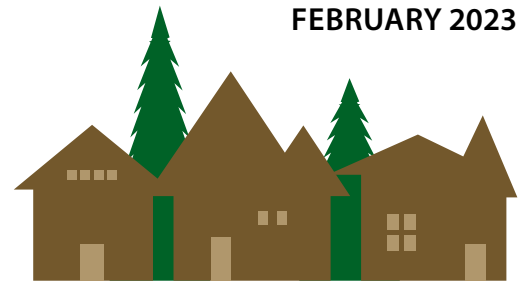


THE YORKER

FEBRUARY 2023



FROM THE YORK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION—BRINGING THE YORK COMMUNITY TOGETHER



TO JOIN THE YORK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Come to the YNA's first
General Meeting of 2023
on **February 22** at Norway Hall,
1419 North Forest Street,
6:30pm to 8:00pm.

Guest speakers: City of Bellingham's
Nicole Oliver & Laine Potter
on Parks & Infrastructure

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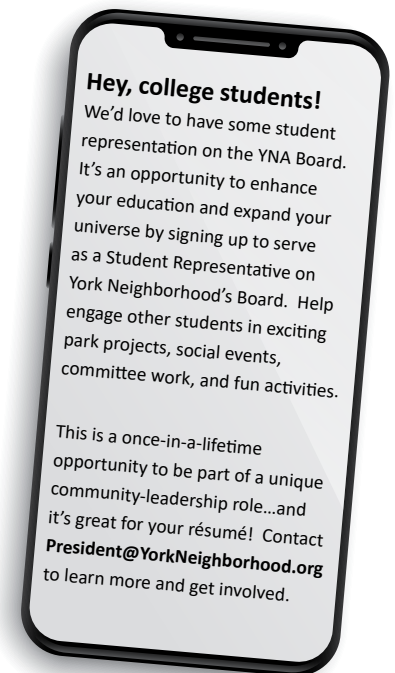
There are lots of good things happening in the York neighborhood in 2023, but we need your help! Upcoming projects include:

- Planning the **renovation of Rock Hill Park**, including new playground equipment.
- Numerous **neighborhood events**, such as the summer picnic, fall BBQ, and winter caroling. We need a spring event, too!
- Developing an **interactive walking map of the neighborhood**, in concert with the City of Bellingham.
- Regular **work parties**.
- And much more—bring **your ideas!**

And the best part? You can help shape the future of all these things by joining the **York Neighborhood Association Board** today. This group generally meets once per month to discuss how best to preserve and enhance the community, and to promote a safe, comfortable, and thriving neighborhood for all.

Contact Chris Donaldson at VP@yorkneighborhood.org to learn more.
Hope to see you at the meeting!

YNA Board responsibilities include helping with annual events such as the summer picnic, the December holiday party and wagon rides, the annual Dumpster Day cleanup, park volunteer work parties, writing articles for the Yorker newsletter, and attending city meetings to engage with our elected government on numerous topics. Members must attend approximately six Board meetings and general meetings per year. The Board also hosts a variety of neighborhood potlucks throughout the year and selects educational speakers for our general meetings.



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YORK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

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President's Corner

By Colin Beazley, YNA President

This February my parents traveled from the Midwest to visit their grandkids in the York neighborhood. We walked around comparing historic architecture, dined at our neighborhood gems **Aslan Brewing** and **Nelson's Market**, and played in **Rock Hill** and **Harriet Spanel** parks. The experience and neighborhood filled my parents and two boys with joy. They commented how the mix of university students, longtime residents, and families makes York a special place to raise kids.

In this issue we celebrate the life of **Jon Ostby**, longtime owner of Nelson's and the patriarch for establishing York as a family-friendly neighborhood. And while I understand that not every resident regards children as their first community priority, I do assume neighbors appreciate living in a community labeled "family-friendly" with safe transportation options, robust parks, and a crime-free environment. Partnerships the York Neighborhood Association is building with **City of Bellingham** (CoB) leadership should give us hope that 2023 will push us another step forward in ensuring York is family-friendly, however you define it, for decades to come.

First, the **Bellingham Parks Department** submitted their 2023-24 proposed department budget to City Council and the budget includes playground

replacement and neighborhood park restoration. Based on playground age, condition, and the department's park-enhancement prioritization tool, **Rock Hill Park** is next in line for a significant update!

