

Come to the PSTOS Valentine's Day Celebration... "Pipes with Pizza"



Featuring

At our PSTOS Theatre Pipe Organ

It's Music, Movies, Food and Fun For all!

Sunday, February 16, 2:00 PM Haller Lake Community Club 12579 Densmore Ave. N. • Seattle

ADMISSION \$10 per person Includes pizza, salad, beverage, dessert and entertainment! A REAL BARGAIN!



DON WALLIN was a staff organist for many years at Tacoma Pizza & Pipes prior to its destruction by fire in 1999. He teaches theatre organ, and installs and maintains pipe organs in the area. Don has played numerous times for various events at HLCC and we look forward to hearing him again.

DON'T MISS IT! MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!

RESERVATIONS are ESSENTIAL!

Food will be ordered based on the number of reservations received, and it's VERY IMPORTANT that you let us know you'll be there. So PLEASE, everyone make your reservations no later than February 12th by phoning 425-485-5465 or by email at rj.evans@verizon.net PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

Vol. 14, No I – January 2003 Published monthly by Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society 6521 N.E. 191st St. Kenmore, WA 98028-3453

Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society is a non-profit organization furthering the appreciation, restoration, and use of the historic Theatre Pipe Organs of the 1920s, through education.

OFFICERS

President—Clint Meadway, 360-805-9794 Past Pres.—Barbara Graham, 206-525-7859 Vice President—Bill Keller, 360-456-8269 Secretary—Bob Zat, 206-329-1826 Treasurer—Norman Miller, 206-784-7154 Board Members Carl Dodrill, 206-236-0067 Jackie Cedarholm, 206-282-5680 Andy Crow, 360-357-8939 Diane Whipple, 253-856-1156

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Listing of non-PSTOS events in the Pipeline

PSTOS, upon request, will list non-conflicting non-PSTOS theatre organ events in the "Other Events" column of the two Pipelines immediately preceding the event, providing Pipeline editors receive sufficient prior written notification. Venue, artist, type of event, date, and contact information will comprise the included information.

Advertising in the Pipeline Classified-type ads for member-owned electronic, electric, or pipe organs, and/or pipe organ parts, will be published at no charge. Please limit copy to include brief description, contact name and phone number. Prices will not be listed. Ads may be edited for content and length. Mail ad copy to address above. Other advertising is not accepted.



New face, new year, new programs. Fortunately, some things never change, such as our mission to preserve and promote the incomparable theatre pipe organ. And it is, truly, a labor of love. Everything the Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society does is through the generosity of our members: generosity with their time, their talents and their resources.

For instance, Barbara Graham volunteered to work an extra year as our president when no one else would step forward. Andy Crow frequently entertains us with his unique style and interesting arrangements, and without pay. Tom Blackwell has been installing an automatic playback system on the Seattle Paramount Wurlitzer on his own time and at his expense. Russ Evans and Bob Zat have made additions and improvements to the Club's Wurlitzer at Haller Lake. Diane Whipple, Jackie Cedarholm, Doug Owen and Roy Williams have delivered Bob Ralston program flyers to many Senior Centers and retirement communities.

And then there is the crew of regulars who set up the locations where we have our programs, keep things rolling, and clean up after all of the rest of us leave. All of this volunteer effort allows us to have the great programs we enjoy each year.

Elsewhere in The Pipeline you will read more about the upcoming Bob Ralston program. Volunteers are needed to make this a success. We want to have financial success and we need success in showing off the all-American music machine to the general public. This is one way to guarantee a future for these wonderful instruments. Don't wait for someone to call you. Volunteer now. You can leave voice mail for me toll-free 24 hours a day at 1-877-843-0953 or email clint@pstos.org.

