



York Neighborhood Association

online at [www.yorkneighborhood.org](http://www.yorkneighborhood.org)

## Neighborhood urges state to build I-5 safety wall

*DOT plans highway ramp construction this summer*



*photo courtesy of Chris Wolf*

**A tow truck prepares to haul away a pickup that landed in front of Chris Wolf's house on the 1100 block of Humboldt Street after the pickup launched off the freeway and rolled down an embankment in February 2008.**

By Anne Mackie

Finding a truck in your front yard that has flipped and rolled off the freeway is a rude awakening to the fact that the I-5 corridor through York Neighborhood runs dangerously close to houses. For the residents on the 1100 block of Humboldt Street, this is what happened in February 2008. And it happened not once, but twice in one year.

As the Washington State Dept. of Transportation (WSDOT) plans its new construction project to "lengthen" the I-5 southbound entrance at Lakeway Drive in July, we ask: "Why isn't a safety and sound wall included with this expansion of the roadway?" The answer: lack of funding—an answer we've heard for over 35 years.

Todd Carlson, WSDOT Planning and Engineering Services Manager, said, "We are not widening the Interstate, only lengthening an existing on-ramp; therefore, no noise analysis was required. Further, we are prevented by policy from putting a noise/sound wall into this project description, again due to the lack of widening."

York resident David Camp has started a petition (available at Nelson's Market) that states, in part: "We, the residents, taxpayers, business owners, of the York Neighborhood demand, therefore, that no work be done to extend the southbound I-5 on-ramp from Lakeway unless it includes a safety and sound wall similar to that at the southbound I-5 exit to Lakeway. Also that a public design process be followed that re-

### Lowell School Rummage Sale Saturday, March 6

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.  
Lowell School Gym  
935 14th St.

Proceeds benefit the Playground Project

### General meeting and chili chow-down

Wednesday, March 10  
Garden Street United  
Methodist Church

**Chili supper: 6 p.m.**

Chili provided. Please bring a salad or dessert to share

**Business meeting: 7 p.m.**

**Agenda:** 1-5 Wall, York Plan Amendments, Committees and projects

spects neighborhood wishes."

WSDOT says it will add a short "concrete barrier" to help lessen the noise; add "visual screening" to the fencing to help lessen the lights from passing vehicles; plant strategically placed trees on top of the concrete retaining wall near Whatcom Street to reduce graffiti; and conduct a "noise evaluation" to determine if this stretch of highway qualifies to be added to the retrofit list for a full-sized wall. To address concerns about increased on-ramp truck traffic, truck-route information from the City will be investigated.

Additional discussion on the I-5 safety/sound wall will take place at the York general membership meeting, Wed. March 10, 7 p.m. at Garden St. Methodist Church.

# Meet the 2010 YNA board members

**Anne Mackie**  
President and Planning Chair



*photo by Chris Collison*

Anne has lived in the York neighborhood for approximately 20 years. She and her husband own Nelson's Market and live above the store. She plans to continue working on the neighborhood's long-range planning through the York Plan Amendments, help provide information to residents and businesses through the newsletter and soon-to-be-updated Web site and get rental businesses licensed.

**Kirsti Charlton**  
Vice President

Kirsti has lived in the neighborhood for 31 years. She is active in the York's plan amendment process and is the mayoral appointee to MNAC, the Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission. Kirsti is also the head of RATS, the Recycle and Trash Society.

**Jessica Bandstra**  
Secretary

Jessica has lived in the neighborhood since 2004. She has two young children. She hopes to see the bus barn someday turned into a park for children in the neighborhood to enjoy. She helps plan the annual picnic and has previously served as newsletter editor.

**Lisa Anderson**  
Treasurer

Lisa and her husband Cory have lived in the neighborhood since 1995. She hopes to represent the York neighborhood as redevelopment is introduced along Samish Way. She is also concerned with plan updates, highway improvement, litter control, alternative transportation and graffiti prevention.

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**Chris Wolf - At Large**

*Years in neighborhood: 3.5*

Chris loves gardening and is involved in garden work parties to help residents start new gardens. She is also involved in Transition Bellingham, a program to help the neighborhood prepare for peak oil.

**Nick Hartrich - At Large**

*Years in neighborhood: 10*

Nick has owned a home in the neighborhood since 2000 and is busy remodeling it.

