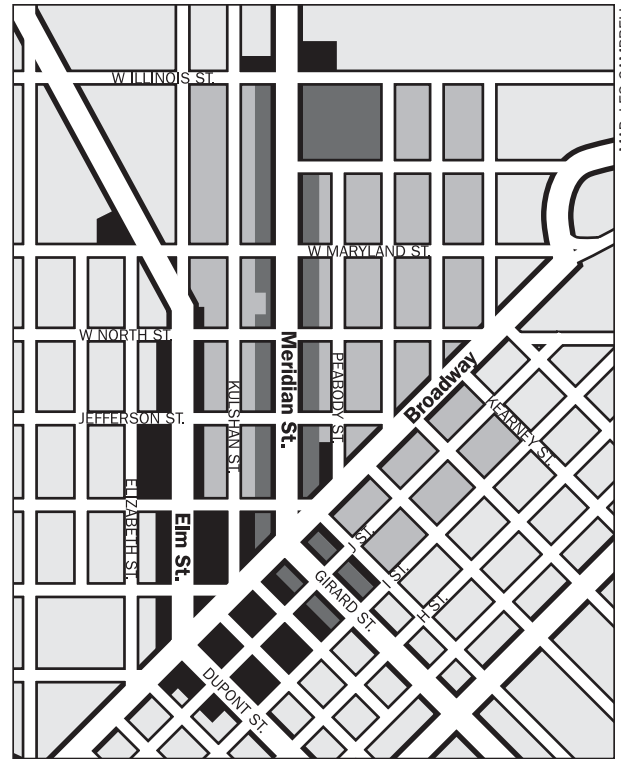
Buy one 12-ounce latte or mocha, and receive
the **second** 12-ounce latte or mocha **free**.
(at point of purchase)

your corner on the world

Open Mon-Fri 6:45am-6:00pm ■ Sat-Sun 8:00am-5:00pm
info@letteredstreetscoffee.com
360-933-4689
Expires 04/30/2010

Planning continues for Fountain District Urban Village

There's still time for interested neighbors to provide input as the city refines its plan for the Fountain District Urban Village. The Fountain District is snug up against the Lettered Streets' northwest border, encompassing the area of Meridian Street beginning at the intersections of Girard and Broadway at the southern end, and extending to Illinois at the northern end. (See map.)



MAP: LES CAMPBELL

■ = Commercial Transition ■ = Commercial Core ■ = Residential Transition

After a series of public meetings in spring 2009, the City of Bellingham published its Public Input Report for the Fountain District Urban Village on July 15, 2009. This report summarized public comments received during the public meetings and described the next steps in the planning process, which included some additional focus group meetings in fall 2009. The results of those meetings will help refine and guide draft master plan and development regulations for the Fountain District Urban Village.

If you'd like to be involved, the City of Bellingham will hold one more public meeting to review findings and draft concepts. This meeting is date is not set, but is expected to be sometime in Febru-

ary 2010. Release of the draft plan and regulations should occur in March 2010. The draft plan will then be reviewed by the Bellingham Planning Commission and the City Council, where additional public input is welcome before adoption by the City of Bellingham.

To review a copy of the Public Input Report as well as complete details of each meeting including comments made primarily by neighbors and business owners of the Columbia, Cornwall

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



LETTERED STREETS
covenant church

Come experience a community
of love, service, authenticity
and belonging....

A community where you are WELCOME!

Sunday 5 pm – 6:30 pm

2100 Broadway
The Fountain Church Building
360.920.6712
Pastor Chris Eltrich
letteredstreetscc.com

the **letterhead** newsletter of the lettered streets neighborhood

WINTER ISSUE © 2010 LETTERED STREETS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

The Letterhead is the official newsletter of the Lettered Streets Neighborhood Association and is published four times a year. If you have an idea for an article, or something you'd like to see included in an upcoming issue, please send an e-mail to letterhead.ed@gmail.com. Pictures or layout questions, try design.boj.bham@gmail.com.

For the latest news, be sure to visit our website at:

www.letteredstreets.org

And become our friend on Facebook! Search for

Lettered Streets Neighborhood Association

Want to receive our bi-monthly Lettered Streets e-bulletin? Email lettered.streets@gmail.com to get on the mailing list.

First Congregational Church of Bellingham, UCC

Our
Worship



Is Open
To All!

We want to Connect with You!

Church Office – 734-3720

<http://www.fccb.net>

Fountain District Urban Village

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

and Lettered Streets neighborhoods, go to www.cob.org and type "Fountain District Urban Village" in the Search box in the upper righthand corner. Click on Fountain District Urban Village – City of Bellingham, WA, click on Reports, Maps and Resources and finally click on Public Input Report.

