



*“What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”
- Jane Goodall*

Winter Weather Advisories

Is there more snow in our future? Who knows? What we do know is that preparing ahead for winter weather can be the difference between inconvenience and an emergency. Stock up now on what you'll need if you're snowed in (with or without power), e.g., food, flashlights and batteries, shovel, an external charger for your cell phone, a week's supply of medicines.



Source: Merriam-Webster.com

BAH is limited by what our volunteers are able to do safely when the roads are treacherous, but we encourage members who would like some social contact while snowed (or rained!) in to let us know if they would like to be on a list to be contacted —there are many volunteers who would enjoy talking to you.

For Volunteers

If you're a volunteer who has on-going relationships with members, please call and check in with them when we have snow conditions that last for more than a couple days. If you're scheduled to drive a member somewhere, make sure to call that person to (1) make sure their appointment is still on and (2) ask about road conditions in their neighborhood. It's *always* better to cancel an appointment than to risk an accident.

Are you a volunteer who's comfortable driving in the snow and has an appropriately equipped car? Please call Angela Mercy at 360-603-0064. Ditto if you are willing and able to shovel snow!

Preventing Falls in Icy Conditions

Here's a timely suggestion from member Susan Vaughan: Sure Paws is an ice melter that's animal and plant safe. “Last year I used it on my steps, sidewalks, and gravel paths out to my truck and pastures-definitely helps keep us upright in icy, snowy weather.” Sure Paws comes in 8 lb (\$13.99) and 20 lb (\$19.99) bags at Cenex- Whatcom Farmers Co-op on Meridian; it's also available at Home Depot.

More than you need? Susan suggests that you might share a bag with neighbors.

Walk Like a Penguin

From the University of Maryland, College Park, comes advice to “listen to the experts and walk like a penguin to help avoid” slipping on slick pavement:

- Walk flat footed and take short shuffling steps
- Wear footwear that provides traction
- Step down, not out from curbs
- Go hands free and use your arms for balance



Source: <https://uhr.umd.edu/news/walk-like-a-penguin/>

From the Chair

We Are A Membership Organization – What Does That Mean?

By Janet Simpson

As we head into 2020, we want to remind everyone that we're a membership organization. While non-member volunteers do a lot of the heavy lifting, members are the people who support and sustain our organization. What does this mean?

First, We Need Your Support.

That comes through your annual dues, your willingness to volunteer if you can, your willingness to speak up and say what you need, to tell your friends and neighbors about us, and your understanding that right now, we are almost completely volunteer led and run. Without members willing to do all these things, we don't continue.

Your dues pay for all of our overhead: phones, computers and supplies, and our share of BSAC costs such as insurance, space, copiers, financial assistance, and oversight. All of these costs are less than they would be if we were not under the umbrella of WCOA but they still exist.

Dues also pay for the Club Express system that allows us to make and track our volunteer requests, track our finances, and keep all the records of volunteers and members that we need to function. Dues also go to our membership in the Village to Village Network. And they pay for anyone we hire: right now, we have paid help five hours a week.

Second, We Need More People to Be More Active

Here's what your dues don't pay for: the time and work and caring (and gas) our assistance volunteers provide—the drivers, the packers, the dog walkers, the computer consultants, the weeders, the social phone callers, the medical note-takers, the handymen and women. Dues also don't pay for office volunteers, who put in 3½-hour shifts (some more than one a week) keeping all the wheels turning. They don't pay for Leadership Council members, who put in 10-20 hours every week, or our committee chairs, or the people who create our social events and activities.

It's easy for all of these people to get burned out, so we need others to step up: to donate when you can, to participate, to ask for what you need, to help us come up with ideas—especially if you're willing to help translate those ideas into action—and to commit to putting in even a few hours a month to volunteer.

We all need to keep in mind that a membership organization lives or dies by its members. I don't know about you, but I think we've got a lot of life left to live.



How to Make Someone's Day Brighter on Valentine's Day

By Florence Isaacs

Valentine's Day is one of those holidays that celebrate belonging, connection, and love—which is why it can be a particularly difficult time for people who have lost a spouse or partner.

What you can do:

1. Invite the person to lunch, brunch, or dinner at a restaurant (or your home). It's a great way to say "You matter."
2. Send flowers or a box of candy, along with a card or note that says, "You're our Valentine."
3. Encourage grandchildren or other youngsters in the family to make their own Valentines for the person. The recipient can display the art on their refrigerator and feel remembered.
4. If you're far away, call or skype to sing "Happy Valentine's Day to You" to the tune of "Happy Birthday". Silly as it is, the message rings loud and clear: "You're valuable."
5. Visit the person and bring along photos that include the late spouse or partner. Talking about old times is strong medicine for loneliness.

