

Still Want to Have Fun Even Though You're Under 21?

By Kyle Fleck

Well too bad, sucker... psyche! Having lived in the "city of subdued excitement" as a minor for about two and a half years now, I would like to think of myself as somewhat of a local authority on under-age entertainment. From local haunts such as the Alternative Library to the ever-mysterious "Great Northern Books", to all-ages music venues like Friendship City and WhAAM, to the delirious swirl of late-night diners such as the Horseshoe and Sherri's, Bellingham has got your twerpy little ass covered for stuff to do. So fret not, gentle cretin! Read on to discover the hidden delights of B-ham nights.

(Please note that though this article is aimed at people under 21, if you are 21 or over all of these places are still totally legitimate hang-out spots... you'll just seem a little weird, kicking back with all of the younglings when you could be yelling at your date over terrible white-boy-blues at the Wild Buffalo.)

- The Alternative Library

A friend of mine who goes by the name Future Man has been running Bellingham's only "alternative" library out of his home for about a year now, and it just keeps getting better and better. Starting out as a library devoted strictly to graphic novels, Future Man has now deemed fit to include movies, CD's and a plethora of straight-up books, from Nietzsche to Freud and even some textbooks (which may or may not be horribly out-of-date). The price is right (\$1 a book for negotiable amounts of time, or \$5 a month to be a member of the library). Not only that, but Future Man hopes to eventually turn the bottom floor of the library (which is in fact a house) into a performance space for music and theater. First up: a community-performed rendition of *The Princess Bride*. Positive vibes and an impeccable atmosphere of eccentricity and mellow chaos make the library a wonderful spot to visit the next time you're on Forest Street.

717 N Forest St
Bellingham, WA 98225
Online at <http://www.sushitree.org/library.php>

- Haggen

Yes, *that* Haggen. The gigantic uber-market at the bottom of Bill McDonald Parkway may seem an unorthodox location for you and your droogs to find yourselves late on a Friday night, but hear me out. After about two in the morning, Haggen is practically deserted, the people who work there are beaten-down and too tired to notice you, and aisle 9 is practically begging you to play a game of sausage football in it. Sports not your thing? Take up residence at the magazine rack and learn all about which celebrities are importing babies from exotic, far-flung locales. Gossip not your thing? Well, first of all,

good, it's really none of your business if Sari is cuter than Apple. But there's so much more you can do! Hide and seek! Capture the flag, using huge packages of toilet paper as flags! And so on! (Disclaimer: I take no responsibility if you are forcefully ejected from Haggan for any of these activities. And be nice to the workers, they are probably extremely decent individuals, and you shouldn't annoy them... too much.)

210
Bellingham, WA 98225
(360) 676-1996

36th

St

- Shari's/Denny's

Make no mistake: Shari's and Denny's are in fact the exact same restaurant, a detail made all the more confounding by the fact that they're right across the street from each other. I'm sure you know the deal by now: open twenty four hours, terrible coffee (but loads of it!), breakfast, lunch and dinner menus served all day, etc. What I personally love about these restaurants is their bland, faceless anonymity. You walk inside and suddenly feel as if you've been transported out of Bellingham... and into any number of other small, quiet, out-of-the-way towns where nothing happens. The only difference between these corporate monsters and other small-town Mom n' Pop diners is, unless you're a regular, the waitresses are far less likely to call you "sugar" or "darling", which is too bad. And the prices. The prices are ridiculous given the quality of the food. Still, if for some ungodly reason you find yourself up Meridian without a paddle and are craving some all-American late night munchies, these old stand-bys are there to help.

Denny's
161
Bellingham,
(360) 676-0173

Telegraph
WA

Rd
98226

Shari's
3904 Meridian St,
Bellingham, WA
(360) 647-0193

- "Great Northern Books"

Look, 21 is a big milestone, there's no denying it. But it doesn't qualify you as an adult. No, you became an adult much earlier: on your 18th birthday. And you know what "adults" get to do that kids don't? (Besides vote, buy cigarettes and enlist in the army?) Enjoy the wonders of pornography! The enigmatically-titled Great Northern Books is in fact Bellingham's premier adult superstore, located in the heart of downtown for all your crazy, scandalous needs. Offering a huge selection of *very* diverse pornographic materials (you'll see what I mean if you go there), Great Northern has been catering to Bellingham's randy side for over thirty years. The owner, Ross, recently told me they had also over-hauled their "viewing booths" in the back to an all-system, with sixty full-

length features accessible for a small fee. Friendly and experienced staff, ginormous, completely unpractical dildos, and more fetish videos than you can shake one of those dildos at: what more could you possibly ask for? (I don't actually want to know the answer to that.)

1308
(360) 733-1650

Railroad

Ave

- The Horseshoe Café

The Horseshoe is one of Bellingham's most-beloved diners. It is *the* archetypal late-night-drinking-too-much-coffee-smoking-too-many-cigarettes-eating-greasy-food-and-avoiding-the-really-scuzzy-looking-dude joint. The staff is friendly if you are, and the food is cheap and pretty delicious (except for the scrambled eggs: avoid the scrambled eggs like). Entering its 123rd year, the Shoe attracts all types: the geezer regulars who've been hitting it up since the mid-70's, punks, juggalos, artsy kids, speed freaks, well-to-do college kids, over-joyous winos and just regular folk. It's lovely for people-watching. They've got a delightful claw game and a number of other money-wasting gambling machines. The men's bathroom is pretty much the only downside of the Shoe: it's so dark sometimes I have no idea if I'm peeing in the toilet or on my pants. Well, maybe that's more my problem than the café's.

