



Bellingham  
At Home

## Your Village Voice – November 2018

*In everyone's life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit. – Albert Schweitzer*

### ***Moving Beyond Proximity to Become Loving Communities*** **A Report from the 10th Annual National Village Gathering**

*By Colleen Harper*



The 10th Annual National Village Gathering in San Diego was an opportunity to learn from village leaders from across the country, attend workshops on program development, and engage in one-on-one and small group discussions about the challenges and rewards of village leadership. Bellingham At Home sent three representatives: Lynn DeFehr, a recent addition to the leadership council; Judy Perry, recently retired medical social worker and active volunteer with the BAH Health Partners program; and me.

Paul Ramsey, V.P. of the National Village to Village board, kicked off the three-day conference with a keynote speech describing the goals of villages nationwide: "We believe that we can shift the social consciousness around what it means to age.... We hold the optimistic belief that good neighbors can move beyond proximity to become loving communities."

The clear message from national village leaders was that we are at the forefront of a paradigm shift, at a time when average life expectancies are rising and along with them the median age of Americans. Every eight seconds from now until 2030, another American will turn 65. By 2030, 24% of the population will be 65 or older, compared with just 9% of the population in 1960. This new reality demands a new and innovative way of thinking about aging.

Kate Hoepke, Executive Director of the San Francisco Village, received a standing ovation for her outstanding talk describing the recently formed coalition of California Villages. Among her many insightful comments: "So many of us are living an outdated story, one in which we are not old. Why do I have this internalized bias against my own future self? How can we fall in love with our future selves? Will that transform ageism?"

Saying she believes in the "transformational power of community to shape our identities and our actions," Hoepke continued: "We must embrace who we are now, and have the courage and the vulnerability to tell who we are, because together we are creating what is next in our lives."

I participated in discussions on creating a sustainable 'mature' village, recruiting and motivating leaders within the organization, and developing strategic community partnerships. I also spoke with several other village leaders from Washington about the possibility of forming a regional coalition to support Village growth across the state. There is momentum behind the idea and we are hoping to have a digital "gathering" before the end of 2018, to discuss how we

can support each other and develop strategies for communicating the goals of the village movement to the broader community.

As village members and volunteers, we are at the leading edge of disrupting assumptions about aging. Working together we can create dynamic, resilient, age-friendly communities that support the frailest among us while empowering individuals to live healthy, fulfilling lives through community involvement and volunteerism.

### BAH Holds Public Info Sessions in November

*Toward our goal of 25 new members by the end of the year, BAH will host two public information sessions in November. "Intro to Bellingham At Home: discover membership and volunteer opportunities" will be offered on **November 7** from 2:00-3:30 p.m. and again on **November 13** from 5:30-7:00 p.m., Rm 16.*

*If you have friends, family members, or neighbors who might appreciate what we have to offer, please encourage them to come to one of these outreach meetings.  
If someone needs a ride, just let us know and we'll pick them up!*

\* \* \* \* \*

### November 6 is *YOUR* Day...

To make your voice heard  
To safeguard your rights as a citizen  
To take responsibility for the world around you  
To honor the people who died for our democracy  
To balance out those who don't agree with you  
To ensure fair representation  
To be able to complain later on  
To set a good example  
To build community

Don't Throw It Away...

**V O T E**

### Help Us Grow Our List of Recommended Service Providers

One of the nice things about being a BAH member is that you always call the office and ask for referrals to service providers that other members have recommended. Whether plumbers, hairdressers, landscapers, dermatologists... if you have someone you trust to do a job right, please call in yourself and give us their contact information.

And if you use one of the people on the list, please remember to tell them you got their name from Bellingham At Home.

## Drop by the Death Café for Lively Discussions—and Cake

Here's what the Death Café of Whatcom County isn't: It's not a grief support group, it's not group therapy, it's not a planning process. Instead, it's a monthly group-directed discussion of death with no agenda, no theme, no fees (although donations are accepted), and no need to register; just show up and bring an open mind.



Source: Deathcafe.com

"Where our culture often denies the reality and importance of death," said Sandy Stork, one of the hosts, "we embrace, with respect and often humor, the notion that contemplating death, and sharing with others our feelings and thoughts about our end of life, can enrich our lives. This is a surprisingly fun place to set aside taboos and explore."

The Death Café of Whatcom County is one of 7,057 such cafes in 60 countries, all based on a model that was developed in 2011 by John Underwood in his house in Hackney, East London. Each group is led by a volunteer facilitator and includes people of all ages and walks of life. This one meets from 6:30-8:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of every month (except December) at the Moles Community Life Center, 2465 Lakeway,

Bellingham. For more information, you can email Sandy at [sandystork@gmail.com](mailto:sandystork@gmail.com).

There's also lots of interesting material to read at <https://deathcafe.com>.

## Make a "Facts of Life" Book

*By Kate Birr*

Need a project? Here's one that will take a bit of effort on your part but could be a real gift for your loved ones or for someone who's trying to help when you're laid up and can't take care of your own affairs. We're talking about organizing your important papers and related information into a single, comprehensive collection, with everything in one place. Having your "facts" together can make it easier for someone to step in and take over if the need arises. It's also a boon for your partner or your estate executor in the event of your death.

