



Bellingham
At Home

Your Village Voice – November 2019

We all do better when we work together. Our differences do matter, but our common humanity matters more.—Bill Clinton

Aging Well Whatcom: A Vision and an Action Plan We Can All Get Behind

By Lauren Phillips

Did you know that there are 89 organizations in Whatcom County that have an interest in and/or work toward the wellbeing of seniors? No, you didn't—and neither did the organizations themselves, which means they haven't been able to collaborate very effectively in addressing our needs. That's what the Aging Well Whatcom Coalition is all about. Its mission: To promote living well through all our years into the end of life.



A Plan Based on Best Practices

The Coalition, consisting of 20 organizations pulled together by the Chuckanut Health Foundation in 2017, has spent the last 18 months developing a Blueprint for aging well in Whatcom County. In September, they held a summit to introduce the Blueprint; 184 people from all 89 organizations gathered together to review the document and provide feedback. Bellingham At Home was represented by three people: Janet Simpson and Elaine Cress—both of whom had helped with its development—and me, as your newsletter editor. Twenty-nine organizations have requested follow-up presentations.

"The interest in the Blueprint and the work of Aging Well Whatcom is a testament to the power of our community's energy around these issues, and a reminder of the work we have yet to do," said Tessa Whitlock, Chuckanut Health Foundation Operations Coordinator on behalf of the coalition steering committee.

The Blueprint contains strategy recommendations in six areas, all of them grounded in evidence-based and collective action, best practices, and individual and community voices:

- Information and Navigation Services
- Transportation
- Cultural Shift
- Wellness & Healthcare
- Housing
- Intergenerational Community

As you can see, Bellingham At Home is already involved in the first four. It was gratifying to find that the other people at my table were very interested in our organization and saw BAH as a potentially valuable partner. Each table at the summit talked through and then reported their responses to the Blueprint—what we felt was missing, what we felt was most important, what kind of action we would individually be interested in committing to.

A Call to Action

Whitlock reports that these strategies drew the most interest:

- Ensuring that representatives of older adult groups are given a voice in policy discussions.

- Adopting policies and regulations by governmental entities, community institutions and non-profit groups that facilitate intergenerational housing, childcare, and other programs.
- Supporting existing intergenerational groups to connect, identify opportunities, learn about best practices, and create partnerships.
- Developing shared information systems to improve coordination of care.
- Creating a comprehensive online repository for information and resources and dedicate the needed resources to keep information up to date.

Not surprisingly, two of the five strategies take aim at the lack of coordination that has stymied collective action and community understanding of just what is already available in our county. The last in particular is one we would all love to see implemented tomorrow: a one-stop shop for information and resources for older people and their caregivers!

Watch this spot in the coming months for updates on the coalition's work and a close-up look at some of the interesting organizations I learned about at the Summit that might make excellent partners for Bellingham At Home.

Meantime, please take a look at the Blueprint online at <https://www.agingwellwhatcom.org/the-aging-well-blueprint>. You might just find that you're interested in participating in one of the work groups that will collectively be moving us toward that vision.

Did You Know?

In Whatcom County in 2018:

- 16.9% of our population was 65 or older (38,141 of 225,685 people).
- That age group grew 2.3% from 2017 to 2018 and has grown 43.2% since 2010.

With Whatcom on the map as one of the best places to retire, these numbers will only grow.



**Got voter pamphlet?
Got ballot?
Be sure to vote by November 5.**

Next Stop on the Slow-Mo Brewery Crawl...



...is Stemma Brewing Co. at 2039 Moore St. (across Iowa from the north-bound exit on I-5), Monday, November 11, 4-6 pm. Food is available courtesy of Mr. Frank's The Bus, including sandwiches, burgers, wings, salad, hummus platter, and more. And the brewery would like you to know that leashed and friendly dogs and cats are welcome!



BAH Writers Group Open House Scheduled for December 6

By Sandy Stanton



Writers Group: George Edward, Joan Dow, Jane Pryce, Sita Amba-Rao, Sandy Stanton.

The Bellingham at Home Writers Group celebrated its first-year anniversary last August. It was a good year. We settled into a group of five regular members, meeting once a week for a couple of hours, which allows time to share what we write at home as well as the spontaneous “Scribbles” we write sitting around the table. That’s after we chat awhile over coffee and treats! However, we think it would be nice to have more members. So, we decided to have an Open House, inviting interested BAH members to join us for a meeting—to get to know us and share in one of our writing activities, if you like. Yes, we’ll have coffee and treats, and we’ll read what we have written for the week.