We are gonna have FUN! ...Clint Meadway, President



January 18 - Home party, Evans home, Kenmore. See back page for more info. February 16 - Valentine's Day Pipes & Pizza Party, HLCC March 16- Bob Raiston at the Paramount Theatre, see pgs. 5-6 April 5 - Home party, Carl & Halie Dodrill home, Mercer Island Early May - Tentative major concert June 21 - Home party, Bill Keller home, Olympia July - Summer Social & concert, Jack & Mary Lou Becvar home August 9 - Home party, Ray & Muriel Whelpley home, Bellevue August 20-24- AMICA Convention, Portland, w/Jonas Nordwall at the Oaks Park Rink organ October 19 - Big event at Haller Lake Community Club Dec. 7 - Holiday Party at HLCC



January silent movie series at Historic Everett Theatre

Show People

(1928) Starring Marion Davies Wed., Jan. 8, 7 pm

Safety Last

(1928), One of the most famous Harold Lloyd films. **Wed., Jan. 15, 7 pm**

My Best Girl

(1927) starring Mary Pickford Wed., Jan. 22, 7 pm

The Navigator

(1924), with Buster Keaton **Sunday, Jan. 26, 2 pm** Tickets and info, 425-258-6766. Box office open Tues.– Sat, 12–5 pm. Theatre is located at 2911 Colby Ave., Everett.

Silent Film at Bellingham's Mt. Baker Theatre

The Mt. Baker Theatre in Bellingham is a beautifully preserved venue, with an enthusiastic and very friendly group of folks participating. Take the drive to Bellingham for this film event! Sunday, Jan. 19th, 2 PM

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PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

Closing Chord Wendell Graham 1917 - 2002

Wendell was an enthusiastic member of PSTOS, attending nearly every event. He often shared his piano and organ playing skills at open console events,



and frequently played duets with others. He was a loyal supporter of daughter Barbara, who served as PSTOS president for three years. Sadly, his wife, Althea, is receiving care for advanced Alzheimer's. Wendell passed away quietly from cancer on November 19. Sympathy is extended to Barbara and other family members and friends. Wendell will be truly missed.

Dick Chang 1922 - 2002



Dick was one of several PSTOS members who worked to install the pipe organ

in Haller Lake Community Club in the mid-1960s. Living across the street from HLCC, he and Betty for many years were the ones to contact to play the organ. An active member of both PSTOS and HLCC, Dick suffered a severe stroke shortly after retiring from Seattle City Light in 1985. He remained as enthusiastic and active as his health would permit but in recent years, his health steadily declined. He died quietly in his sleep on November 24th. Condolences are extended to Betty, Dick's wife of 52 years.

Honorary Life Membership Awarded to the Evans'

Pictured are Russ and Jo Ann Evans after being presented the Honorary Life Membership Award by PSTOS Secretary Bob Zat.

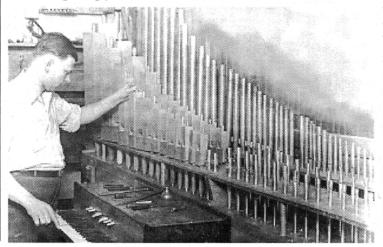


PSTOS was proud to present the Honorary Life Membership Award to Russ and Jo Ann Evans at the annual Christmas party held at Haller Lake Community Center on December 8th. The award read "With gratitude for your continued support and many years of loyal Chapter membership, for opening your home to Chapter members, friends, and Theatre Organ enthusiasts worldwide, for your continued contributions as the *Puget Sound PipeLine* editors and publishers, for your commitment, energy, and continued presence at Local, National, and International Theatre Organ events, and for your excellent organizational and craftsman skills, this award is presented in recognition of your tireless efforts and years of service to Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society". Thank you Russ and Jo Ann. ...Story by Bob Zat



RANK – Refers to a row of pipes all creating the same "voice" or sound, one pipe for each key on the manual or keyboard. The largest pipe creates the lowest pitch, and the smallest, the highest pitch. The pipes are designed to simulate orchestral sounds as closely as possible. As an example, Clarinet pipes sound surprisingly like a real clarinet. If an organ is specified as 4/22, it would have 4 manuals or keyboards, and 22 ranks or sets of pipes creating 22 different orchestral sounds. The larger the numbers, the more tonal resources and flexibility are provided. Some small theatres had organs as small as 2/4, meaning two manuals or keyboards, and only 4 ranks of pipes—a very small organ indeed, with just four different sounds or voices available!

The photo shows a rank of tibia pipes, the heart of a theatre organ, being



voiced by a workman in the Wurlitzer factory in N. Tonawanda, N.Y., in the 1920s. An additional rank of pipes is visible behind the tibias being voiced. The small keyboard used by the voicer is connected to the pipes for test purposes.

