



Backstage at the 7th Street...

Where stars light the sky and the stage

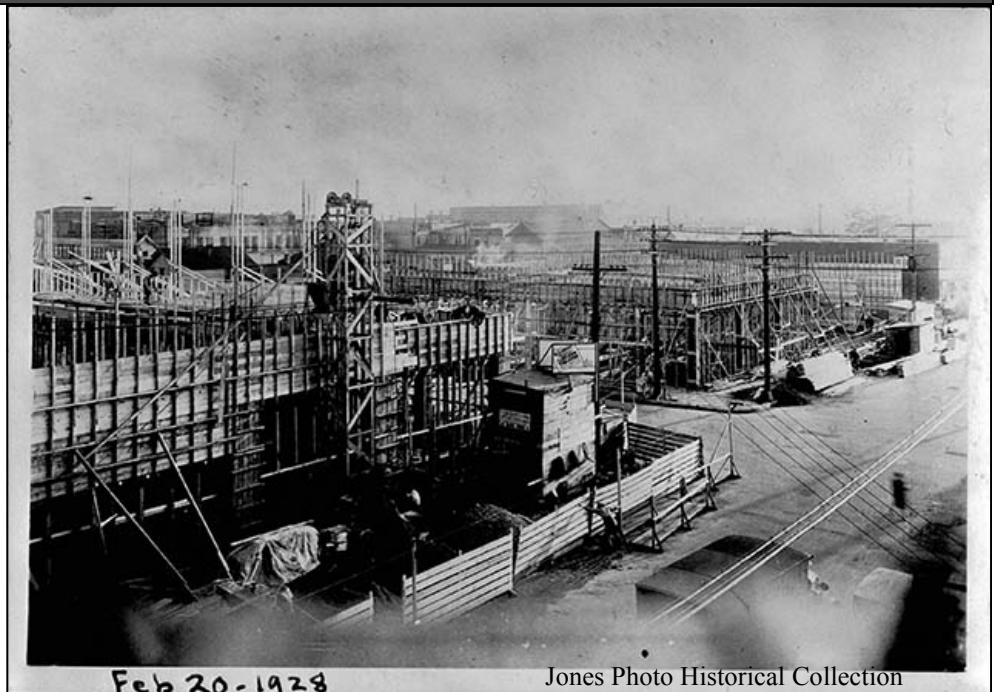
Winter/Spring 2008 ■ Volume 3, Number 1

Hoquiam's Theatre Beautiful: The 7th Street Story

*By John Larson, Director of
Hoquiam's Polson Museum*

The 1920s were prosperous years on Grays Harbor. County-wide, 71 lumber and wood products plants and 31 logging firms boasted a total employment of over 10,000 people. The annual timber harvest by the late 1920s was 1.75 billion board feet of lumber and the market looked to only keep climbing. Hoquiamites, in particular, proudly coined a slogan that asked others to "Hear Hoquiam Hum." Indeed, the town was abuzz not only with the sound of sawmills but with new construction, car horns, restaurants, bars, stores, hotels, and the footsteps of people downtown seeking new ways to entertain themselves.

During that decade, Hoquiam's built commercial landscape changed dramatically as many wooden buildings of the 1880s and 1890s were replaced with modern concrete and brick fire-resistant structures. Sturdy new buildings like the American Veteran's Building and Polson Logging Company offices – both built in 1920 – promised to modernize the town. Sure enough, dozens of new structures followed including a new fire station, telephone exchange, public market, several service stations, and the towering three-story Masonic and Quimby & Wilson buildings. The grand Hotel Emerson opened in 1924 and by 1928, progress downtown was really in full swing. That year was perhaps the single biggest year for big projects in Hoquiam.



Downtown Hoquiam's 7th Street was a busy construction zone during the first half of 1928. At left is the 7th Street Theatre less than a month after the first forms were laid. Also visible on the corner of 7th and J Streets is the new J.C. Penney building taking shape. The pace of construction was rapid as Penney's celebrated its grand opening in June 1928 and the Theatre followed in early July.