The BSAC has reserved Room 9 for us on Friday, Dec. 6, 1:00-3:00. We hope to see you there!

If you have any questions or would like to know more, please call Sandy Stanton at 541-588-2446.

A Big Shout out to Kathleen Hicks

By Angela Mercy



Kathleen is a shining star this month. She has single-handedly filled as many as 5 of our 10 office shifts in a single week! Kathleen, thank you for your cheerful dedication and your can-do attitude. You are deeply appreciated.

Happily, we have four volunteers currently in various phases of training to become office volunteers. Thank you to Mary Lee Fenton, Joan Dow, John Schene, and Kate Birr for saying yes to becoming office volunteers.

Can we have a few more members say yes to doing the same?

Office Matters

Do We Have Your Emergency Contact Information?

What happens when a volunteer can’t find or contact a member when they’ve arranged for assistance? Lately, we’ve had a spate of incidents that warranted getting in touch with someone who knows where a member is or how a member is doing. We’d rather not ask the police to do a “welfare check” unless we have no other option. That’s why we like to be able to call someone who has an idea what’s going on with a member—a neighbor, a close friend, a relative who’s in regular communication.

An office volunteer can check your emergency contact information for you. Or, you can do it yourself on our website:

- 1) Go to bellinghamathome.org and click Member Login.
- 2) Enter your user name and password.
- 3) Once you’re logged in, click your name and open your profile.
- 4) In the Member Profile in the Personal Info box, click Additional Contacts.
- 5) To add a contact, click Add Additional Contact, fill in the information requested and click Save.

Making the Switch to Windows 10 (Part 1 of 3)

By Kate Birr

Are you still using Windows 7 on your computer? If so, you've probably heard from Microsoft that Windows 7 will be retired on January 14, 2020. We want to alert our members and provide background and tips for moving to Windows 10. If you've already said good-bye to Windows 7, you can skip this piece, though you might want to share it with a friend who hasn't made the move.

First, what's happening with Windows 7?



Microsoft has announced the end of security updates for Windows 7. This 10-year-old version of Windows will continue to work, but it won't be kept up to date. Microsoft is urging users to move to Windows 10, either on their existing computers or on new ones. Windows 10 may or may not work on older computers, so users may find that they have to purchase a newer machine if they want to use a system that Microsoft will continue to support. Be aware that Windows 10 has an expiration date, too; it will receive no security updates starting in 2025.

What's the risk of staying on Windows 7?

If you stay on Windows 7, without security updates, your computer will be more vulnerable to malware and viruses, particularly if you continue to connect to the Internet. If your computer becomes infected, it may become unusable—and you may lose whatever you have stored on it. Or you could inadvertently infect others.

What are my options if I choose to go to Windows 10?

If your Windows 7 computer is not too old, you may be able to upgrade it to Windows 10. You can run a compatibility test to see if this is an option. If your Windows 7 computer is not compatible with Windows 10, you'll need to consider buying a new(er) machine or moving to a tablet.

Whether you upgrade your existing computer or move to something new, you'll be faced with learning a new system. If you're like me, this is not something you really want to give time to, but you may discover that, once you've learned your way around Windows 10, you can do many tasks more easily and securely.

You can get help with this transition from Tech Help at BSAC; volunteers are available on Friday afternoons each week. Call the front desk to make an appointment.

Next month: What's involved with making the move?

Volunteers Rock

Spotlight on Lorraine Barnes

By Lauren Phillips

Lorraine is one of those people who seem to have the gift of making themselves at home in vastly different circumstances that suit the changing seasons in her life.

A Canadian who grew up in Montreal, Lorraine used to live with her husband and kids about 40 minutes north of Toronto in a 4,000-sf house built in 1820, which they renovated over a period of 18 years.

"We tore down half the house and rebuilt it and it was quite a showpiece when we finished. We put in an indoor pool in a room with floor to ceiling windows so we could swim there in the wintertime when it was snowing outside.

