



Bellingham  
At Home

## Your Village Voice – January 2019

*Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right.*

*— Oprah Winfrey*

### ***You Asked, We Answered***

#### **New “Life Happens” Benefit for Social Members for the New Year**

There you are, going along happily, minding your own business—healthy as a horse, thank you very much—and bam, you break your ankle. Wait, that’s too depressing. You sprain your ankle. Not much you can do about it except rest, right? But try explaining this to Muffin, who still needs to be walked. Not to mention the groceries that still need to be purchased and the driveway that needs to be shoveled.

Life happens. We get it. That’s why we’re rolling out a new benefit for BAH social members who live in the Bellingham Service area and experience an injury, illness, or any other situation that requires them to hit pause temporarily: four consecutive weeks of access to the same volunteer assistance available to full members. By the way, that “situation”? There’s no need to explain it. You just call the office and say that you’d like to use your Life Happens benefit.

This new feature recognizes that we all need help sometimes and that, as a member of Bellingham At Home, you are entitled to that help. This makes perfect sense if you think of becoming a social member as joining not a club but a community. It’s kind of like an insurance policy: You commit to helping grow and sustain a vibrant, meaningful organization and that organization is going to be there for you when it counts.

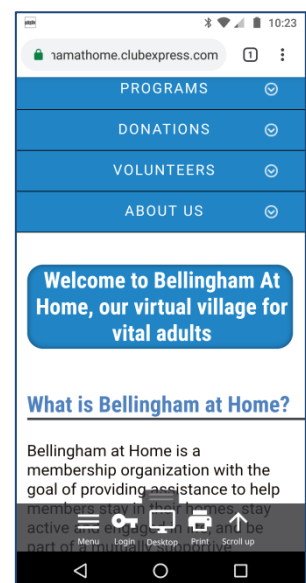
For people who live in the BAH service area, social membership may well be the first step toward full membership as your life circumstances and needs shift, and that’s wonderful. But in the meantime? We’ve got your back.

### **Get a Look at Our Redesigned Website!**



← On your  
computer...

...or on your  
mobile phone →



So appealing, so well-organized, so concise—you're going to love it! We've added pictures, updated content, increased font sizes, and moved the menu to the top of the page. Visitors now have a clear sense of what BAH is and how to get more information right away; members can easily tap into any BAH feature they want to access.

Huge thanks to Colleen for her creativity and efficiency in getting this done and to her volunteer assistant Conny.

## **Hop on Our Expanding Service Provider List**

Thanks to all of you who have called the office with recommendations of outstanding commercial service providers. But we're never satisfied! Send in more, please!

Also, let us know if you've had a great experience you'd like to share with others; we'll run brief write-ups in the newsletter as we get them.

## ***Mark Your Calendar***

### **What's Next? Housing Options as We Age**

Tap into a wealth of information on housing options for seniors in Whatcom County at this free BSAC event on February 20, 2-6 pm, at the Senior Center. You'll find more than 20 housing resource representatives from independent living, in-home care, alternative choices, assisted living, retirement communities, and rehabilitation care. Bring your questions and get them answered right on the spot.

There will also be two featured speakers:

Shelly Zylstram, aging services program specialist, Northwest Regional Council  
Housing Options as We Age  
2 pm

Katharine Danner, executive director, Ashland At Home  
Aging in Place  
4:30 pm

Note: If you came to this event in 2014, you probably heard Katharine Danner, who inspired our own village movement.

## **Cutting Hours to Grow Everything Else**

*By Colleen Harper*  
*Program Manager*

I want to see Bellingham At Home grow into a resilient, sustainable organization, and I am committed to working with our outstanding team of volunteers to make that happen. In November, I recommended to the Leadership Council that my position be reduced to part time for 2019. This change will significantly decrease our 2019 expenditures, making it easier for BAH to grow, reach new members while continuing to support current members, and expand our social calendar.

It's always a great time to volunteer with BAH but never more so than right now: Less Program Manager time in the office will mean more reliance on volunteer help with day-to-day tasks, organizational planning, and community outreach. Please email [info@bellinghamathome.org](mailto:info@bellinghamathome.org) or call the office to let us know if you can help and what your interests are. Together we can—and will—keep on growing: meeting members' requests for assistance and connecting our community through events and activities.

You'll find me in the office from 10am-2pm Monday through Friday. But the office will be open from 9am-4pm, as always, thanks to our great group of office volunteers; we now have 14 volunteers sharing the responsibility of answering phones, scheduling requests, and answering questions about our program.

Happy New Year!