In May of 1928, the Simpson Avenue Bridge opened to traffic with Governor Ronald Hartley on hand to cut the ribbon on the \$500,000 bridge. The Simpson Hotel also debuted that month and J.C. Penney launched its

new department store at 7th & J Streets in June. The Grays Harbor Pulp and Paper Company had just finished their first year in operation and the Hoquiam City Council authorized the purchase of lots to build a new city hall.

The 7th Street Theatre was also built in 1928 and, in many ways, represented the culmination of a 1920s "urban renewal" of downtown Hoquiam. Hoquiam's "Theatre Beautiful" – as the magnificent 7th Street was dubbed – was arguably the most im-



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Backstage at the 7th Street

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Board meetings are held monthly on the second Wednesday.

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Hoquiam's Theatre Beautiful (from page 1)

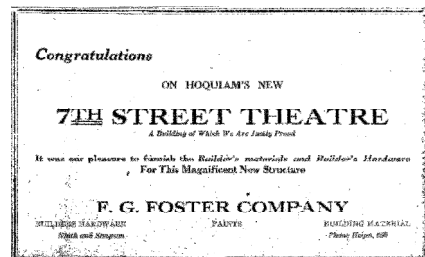
pressive public facility erected in the city since the grand Hoquiam Hotel was finished in 1889.

The 7th Street was the brainchild of Ed Dolan and O.T. Taylor of the newly-formed Hoquiam Amusement Company. As President of the corporation, Dolan was publicly regarded as the "financial genius" who managed to secure the \$175,000 it took to construct the new theatre. Taylor, who was Dolan's principal associate, was considered by theatre critics a "wizard of artistic visualization" and was responsible for directing the building's overall aesthetic design. Dolan and Taylor teamed up locally with Hoquiam architect Edwin St. John Griffith, who in turn worked with the Seattle architectural firm Huntington & Torbit to develop plans for the project. By early 1928 they were set to begin construction.

On January 9, Hoquiam general contractor Nelson & Johnson was awarded the contract to build the 7th Street. Within the month, the firm was mobilized to begin work and early reports in the *Hoquiam American* noted that they "worked day and night for three days" the week of February 5 pouring the first concrete which went into the basement under the stage. Over the next four months, the theatre took shape quickly with a dozen

local and regional sub-contractors taking part in the project. By May 31, headlines announced that the "beautiful playhouse is rapidly nearing completion" and that an opening date would soon be set.

In the weeks prior to the 7th Street's much anticipated public opening on July 10, writers at the *Hoquiam American*, *Washingtonian*, and *Aberdeen World* newspapers were given advance tours of the building and printed column after column describing vividly and enthusiastically every detail of the structure. Architect Griffith authored a guest column in the *Hoquiam American* that provided readers with a better understanding of the 7th Street's atmospheric design – the first of its type in the Pacific Northwest (and, sadly, now the last). Griffith described the night blue ceiling as "giving the sky effect with myriad of tiny stars twinkling [to] create that atmosphere of restfulness which recently has become the most desired thing in theatre decorations."



Washingtonian, July 8, 1928

Local and regional contractors who helped construct the 7th Street Theatre

- George A. McLean, Grays Harbor – plastering
- Electric Equipment & Engineering Company, Aberdeen – electrical
- Pryde Brothers Sheet Metal, Hoquiam – metal work
- Archie M. Hall, Aberdeen – masonry
- Elway-Miller Company, Aberdeen – plumbing and heating systems
- F.G. Foster Company, Hoquiam – furnished cement, reinforcing steel, hardware, tile, and fire brick
- East Side Lumber Yard, Hoquiam – furnished lumber from the stocks of Hoquiam's North Western & E.K. Wood sawmills
- Stouffer-Bowman, Aberdeen – terrazzo work
- Lidgerwood Company, Tacoma – supplied structural steel
- Reliance Iron Works, Seattle – ornamental iron work.
- Grays Harbor Construction, Hoquiam – pile driving, sand and gravel
- Sharpe Sign, Tacoma – furnished the Everlast Neon Sign

Continued from page 2



Edwin St. John Griffith, architect
(courtesy Polson Museum)

Griffith's July 5 article went on to describe in great detail the "harmonious colorings" throughout the building, the 1,000 light outlets in the auditorium, the latest Wurlitzer organ, Wilton velvet carpets, 800 yards of velour drapes, as well as special scenery designed by O.T. Taylor and "built by some of the finest scenic artists in the east."

