



If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got. – Various attributed

From the Leadership Council

BAH Marks Its 3-Year Anniversary with Lower Fees, All-Volunteer Operation

By Janet Simpson

As we mark our three-year anniversary this summer, we are so grateful to all the wonderful members, volunteers, donors, and partners who have helped us reach this point. Each of you played a vital role in helping us activate a new vision of aging in place with dignity. We're especially grateful to the charter members who took a leap of faith and signed on to make it work. Thank you, all!

As we look to the future, your Leadership Council has made several decisions about how to sustain and grow the organization, but we need your input to move forward.

First, we are saying goodbye to many long-through these early times. As we celebrate new leaders who have stepped up for the

Second, we are approaching the end of our our **Membership Rates**. We have received \$450 rate for individuals and \$100 for high. In order to honor our members and have set new rates. **Individual full membership will be \$365/year**, a \$15 increase for Charter members and a \$75 reduction for those who joined at a higher rate in the last three years. Those who joined at the higher rate in the last six months will receive a credit toward their next year's membership. An **additional household member will remain at \$50**. The **social membership**, with the Life Happens benefit, **will stay at \$225**. Of course, please feel free to donate more!

Third, we are, of necessity, also choosing to return to an all-volunteer organization. Our 2019 budget, including a part-time staff position, was based on higher rates, more members, and a hefty fundraising effort. With lower rates, the current projected number of members, and the cancellation of a big WCOA fundraiser we expected to participate in, our budget needs to shift. Recognizing this need, our program manager, Colleen Harper, is voluntarily stepping down. We appreciate her clarity and unselfishness and will miss her dedication as well as her many skills.

Colleen has helped us clarify processes and organize our day-to-day activities in such a way that we believe we can continue in a smooth and effective manner as volunteers and members step up to help. Our stellar office volunteers will continue to handle assistance requests. For general concerns you can call the office and ask to have a Leadership member contact you.

The LC decided to take these steps in order to stabilize our operations and budget as charter members renew. However, we need input from the membership to cement our future. It's pretty straightforward: If we remain an all-volunteer organization, we can keep fees lower. This requires members to participate. If we want to hire a coordinator to assist us again, we need to raise fees and/or add more members. In either case, we hope to expand our membership and donations, making outreach and fundraising critical to our growth.

Your input and involvement will be essential as we move forward. Please let LC members know what you think and what you want. Remember that BAH is your organization, run by members and powered by volunteers.



Third Annual Meeting: Comings, Goings & an Ovation

33 members gathered at the Squalicum Boathouse on May 29th as our LC president, Allen Johnson, presented the decisions detailed above and shared the revised 2019 budget, which reflects those changes. Members can see the slide presentation, including the budget, on the BAH website at:

https://bellinghamathome.clubexpress.com/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=41544&module_id=351260).

Allen and Angela Mercy handed out commemorative plaques to the outgoing LC members and introduced the three incoming members: John Schene, Marilyn Glenn, and Judy Perry. Sadly, Colleen said goodbye (read her column below) and received a heartfelt standing ovation. Thanks to the volunteers who helped set up the room and the delicious lunch buffet and then took everything down and cleaned up—you guys are the best.



Fare Well!

By Colleen Harper

It has been a privilege and a joy to work with Bellingham At Home for the past year. The exceptional volunteers that work behind the scenes to guide and operate Bellingham At home have opened my eyes to the range of opportunities for community service available in retirement. Our dedicated leadership council and committee members are the heart of Bellingham At Home, and together they have created and sustained this organization for three years. I have complete faith that they will continue to do so well into the future.

This organization is doing good work, and I want to see it have the greatest chance of success. In January of 2019, I reduced staff hours to half-time, in order to alleviate the budget burden of full -time staff. It is that same desire that has led me step down now as the paid staff of Bellingham At Home. I will be continuing as support staff for one day per week for a few months, to ensure that the transition is smooth and successful.

I have often received the question, “If you guys use volunteers to help members, why does Bellingham At Home cost anything at all?” As the organization returns to an all-volunteer group, I think it’s important to address this question.



Paid staff at 20 hours per week was about half of our \$38,500 annual budget for 2019. Bellingham At Home has approximately \$22,000 in other expenses annually, the majority related to running our office. While we don’t pay for the space we occupy, we do pay for phone lines, internet, insurance, shared use of the WCOA printer (a contracted expense) and WCOA network, and an admin fee that reflects a fair amount of WCOA staff time used for administrative support of BAH.

