

THE YORKER

AUGUST 2022



FROM THE YORK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION—BRINGING THE YORK COMMUNITY TOGETHER

The York Neighborhood Annual Picnic

It's B A A A A A A A C K !

Sunday, September 11, 2022

3pm to 5pm

at Harriet Spanel Park (corner of Whatcom and Grant streets)

Our picnics were cancelled in 2020 and 2021, due to COVID concerns, so we are **DELIGHTED** to once again celebrate as a neighborhood of friends.

FEATURING :

Food

Hempler's hot dogs and beverages provided. If you wish, please bring a potluck dish to share: salad, side dish, or dessert.

Kids' Talent Show

Come play your instrument, sing a song, do gymnastics, or show your art. All participants receive a prize!

Piñata Smash

And bring a chair so you are comfortable!

Games for Kids

Live Music

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Welcome, college students!

Here's an opportunity to enhance your education and expand your universe by signing up to serve as a **Student Representative** on York Neighborhood's Board. Help engage other students in exciting park projects, social events, committee work, and fun activities.

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be part of a unique community-leadership role ...and it's great for your résumé!

Contact president@YorkNeighborhood.org to learn more and get involved.

Prefer to read *The Yorker* in digital format? Get it here:

yorkneighborhood.org/newsletters



Winner of the 2019 picnic pie raffle

Annual York kids' picnic picture, 2019

Slugger gets ready to bash the piñata

A portable toilet will be on site.

YORK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

PO Box 1585, Bellingham WA 98227-4185

www.yorkneighborhood.org • President@yorkneighborhood.org • [#YorkNeighborhood](https://twitter.com/YorkNeighborhood)



President's Corner

By Colin Beazley, YNA President

The long summer days are upon us and "back to school" may already be on some of our minds. After a summer with some return to normalcy in Bellingham and the York neighborhood, we know that both COVID and uncertain times are here to stay for a while. The York Neighborhood Association Board remains committed to helping our community in both the good and the challenging times.

We invited the City of Bellingham Outreach Coordinator, **Greg Hope**, to our June Board meeting to provide Emergency Preparedness with tips in an emergency. Many of us have heard of "the big one," but the meeting illustrated how community planning is critical to surviving and helping our community during any disaster. Please read through the Emergency Preparedness materials in your newsletter. And stay tuned: our Neighborhood Safety Committee plans to organize community-wide events, such as CPR classes, in the near future. Find out more on page 5.

As for the good times and returning to traditions, the Board is planning the **York Neighborhood Annual Picnic** to be held on Sunday, September 11, at Harriet Spauldine Park. We will be serving food, hosting music and a talent show, and welcoming neighbors, city officials, and community friends to the event. Details are on page 1.

As the Board continues to prioritize community engagement, we are looking to grow our Board coming out of the busy Summer months. The time commitment is dependent on your availability and desire, but the York Neighborhood Association offers a great opportunity for new or longtime community members, renters or homeowners, to give back to the York neighborhood, have a voice at the city level, and drive action in the community.



A couple last items to help our neighborhood remain vibrant and clean: Thank-you to the York university students who took extra care in disposing or recycling their unneeded items throughout the summer.

The York Neighborhood's 44th

Dumpster Day in June, sponsored by Nelson's and SCC, certainly helped!

I also ask that neighbors take a look at plants and bushes along public sidewalks and cut back any excess growth that may restrict the walkway (see page 4 for more on this).

I hope everyone enjoys the Bellingham beauty this summer brings with neighbors, friends, and family.



Jane Richardson PT, ScD, OCS, COMT

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Focus on York business: Bellingham Music tunes up talent

By R. Rebecca Hobbs

I recently sat down with **Lissa Halsinger**, the program coordinator and a piano, voice and guitar instructor for **Bellingham Music**. Lissa was excited to share the new focus and direction of the owner and store

Why a new direction? Throughout the pandemic, owner and saxophone teacher **Rob Peterka** had a chance to reconsider what was most important to himself and the teachers, and for the store, and that was the **students, classes, lessons, and community aspect**. Prior to 2020, the business was more focused on repairs, which is what they've specialized in since the '80s. After giving it some thought, and making some changes in location, the store landed at 319 E Champion Street (in York's northwestern corner). There they do still have a retail store, but it is now a smaller part of the business and the store is mostly stocked with the items that are used by the teachers and the practical items their students need to be successful.