One feature of particular note was that the ventilation system was capable of completely changing out the air in the theatre within three minutes. Design challenges for ventilation were unique to a timber town like Hoquiam as the fresh air intake was located, according to Griffith, on the "lee side of the building to prevent any drifting in of smoke, sawdust and cinders." In 1928, such airborne pollution was commonplace and the theatre's proximity to the nearby North Western, E.K. Wood, and Blagen sawmills would have been of concern.

The 7th Street's public opening took place over a three-day, mid-week period from Tuesday, July 10 through Thursday the 12th. The *Washingtonian* reported that the theatre was "thronged" by sell-out crowds at its formal opening which featured the Association Vaudeville whose varied acts included such performers as the

Georgalis Trio who were billed as "European Marksmen Deluxe" capable of playing musical instruments and removing women's garments with bullets! During this three-day extravaganza, the entire D&R Theatre orchestra was moved to Hoquiam with the act. The 7th Street announced plans to show vaudeville regularly one night each week after the opening and promised to devote the other six nights to feature pictures (the debut film starred Madge Bellamy in "The Play Girl").

Local newspapers also reported on what was arguably the most historically interesting and locally relevant opening feature. The *Hoquiam American* noted that "among the novelties planned for the occasion will be the formal dedication by means of a Hoquiam-made film." Among those "starring" in this film were Hoquiam Mayor George Brault, Hoquiam Chamber President E.L. Scott, Rotary President Harry Wilson, Kiwanis President Laurence Leyine, Active Club President Allen Thompson, and Business and Professional Women's Club President Ella Fleming. O.T.

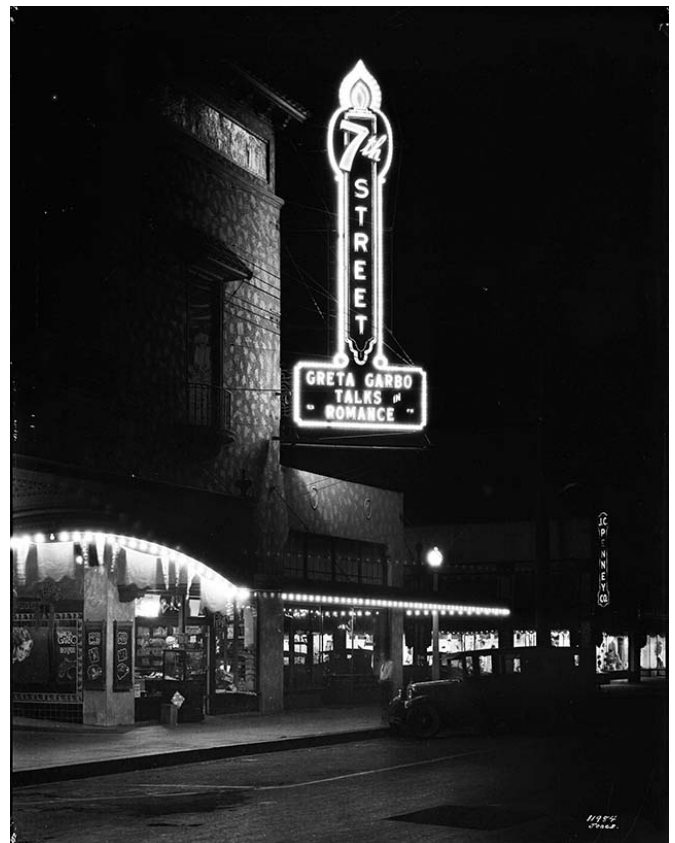
The 7th Street's original "candlestick" sign, marquee, and awnings were electrified beacons for downtown Hoquiam. At nearly 28 feet tall, the neon sign at the 7th and J Street corner maintained proportion with the grand building. (The theatre board welcomes any information regarding what happened to the original neon sign.)

