



Bellingham
At Home

Your Village Voice – February 2019

*How do you spell 'love'? – Piglet
You don't spell it, you feel it. – Pooh
-- A.A. Milne*

Register in Advance

End-of-Life Planning Workshop: Why, How, Now



Too many people in our country, especially seniors, are dying in ways they never would have wanted — connected to machines, in hospital ICUs, or in nursing homes. In large part, this happens because they and their family members or health care agents did not discuss end-of-life planning ahead of time.

Yes, it can be hard to talk about death ahead of time. It may seem unnecessary if you're in good health, unpleasant or even frightening if you're not. But without such conversations, prolonged, medically challenged "futile care" endings can be hard to avoid.

In our current health care system, for many complex reasons, the default tendency is maximum longevity and maximum treatment, no matter what the cost. And the cost is high — financially and to one's quality of life and quality of death. Rather than letting the system decide, people must be empowered to (a) make their own choices about how they die, and (b) talk openly about those choices; better deaths result.

Bellingham At Home will offer a free, two-part workshop to help you prepare to do both those things on February 28 and March 7, facilitated by Nancy Simmers, a member of BAH's Health Partnership Committee. Nancy is certified in this process by both the Respecting Choices and Heartworks groups; for the past three years, she has helped people prepare their Advance Directives forms as a volunteer with the Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement.

Session I on February 28 will feature information, stories, resources, and articles, helping you begin to visualize what you want for your own death, and understand what planning is required to make that happen. By the end of Session II on March 7, you will have everything you need to complete an Advanced Directive as well as suggestions for how to 'have the conversation' with friends, family, and health care providers.

Both Sessions will be held from 1:30-3:30 pm in Room 16, BSAC. Please register ahead of time with the BAH office or at BSAC's front desk.

Department of Corrections

“Housing Options as We Age” is from 10 am-3 pm on the 20th!

In our last issue, we told you that the free BSAC event on housing options for seniors in Whatcom County was from 2-6 pm. Wrong! It's actually from 10 am-3 pm. We also listed two speakers. Wrong again! That is, there will be two speakers but they haven't been finalized yet. Please check the BSAC Bulletin for more information and accept our apologies for any inconvenience.

From Colleen's Desk

Exciting New Volunteer Opportunities

By Colleen Harper, Program Manager

Bellingham At Home is volunteer-powered, and we are always recruiting new volunteers to help with all aspects of the organization. Of course, volunteering is a great way to meet new people, use specific skills and experience, and make a contribution to our community. If you have an idea for how your skills could contribute to BAH, we would love to hear from you! Below are some of the new volunteer roles we are currently looking to fill. If you can see yourself in one of these positions, please call the office at 360-746-3462 or email info@bellinghamathome.org.

Community Service Co-Coordinator

Job Description. Identify service opportunities for Bellingham At Home members and volunteers in the broader Bellingham community. (We currently have one volunteer who would like to find a partner in launching a regular BAH service event.)

Responsibilities. Record and communicate details of the service event. Coordinate with community groups and group leaders to organize BAH involvement. Invite BAH members to join in the event. Attend service events as scheduled. Create or delegate the creation of periodic write-ups of the community service activities events for the BAH newsletter. Coordinators may want to have committee meetings to plan involvement, or simply maintain a contact list of interested parties and communicate with them when events are scheduled.

Event Ambassadors Captain

Job Description. Identify, recruit, and organize event ambassadors for single and ongoing social outings.

Responsibilities. Check in with Event Ambassadors to ensure that scheduled events have the support they need, and follow up afterwards for feedback on how things went.

Traveling Tea Party Givers

Job Description. Bring tea, friends, and conversation to interested members who otherwise struggle to attend social events. We currently have one party giver and ideally will have 2-3 more.

Poster-master

Job Description. Use the Bellingham At Home list of community notice boards to post Bellingham At Home posters for outreach and event committees. Maintain the list and research new places to post.

Community Calendar Researcher

Job Description. Compile and maintain a list of upcoming community events that may be of interest to our members. Can work from home or from a computer in the BAH office.

Responsibilities. Liaise with Event Ambassador Captain to provide suggestions for Event Ambassadors. Provide list to Program Manager to be shared with membership via e-blast.

Annual Picnic 2019 Organizer Team

Job Description. Select date and venue for a summer 2019 Picnic potluck. Organize arrival of food and supplies, set up, take down, and clean up.

