



# Queen Anne Cobblestone

The Newsletter of the Queen Anne Historical Society

January 2013

## Membership Meeting "Stairs of Our Neighborhood"

January 24th, 2013 - 7:00pm 2555 8th Avenue West

Continuing our theme of parks and public spaces, the Queen Anne Historical Society is pleased welcome Cathy and Jake Jaramillo, authors of the new pocket guide, "Seattle Stairway Walks: An Up-and-Down Guide to City Neighborhoods."

They will speak about climbing the many stairways of Queen Anne and nearby neighborhoods. They were recently featured in the Seattle Times.

Light refreshments will be provided.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Cathy & Jake Jaramillo -  
Courtesy of the Seattle Times

## 2013 Park & Garden Tour

Your help is needed to organize and contribute to a planned walking tour of private and public gardens in Queen Anne, tentatively schedule Saturday, May 18th (a week before our annual meeting on May 23rd). Let us know by contacting **Aaron Luoma** - [luom1670@yahoo](mailto:luom1670@yahoo) or by phone 206.931.6105 if you're interested in helping out. The gardens don't have to be historic

in the traditional sense, only good stories about them!

We'll be providing details in upcoming issues of the Cobblestone. The tour will be walkable, will feature historic and contemporary gardens and parks along with the stories that add to their character.



Parsons Gardens - Courtesy of City of Seattle

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history news and more!



## 2013 Membership Renewals

Remember to renew your membership with the QAHS for 2013. Dues are as follows:

Individual – \$20

Family – \$25

Senior (over 65) – \$8

Patron – \$100

Student (18–21) – Free. Sign up by mailing us a copy of your current student ID or show it to us at any event.)

You can mail your dues membership dues to:

Queen Anne Historical Society  
P O Box 19432  
Seattle, WA 98109

or pay by Paypal on our website.

# Queen Anne Historical Society

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## Stairs from a Toddler's Perspective

By Aaron Luoma

There is nothing more enjoyable right now than for my 17 month old son to climb stairs in our neighborhood. For better (pride), or worse (bruises), he goes up and down each step as careful as one can when they are only 30" tall with a stride of about 6". He likes to stop at everyone's front porch, stoop, and particularly is excited when we come across one of Queen Anne's public stairways.



*Comstock Grand Dame Staircase -  
Courtesy of Kiminoa*

As if it were a path to the heavens, my son eagerly tackles the long stretches of stairs more enthusiastically than most of us would admit. During our walks, we've seen you on those last few steps coming up Galer, huffy and puffing, bent over and straddling the hand rail. We've also seen the couples secretly stealing a quiet moment on the Comstock Grand Dame, the dog walkers, the joggers, and nosey neighbors peaking around the laurel hedges into backyards.

Just one last stair....that is what a lot of us are thinking when we journey about our

neighborhood on foot and encounter one of our many public stairways. Our stairs can be a part of forgotten public spaces, lined with encroaching private homes and their gardens. However, I think we've lost some of the beauty of our stairs that few other neighborhoods are privileged with.

Like a Northwest Italian Hill town, our Queen Anne is draped with public stairs that snake their way around backyards and around overgrown evergreen hedges. The Queen Anne neighborhood is a living organism and our public stairways act like the stretchy ligaments holding up and connecting our roads and homes. What would we do without them?

Many of our stairs were constructed in the 1930s by the Public Works Administration (PWA). Besides being historic infrastructure, they offer shortcuts, views, and support the walkability of our neighborhood. According to WalkScore.com Seattle is the 6th most walkable large city in the US, with different parts of Queen Anne scored accordingly, based largely on topography. It states that "most errands can be accomplished on foot in Seattle," and this can only be accomplished in Queen Anne, due to our networks of stairs. I don't think any of us would want to switchback their way up



*Galer staircase to Queen Anne Avenue -  
Courtesy of Rob Ketcherside*

to Queen Anne Drive for a beverage or errand.

Whether you're training for summiting a local mountain, or just wanting to get from Point A to Point B, the stairs of Queen Anne provide many opportunities for exploration and discovery. Perhaps we shouldn't see our stairs as obstacles too daunting to tackle, but pieces of the journey where wisdom and insight can be gained along them.

We hope to see you on the stairs of Queen Anne!

<http://www.walkscore.com/WA/Seattle>  
Access on January 15, 2013



*Group on an October stairway tour adjacent to the Wilcox Walls -  
Courtesy of Queen Anne View*

## President's Letter

By Michael Herschensohn

Dear Friends,

As we embark on a new year and look back on 2012, the society's board is pleased. We have sustained membership levels, improved our financial position slightly, successfully solicited our first ever government grant and refocused our public meetings and writings by selecting an annual theme for each year. As we move forward into 2013, I expect continued success.