Photo courtesy of Jones Photo Historical Collection. Visit www.jones-photocollection.com

Taylor and Ed Dolan were also introduced in the film which was made during the first week of July. Even famed Aberdeen pioneer Sam Benn – at 96 years old – graced the silver screen!

The 7th Street's grand proportions and depiction of an exotic locale were certainly a reflection of the prosperity and optimism that existed both locally and nationally in the late 1920s. The era of wealth that gave birth to such magnificent American treasures as the 7th Street Theatre would, however, end all too soon. As the Depression of the 1930s gripped the Harbor and the nation, the 7th Street endured as a place to escape and to dream. The thousands of live performances and films that have been enjoyed there since are a testament to the space's timeless relevance to Grays Harbor society and culture.

As was the case in 1928, our theatre will again serve as the anchor for downtown Hoquiam's renewal. It endures as a national landmark with a timeless beauty that inspires and awes each new generation that steps through its doors.



The 7th Street Theatre: Celebrating 80 Years

An Evening with JP Patches & Gertrude: The Men Behind the Makeup



By Lane Youmans

Attention All Patches Pals! The evening of Saturday, April 5th, 2008 will be a night for all Patches Pals to remember. As part of the 7th St. Theatre's 80th birthday celebration, JP Patches (Chris Wedes, who is also turning 80) and Gertrude (Bob Newman) will appear on our stage, without makeup or costumes in "An evening with JP Patches and Gertrude — The men behind the makeup." Chris and Bob will kick back and present the audience with their favorite memories and stories from the JP Patches show. There will be film clips from the show as well as a question-and-answer period. JP Patches aired on KIRO TV from 1958 until 1981. When it left the air it was the longest running locally produced children's show in America. JP logged over 10,000 shows, all of them live, and most unscripted.

All tickets are \$10 for this once-in-a-lifetime show. The money Chris and Bob raise will go towards the completion of a statue of the two of them in Seattle's Fremont District that will be unveiled this spring. Along with JP and Gertrude, the statue will include the ICU2 TV set along with a collection box where funds will go to Children's Hospital. Tickets are available at Harbor Drug and 7th St. Deli and Sweet Shoppe in Hoquiam, City Drug in Aberdeen, and All Wrapped Up in Montesano. You can also get your tickets by sending the money to JP Patches Show, 7th Street Theatre PO Box 777 Hoquiam, WA 98550. (Checks made payable to: 7th Street Theatre Association.) Tickets will also be available at the door, but there are only 997 seats and ticket orders are already rolling in. Doors open at 6:30 and the show begins at 7:30. JP Patches collectibles and 7th Street Theatre 80th birthday souvenirs will be for sale in the lobby.

Commemorative Items

by Mickey Thurman

In December 2007 — inspired by the month's weather events — volunteers *brainstormed* ideas for the theatre's 80th birthday. We created two committees: Seats and 80th Birthday Event. It soon became apparent that we also needed a Commemorative Items Committee. After back-to-back meetings we combined committees.

As part of our celebration of the theatre's 80 years, we felt it was important to offer special commemorative items to the community.

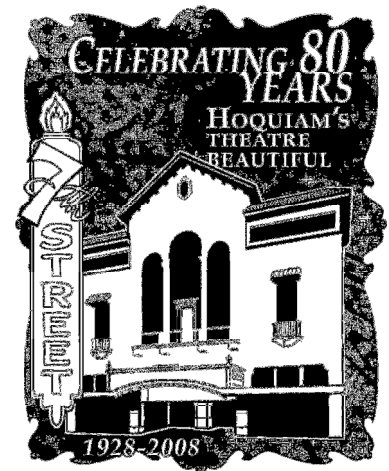
Hoquiam-based artist Billy Fisher, whom we like to refer to as our own, was kind enough to devote hours of his time to create the beautiful artwork for buttons, T-shirts and mugs. The T-shirts recently were completed and have been selling like hotcakes

(well not like hotcakes necessarily, but like real buttered popcorn).