## Event Ambassadors: BAH Events Start with Members

*By Kate Birr*

Scenario: There's a big attraction coming to the Mt. Baker Theater. You want to go, but not alone. So you invite Bellingham At Home members to join you. As an Event Ambassador, you line up the details (see form below) and ask the BAH office to communicate an invitation in an e-blast. The office takes calls from interested members and compiles a list for you. If follow-up is needed (purchasing a block of seats for example), you can do it, and the office can collect for you from members who want to go. You meet your group at the event venue and enjoy the entertainment together. If you have agreed to do more (go out afterwards for example), you oversee moving the group to the agreed location. And just like that, you've made an event happen!

BELLINGHAM AT HOME		
Ambassador Event Program		
Plan and attend your own community outing with an open invitation for Bellingham At Home members to join. Confirm dates, times, cost, and other details and communicate to the Program Manager. The office will collect RSVP's through email and phone and will arrange rides for members who need transportation. Ambassador will follow up with attendees in the days before the planned event to communicate specifics. Ambassador will arrive several minutes early to event and use the RSVP list to ensure everyone arrives. Ambassador will also ensure that members with B@H provided transportation meet with their volunteer drivers for the return trip home.		
Please complete the form below. You can print it and bring to the BAH office or save it and attach to an email to <a href="mailto:bellinghamathome@gmail.com">bellinghamathome@gmail.com</a> .		
Event organized by (member name): _____		
Event Name: _____		
Description:		
_____		
_____		
Location: _____		
Date & time: _____		
Cost (if any): _____		
Meeting arrangements:		
_____		
_____		
Contact information: _____		
Deadline to sign up: _____		
Other details:		
_____		
_____		

This event form is available on the BAH website, or you can download one at <https://bellinghamathome.clubexpress.com/docs.ashx?id=454179> . When you want to organize an event, fill out the form, print it and bring it to the BAH office, or save it and attach to an email to [info@bellinghamathome.org](mailto:info@bellinghamathome.org).



We've already had a couple of successful ambassador events: a private docent tour of the Endangered Species exhibit at the Whatcom Museum in October, and a trip to see the movie "They Shall Not Grow Old," a gripping documentary about WWI using original footage that was brought to life by director Peter Jackson.

Is there an event you don't want to miss? Let's do it together!

Left: BAH members listen as Whatcom Museum docent Martie Lopez provides background about an item in the Endangered Species exhibit.


## Must-Have Resource You May or May Not Be Fit. But Your Home Absolutely Should Be

AARP's *HomeFit Guide* is a terrific resource for people hoping to stay in their own homes even when their age and

physical abilities head off in different directions—people like us. Available at no cost online, the 28-page guide is both an educational resource and a personalized tool kit and it's stuffed with suggestions, lessons, and practical solutions for every room in your house.

Some examples: Install address numbers outside that can be easily seen by emergency responders from the street... Replace round doorknobs with easier-to-use lever-style door handles... Set the hot water heater to 120 or below to reduce energy costs and prevent scalding.

It tells you which things may be DIY and which require skilled expertise—and how to find and hire that expertise. (A good place to start is to call the BAH office and ask for member-recommended contractors.) There are to-do lists, to-buy lists, and home fitness lists for specific needs. There's a questionnaire upfront that takes you room by room through your house to identify what you need. (Are your staircases well lighted? Yes? But are the switches that control the stairway light fixtures located at both the top and bottom of the stairs?)



### My Room-by-Room HomeFit List

Check the box next to the improvements you need or want to make.