The oral history project funded by a grant from 4Culture has digitized over 100 of the tapes in our collection. Some of the transcriptions appear on our website and soon all of the recording logs will be available there ([www.qahistory.org/oral-histories](http://www.qahistory.org/oral-histories)). I invite you to discover this trove of raw local history at your leisure. We plan to transcribe additional histories and add to those that can now be searched on our site. We also invite you to come down (by appointment with [archivist@qahistory.org](mailto:archivist@qahistory.org)) to our offices, generously provided by the Bayview Retirement Community, and listen to the historic voices and get a feel for mid-century Queen Anne.

I continue to be very proud of our Landmarks Committee headed by Leanne Olson. Behind the scenes, Leanne assertively protects our neighborhood landmarks and strives to make sure that undesignated treasures meriting protection get their due.

This week the Queen Anne News published an article by Jan Hadley and me on the Kiehl family and their home at 521 W. Galer. The article continues a string of publications including a super story about Kinnear Park by board member Holly Smith.

Holly's work fell right in with the theme of Queen Anne Parks that is the focus of this year's meetings and some of our writing. Kim Turner's musings in the Cobblestone echo the theme. His last musing revealed the secrets of Bye Kracke Park on the east side of the hill. His thoughts turn in this issue to David Rodgers Park on the hill's north slope and to the sale of a swath of what many thought was park land to Aegis for another senior living center. This month's meeting on January 24 is about the Public Stairways of Queen Anne and the new book Jake and Cathy Jamarillo have written about them. On March 29, Thatcher Bailey, the head of the Seattle Parks Foundation, will speak about Queen Anne Parks, past, present and future. And finally in May, we hope to have a talk by Debi about Folkpark's efforts to bring Kinnear Park up to snuff.

Finally, I invite you to send me ideas for our next theme. We've thought about Uptown (also known as Lower Queen Anne) and the churches of Queen Anne as possibilities. I'd love to see a series of meetings and publications about post-WW II changes to our building stock, but many of you probably have great ideas. Please share them with me at [mh982501@gmail.org](mailto:mh982501@gmail.org). I can wait to see your suggestions.

## Queen Anne Stair Map

If you're interested about the stairs of our neighborhood then you must pick up the "Map of the (Oft) Pedestrian Public Stairs of Queen Anne Hill" by local architect Thomas Horton on our website or at Charley & May on Queen Anne Drive.

### Queen Anne Historical Society Board & Officers 2012-2013

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“KINNEAR HOME”

## Kim's Musings

By Kim Turner

### David Rodgers Park

One of the more enjoyable small parks on Queen Anne Hill is located on part of Nils Peterson's original claim, with its main entrance at 2800 First Avenue West. It covers eight and one-half acres (some sources say 9.2 acres) and includes the "Queen Anne Bowl" an area where either football or soccer can be played. Purchased by B.F. Day from Peterson, it was a gift to the city in 1883, although the city did not do anything with it until 1908.

The "meadow" at the top of the park is a fine place for picnics. The park itself runs in terraces down the north side of Queen Anne Hill, from First Avenue West to Third Avenue West and from West Raye Street down the hill to Florentia Street. Seattle Pacific University uses the "playcourts" at the lower end of the park,

to the west and behind the former North Queen Anne Elementary School. The next terrace uphill is the Queen Anne Bowl, where many games were practiced and played in the distant past. The level south of the Bowl contains the tennis courts, and is often in use.

The first comfort station was built in 1920, but was replaced in 1948 with the brick building which is still in use today. The park got its name from David Rodgers (1864-1923) who emigrated from Ireland in 1885, working as a shipbuilder from the Great Lakes to San Francisco and eventually coming to the Bremerton Navy Yard in 1889 as master shipfitter. Later he became superintendent of the Moran shipyard in Seattle and the Wallace shipyard in Vancouver, B.C. From there he worked at Barnett, B.C., where he assembled five Montreal-built submarines for Russia. He returned to Seattle to build the first two steel cargo vessels at Port

Blakeley, owned and operated by the Port Blakeley Mill Co. With the outbreak of World War I the U.S. government requisitioned freighters, including the "David Rodgers," built for Norway but renamed "West Lake" by the government in 1918. Skinner & Eddy honored Rodgers in 1919 by contributing \$2000 to the Park Department to have a park in Seattle named for Rodgers. The former "Evergreen Park" was renamed in his honor. The original name was given due to the large stand of evergreen trees in the second tier of the park from the top of the hill. Of David Rodgers it was said, "(he had) done more than anyone else in placing the name of Seattle in the foremost rank of the shipbuilding industry." The park remains today as a delightful place to share with those who live and work in the neighborhood. Our society's board held at least two picnics there during the past decade.