If you have any questions, come to a Lettered Streets Neighborhood Association meeting. Or you can contact Katie Franks, at kfranks@cob.org or 360-778-8388.

—Howard Steiner

What's coming up? LSNA 2010 Schedule

The Lettered Streets Neighborhood Association meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at Washington Square, 2501 E Street. Enter through one of the doors on the Logan St. side, right off the building's patio. (Please note that the January 12 meeting is a potluck to be held at the First Congregational Church, 2401 Cornwall Ave.)

We try to arrange interesting topics and speakers ahead of time for many

meetings. Our schedule so far for 2010:

- January 12: Potluck at First Congregational Church, 2401 Cornwall Ave. Starts at 6:30 p.m. We will also be nominating candidates for open board positions.
- February 9: Neighborhood Association elections. Positions open are chair, secretary, Area 1 rep and Area 4 rep.
- March 9: Gardening panel
- April 13: Topic still open
- May 11: Older home maintenance: Tips and

tricks for staying historical

- June 8: Topic still open
- July 13: Topic still open
- August 10: Ice Cream Social
- September 10: Planting trees and keeping them healthy
- October, November and December topics still open.

If there's a topic you'd like to see covered, please contact Arlene at arlene_feld@hotmail.com or come to a meeting to let us know!

Reasons to support your neighborhood association

It's that time of year again, when we respectfully request that our Lettered Streets neighbors support the Lettered Streets Neighborhood Association through annual dues.

The very reasonable dues are:

- Individual: \$5
- Family: \$10
- Business: \$25

To contribute, mail in the membership form below, or pay in person at a neighborhood association meeting.

Here's what your dues support:

- Printing this newsletter and door hangers. The Letterhead newsletter lets people know of plans and events affecting our neighborhood, such as important public meetings and work parties (for example, to help with plantings along the Old Village Trail). The newsletter also fosters a sense of belonging to a community.
 - Our two annual social events: The potluck in January and the ice cream social or picnic in August.
 - Our neighborhood's voice in local planning and government. Representatives of the neighborhood association provided major input into the city's Old Town Urban Village Plan and the recent successful downzone of parts of the Lettered Streets.
 - Potential reimbursement funds from the city for various projects. Receiving money via dues typically helps the neighborhood association receive funds from the city for neighborhood projects.
 - Neighborhood betterment such as the volunteer-created pocket garden at Holly and C Streets
 - Seed money for fundraising projects such as last year's successful Gardens of the Lettered Streets calendar
 - Our P.O. box
- Contributing dues is a tangible way to support your community. Thank you!

Lettered Streets Neighborhood Association MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Contact information will be kept private and confidential, and will not be used or released without your consent.

I would be willing to help distribute newsletters (The Letterhead)

Recommended annual contribution:

Single – \$5 Household – \$10 Business – \$25

Mail to: Lettered Streets Neighborhood Association • P.O. Box 852 • Bellingham, WA 98227

1600 H Street • 733-1811



Taking Steps
by Alan Ayckbourn
January 22 – February 7

Finger Foods
by Nina Shengold
February 18 – 28

Inherit the Wind
by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee
April 9 – 25

Guys and Dolls
by Jo Swerling & Abe Burrows
June 11 – 27

Cool ice cream social on a warm evening

Dozens of Lettered Streets residents delighted in free ice cream at our ice cream social on August 11. Thank you again to our generous neighbors Claudia and Randy DeWees, owners of the Baskin Robbins shop at the Bakerview Fred Meyer shopping center, 733-0031. They donated all the ice cream and cones that we enjoyed on that balmy summer evening.



PHOTOS: ARLENE FELD



Lee Eberhardt steps down as chair

Lee Eberhardt has stepped down as chair of the Lettered Streets Neighborhood Association. Lee and his wife are in the final stages of adopting twin girls from China and expect their lives will shortly become very busy. Thank you, Lee, for all your work with the LSNA board and especially for your work on zoning and growth management over the past years. Lee's term of office was until February 2011. The LSNA board has appointed Arlene Feld as interim chair until the elections in February 2010. At that time, a chair will be elected for the remaining year of the term.

—Rae Edwards

Volunteer opportunities

Here are a couple of ways you can help out with the Lettered Streets Neighborhood Association.

- **Help deliver the newsletter.** We deliver the newsletter by hand to save money and because it's actually more efficient than mailing. You can sign up to deliver for just a few blocks or for the length of your street--whatever you're comfortable with. Every little bit helps. Please contact letterhead.ed@gmail.com if you can assist us.