Parks Department director **Nicole Oliver** will attend our February General Meeting to discuss shorter-term upgrades to the park and future plans. Please attend on **February 22** to start engaging on this significant project!

Second, at our last 2022 General Meeting, CoB Transportation Planner **Chris Cuomo** represented the city's proposal for major infrastructure improvements to Lakeway. Bellingham is collaborating with **WSDOT** on a comprehensive multimodal transportation study for the area between the Samish/I-5 and Iowa/I-5 interchanges, the Samish-Maple-Ellis corridor, and the Puget/Lakeway/Lincoln corridor. If you are interested, this comprehensive study can be found on the CoB website. The purpose of the study and recommendation is to document existing land uses and measure and analyze vehicular traffic impacts and travel demand for people walking, biking, and riding transit. The York neighborhood will be critical participants, as many of the improvements will have a direct impact on and around our neighborhood.



Finally, we had **Councilwoman Lisa Anderson** and **Lieutenant Claudia Murphy** attend our January association-board meeting to discuss the recent major drug raid on **Iron**

Street. Both guests discussed the collaborative effort with federal, state, and local teams and evidence that led to the November raid. They affirmed components of the case were built from calls from York neighbors into Bellingham Police Department (BPD) and requested that our community continue to call the BPD when we witness crime. They also pleaded for residents to review the **Blake decision** of 2021, which decriminalized drug possession in Washington, and speak with their state and local representatives about the negative impact the decision has on police. Feel free to speak with any of the Board members if you want to learn more.

Please step up and do your part if you are able. The YNA is recruiting new Board members for 2023, and we ask that you reach out to us and attend our February General Meeting if you have interest in these efforts. Enjoy reading the newest *Yorker*!

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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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

New play library pops up near York

Allie Bishop, a longtime early-childhood educator and play advocate interested in community projects that can help families benefit from shared resources and values, has officially opened a **play library for toy swapping** just north of the York neighborhood at **1801 Ellis Street**. “I think this meets the value of sustainability that a lot of people have in Bellingham. We don’t all need to have the same things if we’re not using them all the time,” she stated.

Parents will be able to gather up those toys their kiddos are no longer playing with and swap them for different toys which have been cleaned and sterilized. “Maybe when [the kids] come to the library later they’ll say ‘I used to have that!’ and they won’t even know it *was* theirs.”

A nice aspect of the library is that kids can pick out what is meaningful for them at their stage of development, but Allie also envisions parents being interested in the toys they see and encouraged to play with their children. And the library is not just for parents. **Abby Franklin**, the founder and owner of the York-based preschool **The Loving Space**, recently donated some toys.

Around York Neighborhood

P	M	K	B	A	S	K	E	T	B	A	L	L	H	O	O	P	S
T	F	B	Q	I	C	E	C	R	E	A	M	D	O	G	S	J	P
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K	K	N	T	H	Y	N	Y	W	T	R	E	E	S	H	O	H	M

Find the following words in the puzzle. Words are hidden → ↓ and ↘.


- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| BASKETBALL HOOP | ICE CREAM | RECYCLE BIN |
| CATS | MAILBOX | ROCK HILL PARK |
| CHILDREN | MARLINS CAFE | TREES |
| DOGS | NELSONS MARKET | YORKER |
| FENCE | NEWSLETTER | |
| FLOWERS | PARENTS | |
| HARRIET SPANEL | PLAYGROUND | |




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For safety, there will be limitations on what can be accepted. Donated toys should be well-designed, safe, and easily cleaned, as well as in good condition with plenty of life left. And since the storage space is limited for now, they’d prefer smaller toys, roughly the size of a shoebox. Of course they will consider stocking special items but will not be able to accept stuffed animals and soft toys, anything consumable (e.g., Play-Doh), tablets, and commercial/media tie-in toys (e.g., Marvel, Disney).

The Play Library plans to be open a couple days a month for now, but more times may be added as interest grows. The goal for the library is to have 300 toys by March, and pickup is available. Allie recently held two toy-donation drives to boost the catalog. In late spring and summer, the library will partner with **Ridwell**, and the company will pick up toys left on the porch and donate them to the Play Library.

Check out the Play Library on Instagram [@playlibrary.co](https://www.instagram.com/playlibrary.co) or on Facebook as “Whatcom Play Library.” There’s also a newsletter subscription available at playlibrary.substack.com to keep you updated on when toys can be swapped.