The challenges they are currently facing are, like most everyone coming out of the pandemic, reevaluating their business practices and deciding how to fully transition...in this case meaning to have both in-person lessons and keep virtual ones in place. What's going well for the business is that they have a great staff of talented instructors who are eager to help. They also have trusted clientele returning, and their space has recently received some upgrades, adding both art and couches that make the location more family-friendly.

Having been in business since 1983, Bellingham Music is well-known in the community, and they're receiving a lot of wonderful support from other businesses who are interested in partnering with them for events. Such was the case with **Greene's Corner** hosting budding musicians for **Make Music Day** on June 21.

*Pianist and school administrator
Emily Perry at left, with
Lissa Halsinger—pianist,
vocalist, guitarist, and
programs coordinator.*



The studio is currently serving approximately 125 students ranging from age 5 to retired adults over 70 who are either taking private lessons or enrolled in classes. And they are ready and willing to add more classes and welcome community input for further direction. They already have fun classes for ukulele, world percussion, and pep band, as well as an open **Sax Gym** that allows adults to come in a jam at 7am before they go to work. For older adults there is an **Old School of Rock** pairing program starting this month, which is a "space for eager, upbeat learners to come together in duos to learn to play guitar through songs of the '70s and '80s," according to their website.

On the horizon, plans include a midday community jam session, having more collaboration between students, and joining future art walks. Be sure to also check out their students at the **Jamming at Whatcom Falls** events, which will happen the last Thursday of August and September at **Whatcom Falls Park** from 5:30–6:30 under the large picnic shelter near the fish hatchery. Students and teachers play both preselected and new tunes which they learn on the spot. Bellingham Music's students can also be heard at games in the **Bellingham Bells Pep Band**.

Did you know?

*The summer heat record in Bellingham was **100°F** on August 12, 2021, topping the 92°F of July 17, 1912. (And it's been steadily increasing.)*



Jeremy Ferrera
Financial Advisor

1801 Roeder Ave Suite 156
Bellingham, WA 98225-2257
Bus. 360-671-0850 Cell 360-348-0018
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jeremy.ferrera@edwardjones.com
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Property owners responsible for sidewalk and street vegetation control

By City of Bellingham staff Amy Cloud (Public Works Department) and Janice Keller (Communications)

Seasonal rain and sun have accelerated the growth of neighborhood trees, shrubs, and lawns. Adjacent-property owners are responsible for trimming their vegetation when it extends onto streets and sidewalks, to maintain full access and remove safety hazards.

"Everyone needs to be able to use our streets and sidewalks to get around, and it's up to all of us to help keep these spaces safe and accessible," said **Todd Baker**, interim street supervisor.

"Taking care of vegetation ensures that parents with strollers, kids on bikes, neighbors using wheelchairs, and everyone else can safely use our sidewalks," Baker said. "Keeping vegetation trimmed also helps drivers have better visibility."

Shrubs, plants, tree limbs, and other growth, including dead trees, should not extend into the public right-of-way, blocking user access, limiting sightlines, or creating other safety risks. Bellingham Municipal Code (**13.40.050**) requires adjacent property owners to address safety and "nuisance" issues (**BMC 10.28**) such as blocking vegetation.

The adjacent-property owner is responsible to prune back vegetation that restricts access or sightlines.

Overgrown vegetation can be more than a nuisance; it can create dangerous situations. If drivers cannot see cross traffic because of bushes at the corner or children are walking in the street because the sidewalk is overgrown, those are safety hazards. City officials enforce vegetation ordinances by first notifying property owners based on complaints or concerns observed by City street crews.