113 E Holly St
(360) 734-0380

Online at <http://www.horseshoe.openaccess.org/>

- Friendship City

Friendship City is an up-and-coming community space which hosts diverse events such as film workshops, arts and crafts activities and concerts. Sam Parker, one of the residents of the house out of which Friendship City operates, told me that the main motivation for turning his home into a venue was to create "happy, lasting memories" for people in the community. So far, he says, the response to Friendship City has been "overwhelmingly positive," probably at least in part due to their "no drugs, no booze, no assholes" policy. "It creates an atmosphere that I haven't really felt at a lot of places around Bellingham," Parker told me. Particularly the lack of assholes, one would assume. (Totally kidding.) One other unique aspect of Friendship City is that word of all their events is spread primarily by word-of-mouth, in true DIY fashion, so you have to be at least a little in-the-know or on the lookout for posters or Facebook invites to figure out how to get there. This stems from the fact that Parker and his roommates are attempting to create a safe, fun place in the community; not annoy them with gigantic, raucous house shows every single weekend. As he told me: "We're punk, but we also give a fuck."

Online at <http://www.myspace.com/friendshipcity>

- WhAAM

The first thing you should know about WHAAM is that it's like Batman: it's got multiple identities. The sign above the door says: "Anything Grows: The Old Foundry." But then you look in the window and there's a banner that says: "Whatcom Peace and Justice Center." But it is *also* WhAAM. How else is it like Batman, you ask? It's... an all-ages music venue? Okay, this metaphor just completely broke down. Created in 2005, WhAAM has hosted tons of great bands for really cheap ticket prices (usually five bucks) and is big enough that it doesn't get all gnarly and smelly when you've got throngs of people grinding and sweating all about you. Coming up they have shows by Crossfox, Yogoman Burning Band (highly recommended!) and local sensation the No-Fi Soul Rebellion. Most of their shows only cost five bucks and most of that money goes straight to the bands, so go enjoy yourselves at BatWhAAM... you know what I mean.

100 E. Maple St
(in the Old Foundry Building)
Online at <http://www.whaam.org>

- Pickford Cinema

Pickford Cinema is, as it advertises itself, "Bellingham's only independent movie theater." What does this mean to you, the theater-goer? It means first of all that you don't have to sit through twenty minutes of horrifyingly unfunny Fandango commercials. Secondly, instead of *Beverly Hills Chihuahua 2: Pet Shop Reunion*, you might actually be able to see movies actually worth spending money on, such as Mike Leigh's *Happy-Go-Lucky*, brilliant documentary *Blindsight*, or Guillaume Canet's *Tell No One*. What's that? You haven't heard of any of these movies? That's exactly my point. The Pickford's got all that weird, artsy, possibly-subtitled goodness your average multiplex lacks. Not to mention the gourmet popcorn, low prices, and a frickin' RAFFLE every showing, giving away prizes like free Mallard's Ice Cream or movie merchandise. Amazingly, given our current financial situation, the Pickford is actually in the process of moving to a larger location right next to the Museum of Radio and Electricity, which will include two theaters, a lounge area with live music and film discussions featuring local movie industry folks. So go support their renovation project by seeing some movies up in there, ya hear?!

1416 Cornwall Ave
(360) 738-0735
Online at <http://www.pickfordcinema.org>

- Bellingham Art Walk

Bellingham's downtown businesses keep their doors open from 6 to 10pm on the first Friday of every month, hosting art from local as well as visiting artists and usually hooking up free food and drink. These art walks are great ways to familiarize yourself with downtown, eavesdrop and all manner of crazy art-talk and eat some delightful hors

d'oeuvre. Some things you should probably say extra-loud so as to make yourself appear extremely savvy and in-the-know:

- "Mmmm... so rich with subtext."

- "It's almost as if he/she appropriates the verisimilitude of Joyce in a visual panorama."

- "This piece is clearly toying with post-20th-century gender theory."

And last but certainly not least:

"A kaleidoscopic whirligig of emotion." (Note: 3/4's of these comments taken from actual gallery walks.)

- Canada

WHOO CANADA! GETTING DRUNK IN CANADA IS AWESOME! PEOPLE NEVER GET BUSTED FOR ANYTHING IN CANADA! MAPLE LEAFS! NO COPS! MOOSE! LEGALIZED POT! SCREW KYLE'S ARTICLE I'M GETTING TOTALLY WASTED IN CANADA THIS WEEKEND YEAAAAAHHHHHH BUDDY!

P.S. DID YOU HEAR? HOCKEY.

(Note: I do not actually condone or endorse anything said by the entirely hypothetical narrator of the Canada section. But the Maple Leafs are a pretty good hockey team.)

Online at <http://www.canada.com> ... obviously.