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Ten years ago there were several top class places to see and hear a theatre pipe organ in the Puget Sound area. Among these were the 4/20 Wurlitzer at the Seattle Paramount, the 3/18 Wurlitzer at Bellevue Pizza and Pipes, the 3/20 Wurlitzer at Tacoma Pizza and Pipes and the 4/48 Wurlitzer at the Wilcox Wurlitzer residence in Gig Harbor. Then they started to slip away. The Paramount was sold and the console was temporarily removed during the theatre's renovation. Bellevue Pizza and Pipes was torn down and turned into a parking lot. The Wilcox Wurlitzer residence was sold twice, presenting the possibility of the organ not being available for occasional concerts. Tacoma Pizza and Pipes burned, destroying the restaurant and the organ.

A year ago we were down to only two large instruments in large venues.

PSTOS maintained a working relationship with the Gig Harbor owners and we have had many top notch programs there over the years. With 300 seats, we can afford top artists and cover expenses resulting in additions to our operating funds. We were not so fortunate at the Paramount due to several layers of ownership and management and its designation as an historical site. Due to the large amount of investment in the theatre and their debt service requirements, using the Paramount became a major financial hurdle the PSTOS board was unable to jump.

Presently, we enjoy an outstanding relationship with the owners of Gig Harbor's Wilcox Wurlitzer and look forward to many wonderful future programs there. Of course, we have our own 3/8 Wurlitzer at the Haller Lake Community Center and enjoy it during our two or three programs there each year. The 3/9 Kimball at Franklin High School is also available to us. But how can we use these locations to promote the preservation, understanding and enjoyment of the theater organ? Our audiences tend to be members and friends of members. If we look no further than our own club and our friends, the future for the instrument is bleak.

PSTOS President, Barbara Graham, asked a consultant to address the Board last Spring. His talk concerned what it takes to run a theatre like the Paramount or the Performing Arts Center in Olympia. He helped us understand how we, as a nonprofit organization, might be able to work with theatres to promote the theatre organ, its history and its music. With 2,975 seats available at the Paramount it was obvious this venue would give us exposure! It was also clear we would have to go outside our own circle to fill it. The next question was who could fill it?

It takes a highly recognized name to attract enough patrons to a large theatre for a profit to be made.

This is why the Paramount and Moore theatres bring in rock bands. These groups attract fans much like Frank Sinatra did in Las Vegas and our sports heroes do in the stadiums. It is debatable that these stars' talents are worth what they are paid, but the fact that they can fill a venue at a price the public is willing to pay makes their fees "reasonable" and creates a profit so the theater or stadium can continue to operate.

Filling the Paramount will take a major star well known to the public at large.

The Board could think of three such stars: Virgil Fox, Korla Pandit and Bob Ralston. Since Virgil and Korla are no longer with us, the choice was easy. There are many other very talented theater organists, but none as well known outside of ATOS circles as Bob Ralston.

We decided to do this show to expose the public to the theatre organ in the best venue in Seattle.

We are promoting it to senior centers, retirement communities and Lawrence Welk fan clubs. We're seeking corporate sponsors to help us with the costs and to get additional exposure. A second purpose is to rebuild our relationship with the Paramount management, *Seattle Theater Group*, which became the owner of the Paramount December 16, 2002. Our consultant explained that theatre management is always looking for people who will bring in a show and make a profit for them. We decided to take this route to continue our quest. Several PSTOS members have been working with STG over the past ten years, so we're not starting from zero. When the Bob Ralston program is behind us, we'll review the results and decide if we will offer additional general public attractions in the future using the Paramount and its Wurlitzer. Maybe a-35 piece Big Band with Lynn Larsen at the console and the auditorium floor in level mode for dancing!

The costs are large, but we can cover them with sponsorships and ticket sales.

Incoming President, Clint Meadway, hopes to make enough on the event that we can complete needed work on the Haller Lake organ, add to the scholarship fund and provide bus transportation to all events during his term. To do this we need to sell 2,610 tickets at the prices of \$15, \$20 and \$25. Radio and television advertising will be paid for with 200 tickets. This will provide us with \$41,600in revenue. The artist's fee and costs are \$4,500 and the Paramount's costs to open the doors are \$9,100. There are theater restoration charges and other things that get deducted from each ticket sold that will total \$7,900 if we sell all the tickets, less if we don't. Our profit potential, then, is just over \$20,000.