We also buy paper, postage, envelopes, office supplies, and professionally printed promotional materials. There is ongoing computer maintenance that is necessary, and fees associated with the web-based program that is essential to scheduling our members’ requests. We have a very modest advertising budget, \$2000, which can buy about one month’s worth of a business card-sized ad in a publication like the *Bellingham Herald* or *Cascadia* weekly. Our publicity team uses this small

budget strategically for the greatest impact.

I think it is important that members understand that the amount we spend for our office “overhead” is well below market value, because of the unique supportive relationship with WCOA as our parent organization.

We are so grateful to all of our volunteers, without whom this organization could not exist. We are also grateful for our members and donors, whose financial contributions provide the necessary fuel for this organization to function. When you ask, “Where do my membership dues go?” you can be confident that they are supporting the essential logistical needs of Bellingham At Home.

The Order of the Volunteer Lawn Mowers: An Idea Whose Time Has Come?

By Lorraine Barnes

BAH members, let’s get together and mow!



Source: Clipartmag.com

You will have noticed that the grass is growing. For many of our members, this means paying someone to mow the lawn. Wouldn’t it be great if we could offer volunteer lawn mowing services to those people? They could put the money saved towards their annual membership fee or donation!

As I picture it, we would take on only standard-size lawns that require 60 minutes of work maximum. And then mower and mowee could play if they liked—maybe enjoy a coffee, a light lunch, or a glass of wine together. We could wear T-shirts printed with the BAH logo (my treat); we’d be walking advertisements as well as volunteers!

Want to contribute more of your time to your village but don’t know how?

Come join The Order of the Volunteer Lawn Mowers! If you felt even a nanosecond of interest reading this, contact me at 360 746-9943. (Please don’t all call at once ☺!)

This is a seed of an idea, so there are some decisions to make before mowing can begin. But I see this as an opportunity to help others, experience camaraderie, increase the visibility of Bellingham At Home within the community—and help make the village more affordable for some.

Next Stop on the Slow-Motion Brewery Crawl

The next get-together is scheduled for Monday, June 10, from 4-6 pm. This time we're showing some love to the Kulshan Brewing Company's Roosevelt Taproom & Production Brewery, otherwise known as K2, at 1538 Kentucky Street. Please join us—the more, the merrier!



BAH members enjoy beer, cider and root beer at Stone's Throw Brewery in Fairhaven.

BAH's Volunteer of the Year Always Goes Above and Beyond

By Colleen Harper



Janet in Wales

Janet Simpson was not at the annual WCOA Volunteer Appreciation Dinner on May 3 to accept her award as BAH's Volunteer of the Year—she was living it up on a family vacation in Wales!—but that did not keep us from celebrating her leadership. She is on the Leadership Council, chair of our Outreach Committee, and now Treasurer and member of the ExCo; she is also a major contributor to the newsletter.

Regardless of which hat she is wearing, Janet always makes time to work directly with members—to connect with them in a meaningful, heartfelt way. She says it's the most important part of the organization for her, and it keeps her connected to the BAH mission and vision.

She helps with household chores and provides rides, but she really shone this year when winter hit Bellingham hard: she braved the snow storm to shovel a path for one member who uses a walker and needed to get out of the house, then shoveled another and, when that member said she hated to drive in the snow, took her to the grocery store where they both got some snow day essentials.

The best way to describe Janet's dedication to the BAH community is above-and-beyond. We're so lucky to have her.

How to Pick a Restaurant Where You Can Actually Hear Your Friends

By Shari Eberts

My favorite restaurant recently underwent a big renovation. The place definitely needed an update, but I was crushed. This restaurant was my safe haven from noise. It was old-school Italian. It had carpeting, acoustic tiles, fancy white tablecloths, and waiters from Italy. The food was outstanding and the environment was perfect — quiet.

Then they did the renovation. They removed the carpet and installed hardwood floors. They spiffed up the bar area, adding more hard surfaces, and swapped some of the cloth wall hangings for framed photos. I noticed the difference right away. The restaurant was now more visually appealing, but it was no longer quiet. Factor in my hearing loss, and this renovation has made dining out there quite challenging.