Responsibilities. Pick date. Develop budget proposal to be approved, ensure spending remains within approved budget. Coordinate menu items to be purchased by BAH and potluck sign-up list for attendees. Invite entertainment, if desired.

Create postcard invitation to be printed and mailed by office. (Program Manager can help!) Begin meeting in February or March 2019. Assign tasks to team members. Meet monthly to verify progress. Identify where volunteer support will be needed on the day of the event so that we can recruit help as needed.

Report from the LC

By Janet Simpson

The Leadership Council has been working on an update of the Membership Handbook, the first since 2016. The revised document will be available soon. Along the way, we're also updating policies, including Transportation Assistance. The new policy and guidelines include only a few changes from current practice but, we hope, will clarify what BAH can and can't do with regard to rides for our members.

Transportation Assistance

Transportation is a critical piece of living independently, and BAH wants to work with members to meet all reasonable and timely requests. Most members who request transportation do so on an occasional basis—e.g., a ride to the airport shuttle, a doctor's appointment. This is a predictable demand and, given 3 days' notice, we have sufficient volunteers to meet most if not all of these requests.

However, sometimes—after joint surgery say, or an accident—someone has an increased need for transportation. To accommodate this need, BAH will provide a safety net: up to 4 rides per week on a short-term basis (1-3 months), if arranged in advance.



For members who have a long-term need for 3 or more rides per week, we see Bellingham At Home as part of a multiple-faceted solution including the Whatcom Transit Authority, family / friends, and commercial service providers, and we will work with the member to set up a suitable schedule.

- Rides to and from a location are considered as 1 ride if the interval is less than 2 hours.
- Transportation requests need to be made 3 days in advance. Given shorter notice, it is less likely we will be able to meet the request but we will still make the effort.
- Members can request up to 2 rides per week on a regular basis.
- Requests can be made for up to 4 rides per week for no more than 3 months during a period of increased need. The member should notify the office of the extenuating circumstance.

Misuse, excessive use and frequent cancellations will be addressed by the Program Manager.

Membership Fees for Additional Household Members

The fee for each additional household member is increasing, from \$50 to \$100, to cover increased administration and benefit costs.

Membership Drive

Thanks to your help in reaching out to prospects, BAH welcomed seven new members between October and December and an additional three so far in January, putting us on target for our goal of at least seven new members per quarter. Four of the newbies are social members and will have the advantage of the "Life Happens" benefit.

Keep telling your friends about us and consider coming to our outreach events to talk with prospective members—it helps a lot.

Fundraising

Letters requesting financial support were sent out at the end of November to members, volunteers, previous donors, and others on our mailing list. Our wonderful community responded with 17 donations and a total of \$3,625. General donations of \$10,000 over the course of 2018 constituted 25% of our budgeted income. Thank you to all our generous donors!

Year-end Stats

We currently have 90 members.

In 2018, we filled 598 assistance requests. That was 27% more than in 2017.

As of January 1, we have a total of 86 volunteers—including seven new volunteers!

Upcoming Volunteer Trainings

BAH will hold volunteer trainings every month through October in 2019, so whenever you decide to jump in you can be ready and able as well as willing to lend a helping hand within 30 days. Here's the schedule:

- February 13, 3-5 pm, Rm 2
- March 13, 1-3 pm, Rm 9
- April 10, 3-5 pm, Rm 2
- May 8, 1-3 pm, Rm 9
- June 12, 3-5 pm, Rm 2
- July 10, 1-3 pm, Rm 9
- August 14, 3-5 pm, Rm 2
- September 11, 1-3 pm, Rm 9
- October 9, 3-5 pm, Rm 2

My Volunteer Hero

By Lelia Coyne

The Solstice windstorm cycle left me gasping for better days! A BAH volunteer provided one.

December 13 a neighbor's tree fell and blocked my driveway. December 20 I watched a tree drop on the corner of my house as I ate lunch. Power was out for nine hours as I struggled to pack in the dark for a December 21 trip. When I returned, another gale blacked out my internet and telephone service. Branches bombarded my roof, leaving me in the dark again. After one of these blows, I noticed that my oven was no longer functional. Screen Message: *Err - Main Oven Sensor*. The only visions dancing through my head over the holidays were dollar signs.



Maybe it was my deficient cataract surgery or my recent knee replacement, but when the nice lady at the oven repair service listed in the manual asked for the model and serial numbers, it took me 15 minutes to determine they were in tiny illegible letters on the inside of the oven roof. I could not twist myself into a position even to take a cell phone picture.