The club needs your help with this major fund-raising event. Please volunteer...

...to deliver program flyers to any groups you know who are Lawrence Welk fans—senior centers, retirement homes, other clubs. You can get flyers exactly like the one on the next page, but *IN FULL COLOR*, from Jo Ann Evans—if you can distribute one or more flyers to any of these types of places, please phone your request to her at **425-485-5465** or email at **rj.evans@verizon.net** and she will immediately mail you the color flyers you need. There are other jobs to be done starting January 6. See the President's message for contact information and pitch in!

We need the help of EVERY MEMBER to assure success of this event!

Why BOB RALSTON at the Paramount? Let's take a little journey and look at things as they were, are, and can be...

COMING TO THE SEATTLE PARAMOUNT



"Music and Memories" On The Paramount's Mighty Wurlitzer

BOB RALSTON, the Lawrence Welk Orchestra's pianist, organist and arranger for 39 years, celebrates the 75th anniversary of Seattle's Historic Paramount Theatre with an afternoon of "Music and Memories." Bob will feature the thrilling sounds of the Paramount's Mighty Wurlitzer Pipe Organ as it was enjoyed by theatre patrons on opening day in 1928.

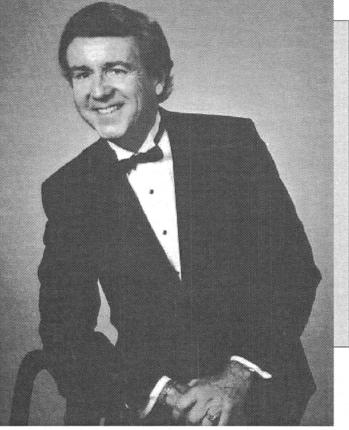
Sunday, March 16 - 2:30 PM



Tickets \$15 • \$20 • \$25

Available through Ticketmaster Or at the Paramount box office, 206-467-5510

For group ticketing, phone Angela, 206-315-8015. Ten or more tickets on one transaction, 10% discount. One FREE ticket with every group purchase of 15 tickets.





Presented by Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society and Seattle Theatre Group

Pages From The Past...

Vancouver's magnificent Orpheum Theatre celebrates 75 years.

Two interesting articles reprinted from The Vancouver Sun, November, 2002, written by John Mackie, and shared by Helen Hale

Mighty Wurlitzer played from opening day

When it opened on Nov. 7, 1927, the Orpheum Theatre was a marvel of vaudeville/movie palace design. No 1927 vaudeville or movie palace was complete without the latest musical marvel to accompany the live acts and silent films: a Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ.

Seventy-five years after the theatre opened, the Orpheum's mighty Wurlitzer remains in the orchestra pit at the foot of the stage, the only theatre organ still in its original locale in Canada. It's also the only instrument left in the Orpheum's orchestra pit, which was taken out so the stage could be expanded in 1977.

Theatre organs were pipe organs modified for theatrical use: the Orpheum's Wurlitzer has buttons for a whooshing "surf" sound, a bird's twitter, the honk of an auto horn and the bzzzz of a door bell. A 1927 drum set is hidden high above the stage.

However, the Wurlitzer's main claim to fame is its ability to simulate all sorts of instruments, including a trumpet, tuba, clarinet, oboe, celeste, flute, marimba, chimes, xylophone, glockenspiel, sleigh bells, cello, piccolo and harp, produced from about 1300 pipes hidden in chambers. It works on wind pressure supplied by a 3-stage blower (fan) in the basement.

In the days of silent movies, organs were essential to create the mood of the film, which had no sound of its own. In the 1920s, when a film came, along with it came a score for the piano or organ. They'd play chase music, or romantic music, or dramatic or mysterious or comic music, whatever went with what was happening on the screen so you could make emotional contact with the movie.

The Wurlitzer cost \$45,000 in 1927, the year Al Jolson's talking picture *The Jazz Singer* revolutionized movies. Seeing the impact of the talkies, the



Caretaker Norman Young recreates a vision of vaudefville days at the keyboard of the theatre's Wurlitzer

Orpheum builders tried to cancel the order for the Wurlitzer, but it was already en route from New York with another big Wurlitzer destined for the Capitol Theatre.

The organ was a big hit in the early days of the theatre. When the movie stopped and before the curtains opened for the vaudeville, the organ would rise out of the orchestra pit and there would be an organ interlude of a few minutes. Then the vaudeville would begin.