My favorite-restaurant experience highlighted for me the problems that anyone with hearing loss faces these days as restaurant noise levels rise, tables are pushed closer and closer together, and trendy glass and hardwood replace sound-absorbing carpet and cushioning. As I looked for a new favorite, I started thinking about what makes a restaurant good for people with hearing loss and how we can advocate for ourselves to make sure we get an acoustically friendly table.

Here are my tips for a successful experience when dining out with hearing loss.

1. **Don't wait to tell the restaurant about your needs.** When you call to reserve and make a reservation online, note your desire for a quiet table. Then remind the restaurant if they call to confirm. This gives the staff a better chance of meeting your needs than if you walk in cold. Always mention that you have hearing loss — this often gets more attention than simply requesting a quiet location. If they seat you at a less than ideal table at first, ask for a quieter spot. Persistence can pay off.
2. **Request a table in the corner.** A corner table or, failing that, a location beside a wall works best since there is a barrier between you and the noise of the restaurant. You also won't have distracting noise behind you and will find it easier to focus on the speakers at the table. A booth is also a good choice if it has high back seats.
3. **Choose restaurants with sound absorbing decor.** Carpet, curtains, cushioned chairs, cloth tablecloths, and acoustic tiles are ideal. Most restaurants have websites with photos, so you can preview the decor before you go.
4. **Sit outside.** If the weather allows, enjoy dining al fresco, where the noise from other diners has more space to dissipate. You're also less likely to experience loud background music. Of course, this doesn't apply if the outdoor seating is near loud traffic.
5. **Eat early or late.** If you can avoid the crowds, the din from other diners will be lower. You'll also be more likely to get the table that you want. And restaurants can be more willing to lower the music during off-peak hours.
6. **Read online reviews.** Many restaurant rating systems now include noise level as one of the criteria. For example, Zagat has a "Good for Quiet Conversation" search category. Yelp allows you to search for restaurant reviews that contain the word quiet; simply type "quiet restaurants" into the Find area on the main screen. You can also Google any restaurant's name plus "noise levels" to unearth reviews that discuss how loud the restaurant is or isn't.
7. **Ask around.** I like to trade restaurant tips with my hearing-loss friends and also with my hearing friends. Once you hit a certain age, everybody wants a quiet restaurant! Try asking on Facebook.

This article was reprinted from Senior Planet, where it appeared on June 3, 2016. (<https://seniorplanet.org/how-to-pick-a-restaurant-where-you-can-actually-hear-your-friend/>). Shari Eberts is a hearing health advocate and writer; you can read her blog at <https://livingwithhearingloss.com/>.

Quiet Restaurants in Bellingham

To Eberts' list, we would add that, while some restaurants are closed on Mondays, those that aren't often are quieter at the beginning of the week. Here are some local restaurants that are generally pretty quiet. Let us know your favorites and we'll add them to the list.

- North Water (4260 Mitchell Way)
- The back room at Mambo Italiano Café (1303 12th St.)

- Mykonos Greek Restaurant (1650 W Bakerview Rd.)
- Five Columns Greek Restaurant (1301 E. Maple St.)
- Latitude Restaurant (1065 E. Sunset Dr.)
- The Web Locker patio (734 Coho Way)
- The Black Cat for lunch (1200 Harris Ave.)

Membership Matters

Spotlight on Barb & Howard Evans

By Lauren Phillips



Back when Barb and Howard Evans had a small sailboat, they enjoyed sailing around the San Juans. They were on Sucia Island once when they saw there was a storm coming up and knew they'd better get out while they could. Barb tells the tale:

"Someone had to pull the anchor, because we'd been there overnight, and someone had to sail the boat out. Now Howard is a much better sailor than me. Being very pragmatic about the whole thing, I realized that if I was on the tiller and he went overboard pulling the anchor, my chances of getting him back were slim, but if our positions were reversed, he could get me back in the boat. So I pulled anchor. It was tough going for about 90 minutes that morning—it was exciting."

This incident tells you a bit about the couple.

Howard was, in his own words, a bit of an adrenaline junky. He tried bungee jumping, he jumped out of a plane twice, he was a cross country skier before switching to downhill, and 30 years ago he took up mountain climbing; there's a picture of him becoming the oldest person to climb Willis Wall on Mt. Rainier with a big grin on his face.