Jenny Fisher, another local artist (and also Billy's mother) stepped up and has done a wonderful job coordinating the designs and ordering of the 80th Birthday items from local businesses.



Button design created by local artist Billy Fisher



T-shirt and mug design by Billy Fisher

Commemorative items will be for sale throughout the year at our events, and we also hope to place some of the items with local merchants. T-shirts sell for \$20 (men's and women's shirts available), mugs are \$10 and buttons are \$1. *Limited supplies!*



**7th Street Kids Present:
Seussical the Musical at the 7th
Street Theatre in July**
By Jeannie McNeal

Oh, the Thinks you can Think! Come wonder and dream with Dr. Seuss at the 7th Street Theatre this summer as the 7th Street Kids perform *Seussical the Musical*. Reacquaint yourself with the Cat in the Hat, Gertrude McFuzz, Mazie La Bird, and Yertl the Turtle. Follow the adventures of Horton the Elephant and his friends when Horton hears a Who on a tiny speck of dust in the Jungle of Nool and knows he must try to save the Whos of Whoville because, after all, “a person’s a person no matter how small.”

Auditions for *Seussical the Musical* will be held at the 7th Street Theatre on Saturday, June 7 at 9:00 a.m. Kids who are age 7 through 16 on the day of auditions are invited to try out for a role in the musical. No preparation is required. Those who audition will be taught a short dance and song which they will perform for the directors and producers. The directors and producers will choose 50 performers for roles in the summer production.

Rehearsals begin June 23 and will

run weekdays from 9 AM until 1 PM. The 7th Street Kids will perform *Seussical the Musical* for the public on Friday and Saturday, July 25 and 26, at 7:30 PM and Sunday, July 27, at 2:00 p.m. Tickets will be available at Rosevear’s, Harbor Drug, and at the 7th Street Theatre box office one hour before performances.

Even if you do not like Green Eggs and Ham, you will love *Seussical the Musical*! If you have questions, please call Jeannie McNeal at 360-532-1097.

Theatre hires Event Coordinator

This year brings all kinds of excitement to the 7th Street. On January 1 we hired Jamie Brand of Hoquiam for the position of Event Coordinator. During this past year, our volunteers have been trying to keep up with the ever increasing tasks revolving around our active calendar. We decided it was time to hire someone part-time. Jamie and her husband, Joe, began volunteering at the theatre last spring, after moving here from Snohomish with their three children in the fall of 2006. Fortunately for us, she was interested in this part-time position.

Jamie works at the theatre and out of her home, and is the contact for all new rentals, handles the online calendar postings, works with renters and theatre personnel regarding scheduling, handling renter’s needs and is just basically a great person, and we are extremely glad to have her.

Sandie Pennant joins board as Treasurer

On January 1, Sandie Pennant of Hoquiam became our new Treasurer. Sandie replaces Karen Scott, who retired from the position at the end of 2007. Sandie’s “real” job is at KD&S Environmental in Montesano.

Sandie has walked into a year of exciting bookkeeping challenges: our seat campaign, our new employee, and tracking deposits for our commemorative items. She has graciously accepted the fact that most of this is “just temporary — it’ll be fine.”

Welcome aboard Sandie!

Theatre benefactor Ed Bowers passes away

Hoquiam icon Ed Bowers passed away on January 17, 2008 at the age of 90. In 1986 Ed donated funds to the Grays Harbor Community Concert Association to purchase the 7th Street Theatre. Ed Bowers’ generosity and love of the 7th Street Theatre saved this historic treasure. During his tenure in the Concert Association, Ed would go from business to business, asking owners to purchase concert series tickets, donning his signature suit jacket, plaid hat, bolo tie, and never without pipe in hand. He loved contacting the artists as they came to town, and introduced them from the stage. Ed will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

What are those things on the lobby walls?