Talkies arrived, ending an era

Unfortunately for the musicians, the talkies not only ended silent film, they ended vaudeville. Most theatre organs were sold and moved to churches. The theatres didn't want them because of the maintenance costs. Most of the theatres were heated with coal and a lot of dust worked its way into the pipes.

The Orpheum's Wurlitzer remained in place. The most substantial change it has gone through was having its mahogany surface covered by a garish coat of cream and gold paint in the late 1970s.

There has been talk of rebuilding the Wurlitzer to make it better for symphonic use. Sadly, it's used only a handful of times each year, and even then, isn't always visible. Organist Terry Fullerton says when the Vancouver Symphony and Bach Choir join on stage, there isn't room for the organ, so he plays it from beneath the stage in the orchestra pit. He watches proceedings on a video monitor to know when to play.

A magnificent, magical place

The Orpheum threw open its doors to Vancouverites in 1927 and has survived to celebrate its diamond anniversary

The Roaring Twenties was a dazzling decade, but no year was brighter than 1927, the year Charles Lindbergh flew across the Atlantic, Babe Ruth hit 60 home runs and Al Jolson's "talking picture" *The Jazz Singer* changed movie history.

It was an auspicious year for Vancouver, as well. On Nov. 7 the city's most opulent theatre, the Orpheum, opened its doors.

Built in a fanciful "Spanish renaissance" style, the Orpheum was a classic of the movie-vaudeville palace era. It took 800 workers 10 months to construct the \$1.25-million building, which was huge – 3000 seats – unbelievably ornate and featured the latest in technology, such as an air-conditioning system where air was chilled through blocks of ice and running water.

In November, the Orpheum celebrated its 75th anniversary with a series of concerts and performances. But it almost didn't make it to 50.

In 1973, Famous Players Theatres was set to chop the Orpheum's glorious auditorium into a multiplex cinema of six to ten theatres, or even sell it off so could be knocked down and redeveloped.

Vancouver's other grand old movie palaces – the Capitol, the Strand and the —Continued next page—

Pages From The Past... continued

Pantages – fell to the wrecker's ball around that time. But the prospect of losing the Orpheum electrified Vancouverites into the biggest heritage movement in the city's history.

Thousands responded to the Save The Orpheum campaign, and the building was purchased for \$3.9 million by the city, underwent a \$3.2-million renovation and reopened in 1977 as a concert venue. It now ranks among Vancouver's pit owner and real estate magnate who had built several suburban theatres. For his downtown showpiece, he chose one of the world's premier theatre architects, B. Marcus Priteca of Seattle.

In a long career, Priteca designed over 100 theatres, including the famed Pantages in Hollywood, the Paramount in Seattle and Vancouver's second Pantages. Movie palaces of the time reflected the latest architectural rage and



most beloved structures, up there with the Lions Gate Bridge, the Hotel Vancouver and the Marine Building.

This is its story.

The public appetite for vaudeville and movies seemed insatiable in the 1920s, and theatre owners outdid themselves trying to build pleasure palaces for the masses.

The Orpheum Theatre is a product of this era. It was built by the Orpheum Circuit, a vaudeville powerhouse that started in San Francisco in 1886 and grew to 50 theatres, all of them west of Chicago.

The Orpheum Circuit was in the midst of a big expansion in 1927 when it opened new theatres in Vancouver,

attle, Omaha and Sioux City, Iowa. The Vancouver Orpheum was actually built by a "local capitalist," Joseph Francis Langer, and leased to the Orpheum Circuit. Langer was a gravel **1927: The concept** Illustration shows Seymour Street side was to be in Spanish Rennaisance style.

tended to be totally over the top.

"They did oriental, they did art deco, after they discovered King Tut's tomb they did Egyptian. If they discovered a Mayan temple they'd do Mayan," says Norman Young, retired UBC theatre professor and former head of the Civic Theatres Board which runs the Orpheum.

"They called the Orpheum Spanish renaissance. It was based on the architecture of Seville and Granada in southern Spain where there was Moroccan influence. Very loosely done."

Indeed. The crest of arms on the second floor balcony bears British symbols – the thistle for Scotland, the rose for England, the shamrock for Ireland, and feathers for Wales. The design for the ceiling in the grand foyer was lifted from a temple in India.