**Don Hilty-Jones - Historic Preservation Chair**

*Years in neighborhood: 6*

Don is heavily involved in local history issues. He wants to help get the Historical Neighborhood status for the neighborhood.

**David Hopkinson - At large**

*Years in neighborhood: 8*

David and his wife live in the yellow church on Franklin. He wants to see the neighborhood become a designated historical district and is concerned with rental licensing and inspection.

**Helen Jackson - Franklin Park Rep.**

*Years in neighborhood: 4.5*

Helen enjoys the outdoors and walking the many trails in Bellingham. She is coordinating several Franklin Park projects including monthly work parties to restore open spaces.

**Lesley Keenholts - Quality Improvement Chair**

*Years in neighborhood: 29*

Lesley is an avid hiker and loves the outdoors. She also hopes to see a rental licensing program come to Bellingham and considers renting to be a business ownership.

**Chris Collison - Newsletter Editor**

*Years in neighborhood: 1.5*

Chris is a Western senior. He wants to help improve communication between students and other neighborhood residents, online and through the newsletter.

**Carolyn Mulder - Dumpster Day Chair**

*Years in neighborhood: 22*

Between gardening and spending time with family, Carolyn coordinates Dumpster Day and works to improve a safe, family-friendly community.

**Vale Bates - At large**

*Years in neighborhood: 7*

Vale and her husband are passionate about maintaining the neighborhood's historical integrity and restoring historic homes. She enjoys photography, hiking, baking and playing with her dogs.

**Carrie Schwarz - At large**

**Tom Scott - ABN rep., Webmaster**

**Gary Gerard - City Gates Apartments Rep.**

**Jake Lunden - At large**

# York Plan Amendments advance to public hearing



photo by Chris Collison

**Bellingham School District's bus barn could be converted into a park under the proposed plan amendments.**

By Anne Mackie

Scheduled for a public hearing at the Planning Commission, April 22, and later this spring a second public hearing at City Council, York's Plan Amendments propose additional open space for parks, traffic solutions, historic preservation and important land use rezones to enhance York quality of life.

The lengthy planning update process started back in 2007 with resident surveys, meetings with City planners, multitudes of public meetings, and plan amendments capturing the wishes of the majority of the neighborhood. A quick synopsis of the proposals:

**Area 1:** Rezone the Bellingham School District bus barn property along Whatcom Creek waterway from "industrial" to "parks/open space" at which time the school district sells the property, so this can become a city park. Opportunities for multi-family housing along the Meador Street side of the property could also be incorporated.

**Area 2:** Encourage urban infill using historic buildings and new construction (the vacant Wilson Motors lot and other historic downtown properties within Area 2).

**Areas 4, 5, & 9:** Promote historic district designations and design guidelines.

**Area 7:** Designate "public/open space" as an extension of Franklin Park, in the present unimproved street rights-of-way along the upper west hillside adjacent to the park and in the 1200 block of Franklin Street.

**Area 8:** Support York's portion of the Samish Way Urban Village for redevelopment/infill within the neighborhood.

**Area 9:** Rezone Ellis St. from 1,000 sq. ft. per unit density to 3,000 sq. ft. per unit (in keeping with the density of Area 5, which it borders). Allow continued multi-family housing, as currently exists, and approved commercial uses. Create incentives, such as reduced parking requirements for businesses, to encourage owners to add commercial uses if they retain the original historic structure.

**Transportation proposals:** address increased traffic volumes and cut-through traffic solutions; link neighborhood internally through safe pedestrian and bicycle causeways; consider Residential Parking Zones (RPZs).

Details of the Plan Amendments are available on the York Web site at [yorkneighborhood.org](http://yorkneighborhood.org). The proposals will be discussed at the upcoming March 10th general membership meeting.

# Voila! Franklin Park

by Helen Jackson

Franklin Park Projects Coordinator for YNA

A joyous celebration of 200 park-goers on Nov. 14th, 2009 hailed the Franklin Park grand reopening. Since then, we have continued enjoying all the new features the park offers. Young and old, north side and south side residents join to walk/ride the pathways, lunch beneath the shelter, whirl on the Super Nova, climb, swing and slide in the playground, practice skateboarding, play field sports or a little b-ball. If you haven't yet experienced this phenomenon, walk on over, maybe using the X-walk at Grant Street, and enjoy being with neighbors in the midst of play.



photo courtesy of Jeff Bates

It's time for a round of applause to all those who worked together to make this happen!