Start with the basics:

- Current medications and pharmacies
- Doctors (names and phone numbers)
- Insurance policy numbers and location: (Medicare, supplemental health, life, auto, etc.)
- Health Care Power of Attorney
- Advance Directive / Living Will
- Will
- Trust documents
- Mortgage documents
- Birth and marriage certificates
- Safety deposit box (location, codes)
- Bank accounts
- Credit card accounts
- Retirement accounts
- Social Security account
- Stocks, bonds, annuities
- Broker, financial advisor (names and phone numbers)
- Attorney (name and phone number)
- Accountant, tax advisor
- Email account
- Computer accounts and passwords

We could go on, but you get the idea. We'd like your suggestions for other items that make up a person's "facts of life." We'll add them as they come in and keep the list on our website.

You needn't include the important papers themselves, but provide account numbers and directions as to where the originals can be found. Also, things change. We recommend updating the book at least annually and whenever information changes.

You can store everything in a 3-ring binder. If you prefer to use a computer, you can put information in a document file and store it on your hard drive, on a memory stick, or in the cloud; just be sure there's more than one copy and that they're all protected.

And maybe the most important thing: Let the appropriate people know that you're doing this and where you're putting your "book"—and LABEL IT CLEARLY.

Thanks to Gretchen Rubin for the idea, which comes from her September 5 podcast (<https://gretchenrubin.com/podcast-episode/185-facts-of-life>).

## The Power of Music to Move People with Dementia

By Lauren Phillips

If you saw the documentary "Alive Inside" back in 2012, you will not have forgotten the story and images of Henry moving in time with the music playing through headphones, talking about seeing big bands in his youth, and singing along with Cab Calloway. An Alzheimer's patient in a nursing home in Brooklyn, Henry was transformed by the music he loved from a silent, motionless man to one enjoying the moment and engaging with those around him. ("Alive Inside" is available on Amazon, YouTube, and from the Bellingham Library.)

The movie features the work of Dan Cohen, a social worker who runs a nonprofit called Music & Memory, which trains care professionals how to set up personalized music playlists, delivered on iPods, for those in their care. Thanks to this program, thousands of people with dementia in care facilities throughout the country have undergone the same transformation as Henry, moved by familiar melody and rhythm out of their depression and isolation.



"The parts of the brain that respond to music are very close to the parts of the brain concerned with memory, emotion, and mood," according to the late neurologist Oliver Sacks, who was quoted in an article in *Social Work Today* in 2013. This is why people who have lost their story, their past, "can regain a sense of identity [through music] at least for a while."

Research shows that Music & Memory's approach delivers consistent results: participants are happier and more social, and their relationships with staff and family deepen. There is growing evidence that a personalized music program gives professionals one more tool in their effort to reduce reliance on anti-psychotic medications.

There are 75 care organizations that have been certified by Music & Memory as providers of their personalized music program. One, The Bellingham at Orchard, is in Bellingham. But family members and friends of people with dementia can capitalize on this understanding on their own. You'll find a free

resource guide to doing this on the organization's website (<https://musicandmemory.org/get-involved/for-elder-caregivers/>). All you need is an iPod or other digital device, a set of headphones, and a playlist of the person's favorite tunes. Maybe Cab Calloway?

*The power of music to enliven older people is not news to BAH member Burl Harmon, who regularly entertains people in area nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and other venues with the music they love, often old standards. Here he plays for residents at Solstice at Bellingham.*



## Mark Your Calendars for BAH's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Holiday Party

This year's celebration will be held on **Wednesday, December 5, 5:30 p.m.** in the Bellwether Hotel Admiral room. Cost will be \$30 per person for dinner; the good company and warm spirits (of all kinds) are free! Call the office to reserve your space and tell us which entrée you prefer. Selections are listed in the calendar and will be included in a BAH e-blast.



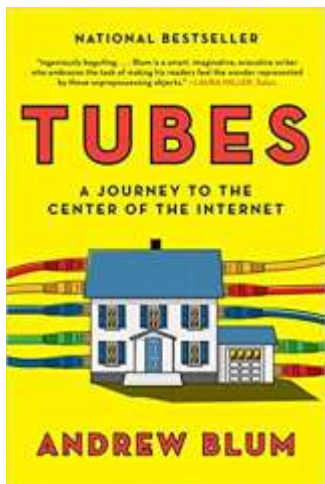
## Book Report

### **Tubes: A Journey to the Center of the Internet**

*By Marilyn Burlingame*

If you think of the Internet, as I do, as a shapeless, placeless, magical blob, then be prepared to find amazement and delight in *Tubes* by Andrew Blum.

The book begins: "On a bitterly cold day a few winters ago, the Internet stopped working. Not the whole Internet, only the section that resides in a dusty clump beside my living room couch." When the repairman comes, he shows Blum where a squirrel has partially chewed through the outside cable. Suddenly, Blum is aware of the pure physicality of this communication magic.