"We lived on three acres and I raised goats and chickens. It was fun, I loved raising the animals. I was a real earth mother; I had two home births when it wasn't popular. There could be 14 kids in our house at once; when you live in the country, kids can't just take their bikes and go—you have to import and export them with a car."



Today, Lorraine lives in Bellingham in a 560-ft studio that she built over her garage for guests and rents out her home.

“A family that had just sold their house approached me back in 2011 and asked if I’d like to rent them my home for a year while they looked for a new one. And I thought, well, I could try staying in the studio. That was seven years ago. It’s worked perfectly for me, I just love it.”

Was it hard downsizing, something so many of us are wrestling with right now? Not really.

“I got rid of just about everything. The only things I kept were my family photographs and my kids’ schoolwork. I have a small winter wardrobe and a small summer wardrobe.”

When family comes to visit, as they will do this Christmas, Lorraine finds them someone else’s house to rent.

Today, her love of animals is expressed in her volunteering with Old Dog Haven, a rescue organization that pulls senior unadoptable dogs from shelters and places them with permanent foster homes, paying all the animal’s medical expenses until the end of life—typically a couple of months to a couple of years. Lorraine holds meet and greet events for ODH and has fostered a few dogs herself.

“It’s particularly good for people our age because we don’t want a dog that we’re going to have to leave behind. These dogs just want companionship, some love and a warm bed. A little Chihuahua I fostered was in bad shape. She had to have all her teeth pulled and she had a respiratory condition. When things got really bad I would take her to a specialist in Lynnwood—she had her own doctor, she had even an eye specialist. When I got her, she was so vacant; it was as if there was nobody home when I looked in her eyes. But by the time she died, three years later, she was very much her own dog and had taken over my studio. It was such a wonderful experience to witness that revival.”

Lorraine has been a stalwart on BAH’s Membership Committee from the beginning and this year, of course, she and Elaine Cress started the Slow-Mo Brewery Crawl.

“I like to volunteer. I can get a little carried away with that. But I must say I’m enjoying retirement. I love to have quiet, lazy mornings.”

Outreach Update

Bellingham At Home has scheduled two outreach information presentations to round out the year:

- Thursday, November 14, from 3-4 pm in Rm 16
- Wednesday, December 28, 1-2 pm in Rm 16

If we all made it a point to encourage at least one person to attend, we could probably jump our membership numbers up nicely by the time 2020 rolls around.

From the LC

By Janet Simpson

Four things to know this month:

- We are glad to have Marilyn Glenn returned from travels and taking her place on the LC.
- As soon as we can figure out the best way to do it, we will be posting LC minutes on our website.

- We will be planning a Holiday Party in December. If you'd like to work on it, please let us know!
- John Schene and I will start exploring the possibility of expanding membership to Sudden Valley.

Note: Rooms at BSAC can only be reserved for BAH committee meetings or administrative purposes. In order to reserve a room for an event or interest group, it must be open to ALL members of BSAC and listed in the BSAC calendar.

More Service Provider Recommendations, Please

It's been several months (ahem) since we've reminded you that the more members that report their experiences with first-rate commercial service providers, the more trustworthy recommendations there will be when you're looking for a house cleaner, or a veterinarian, or a hat blocker [just wanted to see if you were paying attention;-), or a caterer, or a [FILL IN THE BLANK]... So does anybody know a good chimney sweep?



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



Barb Evans
Nick Waslenko
Jaowanoot Kennedy
Inge Paulus

And...

Welcome!

To our newest members
Dick and Minda Garcia



**BAH is having a HOLIDAY PARTY – our 4th!
Thursday, December 5, 5:30-9:30, at the
Bellwether Hotel, Garden Room**

**Members, Volunteers:
Please mark your calendars!
Cost is \$34 per person for dinner.**

**We can seat 40 people in all,
so please call the office soon to reserve your places.**

Entrée options:

- **Risotto Forester with Wild Mushrooms and Balsamic
Roasted Portobello (GF)**
- **Herb Roasted Airline Chicken Breast with Creamy Marsala Mushroom
Sauce & Roasted Garlic Potatoes (GF)**
- **Quince & Cranberry Stuffed Squash, Arugula Pesto & Roasted
Brussels Sprouts (GF/DF)**

**Dinners include entrée, salad, rolls, vegetables, dessert, and coffee/tea.
Cash bar.**

Watch for more details in upcoming e-blasts.

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.