York holiday caroling event a stellar success!

By Tom Scott, YNA Secretary

December 10, 2022, saw the return of the **York Annual Caroling Party and Wagon Rides**, the sixteenth, after a hiatus of three years. This event was originally the dream of a local Yorker back in 2005. That dream was a caroling hayride but was soon after changed to “hayless” to avoid any discomfort or allergies. That wintery dream fleshed out to be sharing seasonal goodies, a wagon originally pulled by a pair of black Percheron draft horses draped with sleigh bells, warm cozy clothes, a YNA caroling book of common songs, and hot drinks, and **Nelson’s Market** offered to be the venue. Almost every year since, carolers have not only met to party at Nelson’s Market but come to enjoy wagon rides while caroling.

This year’s event saw an increase in young families attending, and we had more local musicians and more choir students from Bellingham schools than ever before! Thanks to the **Sehome High School** choir director for coordinating them pre-event and during the event.

Every year has been bigger than the one previous, with more and more carolers coming to share treats and good cheer, sing carols, and listen to local musicians and members of school choirs. As with all relatively recent past years, the **YNA Caroling Committee** provided hot drinks for all the attendees and carolers to help keep them warm. One of our sponsors even brought a train set to entertain the youngsters while awaiting their rides.

The event casually included collecting for the **Bellingham Food Bank**. A couple years before COVID, the collection became more standardized, complete with logos, et cetera. We have not recorded numbers for the food donations, but they also appeared to be more than previous years.

Thanks to our event sponsors!



**Jeremy Ferrera
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If you'd like to be involved in putting on the 2023 event, please contact **Tom Scott** at TomRScott@On-SiteComputer.com.

All feedback during and after the event was very positive, and the Caroling Committee members individually voiced looking forward to next year!

As for that dreamer back in 2005, word is they definitely saw their caroling dreams fulfilled yet again. Seeing all the formerly young children return as 30-something adults (some bringing children of their own) and other former adult neighbors brought even more joy than previously dreamt.

An added point of glee for many of us elder Yorkers was the return of some of the Yorker adult children and former neighbors coming back to partake and reminisce. After 19 years (including the hiatus) many such “returnees” don’t remember York *not* hosting the event. For them, it is the York of their childhood, creating a yearning to return and take part. Some brought a third generation with them.



photo: Élan Engel

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

Can you identify this mystery house?

Here's a great old photo we found in the archives, taken circa 1900 somewhere in York. We don't know much about it, except it was marked "522 Gladstone Street," and the house has possibly been knocked down since. All we know for sure is the clothes are especially dapper, in a bygone era of pocket watches and great hats.

If the history of the neighborhood interests you and you want to learn more, you may want to join the York Neighborhood Historic Preservation Committee. The goal of this committee is to honor the past history of York as well as help plan for its future. This year's projects include the potential development of an interactive walking map of the neighborhood, as well as archiving numerous photos and other historical artifacts of interest to the community. You in?



Contact *Chris Donaldson* at VP@yorkneighborhood.org to learn more.

Nelson's Market changes hands

York neighbors **Ben and Urania Shaklee**, who have lived next door to the establishment since 2011, took over operations on January 25 and are committed to preserving the 128-year-old business as a grocery, café, and community hub as well as carrying over the name "Nelson's Market."

"Nelson's is so much more than a cafe," said Ben Shaklee. "It's a piece of history, a corner store and community hub where neighbors meet, offer up support to one another, and where we were first welcomed to the neighborhood after moving here from the East Coast in 2011."

The business owners look forward to providing more details in a future issue of the *Yorker*.

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[f](https://www.facebook.com/Nelsons-Market-Marlins-Cafe) #Nelsons-Market-Marlins-Cafe



Work parties: a chance to serve your community

A brave group of Bellingham neighbors, many who came from neighborhoods outside of York, gathered in **Harriet Spanel Park** on a damp December morning to take on invasive species on the **Franklin Trail**. “*Many hands make light work*” is the quote that came to mind as the volunteer group worked with the **Bellingham Parks Department**.

With the help of 24 volunteers, the group removed approximately 5 cubic yards of invasive vegetation, spread about 10 cubic yards of mulch, picked up about 1 cubic yard of litter, and planted 28 native plants—including 20 shrubs and 8 trees! The work completed was extremely important for improving the habitat health of Franklin Trail. The invasive species removed were Himalayan Blackberry, English Holly, and Spurge Laurel.