The message is, "You are not alone. You are not forgotten. We love you."



Source: Homeaidhealthcare.blogspot.com

If you're the one feeling alone, create your own celebration: dine out with other single friends, do something loving for yourself (massage anyone?), spend the day with your grandchildren or other young people, or do a good deed for someone else.

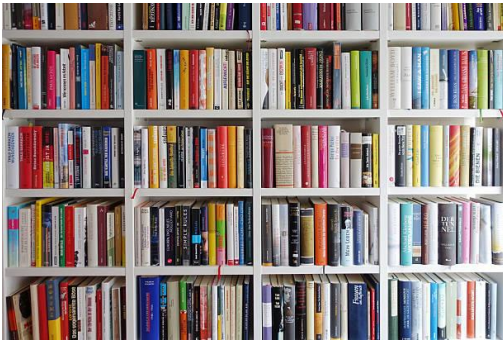
Florence Isaacs is a bestselling writer specializing in etiquette, health and medicine, relationships, and communication. Her newest book is Do I Have to Wear Black to a Funeral? You can check out this and her other work at her website:

<https://florenceisaacs.com/>

Lauren's Bookshelf

By Lauren Phillips

Some excellent fiction for these long winter evenings:



Akin. Emma Donoghue (author of *Room*). Retired professor Noah, a widowed, childless New Yorker, is just turning 80. He is headed out for a long-awaited trip to Nice, where he was born and where he hopes to find out more about his mother's activities during the war by tracking down some old photos he has found. And then he is suddenly asked to take on his 11-year-old great nephew, whom he does not know, for a couple of weeks until the boy's aunt is able to take him—his mom is in prison and his father died of an overdose and social services really want to keep him out of the system. So they go together to Nice. As interesting as their trying to track down Noah's mother's past is the struggle for him and this grieving, angry, and defensive kid to relate to each other.

The Last Train to London. Meg Waite Clayton. A suspenseful, heartbreaking, and hopeful account of the Kindertransport rescue by train of 10,000 children from Nazi-occupied Europe right before the war, which actually happened. Clayton focuses on two families in Vienna and on Truus Wijsmuller, a childless Dutchwoman (and a real person) who was determined to save as many children as she could in a race against time, fighting reluctant Western governments as well as the Nazis. Even as I wept at the end, I was heartened by the story of what a principled, compassionate, and courageous individual who is willing and able to risk everything can accomplish.

Truly Madly Guilty. Liane Moriarty (author of *Big Little Lies*). Given that this is not in the category of great literature, I thought it was a terrific read: a really interesting range of characters with realistic lives and concerns, a compelling story and structure, and clean clear prose. It takes place in two time dimensions: the day of the central event, which takes place at a backyard barbecue; and now, which is some weeks and then months later, as we see the three couples involved try to deal with what happened. I was worried that once we found out what the event was, it would all be downhill but it's not at all. I found it unputdownable.

Mark Your Calendar

Housing Options Open House Is March 4

Bellingham Senior Activity Center Presents:

What's Next:

Housing Options

As We Age

Wednesday, March 4th
10:00am - 2:00pm
315 Halleck Street



The senior center will host "What's Next: Housing Options as We Age" on Wednesday, March 4, from 10 am-2 pm. This is your opportunity to explore the future for yourself and for loved ones.

Whatcom County offers a wide range of housing options from shared-housing and in-home attendants, to adult family homes, rehabilitation, and independent and assisted living facilities, all of which will be onsite with information, resources, and answers to your questions.

Throughout the event there will be presentations on the different kinds of arrangements available in the community, including those that help us age in place. Come check out the possibilities.

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

...is Kulshan Brewery's Sunnyland Beer Garden, 2238 James Street. Join us Monday, February 10, 4-6 pm. The regular Monday food truck at Kulshan is Hot Mess. (Note: January's meet-up was cancelled on account of the big snow.)