Barb, on the other hand, is very down-to-earth, level-headed. She's both practical and optimistic: definitely a glass-half-full person. Whatever the situation, she can do what needs to be done—and in most cases have a good time doing it.

It's a dynamic combination that has served them well through a lifetime involvement in two of the things that matter most to them: education and volunteering. An early example of both: She and Howard helped start a progressive elementary school in Illinois that is still going.

"That was a lot of work," Barb recalls, "a lot of late nights, but a lot of fun."

After getting his masters and doctorate at the University of Illinois, Howard taught philosophy and education at Milliken University in Decatur, Illinois; Boston University; and then, for the bulk of his career, at Western. While he was in graduate school, Barb taught grade school. Since having kids, she's had a ton of really interesting part-time gigs, paid and volunteer, mostly education-related. She was a substitute teacher, taught "Living and Learning with Toddlers" at Bellingham Technical College, taught preschool through Whatcom Community College, tutored with Upward Bound, was on the Academy of Lifelong Learning's board, and is the membership chair of the WWU Retirement Association. And of course she's been a BAH leader right up to this spring, when she is retiring from the LC.

Once he retired, Howard volunteered for the Whatcom Volunteer Center, "fixing roofs, building a lot of ramps and kitchen cabinets." But there's another side to his woodworking talent. Their apartment is studded with stunning pieces

he designed and built, including two tall corner hutches, a charming sideboard in the dining room, and an elegant entry hall table.

But what jumps out at you first in their fifth-floor home is a wall of windows overlooking the bay, featuring spectacular sunsets and a body of water that, for Barb, is always changing—just like life.

Event Ambassadors: Keep it Simple

By Kate Birr



Joan Ofteness, museum docent, talks about the Slow Art movement to BAH members before our tour.

Have you heard about the Slow Art movement? In the rush to see everything, the average museum goer spends less than 10 seconds looking at a work of art. If you follow the lead of Slow Art proponents, you won't look at a whole exhibit, focusing instead on a few works and extending your attention in the process. Joan Ofteness, the docent who led our BAH group recently on a tour at the Lightcatcher, took the slow tack, helping us to see in depth eight of the show's 60+ works. It was a rewarding experience. Afterward, several of us stopped at the new museum café, Kismet, for tea and snacks.

Like our museum visit, a BAH social event doesn't have to be a big deal. Members organize and announce them, and there's likely to be at least a handful of other members happy to join you. The idea is simply to do something fun with a group.

Some ideas to inspire you:

- Attend a Bellingham Bells baseball game
- See a movie at the Pickford (or at the other place)
- Go out for buffet brunch
- Meet for a picnic (location TBD)
- Take in a play at the Theater Guild, with its new elevator
- Check out that new restaurant
- Have BAH neighbors over for coffee

Be an Event Ambassador and invite Bellingham At Home members to join you. You line up the details (there's a form you can download on the website) 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, collecting the money if you are purchasing, say, a block of seats. 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!

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

Openings Available in the Writer's Group

Jane Pryce's writers group is looking for a few more members. This is a supportive group for people who enjoy writing. They do writing exercises and read each other's personal writings. Discussion focuses on sharing each other's stories instead of critiquing each other's writing.

The group meets on Fridays at 1:30 pm. If you are interested in joining, please call Jane at 360-441-1473 for directions to the next meeting.

Many Happy Returns of the Day

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

Erick Halldorson

Carl McGath

Judith Koontz

Vickie Knechtel

Nanette Davis

Ann Therkelsen

Judith Krieger

Barry Mason



11th Annual National Village Conference in Chicago this September Open for Registration



**The Sheraton Grand's Chicago Burger
Company patio on the Riverwalk**

The 2019 National Village Conference will be held September 18-20 at the Sheraton Grand Chicago in the exciting River North district. Bellingham At Home will not be sending any official representatives this year, but we'll be happy to help you make arrangements if you're interested in attending. The theme this year is Connecting Generations and there's a full schedule of breakout sessions, keynote addresses, and receptions where you can mingle with other village people and pick up great ideas to bring home to BAH.

The rate is \$450 for the three-day conference and registrants will receive a special hotel rate of \$199/night. For more details and to register, visit https://www.vtnetwork.org/content.aspx?page_id=4002&club_id=691012&item_id=930690.

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.