**Thanks** to the dedicated Franklin Park Committee, which met monthly over a four-year period with Jonathan Schilk, landscape architect for the Parks Department. Together they found funding, conducted surveys and chose features for the Park. **Thanks to** Jeff and Sarah Bates, Heather and Miguel Alvis/Boriss, David and Vilma Camp, Abby Franklin, Helen Jackson, Cindy Kaufman, Melanie Pacific, Cathy Repogle and Ruthie Vergin. Thanks to the Parks Department and the Planning and Community Development Department for all the time, consideration and support that went into making this project successful.

**Thank you for making the opening celebration one to remember:** The creative Celebration Committee: Abby Franklin, Sherry Helde, Jessica Bandstra, Deedee and Andy Marshall, Kirsti Charlton, Vilma Camp and Helen Jackson.

**To all the donors:** The Family of Jeff Reed, who provided funding; all who brought cupcakes and volunteered. Jason Quick, the incredible juggler; Jordan Rain and friends, musical magic; the Squalicum High School Marching Band/director Kay Reilly, pizzazz and rhythm.

**Local businesses and organizations:** Community Food Coop, Nelson's Market, Rocket Donuts, Starbucks Coffee at Sehome Village and on Meridian, Trader Joe's and Garden Street United Methodist Church.

**Community spirit brings the neighborhood to life!**

A special thanks to the Reed Family, who donated \$1000 for the Park projects and the beautiful Olivine bench at the skate feature at Franklin Park in memory of their skateboarding son, Jeff.

# City should require rental licensing with mandatory inspection for tenant safety

by David Hopkinson

Of 14,000 students at WWU, only 30 percent live on campus. An unknown number of students at BTC and WCC are not Bellingham residents, so they, too, need a local home. This means that every August, an army of as many as 10,000 people is looking for a place to live. Notice that this count does not include an unknown number of people who are not students, such as families in need of rental housing. In response to the need, more than half of the homes in Bellingham are rental properties.

Walk down any street in the York Neighborhood. You will see a wonderful variety of homes, some elegant, built 100 years ago, others more modest, or more recent. Some homes are immaculate, beautiful and well-kept. Others are deteriorating and sad. It is likely that there are more rentals among the latter group. Count the mailboxes—note the number of bicycles on the front porch. Notice the peeling paint and the unkept lawn; be very careful of the front steps, some of which look as if they may give way underfoot.

Bellingham does not regulate residential rental property. There are laws in place, but there is not the means to enforce them. There can be no certainty—of the sort that exists for, say, hotels and motels—that a particular property is a safe place to stay.

In the absence of any other examina-

tion, renters must be capable of evaluating the building which they inhabit—in terms of compliance with fire safety codes, for example. We have a “complaint-driven” system, which means that for rental housing, only when a problem has erupted full-force will anything be done about it—if at all.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has said complaint-driven systems don’t work, perhaps because renters are more likely to move than to complain, so problems remain obscure and the buildings deteriorate. If landlords do not live adjacent to their rental properties, over time they are likely to be disengaged. Buildings slowly decline, while becoming increasingly dangerous.

We need a system of residential rental property licensing with mandatory periodic inspection—like hotels. We need the technical expertise necessary to determine objectively whether or not residential rental housing is safe. Look at the rental inspection checklist used by Gresham, Ore. Then send a message to the Bellingham City Council and Mayor.

Tell them:

*“ I support licensing of residential rental housing with mandatory inspection. ”*

**Write:** Bellingham City Council  
210 Lottie St. 98225  
**E-mail:** info@cob.org

To view Gresham, Ore.’s rental inspection checklist, follow this link, then click “Interior Inspection Checklist.”

<http://greshamoregon.gov/rentalhousing/>

## Thanks to one who cares

Congratulations to our own Helen Jackson for being selected as one of The Bellingham Herald’s “10 Who Cared” 2009 Award recipients (Herald story, Dec. 10, 2009). Helen was selected because of her work organizing the Franklin Park Committee and its efforts to renew the park. She’s quick to defer credit to the large group of volunteers and York neighbors who worked on the project (see her article in this issue, page 3), but we are pleased the Herald and the larger community acknowledged her leadership. Thank you Helen, from all your Yorker friends!