- **Design a fundraising calendar.** Are you a photographer? Or do you have print layout and design experience? We had good luck with our Gardens of the Lettered Streets fundraising calendar last year, and we'd like to do at least one new calendar this year. Topics could be Lettered Streets gardens, or historical buildings and houses, or pets...if you want to be involved please contact Arlene at arlene_feld@hotmail.com.

THE LETTERHEAD • WINTER 2010

If disaster strikes, are you prepared?



PHOTO: ISABEL MASSE

The City of Bellingham has resources to help you prepare for an earthquake or other major disaster.

Do you know the immediate steps to take following a major disaster? These steps can help save lives and reduce trauma and property damage.

One way to be prepared is to take advantage of the city of Bellingham's "Map Your Neighborhood" program. This excellent program will help you and your neighbors to know what to do

both at home and in your neighborhood during a disaster when events overwhelm the police, fire and medical 911 emergency responders.

For more information regarding this program, please contact Carol at the Lettered Streets Disaster Preparedness Committee, 527-2974.

—Carol Whitting

Lettered Streets Neighborhood Association

Monthly meeting: 2nd Tuesday (most months) at Washington Square, 2501 E Street, 7 p.m.

Next meeting: Potluck, January 12, 6:30 p.m.

Special Meeting Place: First Congregational Church, 2401 Cornwall Avenue

Chairperson: Arlene Feld (interim)
 Vice Chair: Michael McAuley
 Treasurer: Vince Brown
 Secretary: open
 MNAC Rep: Howard Steiner



Area 1 Rep: Becky Hutchins
 Area 2 Rep: Shirley Mahberg
 Area 3 Rep: Rae Edwards
 Area 4 Rep: Mike Kimmich

FAN LETTER:

A celebration of people, places and things in the Lettered Streets

Bellingham Theatre Guild: Volunteers make a neighborhood treasure fun

Between H and G Streets, a block off of Dupont, looms one of the tallest buildings in the neighborhood: the 107-year-old Congregational Church building that houses the Bellingham Theatre Guild (BTG). Situated on seven city lots, no one can deny its physical presence; but it is its historical and artistic value that make the BTG important to our city, and especially to the Lettered Streets Neighborhood.

Founded in 1929, the BTG is one of the oldest continuously operating theater companies west of the Mississippi. Over 7,000 performances of almost 700 different shows—comedies, dramas, musicals and children's shows—mean that a lot of theater has happened in our area over the years.

What's even more impressive is that this is all-volunteer theater, made by the community, for the community. It's our neighbors and folks from surrounding communities who donate the thousands of hours necessary to keep this historic old building running and the magic happening on stage. Add that to the fact that the BTG is one of Bellingham's oldest existing businesses, and our neighborhood really has something to be proud of.



PHOTO: BELLINGHAM THEATRE GUILD

The Bellingham Theatre Guild offers live drama, comedy and musicals for just about the price of a movie.

The original Congregational Church building where the BTG brings theater to life was constructed in 1902, just a few blocks above the head of the old G Street waterway. A streetcar line ran right past the building, making it a central feature in early Bellingham life. The structure was purchased by the BTG in 1944, and a decades-long pro-

cess of renovations, purchases of additional lots for parking, and additions to the building began.

In the 1980s, an addition was put on the back of the building, expanding the space to well over 10,000 square feet. Housed inside this space is the auditorium, which seats 194; a workshop, extensive costume room, props and lighting storage, actors lounges and dressing rooms, a reception room, kitchen, and office space. That addition is easily discernible from the original building.

Future plans for the BTG theater include the addition of an elevator to ensure access for everyone. (The auditorium is on the upper floor, and numerous stairs make access difficult for some.) This past summer, the building was repainted; walk by and you'll see the old

place decked out in fresh blue and pink, looking great despite its age.

Make your next outing a truly local affair: go see a fun, affordable show created by your friends and neighbors, all within walking distance of your own home. Or better yet, get involved by volunteering—it's great for families looking to do something together, or for individuals interested in all aspects of theater. Be a part of our proud local history!

The Bellingham Theatre Guild is located at 1600 H St., Bellingham WA 98225. For more information on performances and volunteer opportunities, visit www.bellinghamtheatreguild.com or call 360-733-1811.

—Jeff Braswell

Upcoming shows at the Bellingham Theatre Guild

Taking Steps

by Alan Ayckbourn

Performances Jan. 22-Feb. 7

Finger Foods

by Nina Shengold

Performances Feb. 18-28

Inherit the Wind

by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee

Performances April 9-25

Guys and Dolls

by Jo Swerling & Abe Burrows

Performances June 11-27

SEE AD ON PAGE 3

WINTER 2010 • THE LETTERHEAD