After another 30 minutes piloting me through “enhanced troubleshooting techniques” over the phone (*I don't suppose you can pull the oven away from the wall? I don't suppose...*), she gave me the number of a local repair person. Wait

time: two weeks. Back to the official repair service, where they gave me an appointment just one week out—although they insisted that, contrary to the nice lady’s assurance, I would need the model and serial numbers.

Enter my BAH volunteer hero: Kevin Parker

"They wouldn't put the serial number there! Mine is on the door of my oven."

"I'm afraid they did."

"The letters are too small. I can't read them!"

So it wasn't just me. And even without having had recent joint or eye surgery, Kevin was barely able to scrunch himself up enough in the cramped space to take a picture.

"We just had a \$400 repair on our oven."

The dancing dollar signs reappeared before my eyes.

"You know what? Let's try this. Press cancel!"

Voila!!!! Error message disappears and I can set the clock.

"Set it on bake; I'll wait. Mine preheated to 250 degrees and then stopped heating."

Mine kept heating.

Did I just recoup the cost of my BAH membership for this year (after Rick DeFehr saved it for me last year by repairing my icemaker)?

I did, I did.

Membership Matters

Spotlight on Judy Perry

By Lauren Phillips



If you put all the pieces of Judy Perry’s life on a table, they would fit together like a well-crafted jigsaw puzzle. From Missoula, MT, to Bellingham and BAH, there is a constant theme: jumping in where there’s a need and an opportunity even when you’re not exactly sure what you’re doing—patching things together, figuring things out, making them work.

“I was born in Missoula and that’s a big part of who I am. In a small place, you get to do things you might not get to do if there was more competition around.”

Here’s an example: Following a first career as a CPA spent traipsing after her first husband, who was a lawyer in the Marine Corps during the Vietnam war, Judy ended up back in Montana, no longer interested in accounting. What she wanted, she had realized, was to work with people—to be a social worker.

“So here I am, I’ve gone back to school for my social work education and then this job opened up in Helena, which was the capital city but had just 20,000 people. The hospital there wanted someone to start a social work department.

Well, I’d never been a social worker and they’d never had one, so it was a natural fit! I just figured things out as we went along.”

In the 1980s, “traipsing after my second husband—it’s what you did then,” Judy moved to Washington, first to Kirkland and then, in 1987, to Bellingham. Right away, she felt at home.

“Having been shaped by my early experiences in the small town of Missoula and in a truly tiny town in northern Idaho, where you walked everywhere and knew everyone and people were in each other’s lives, I like walking down the street and smiling at people and talking to them—not being afraid of people.”

And here comes another example of opportunity beckoning in a small town and Judy jumping in to make something work that might seem unworkable at first.

“When my youngest son was well into grade school, I was determined to finally get my masters in social work. I found an evening program at the University of Washington and got my degree in three years, going one or two nights a week. While I was at school, a job opened up for a part-time social worker at the Mt. Baker Kidney Center, for which I wasn’t yet credentialed. But wait, maybe the person I was replacing would be willing to supervise me—and she did, for three years!”

Judy would work as a full-time social worker at the kidney center for 29 years.

In the process of working with people who had a terminal illness, some of whom were young and had kids, Judy became aware of the lack of grief services available for children in Whatcom County. She became a founding member, board member, and volunteer with Our Treehouse, a grief program for families with children coping with death.

“Once again, we didn’t know exactly what we were doing at first but there was a wide variety of talents that came together and we did it.”

Bellingham At Home beckoned in much the same way.

“Working in a kidney center really raises your awareness: These are people with serious medical conditions whose income is typically dropping and who are patching it together. As a social worker, I was in charge of patching—getting involved in transportation and housing, accessibility and affordability. So I know that people get to a point where they can’t do for everything for themselves. And I am a people!”

So when BAH started up, Judy realized she was “ready to step off the bridge of youth onto the bridge of aging.” Last winter, she resigned all her previous positions and let her social work license go.

BAH’s Health Partner program was right up her alley, and Judy wanted to be in at the beginning as she has so many times in her life. She was one of seven volunteers who signed up to take the Health Ministries Network (HMN) Foundation Course, which prepares individuals to care for the whole person by integrating mind, body, and spirit wellness. The course has 18 modules and took 44 hours over two months (not counting homework).