## Trees flower in York

Notice the beautiful blooming street trees throughout the neighborhood? Many of these street trees are the result of an early 1990s York Neighborhood Association tree planting project. Now, 20 years later, the fully-matured trees add their waves of color to our landscape. A second batch of trees was planted in 2007 by the YNA, funded by a City of Bellingham Small & Simple grant. Please be kind to these young trees and respect their tender branches.



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# Gardeners lend a green thumb to prepare for spring



photos by Chris Collison

**LEFT:** Chris Wolf (center) leads a team of volunteer gardeners in sheet mulching at Kirsti Charlton's house. **RIGHT:** Klara Schwarz, 8, sprays water over cardboard pieces laid on top of mulch to aid in composting.

by Chris Collison

Neighborhood residents gathered on a sunny Saturday morning to help Kirsti Charlton start a new garden in her front yard in anticipation of spring. The team spread compost and cardboard over old

grass to turn it into fertile soil—a permaculture technique called sheet mulching.

Chris Wolf, who helped lead the effort, said the process helps get rid of grass without chemicals and leaves nutrient-rich soil for new plants in its place.

Wolf said she hopes to continue teaching the technique and wants to help neighborhood residents start new gardens in the coming months.

For more information on garden work parties, contact Chris Wolf at (360) 961-9028.

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# Firework bans curb fire danger

by Kirsti Charlton

At the February 2010 York Neighborhood Association Board meeting, Clay Butler, a Bellingham resident, made a presentation on consumer fireworks in our community. He said he has had it with the noise that occurs as much as a week before the Fourth of July and several days after. He said he is concerned about fire hazards, saying Bellingham was lucky in summer 2009 that there were no firework-caused fires because it was so dry.

Members of the board responded to Butler's presentation with tales of their own about frightened pets, sleepless nights, and firework debris littering the streets for weeks after the Fourth, not to mention the concern about firework-related fires. Firework bans and restrictions are not new in Washington cities. Fifty-one cities ban the use of consumer fireworks, and 55 restrict their use.

Butler described the success story of Spokane when it banned fireworks 17 years ago. In the 10-year period before the ban, there were 1,044 fireworks-related fires and 290 fireworks-related injuries. In the 10-year period after the ban, there were only 46 fireworks related fires (a decrease of about 98 percent) and only 37 related injuries (a decrease of about 85 percent).

In Bellingham, the Municipal Code states that there are certain days before the Fourth of July when fireworks sales are legal. The city's noise ordinance states that "frequent, repetitive, or continuous" noise is prohibited, but the ordinance has no specific exception for noise resulting from fireworks.

Butler encourages all community members who want to ban the sale and use of fireworks in Bellingham to contact the Bellingham City Council with their concerns. Butler can be reached at 360-225-3410 or at [butlers@Juno.com](mailto:butlers@Juno.com)

## York Neighborhood Association Donation

- Students \$5
- Household \$20
- Single \$10
- Business \$100 (includes business-card-sized ad in each issue of the Yorker)

### Projects Donation

(to be used specifically for the project marked below)

- Franklin Park Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Rock Hill Park Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Historic Preservation Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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### Return form to:

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# RATS: keeping the neighborhood clean

by Kirsti Charlton

Mark your calendars: RATS, the Recycle and Trash Society of York Neighborhood, meets on the first and third Saturdays of the month at 8:45 a.m.

RATS picks up trash and recyclables (glass, aluminum, plastic). Aluminum cans are taken to recycling centers, and money earned is used to support neighborhood projects such as new plants at the parks.

If we're working north of Lakeway, meet at Nelson's. If we are working south of Lakeway, meet at Franklin Park.

Bring your gloves—but if you don't have any, don't let that stop you from coming by, as we have extras! We also supply the collection bags.

We are on the streets for about an hour, so it's a very short time commitment.

Please join us! For more information, call or text 360-393-7187.

# Police encourage residents to report graffiti



Below is information about graffiti from the MNAC meeting of January 2010. **Do not hesitate to call to report graffiti.** According to studies, the sooner it is cleaned up, the less likely it is to reappear.

Information from Officer Kat Dearborn:

Graffiti is on the rise. Most, but not all, graffiti could be gang-related. The City sends a letter to the property owners, who have 24 hours to take action from receipt of the letter. If it is not cleaned up within that time frame, authorities can issue a citation. One is-

sue that causes delays is that the police department often does not know where graffiti appears, so it is important to report it to the police department by calling 911. The operators will screen the call and transfer to the appropriate party.