Residents who notice problem vegetation that is not within their area of responsibility, and sidewalk or street damage requiring repairs, may report these concerns via **SeeClickFix**, the City's online reporting tool, at cob.org/about/contacts/report.

Find out more here: cob.org/services/transportation/streets



Vegetation encroaching on sidewalk makes use difficult.

**Be a good neighbor:
keep the sidewalks free of
vehicles and shrubs!**



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York's Safety Committee working for you

By Todd Kleinbrook

Hey there, Yorkers! We have a new committee that encompasses all things safety. We are currently meeting once a month to discuss topics such as emergency preparedness, Light Up the Neighborhood, Neighborhood Watch, first-aid training, bike and pedestrian safety, and more. If you are interested in joining us in any of these efforts, send an email to safetycommittee@yorkneighborhood.org.

Do you have a plan if we were to experience a natural disaster? My household currently doesn't, and that's a little scary to me... but there's no time like the present to start developing that plan.

You should have received a "2 Weeks Ready" pamphlet with this current *Yorker's* print edition. This production of the state's **Emergency Management Division** is meant to be a quick guide to get the conversation started around disaster preparedness within your household and our greater community. Please take a few moments to look through the pamphlet and see if you find any ideas

to get those preparedness juices flowing. Our committee is looking for ways to have a deeper focus around preparedness, so be on the lookout for updates.

At our York Annual General Meeting, earlier this year, **Lt. Claudia Murphy** of the City of Bellingham Police Department took questions from the neighborhood regarding safety. A popular question came up around what we can do as individuals to make our neighborhood safer while helping to keep crime down. Her number-one recommendation: **keep our outside lights on at night.**

We need to **light up our neighborhood**, and LEDs are an amazing way to achieve that goal! Did you know that a 12-watt LED bulb that's on for 10 hours a day, 365 days a year, would cost you \$5.09 for the year? That's a little over a penny a day! That seems like a fantastic value when you consider what having your lights on can mean for our community. Please look for more updates around this campaign as we work to keep our neighborhood safe.



Light Up the Neighborhood!

Porch lights brighten up the neighborhood and deter unsavory behavior. An LED bulb will save tons of energy (\$), alleviating the guilt of leaving outside lights on. And your mail carrier and delivery people will be grateful, too, for safer navigation to and from your door!



Dumpster Day 2022 thank-yous

By Anne Mackie

Another successful neighborhood clean-up swooped up junk from York alleyways for the 44th Annual **Dumpster Day**, held June 18. Per usual, the dumpster opened at 8:30am and was full and closed at 10:30am.

Special thanks to the crew of volunteers pictured at right, as well as those not pictured: **Rebecca Hobbs, Erik Thomas, Opie Knechtel, Kirsti Charlton, and Chris Donaldson.**

Special thanks to **Sanitary Service Corporation** and **Paul Razore** for the free dumpster and to **Republic Services** for coming through with free dumpage fees. Also, thank-you to **Jon Ostby** at **Nelson's Market** for use of the parking lot and for the free coffee. **Carolyn Mulder** served another term as the official "Dumpster Queen" and provided her delicious homemade scones. 4,200+ pounds of junk were disposed of, along with four toilets... a new record. Scavengers found some goodies to keep, too.



Dumpster Day volunteers Andrew Molitor, Carolyn Mulder, Lisa Anderson, Cory Anderson, Eric Baumgartner, and Anne Mackie.

York Neighborhood Association Board

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President: **Colin Beazley**
Vice President: **Chris Donaldson**
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Anne Mackie • Élan Engel
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Mark Ellis Walker • Opie Knechtel
R. Rebecca Hobbs • Todd Kleinbrook

Newsletter Editor: **R. Rebecca Hobbs**
Newsletter Layout: **Mark Ellis Walker**

A brief history of Harriet Spanel Park

Harriet Spanel Park, located at 1200 Franklin Street in the historic York neighborhood, was for many years the location of **Franklin Elementary School**. The school was built in 1904 and served the community until 1972, when it was demolished and the site transformed into **Franklin Park**.