Being a volunteer, however, didn’t seem like enough. She wanted to be on the inside, supporting the organization. So she became a social member this winter. She likes to quote one of BAH’s own foundational leaders, Allen Johnson.

“Allen puts it so well: This isn’t a fee-for-service organization. We’re in it to help each other and create community.”

Your Outreach Update

You have four opportunities to help reach prospective members with the BAH story in the first quarter. The next two Outreach Information Sessions are January 30, 1-2 pm, and March 5, 11 am-12 pm, and we’ve found it’s both encouraging and inspiring to people when we have current members on hand to talk about their experiences. No need to sign up—just show up!

We’re also looking for people to join volunteer Bob Hendricks in staffing the BAH outreach table at the Cordata Coop on February 12 and April 9 and at the downtown store March 12 and May 14; please let the office know if you can pitch in on one or more of these dates.



Bob Hendricks and Judy Perry staffing the BAH outreach table at the Coop; it's a fun way to meet and greet potential members and volunteers in a casual setting.

Finally, we need a couple of volunteers to help distribute informational flyers around town as the need arises; you can sign up for this job category and we'll get in touch when we put out a new flyer.

Self-Knowledge

A New Take on an Old Idea

By Lauren Phillips

Broken your New Year's resolution already, have you? Never mind, you're in good company. After many long years of failure, lots of people have given up on New Year's resolutions altogether. I'm one of them, but then a friend sent me an article by CNN's David Allan on a different approach that I found really appealing: monthly micro-resolutions.

His idea was to abstain from 12 different activities—things he needed to either give up or cut back on—for just one month each, "like a dozen back-to-back Lents... Some of the mini-resolutions were fun; most were not; all taught me a little about myself." For example, last September, he gave up Stuff That Doesn't Spark Joy or Isn't Useful, weeding out old socks and outdated electronics. In November, it was Eating after Dinner. "Even though I ate way less at night," Allan wrote, "I must confess that I formulated an increasingly liberal definition of dessert as part of my dinners." Then there were grumpiness, Facebook, and the word "like." You get the idea.

Of course, this would work just as well (or even better) if, instead of abstaining from bad habits, you select things you'd like to try—maybe things you're afraid of or just haven't made time for. Writing actual letters to friends comes to mind... or Tai Chi... or painting... or Indian food... or jazz... or hey, volunteering!

In any event, I found myself drawn to the concept of 12 little personal experiments. It seemed so....do-able. You can probably do—or not do—anything for just 30 days, right? And then you know something you didn't know before about yourself and/or about the world. So far, I've only come up with five micro-resolutions, but presumably by May I'll think of some others. Interestingly, one of mine is also not eating after dinner; although this doesn't happen until April, just knowing it's coming up seems to have made me a bit more thoughtful when I wander into the kitchen these dark winter evenings.

Check out how Allan did in 2018 and get some more micro-resolution ideas at <https://www.cnn.com/2018/12/18/health/micro-resolution-wisdom-project/index.html>.

Welcome, Welcome to our Newest Members!



Please say hello to the members who joined us in January:

Iris Parker

Kevin Parker

Betty Basham

Many Happy Returns of the Day

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

Barbara Balfour

Burl Harmon

Iris Jones

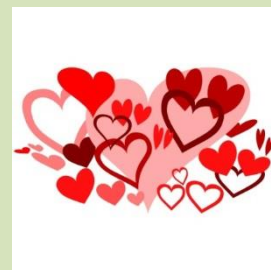
Donna Klander

Angela Langner

John Lawler

Sharon Morris

Joanne Porter



Many thanks to Lynn DeFehr for once again decorating the BAH entry for BSAC's holiday Festival of Trees Gala & Auction – another splendiferous job!

The theme for our tree was "Bellingham At Home for the Holidays."

BAH's Totally Frivolous Memory Sparkler Trivia Quiz #2: The '90s

Joan Dow

1. Who lit the torch for the 1996 Summer Olympics?
2. What was the first cloned animal in 1994?
3. Who was confirmed by the Senate for the US Supreme Court in 1994?
4. What was the last state to ratify the 13th Amendment outlawing slavery in 1995?
5. What was the first genetically engineered food in 1994?

Answers: 1. Muhammad Ali, 2. a calf, cloned by Ned First, 3. Stephen Breyer, 4. Mississippi, 5. the FLAVR SAVR tomato

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

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.