To report graffiti on city-owned property, notify the Public Works Department at (360) 778-7700. If you see graffiti on a freeway overpass, please contact Department of Transportation at [carlsot@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:carlsot@wsdot.wa.gov)

When resources are available, a graffiti removal program operates during the summer months. A police officer works with at-risk youth and property owners to clean up graffiti around town.

**To report graffiti in the neighborhood, call 911.**

# York historic district approved

by Anne Mackie

It's final! A portion of the York Neighborhood bordered by Lakeway Drive on the south and Ellis Street on the west has recently been added to the National Register of Historic Places. Going forward, we hope to apply for historic designation for the area around Franklin Park and the subsection of the neighborhood west of Ellis Street (along Magnolia Street and including blocks around the Garden Street United Methodist Church).

Research about all of York's homes (both within the new Historic District and areas not yet included) is posted on the Washington State Dept. of Archaeology and Historic Preservation Web site. Most of the homes have photos—current and historical—and a write-up about architecture and former residents.

## Instructions for looking up your house:

Go to <https://fortress.wa.gov/dahp/wisaard/> This opens the state's WISAARD database.

- 1 select the "search" tab;
- 2 select "Historic Property Inventory Quick Search" as the type of search.
- 3 For Location Address, type in the house number and street name, but DO NOT include "street" or "st" in your address or it won't function correctly.
- 4 Type in the City and County.
- 5 Hit "Search" key and a window will open that lists your address and shows four icons for details, document, photo and report. I have had intermittent success with this Web site, so be patient and keep trying.



*photo courtesy of Anne Mackie*

**This Queen Anne Cottage style home at 1320 Ellis St., built circa 1900, contributes to the York National Historic District.**

Anyone interested in participating in the York Historic Preservation Committee should contact committee chair, Don Hilty-Jones at [YorkHistoric@yorkneighborhood.org](mailto:YorkHistoric@yorkneighborhood.org)  
Meetings will be scheduled this spring.

# Neighborhood Calendar of Events

## General meetings

March 10 and May 12 at 7 p.m.  
Garden St. United Methodist Church

## Recycle and Trash Society

Every first and third Saturday of  
the month at 8:45 a.m.

## Planning committee meeting

March 29 at 7 p.m.  
At Nelson's Market

## Rock Hill Park spring cleanup and work party

April 10, 9 a.m. to noon

## Franklin Park Work Parties

March 13, April 17, May 8 and  
June 12 from 9 a.m. to noon

## YNA Board meeting

April 14 at 7 p.m.  
Garden St. United Methodist Church

## Thank you for your continued support!

Thank you to these businesses and residents who donated since the publication of the last issue of *The Yorker*:

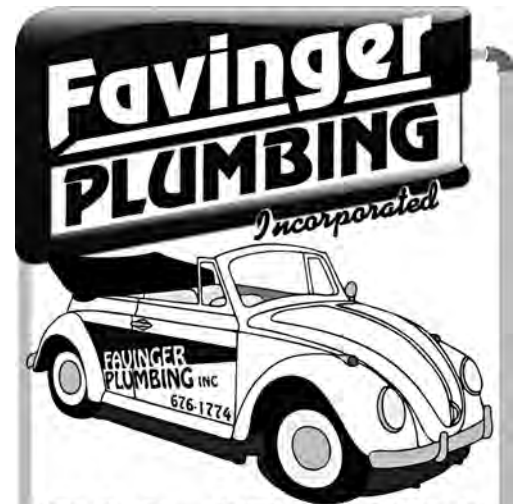
Lena Bagwell; Ronald Barnett; Jeff, Sarah, Jessa and Cassin Bates; Bishop Construction; Laurie and Jeff Brown; Judy Frane and David Chicovsky; Mel Charlton; Engelhardt & Salazar; John and Marguerite Rietz; Darol Streib; Douglas White; and RATS aluminum can recycle funds.

## Sponsors of the 2009 Holiday Caroling Horse Wagon:

Back In Motion; Nelson's Market (Anne Mackie & Jon Ostby); Onsite Computer Services (Tom Scott); and Therapeutic Massage.

Always a HUGE THANKYOU to Garden St. United Methodist Church for their continued support of the York Neighborhood Association by providing free meeting space.

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