If you asked me to draw a map of the Internet, it would look like those antique maps of the early explorers, with "Here be dragons" all along the edges, representing the unknown and unimaginable. Blum's book is a travelogue of his trip among the dragons, from the dusty clump in his living room to cables filling rooms and emerging from the sea. He shares his sense of wonder as he explores the geography of the Internet, and, just as in the best travelogues, introduces us to the people who live and work in that geography.

The Internet is really a "network of networks," more than 40,000 of them, with both physical and social connections: wires and relationships. As Blum explains, "The networks of the Internet would be global, but the infrastructure would always be local."

We travel with Blum to many of these localities, visiting Ashburn in Virginia, Frankfurt in Germany, and Amsterdam, always following the distinct physical path of the Internet. He describes "rivers of cable" and batteries stacked like "drawers in a morgue." He traces what

he calls "the ultimate totems of our physical connections," the undersea cables that make the Internet global. And finally, he takes us on a visit to our own backyard, The Dalles and Prineville, Oregon, and Quincy, Washington, where huge amounts of data are stored for Google, Facebook, and Microsoft.

"I no longer saw the network as an amorphous blob, but as specific paths overlaid on the more familiar geography of the earth."

Along with the places, we meet the people of the Internet, like Leonard Kleinrock of UCLA, where the Internet (as ARPANET) began; and Steve Feldman, now of the North American Network Operations Group, who, in the 90s, ran the global crossroads "improbably located in the parking garage of an office building in a suburb of Washington, DC." Eric Troyer gives him a personal tour of the Equinix complex in Ashburn, VA. He meets Rui Carrilho, the Tata station manager in Portugal; Jol Paling in Penzance; and Eddie Diez, who spends his nights underneath Manhattan streets.

"These guys aren't Steve Jobs or Mark Zuckerberg. They didn't invent anything, reshape any industries, or make a whole lot of money. They worked inside the global network and make it work. But they lived locally, as most of us do."

By the time Blum returns to his home in Brooklyn, to his own clump of the Internet (and the squirrel), he has concluded that "the Internet wasn't a physical world or a virtual world, but a human world."

## **Festival of Trees Gala & Auction Promises Fun for All (and Trees for Winners)**

Are your Christmas trees feeling a little been-there-done-that? Do you linger wistfully over glossy pictures of dazzling trees in magazines? Then we have the holiday event for you! The annual Festival of Trees Gala & Auction, held in the Leopold's Crystal Ballroom on Saturday, December 1st, at 5:30 p.m., is your opportunity to admire and bid on beautiful trees decorated by local groups. Let's see, who won last year's Best Tree award? Oh yes, it was Bellingham At Home!

An always popular community event, the two-day, holiday-themed benefit has found a new non-profit home with the Bellingham Senior Activity Center, which uses all proceeds to support active aging. Everyone is welcome to tour the trees for free on Friday, November 30th, 11 am-7 p.m. and Saturday, December 1st, 10 am-12 noon.

In addition to the live tree auction, the main event features a silent auction, raffles, and a dessert dash. (If you're the high bidder on a tree, friendly boy scouts will deliver it right to your door!) Tickets, available at BSAC, are \$50 and include dinner and drinks. You can also purchase tickets online at [BellinghamFestivalOfTrees.bpt.me/Facebook/BellinghamFestivalOfTrees](http://BellinghamFestivalOfTrees.bpt.me/Facebook/BellinghamFestivalOfTrees). For more information email [msimon@wccoa.org](mailto:msimon@wccoa.org) or call 360-733-4030.



**Welcome, Welcome to our New Members!**



Say hello to our newest Bellingham At Home members:

Vickie Knechtel

Donna Lane

Angela Langer

## Many Happy Returns of the Day

Here's a shout-out to members  
celebrating a birthday in  
October and November:



Janet Simpson  
Jean Gross  
Joseph Hashmall  
Elka Fink  
Angela Mercy  
Allen Johnson  
Linda Knudsen McAusland  
Barb Evans  
Joan Halldorson  
Nick Waslenko  
Sue Moyer  
Ingeborg Paulus  
Ruth Stafford

## Only Two Months Left to Take Us up on This Joint Membership Offer

For a limited time only, give the gift of community and join BAH together with a friend...

Become a full member of Bellingham At Home and receive a FREE Social Membership (a \$225 value) for a friend or family member. While not eligible for volunteer assistance, social members are invited to participate in all BAH social activities and interest groups, plus they receive our monthly newsletter, Your Village Voice, and all e-blasts.

Do you have an elderly parent or neighbor who's not yet ready to join BAH on their own? This is a great way to get them involved and let them discover what the organization is all about!

This special offer is good through the end of 2018.

### Bellingham At Home Contact Information

Location: Bellingham Senior Activity Center, Room 14, 315 Halleck Street, Bellingham, WA 98225

Phone: 360 746-3462 E-mail: [info@bellinghamathome.org](mailto:info@bellinghamathome.org)

Website: <http://BellinghamAtHome.org>

Bellingham At Home is a program of the Whatcom Council on Aging, which is a 501(c)(3) organization,  
and a member of the Village to Village Network.