The Hoquiam American, July 5, 1928: Bordering the upper walls of the lobby are stenciled likenesses of the fabled ornythorinkus, vampus cat and sidehill gouger, conceived by modern man as having once populated the forests and mountains of the Olympic Peninsula.

Which one do you think this is?



Thank you to our wonderful supporters in 2007!

Foundation, Government and Business Funding for Rigging Project

State of Washington \$350,000+
Murdock Trust \$75,000
Forest Foundation \$25,000
The Bank of the Pacific \$5,000
Timberland Bank \$5,000
US Bank \$5,000

Private & Business Donors \$500 to \$3,000

Don Bezzo
Stan & Bonnie Johannes
R.A. & J.T. Vandemaele
Ray Kahler
Wal*Mart Stores, Inc.

Private & Business Donors \$25 to \$499

Robbins' Air
Eva Aiken
John & Carrie Larson
Patricia Stevenson
Claudia Self
Dennis Company
Ellen Pickell
John & Paula Mitchell
Peter Krohn
Ruth Gavareski
Ruth Holmes
Sid Snyder
Straka Trucking
Susan Ruyle & Rich Rosche
Charlotte Tibbetts
Anthony & Dorothy DeSalvo
Beverly R. Patterson
Charles R. Wilson
Margaret Cornell Rankin Memorial
Greg & Becky Durr
Hoquiam Women's Club
Jerry & Sue Keltner
Jim & Jackie Henry
Staples
Robert & Lloudine Graham
Roberta Laakso
Svea McKay
Ty & Dealy Palmer

Diane & Dean Schwickerath
Ada Spencer
Dorothy Hooegeven
Joyce Smith
Lois Salituro
Marlene & Dick Dixon

Director and Producer Memberships \$200 to \$1,000

Don Bezzo
Pam Farr & Dan Johnson
Dewey C. Froseth
Ray Kahler
Robert Preble
Elizabeth Ross
Kenneth & Jean Snyder

Lead and Supporting Actor Memberships \$25 to \$199

Dorothy Bigelow
Club Purple
Jim & Doris Daly
Dick & Billie Gran
Dennis & Mary Lou Gregory
Steven & Helen Hepp
Martha Hill
Lewis & Helen Lord
Gregory & Judith Maurer
Julie & Timothy Merrill
Robert & Nancy Neisinger
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2007 Movie Sponsors

7th Street Sweet Shoppe
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Casa Mia
Coleman Mortuary
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Deidra's Deli
Detour Restaurant & Lounge

Durney Insurance
Gregory Durr
Failor's Sporting Goods
Pam Farr/Dan Johnson
GHAB
Girl Scouts of Grays Harbor
Golden Dragon
Grays Harbor Paper
Grays Harbor Radio
The Grey Gull
Grizzly Den
Harbor Drug
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Hometown Feed
Hoquiam Vision Clinic
Hoquiam Teacher's Assn for
Betsy Seidel
Chris & Frankie Iversen
Jodesha Broadcasting
Garth Jones
Keith & Lynn Kessler
Lana's Hangar Café
Levee Lumber
Little Orly Candy Co.
Mac's Pizza
Mawhorter Family
The Paul McMillan Family
Moe-B Trading Co.
The Oriole
Karen Scott
Claudia Self
Jason Self
Stiffy's Pub & Grub
Paul Stritmatter
Swanson's Foods
Alissa Thurman
Debi Tracy Design
Trio's Bar & Grill
Twin Star Credit Union
Sue Varland
Lane & Terri Youmans

*What a
Wonderful
Community!*

News Flash — 1928

80 years later -

Save a Seat campaign in progress

Hoquiam American, February 9, 1928: B.F. Shearer Company of Seattle was given the order for 1,100 of the finest type upholstered seats. The seats were hailed as “the newest and most comfortable design” and were made by the Hayward-Wakefield Company of New York. Notably, the 7th Street’s seats were similar to those installed in the famous Roxy Theatre in New York.

