



*The Quarantini Cocktail: No upper limit, no hangover, and you can have them every day.
1 oz. prevention, 1 oz. love, 1 oz. laughter. Top with a prayer.
– Elaine Cress & her sister*

Update From the LC

By Janet Simpson

Hopefully all members have seen the announcement below; we're repeating it here to make sure. It's ironic that our goal is to create community and prevent isolation, and here we are in a time where isolation *is* the community goal. I hope you understand that by staying at home you are contributing to the community good. Right now it can be another form of volunteering to help others. And other Villages across the country are doing the same things we are.

I'd also like to add a note about a few positive consequences. China has unpolluted air. Carbon emissions are down. Venice has clean water in its canals & dolphins are returning. Neighbors are helping neighbors all over the globe. And we can see how much our entire world is connected. We're also discovering a very positive use for technology as a way to ask for help and stay connected. Perhaps this virus will give us a way to see both what we can do if we really need to and what we shouldn't do. If nothing else, there seems to be lots of singing on line — a welcome change. So if you're feeling down, put on some music, or sing a song loudly while washing your hands. Or say, "I'm well, I'm content, I'm at peace!"

From BAH's Mid-week E-blast:

ATTENTION BAH Members and Volunteers:

Because all of our members and most of our volunteers are at high risk from the Covid19 virus, we are **temporarily suspending all in-home and transportation assistance**. Volunteers are asked not to go into a home or carry people in their cars. We make this decision out of concern for all our members and volunteers as well as the community. If this creates hardship for anyone, please call Janet Simpson (360-671-9713).

We are still available for **food deliveries or medication pickups** (non-narcotic), resource referrals & other **outside the home assistance** as long as we have volunteers available. You can also call the office and ask for someone to call you back just because you're feeling isolated and would like to chat. We will be doing more check-in calls and hope people will let us know if they want more frequent friendly calls.

Office staff are still monitoring calls into the office. If you don't get someone in person, your call will be returned soon.

Joan Dow, our **Cluster Coordinator**, offers her phone number to anyone who has a need (360-592-4345). You can also call Janet Simpson (# above). We know all seniors are being encouraged to stay at home right now and we support everyone in doing what they feel is important for their health. We care about each and every one of you. Our virtual village has become more virtual, but we are still very much a supportive and caring community. We are definitely in this all together.

Staying in Touch – Especially for our Members Who don't use Email

If you don't use email, you don't see our weekly (or more frequent) e-blasts, with calendar updates and other news. E-blasts go to all members and volunteers. You can find out what's in our most recent update by calling the office and asking a volunteer to read it to you over the phone. Or leave us a message, and we'll have someone get in touch. Please don't hesitate; we want all our members to know what's going on and what has changed, especially in this time when we're all confined to quarters.

AARP Sponsors Coronavirus Town Hall with Washington State VIPs

Janet Simpson attended the March 21 by-phone Town Hall Meeting, sponsored by the Washington State AARP, with Governor Inslee, Secretary of Health Wiesman, and Attorney General Ferguson. Here are her notes from the call:

The main message was to keep **Physical Distance & Emotional Connection**. The Governor asked everyone over 60 to stay at home. He is not ordering a lockdown at this time, but wants you to know that if you **"put a bubble around yourself" you can help reduce fatalities**. If we protect ourselves, we make a difference!

He asks that if you can, get others to pick up groceries and medications for you.
Avoid children (including grandchildren) and other adults since they carry the virus.

Governor Inslee said he is confident our supply chain is in a very stable condition. Don't hoard.
This weekend WA was receiving 1.6 million respirator masks and other supplies.
He has asked hospitals to stop elective surgeries because they use up medical supplies.

A few answers to questions:

- 1) No evidence animals or pets are carrying the virus (hug 'em up).
- 2) Deliveries should be safe: suggest bring pkgs in, unpack & discard container, put things away and WASH YOUR HANDS.
- 3) For mental health, you can find online options.
- 4) Get outside some if you can and get some sun. Just keep distance.
- 5) Soap & hot water is the best hand cleanser. Doesn't have to be anti-bacterial.

The virus enters your body through mouth, nose, or eyes. If you're not sneezed or coughed on, you mostly pick it up on your hands and then transfer it to your face. This is why WASHING HANDS is so important.

- Watch out for scams: things like virus cures, free testing kits, get your gov check, or scam charities. Donate only to organizations you know or can look up. Don't open links or give personal info;
- Also watch for price gouging. You can report this and scams to the attorney general at 1-800-551-4636 or go to the website.
- Give blood if you're eligible!
- Retired Health practitioners can volunteer at Dept of Health to work with phones, etc. Contact the Dept of Health.

