

Auburn Historical Society Hosts Clara Barton

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(http://auburnmassdaily.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/IMG_2197.jpg) Visitors at Tuesday's Auburn Historical Society meeting expecting a costumed interpreter to speak about Clara Barton – myself included – got much, much more. Actress Sheryl Faye (sherylfaye.com (<http://sherylfaye.com/>)) portrayed Clara Barton from childhood through to the late 1800s, when Barton was made the first director of the American Red Cross.

Her performance was dramatic and believable.

Her costume changes were subtle and reflected Faye's portrayal of Barton at various stages of Barton's life. Enhanced with slides and audio, the reenactment went well beyond the realm of what one might consider a lecture.

Faye typically performs for school groups, so the Historical Society meeting was a bit of a shift for her. "Some of the material might seem a little basic for an older audience" said Faye afterward. The audience was clearly young at heart, as they responded with plenty of laughter and surprised gasps at some of the lesser known facts that Faye -er, uh, Barton – shared during the presentation. Their appreciation was evident in the rousing applause offered up at the performance conclusion. Sari Bitticks, Auburn Historical Society President, thanked Anna Stead for providing Faye's performance.

Though Clara Barton is a household name as the founder of the American Red Cross, and many of us have visited her homestead in Oxford, there was much shared about her life that was clearly new to many in the audience. For example, Barton got her start at nursing with her eldest brother who fell ill after a fall from a ladder. Barton spent over 2 years following the family doctor's orders, and nursing David back to health.

Barton began her adult career as a teacher, and founded a free school in New Jersey. The school was wildly successful, a new building was constructed, and local school

(http://auburnmassdaily.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/IMG_2194.jpg) officials hired a man to replace Barton as principal, as they did not believe a woman could effectively the school, though she had been running it all along!

At this time, the Civil War was brewing and the rest is, truly, history.

Faye also impersonates Helen Keller. "I am also working on an Eleanor Roosevelt reenactment for later this year" she adds.



The next Auburn Historical Society meeting is on Tuesday, May 20. The topic will be Waters Farm, and this meeting includes a potluck dinner.

Everyone is asked to bring a favorite dish to share. I can say with confidence that if the potluck dishes are half as delicious as the baked goodies at this meeting, the food alone will be worth your attendance!

The Historical Society meets the third Tuesday of most months at the Kateri House on Wyoma Dr. Meetings are free and open to the public.

Memberships to the Historical Society are also available, and support the Society including the operation of the Historical Museum on South St. You can visit their website at www.auburnhistory.org (<http://www.auburnhistory.org>).



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