<p><b>ENTRANCES AND EXITS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Create a no-step entry into the home</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install a no-step, no-trip threshold</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Add handrails to both sides of all steps</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install lever-style door handles</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install deadbolt locks and/or slide latches or chain locks on exterior doors</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install a security peephole or viewing panel on the exterior door</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install a camera or other electronic system for seeing who's at the door</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Put a bench near the exterior door for placing packages while locking or unlocking the door</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install sensors on outdoor light fixtures to automatically turn lights on at dusk and off at dawn and/or when motion is detected</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Add easy-to-see address numbers that are visible from the street</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Repair holes, loose bricks or uneven pavement on exterior walkways</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clear paths so they're free of leaves, moss, mold or other slipping hazards</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Remove scatter or throw rugs from the front stoop and inside the foyer</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Remove clutter from hallways</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Widen doorways to at least 36" wide by replacing traditional door hinges with swing-away or swing-clear hinges</li> </ul> <p><b>STEPS AND STAIRWAYS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Repair or renovate stairways that are weak, have open backs, raised nail heads, missing treads, loose steps, etc.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cover steps with a tightly placed, woven low-pile carpet with thin padding</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Apply nonslip adhesive strips to uncarpeted steps</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install handrails on both sides of all staircases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install a light fixture to illuminate the entire staircase, and place a light switch at the top and bottom of the stairs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Plug automatic night-lights into outlets near steps and staircases</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clear the stairs of clutter</li> </ul> <p><b>KITCHEN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install task lighting for the sink, stove and other work areas</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Replace knobs on cabinets and drawers with easy-to-grasp D-shaped handles</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Purchase a stove or cooktop with controls near the front of the device</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Place a lightweight, ABC-rated fire extinguisher in an easy-to-reach location</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Purchase a step stool that has nonslip steps and a grip handle</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install adjustable, pull-down or similar shelving for safe access to upper cabinets</li> </ul> <p><b>BATHROOM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install pull-out cabinetry shelves beneath counters and place Lazy Susans in corner cabinets</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install a lever-, touch- or sensor-style kitchen faucet (ideally one that's pressure-balanced, temperature-regulated and kept at or below 120°F)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Establish a kitchen surface for working while seated</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install easy-to-use lever-, touch- or sensor-faucets for the sink, bathtub and shower</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install a nonskid mat or nonslip strips in the bathtub and/or shower</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use rubber-backed rugs (or mats secured with double-sided rug tape or rubber carpet mesh) on the bathroom floor</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install attractive grab bars in the bathtub, shower and adjacent to the toilet</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install a comfort-height toilet (or a toilet seat riser)</li> </ul>
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This worksheet is a supplement to the AARP HomeFit Guide. For more information visit [www.AARP.org/HomeFit](http://www.AARP.org/HomeFit).



Get your copy of this valuable resource at <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/documents-2015/HomeFit2015/AARP%20HomeFit%20Guide%202015.pdf>.

## Bellingham's Got Talent: Polished Entertainment at BAH Holiday Party

Bellingham At Home members, volunteers and guests sat back after dinner and enjoyed a top-notch holiday show with acapella singing and dancing by Bellingham High School's award-winning Showstoppers.

Photos don't do justice to the Showstoppers' talent. You had to be there!



## Many Happy Returns of the Day

Here's a shout-out to our members celebrating a birthday in January:

**Steve Morris**

**Marguerite Johnson**

**Judith Koontz**



## Welcome, Welcome to our New Members!



Please say hello to our newest Bellingham At Home members:

**Judy Perry**

**Brenda Karasik**

### Volunteers:

#### *Help Wanted*

**Leadership Council Scribe** -- attend monthly Leadership Council meetings and take clear, precise notes. Volunteer can use the BAH laptop or take handwritten notes and compose in a Word Document later. 3-5pm the third Wednesday of the month.

#### *O Come Let Us Appreciate You*

Our next Volunteer Appreciation event is on Wednesday, February 13, from 12:30-2:30 in Room 16, featuring refreshments, sharing of volunteer adventures and ideas, immoderate laughter, and a modicum of gossip. Plan now to join us and find out what's in, what's out, what's hot, what's not, and what may be coming 'round the bend.

## BAH Writers' Group Settling In

*By Sandy Stanton*

Since its first meeting in August, the Writers' Group has changed venues, times, members, and activities several times. What hasn't changed are its persistence—with a meeting every week except the day after Thanksgiving—and our enjoyment, of our writing activities and of sharing our work with each other. Two-hour meetings allow us to write, read, and talk at leisure—something you can only do with a small group.

Our key activity is writing a piece at home to read aloud at the meeting. While topics are suggested, we're free to write whatever we want—flexibility is key to the group's nature. We don't critique—just listen, learn, and have fun. Our other activity is something we call 'spontaneous scribbling': sitting together at the table, each writing a short story (very short—just five minutes); sometimes, we must include a series of words provided by a member or take inspiration from an assortment of objects placed on the table. The variety of stories inspired by the same prompts is astonishing! Oh, yes, to nourish such activity, we always have coffee, tea, and yummy stuff brought by members.

If this sounds like something you'd be interested in, please call the BAH office. They will ask our organizer, Jane Pryce, to give you a call regarding possible openings in the future; perhaps we will need two groups to keep things at a workable size. The important thing about the writing group is that it was started by a member for other members. And that's what BAH is all about, after all.

# BAH's Totally Frivolous Memory Sparkler Trivia Quiz #1: The '80s

Joan Dow

1. Which TV evangelist did George H.W. Bush defeat to win the Republican nomination in 1988?
2. Who was the first American woman in space in 1983?
3. What newspaper described the 1980 comedy The Blues Brothers as "filled with positive symbolism and moral references"?
4. What was the minimum wage in 1980?
5. Which of these arrived in the mid-1980s? The McNugget, the computer mouse, DNA fingerprinting

Answers: 1. Pat Robertson, 2. Sally Ride, 3. *L'Osservatore Romano*, the daily newspaper of the Vatican, 4. \$3.10, 5. All of them



## **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.