Grays Harbor Washingtonian, July 8, 1928: For comfort and convenience there are no stairs to trip the unwary foot; the heavy carpetings still the footsteps; the seats, especially designed for the 7th Street Theatre, are wide and comfortable and so placed there is no need to crane one’s neck to see the stage or screen. And there is no awkward crowding or stepping on toes to reach the center seats.

Not only do you have a chance to save one of the theatre’s original seats, but by doing so, you will in fact save yours. Fliers went out in the mail in January and seat orders are arriving steadily in the mail. Our goal is to have all 997 seats restored by Washington Correctional Industries in the fall of 2008, when the theatre will be closed for the stage rigging replacement project.

The 7th Street Theatre is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and for your tax-deductible contribution, your name or the name of a loved one will be engraved on a plaque which will be on display at the theatre. You will receive a certificate of appreciation as well as four movie tickets for the 2009 movie season. This is a perfect way to honor a loved one, or celebrate your own personal commitment to the arts and become a part of the theatre’s history.

Great gift idea!

Seat Drive Pledge Card

Your name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email address: _____

I would like to dedicate the following seat(s):

\$200 Balcony (upper) section Qty: _____ = \$ _____

\$250 Main section seat(s) Qty: _____ = \$ _____

\$500 Loge seat(s) (top two rows, main section) Qty: _____ = \$ _____

I don’t wish to buy a seat at this time, but I will make a donation of \$ _____ toward the Save a Seat campaign.

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____ 7th Street Theatre Association, PO Box 777, Hoquiam WA 98550

You may also pay online with your credit card or PayPal account at www.7thstreettheatre.com “Save a Seat”

Inscription: Please print clearly! Use one form per inscription. Your message may include up to 16 characters per line. Characters can be upper or lower case. Spaces count as one character. You may use letters, numbers, and/or the following three symbols: & / - (ampersand, slash, or dash). Each of these symbols count as a character. No other punctuation may be used. All inscriptions reviewed by committee.

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Example:

M	R		&		M	R	S		R	U	D	O	L	P	H
V	A	L	E	N	T	I	N	O							

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE 7th STREET THEATRE

2008

- *Mar 21 & 22 (7:30 pm)
Movie: *Maltese Falcon* (1941) starring Humphrey Bogart and Mary Astor (unrated)
- *Mar 29 (7:30 pm)
Zona Calda (Community Concert Series)
\$12 adults/\$5 students
- *Apr 5 (7:30 pm)
An Evening with JP Patches & Gertrude: The Men Behind the Makeup –
80th Birthday Celebration – \$10
Tickets available in Hoquiam at Harbor Drug and 7th Street Sweet Shoppe, City Drug in Aberdeen and All Wrapped Up in Montesano
- *Apr 12 (7:30 pm)
Myrtle Street Jazz (Community Concert Series)
\$12 adults/\$5 students
- *Apr 18 & 19 (7:30 pm)
Movie: *Rear Window* (1954) starring James Stewart and Grace Kelly (Rated PG)
- *May 2 (7:30 pm)
Young Artist Showcase
- May 9 & 10 (7:30 pm)
Movie: to be announced

- May 17 (7:30 pm)
The Mosaic Brass Quintet (Community Concert Series) \$12 adults/\$5 students
- May 20 (7 pm)
Hoquiam High and Middle School Choir Concerts (free)
- May 31
High Impact Dance Academy recital
- June 7 (9 am to 1 pm)
7th Street Kids Auditions
- June 7 evening
Grays Harbor Dance recital
- Jun 13 & 14 (7:30 pm)
Movie: *ET: The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982) Starring Henry Thomas (Rated PG)
- July 10
Happy 80th Birthday 7th Street Theatre!
- Jul 25 & 26 (7:30 pm) Jul 27 (2:00 pm)
7th Street Kids present *Seussical the Musical*
- September through November
Theatre closed for stage rigging replacement project and seat restoration!!!!

Movie Admission Price: \$5 adults/\$3 students
*Presented by the 7th Street Theatre Association

7th Street Theatre Association
P.O. Box 777
Hoquiam, WA 98550

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Celebrating 80 years