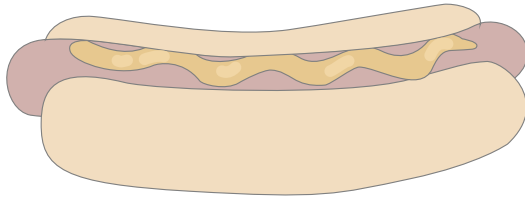
Franklin Park was renamed in 2017 after our longtime Bellingham resident and community activist **Harriet Spanel**, who served in the Washington State legislature for 22 years and on the City of Bellingham Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. According to historic records, Harriet was a tireless advocate for many things, including the preservation of our environment and women's rights.

Today, the park sits on a full city block and provides a great field, picnic shelter, basketball court, playground equipment, and skate feature for those residents wanting to catch some air. It's a great use of open space, and the next time you enjoy the park give a little nod to Harriet Spanel, a woman who provided years of great service to those in our community.

Do you love the history of the York Neighborhood as much as we do? Then join our committee by reaching out to **Chris Donaldson** at 360-383-6376 or by email at VP@yorkneighborhood.org. We look forward to hearing from you!



*Franklin Elementary, circa 1904;
photo courtesy of Whatcom Museum*



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Parks & Recreation prioritizes Rock Hill Park playground replacement

by Chris Donaldson

If you haven't meandered by **Rock Hill Park** lately (located south of Potter and east of Humboldt), you're in for a treat. Thanks to a **City of Bellingham "Small and Simple" Grant** in 2021 orchestrated by longtime resident and business owner Anne Mackie (**Nelson's**), a number of new plants have taken root and are providing beauty for all those who visit. An interpretive pollinator sign has also been installed by Bellingham's **Parks and Recreation Department**, so you (and the kids) can learn more about nature and bees at work.

But wait, there's more! The basketball court and hoop is also scheduled to be refurbished this summer (if it hasn't happened already), and a new fence has been put up on its Lakeway end to discourage foot traffic coming in from that side of the park. **Nicole Oliver**, the city's Parks and Recreation Department director, visited the park on August 5th to review the improvements and also discussed the exciting news that the park has been identified as "next up" for playground replacement and overall park improvements. Though this likely won't start before 2024, this will give our neighborhood ample time to explore options such as climbing features and walking paths to make the park a more integral part the community. A major hat-tip to neighbor **John DeOrio**, who has led these efforts as Park Steward.

Keep your eyes on this space for future updates, and to learn how you can help shape the future of Rock Hill Park. In the meantime, head on over and enjoy this beautiful spot right in our backyard!

Mission Statement of the York Neighborhood Association:

- To reduce isolation among residents;
- To enhance the quality of life in a low- and moderate-income urban neighborhood;
- To create a sense of community;
- To reduce or prevent crime; and
- To preserve the historic character of the neighborhood.



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Calendar of York Events

August						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

September						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

October						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

York Board Meeting
Wednesday, August 24, 6:30pm
 Norway Hall — 1419 North Forest Street

Labor Day
Monday, September 5

York Neighborhood Annual Picnic
Sunday, September 11, 3–5pm
 Harriet Spanel Park—south of Lakeway Drive,
 at Grant and Whatcom streets

**Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory
 Commission (MNAC) Meeting**
Wednesday, September 21, 6:30pm
 via Zoom—see www.cob.org for access info

York Board Meeting
Wednesday, September 28, 6:30pm
 Norway Hall — 1419 North Forest Street

Columbus Day
Monday, October 10

MNAC Meeting
Wednesday, October 19, 6:30pm
 via Zoom—see www.cob.org for access info

3rd Annual Scarecrow Throwdown
October 23–31

York General Neighborhood Meeting
Wednesday, October 26, 7pm
 Norway Hall — 1419 North Forest Street



Entries in the 2021 Scarecrow Throwdown

CONTACT

York Neighborhood Association
 mailing address:
 PO Box 1585
 Bellingham WA 98227-4185

President@YorkNeighborhood.org

website: www.YorkNeighborhood.org

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Donations to the York Neighborhood Association are appreciated!

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