Village to Village Gathering

The Village as an Antidote to Social Isolation and Loneliness

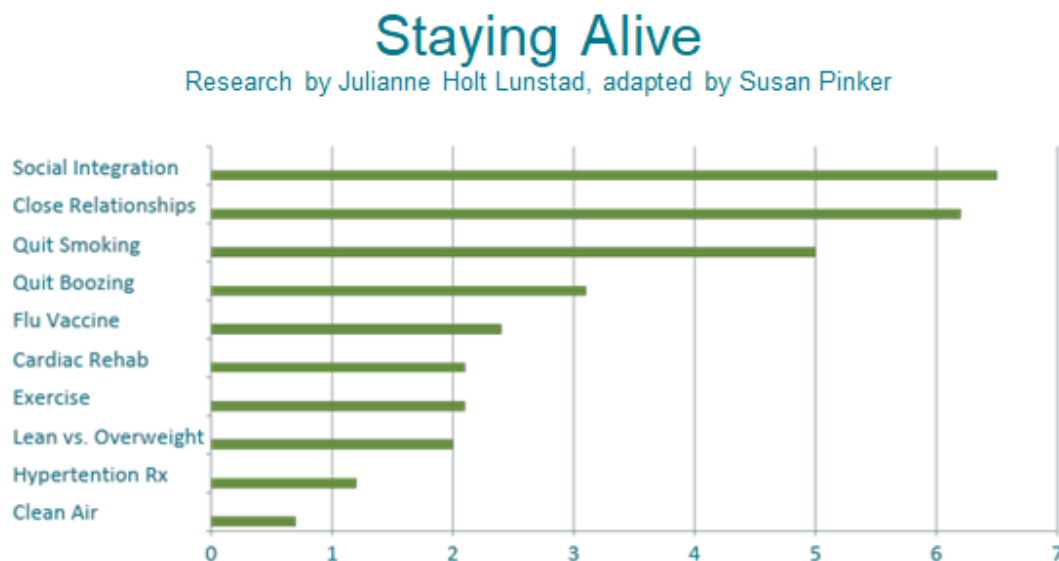
By Lauren Phillips

A major theme at the 2019 Village to Village Gathering, held in Chicago in September, was the village as an antidote to social isolation and loneliness—and the importance of this for an aging population.

The fact is that we are facing a public health epidemic of social isolation and loneliness that comes with a ton of negative health impacts: increased risk of chronic illness and depression, decreased life satisfaction, more frequent bouts of illness, longer recovery times, and increased risk of mortality.

Here are some other eye-popping facts about the consequences of isolation that the conference covered:

1. In a 2011 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation survey of 1,000 physicians, 85% say unmet social needs directly lead to worse health for their patients, and social needs are as important to address as medical conditions.
2. Social integration and close relationships beat out eight other health factors as predictors of mortality among seniors. (see graph)



3. Medicare costs are \$134 more a month for patients who identified with being isolated or lonely. That adds up to an additional \$1,609 a year for one such person—and \$6.7 billion annually for the United States.

Factors that contribute to social isolation in seniors include loss of a loved one, retirement, loss of a driver's license, psychological and cognitive challenges, chronic health conditions or disability, and loss of hearing and eyesight. And there are a lot of ways villages are countering these barriers for their members.

Two innovative approaches that were addressed at the conference are a variety of intergenerational programs that connect village members with school kids; and the use of technology to provide online services for members and volunteers. For example, an outfit called Helpful Village has software that can track service requests, issue event invitations, rate commercial service providers, and solicit member feedback.

But villages also excel at low-tech initiatives that likewise serve to connect members with each other. Bellingham At Home, of course, provides transportation and home chore assistance, social visits and phone calls, help interacting with healthcare services, interest groups, and social events.

As keynoter Kate Hoepke, executive director, San Francisco Village, and chair, Village Movement California, put it, "Villages are infrastructures of social care: intentional communities built on principles of reciprocity and pro-social values, providing connections that preserve choice and self-determination, and social integration—a feeling of knowing that you belong."

In Memory...

Myron Fink

Myron Fink died in March 2019 at age 95. He and his wife Elka joined BAH in May 2017. They moved to Bellingham in 1994 to be near children. Myron was born in New York City in 1924. His life included childhood in an orphanage, military service in Europe in World War II, and a varied career in law that took him and his family from New York to Los Angeles and then to Albuquerque. In New York, where he studied and practiced law, he married Elka, a social worker. He became a professional law librarian as well as a law professor. The law library he developed at the University of New Mexico was recognized as one of the most complete in the region. Myron's interests included gardening, mediation, progressive politics, and spending time outdoors.

I encourage you to read the recollections of Myron by his children Anji and Paul on the family website, www.FinkFinale.com. They are beautifully written and will make you smile and feel that you knew him.