Architecture buffs may have quibbled with the mix of styles, but ticket-buyers didn't seem to care.

"You escaped from your drab little life by coming into this make-believe place, a picture palace," says Young.

Architects like Priteca were able to make their theatrical palaces look even more expensive than they were through the wonders of plaster. The Orpheum's ornate ceiling isn't actually the ceiling, it's a false one made of plaster hanging on hundreds of wires.

"It's all fake. It's a set. It's all lathe and plaster and chicken wire and everything," says Young.

"They put a metal mesh on, forced plaster through, and got a very tight, thin acoustic shell that was beautiful for sound."

"Priteca had a great line," said Chuck Davis, who's writing a history of the Orpheum. "He said Alexander Pantages told him 'Any idiot could take a million dollars and make a million-dollar theatre; it took a genius like Priteca to build a million-dollar theatre for half a million.""

The million-dollar look was enhanced by \$100,000 worth of gold leaf that was applied to the ceiling, columns and arches. Silk tapestries were hung from wall panels, adding to the feeling of opulence.

At the foot of the stage was an orchestra pit for 20 musicians, and a \$45,000 Wurlitzer pipe organ. Hundreds of pipes for the organ are discreetly hidden behind organ screens that flank either side of the stage.

The orchestra pit was taken out to expand the stage in the 1977 renovation, but the Wurlitzer is still in use, the only theatre organ still in operation at its original site in Canada.

Bill Irwin's 10th Annual Organ Festival and France Tour

This 17-day Festival is now billed as the World's Largest Organ Festival, a unique experience with world class performances. Departs April 24. For information call All Stars Travel toll-free at 1-800-591-7827 and ask for Jo. Or request information via email at **festivaltour2003@aol.com**

As of November, 31 music lovers have signed on, coast to coast, from Washington and California to Florida.

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8 Paramount Theatre's Horror-Sci-Fi January silent movie series Accompanied on the Wurlitzer by Dennis James Mon. Jan. 6, The Monster (1925) starring Lon Chaney Mon. Jan. 13, The Lodger (1926)

directed by Alfred Hitchcock

Mon. Jan. 20, Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1919) and Der Golem ((1920)

Mon. Jan. 27, The Women in The Moon (1929)

All movies begin at 7:00 PM.

PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY

Russ & Jo Ann Evans, Newsletter Editors 6521 N.E. 191st Kenmore, WA 98028-3453



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

something new in 2003 - Home Parties!

During 2003, four different PSTOS members will host Home Parties. At these events members may play the organ, listen, socialize, nibble, and just enjoy getting together. There will be no featured artist. For those who wish to play, there'll be help with registration, so practice up and plan to attend.

There's no charge, but folks are asked to bring a small plate of finger food to share. Beverages will be furnished. To help avoid overcrowding, please reserve!

First HOME PARTY of 2003

Saturday, January 18, 2–5 pm Home of Russ & Jo Ann Evans and their 3/16 Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ 6521 NE 191st St. • Kenmore Limited to 35. Reserve NOW at

425-485-5465, or by email at rj.evans@verizon.net

DRIVE DIRECTIONS for the January 18th Home Party-

From 1-5, Take EXIT 175 eastbound onto NE 145th, drive east 1.4 mi. to Bothell Way. Turn left (north). Drive around the north end of the lake 3.0 mi. to 68th NE. Turn left (<u>north</u>) on 68th and drive 0.5 mile to NE 190th St. Turn left (west) on NE 190th, drive one block to NE 191st St. Turn left on NE 191st, drive one block to a culdesac on your left marked Dead End, turn left. The Evans home is the first on the left in the culdesac.

From I-405, take EXIT 23 westbound toward Bothell. Drive 5 miles, staying on Hwy 522, to 68th NE. Turn right (north), and continue as above where underlined. If lost, 425-485-5465.

New PSTOS Board of Directors installed

Installation of new officers and Board members took place at the Christmas Party.

Back row left to right: Andy Crow, Board Member; Bob Zat, Secretary; Bill Keller, Board Member; Clint Meadway, President.

Front row: Carl Dodrill, Board Member; Norman Miller, Treasurer; Diane Whipple and Jackie Cedarholm, Board Members.

Not in picture: Barbara Graham, Immediate Past President.