A huge thanks to **Woods Coffee**, who donated the coffee, and a special thank-you to all of the volunteers who joined the environmental restoration activities.

As the coeditor of a lot of pride in walking the latest edition. During my latest delivery outing, I had the privilege of meeting several new neighbors, and anyone who sees me come up to their doorstep is always thrilled to see our newest offering. At one particular home, I could see a resident through the window, so I waved and was prepared to leave the newsletter on the doorstep, but she came to the door and happily greeted me and introduced herself. I love our neighborhood!

—Rebecca

Have a delivery story or other neighbor interaction to share?
Email YorkerEditor@yorkneighborhood.org.



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Remembering Jon Ostby, owner of Nelson's Market

On January 22, York neighborhood icon **Jon Benjamin Ostby** passed away at age 75 with his loving wife **Anne Mackie** by his side. A beloved husband, father, grandfather, and owner of **Nelson's Market** from 1984 to 2022, he will forever be remembered for his generosity, love of baseball, and contribution to **making the York neighborhood a better place for all.**

Born April 28, 1947, in Granite Falls, Minnesota, he graduated from Kennewick High in 1965. He then attended Columbia Basin College until 1967 when he was drafted into the U.S. Army and sent to Vietnam. He served honorably, receiving these distinctive decorations: Purple Heart, Bronze Star, Army Commendation Medal for Valor, and Combat Infantry Badge.

After discharge in 1969, Jon moved to Bellingham and attended Western Washington State College, where he joined the Vietnam Veterans Against the War. In May 1970 Jon participated in a fateful antiwar demonstration on I-5, where he jumped the fence, walked down Potter Street, and wandered into a little corner store called Nelson's Market to buy a six-pack. He bought the store 14 years later.

The historic 1895 Nelson's Market is where Jon raised his two sons while living in the upstairs apartment, as many previous owners had done. Gradually each son had their tours of duty working for their dad, either in his industrial landscape maintenance **Grounds Crew** company, in the market, or its **Marlins' Café** that son Paul helped open in 2014.



Nelson's Market in 1984



Jon Ostby, working at Nelson's Market, 1984, bought the store from Ethel Nelson.

Jon met his new wife, Anne, at Nelson's. Together they kept the "mom and pop" store alive for their beloved York neighborhood, hosting holiday caroling parties, annual community clean-ups, and serving free ice-cream cones to kids on the last day of school. Nelson's Market was a safe place for all to come—to call Mom if she forgot to pick you up after school, to count out your pennies for Jon when you bought candy, to drop in years later to show off your own kids, and to talk.

Second only to Jon's love of family and community was his love of baseball. He studied baseball, played baseball, talked baseball, umpired games, and coached many kids' teams. He was a second father to youngsters and college-aged neighbors and never met a stranger. He was a brother to all.

Jon is survived not only by Anne, his sons Jay and Paul, and several family members but also, perhaps most notably, by Nelson's Market, "a stationary float in the parade of life." He loved this place with all his heart.

A celebration of Jon's life will be held Sunday, March 19, from 2 to 4 pm at the **Bellingham Cruise Terminal**, 355 Harris Street, in Fairhaven.



Nelson's today

full obituary: <https://www.sigsfuneralservices.com/obituaries/jon-ostby>

February						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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March						
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April						
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

Calendar of York Events

Valentine's Day
Tuesday, February 14

Mayor's Neighborhood Advisory Commission (MNAC) Meeting
Wednesday, February 15, 6:30pm
via Zoom—see www.cob.org for access info

Presidents' Day
Monday, February 20

York General Membership Meeting
Wednesday, February 22, 6:30pm
Norway Hall — 1419 North Forest Street

MNAC Meeting
Wednesday, March 15, 6:30pm
via Zoom—see www.cob.org for access info

Celebration of the Life of Jon Ostby
Sunday, March 19, 2pm to 4pm
Bellingham Cruise Terminal, Fairhaven
355 Harris Avenue

York Board Meeting
Wednesday, March 22, 6:30pm
Norway Hall — 1419 North Forest Street

Spring Break Free Ice-Cream Cones for York Schoolkids
Friday, March 31
Nelson's Market—514 Potter Street

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

York Board Meeting
Wednesday, April 26, 6:30pm
Norway Hall — 1419 North Forest Street

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