George Oliver

George David Oliver, age 94, died on December 11, 2019 in Bellingham. George and his wife of 33 years, Patricia H. Duhnkrack, joined BAH as charter members in 2016. George was born in 1925 in Brandon, Manitoba, Canada. He graduated in 1951 from Haileybury School of Mines in Ontario, Canada and got his private pilot's license to fly bush planes while working in mining exploration in Saskatchewan and Ontario. In 1960 the family immigrated to Sarasota Florida where they lived for 9 years, while he and a brother-in-law built South Winds Mobile Home Park. In 1969 they returned to Canada before moving to Scotland for a year where he was able to connect with many family members. Upon returning to USA the family settled in northern Idaho and then Friday Harbor, Washington, where he got involved in sailing. They spent a year sailing the South Pacific aboard his beloved sailboat, Isabella. With Patricia, he traveled by bicycle throughout New Zealand, Europe, the British Isles, and Canada. They wintered in Hilo, Hawaii where they enjoyed swimming, running, and tennis. During summers in Bellingham, they enjoyed tennis, ocean kayaking and hiking the North Cascades Mountains, particularly Mt. Baker. George was proud of being the oldest participant in the annual Bellingham Ski to Sea Race, which fell on his birthday each year.

Betsy Wilson

Betsy Wilson, age 87, died in Bellingham on January 6, 2020. Born in 1932 in Newark, Betsy grew up in West Orange, NJ, and earned her BA and MA at Wheelock College. She moved to Bellingham, WA in 1995. She was a preschool teacher and a child life specialist. Betsy was also the Founder and Director of "Let's Face It USA", an organization that helped those with facial difference. She enjoyed building community through her many friendships. She will be remembered for her lifelong focus on education, welcoming strangers into any group, and helping us see the person behind the face.

Please let us know if you're aware when a member has died.
We would like to include a short appreciation in this newsletter.

Volunteers Rock Spotlight on Jane Pryce

By Lauren Phillips



If you were to come upon Jane Pryce sitting in a beautiful garden and reading poetry while sipping high tea in the late afternoon, it would not be unreasonable to assume that she had designed the garden, written the poetry, and made the high tea.

Let me explain. For 15+ years, Jane was a professional landscape gardener with a passion for creating, with "harmonious intent," four-season gardens with a hint of fragrance all year.

"Unlike most landscapers, I prefer to design gardens spontaneously, working with an idea from my client and starting from the ground up." Her gardens have won awards in Whatcom in Bloom competitions, among others, and been featured in local garden tours. (You can see her work at her website, <https://harmoniousgardens.wordpress.com/http>.)

Jane's own garden is the setting in good weather for BAH's writing group, which must find it harmonious because it has helped inspire a wildly diverse collection of spontaneous writings—scribblings, they call them, five-minute exercises—that will be published, along with a few other kinds of writing, by Village Books this spring. Jane has previously published a small book of poems; her poetry has also appeared in Whatcom Reads and Clover, "a literary rag" put out by the Independent Writers' Studio. Even as a small child, Jane wrote plays for her dolls.

"I found those plays the other day—they're 60 years old!"

Now, about the tea. When Jane moved from England, where she was born, to Bellingham in 1991, she did a couple of things to meet people. She volunteered with Whatcom Hospice. And then she started holding High Tea classes, teaching people how to make high teas, for Bellingham Parks & Recreation. (She is British, after all.) Eventually, she began making high teas for groups at her home to raise funds for Coats for Children. One time she did an English tea at the Whatcom Museum for 85 docents!

"That was a lot. I cooked everything ahead of time, although passing the tea round to that many people was difficult."

I asked Jane why she decided to volunteer with BAH.

"I was retiring and I thought it would be cool. Office work wasn't for me but I really enjoy driving members because of the different people you get to meet—that's really why I do it. I'm not a gregarious person but I like the one on one. I've always enjoyed elderly people, because they have lived so long and have such wonderful stories to tell."

Occasionally Jane likes to cook for an elderly person or two "if they're not eating enough" and "I have a few people I call if I don't hear from them every day." She thinks for a moment.

"I suppose I'm a carer, but with a caveat... I'm not going to be on call 24/7. Because I have a life."

Indeed.

Please Plan Ahead When You're Going to Need Assistance

This is a reminder that BAH cannot fill next-day requests for volunteer assistance. (We'll try if it's really an emergency.) Please allow 3-5 business days for us to find the right person to meet your need. We'll let you know around noon the day before if we don't have a volunteer, so you'll have time to make other arrangements. Thanks!

And now, *a very Happy Birthday* to our members celebrating a birthday in...

February



***Donna Klander
Barbara Balfour
Angela Langner***

***Iris Jones
John Lawler
Burl Harmon***

And a warm

WELCOME

to our newest member,

Evelyn Jane Albrecht

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.