There may be outbreaks for 3-4 months.

Stay Home, Stay Away from Others, Stop the Transmission

Cancelled Because of You Know What...

- April 13th Slow-Mo Brewery Crawl Stop
- April 2nd Volunteer Fair & Soup Sampling
- Volunteer training
- Lunch Bunch
- Gifts of Age conversation
- Book Group
- Free tax filing help from AARP at the First Congregational Church (tax returns aren't due until July anyway)

Did you notice? There's no calendar for April. We will publish one when we're able to resume our normal gatherings.

Medicare Expands Telehealth Benefits



Source: istockphoto

Medicare has temporarily expanded its coverage of telehealth services to respond to COVID-19.

Medicare beneficiaries can temporarily use telehealth services for common office visits, mental health counseling and preventive health screenings. This will help ensure Medicare beneficiaries are able to visit with their doctor from their home, without having to go to a doctor's office or hospital, which puts themselves and others at risk.

If you have an existing healthcare appointment, or think you need to see your doctor, please call them first to see if your appointment can be conducted over a smartphone with video capability or any device

using video technology, like a tablet or a laptop. For some appointments, a simple check-in over the phone without video capabilities may suffice.

Important: If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, such as a cough or difficulty breathing, call your healthcare provider immediately.

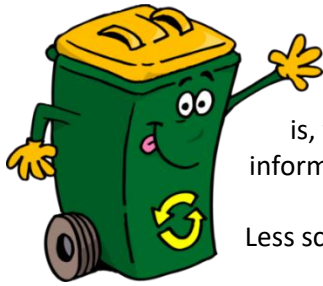
More information is available at https://www.medicare.gov/medicare-coronavirus?utm_campaign=20200318_gmd_prv_gal&utm_content=english&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery#500.

*Don't change your behavior to avoid being infected.
Assume you are infected and change your behavior to avoid transmitting.*

Other Resources for Your Staying-at-Home Life

The Bellingham Insider website (<https://www.bellingham.org/insider-blogs/restaurants-offering-take-out-food-curb-side-pickup-and-delivery-in-bellingham-and-whatcom-county/>) has links to delivery services and take-out meals. Please share any other leads with BAH (email info@bellinghamathome.org or call the office).

Making Garbage Day Easier!



Is taking your toter down (or up!) to the curb on garbage day a challenge for you? Then you'll be happy to know that, for a small fee, SSC workers will walk up and get your toter, take it to the truck and empty it, and bring it back. Rates depend on how long your driveway is, what size toter you have, and how often you need it picked up. Call the SSC office with that information and arrange for what they call "Pack Out Service."

Less schlepping, more sleeping in!

Aging Well Whatcom Coalition Releases Its 2020 Workplan

By Lauren Phillips

Last November I shared with you a report on the summit held by The Aging Well Whatcom Coalition to introduce the strategy recommendations developed by its 20 member organizations. The recommendations fell into six areas: information and navigation services, transportation, cultural shift, wellness and healthcare, housing, and intergenerational community.

Now the coalition has released its 2020 Workplan, which lays out the projects selected for implementation this year. If you are interested in participating in any of the work described below—or if you'd just like to be kept abreast of developments—please contact the coalition at <https://www.agingwellwhatcom.org/>.



2020 WORKPLAN

GOAL 1 - Facilitate/Empower Community Implementation of Blueprint Strategies*

| Projects | Who | Timeline |
|--|---|----------|
| Develop a community-wide information/resource repository. Participate in local Resource Roundtable group that is exploring options for a community wide information/resource system and evaluate potential online platforms and portals. | Whatcom Council on Aging, NW Regional Council | Feb-Mar |
| Create an intergenerational community action plan or recommendations. Convene an intergenerational community workgroup to identify existing intergenerational work, research best practices, identify local opportunities, and develop recommendations for Whatcom County. | Intergenerational Workgroup | Feb-Aug |
| Design and implement campaign related to ageism and aging well. Convene a campaign committee, define campaign goals, determine speakers and other activities, and develop partnerships to carry out activities and coordinate implementation. | CHF, Campaign Committee | Feb → |
| Other Activities to Support Blueprint Implementation | | |
| Clarify and develop funding. Contribute to developing CHF's funding criteria and processes for AWW projects; explore strategic funding opportunities including business partnerships or sponsorships, as well as foundation and governmental funding. | SC members | Mar→ |
| Investigate AARP Livable Cities designation/Network or other designation. Convene ad hoc committee to research AARP Livable Cities, or other age-friendly designation, that would ensure that older adults have a voice in policy discussions, and that elected officials and decision-makers are committed to addressing issues affecting older adults; develop recommendations for Whatcom County. | SC ad hoc committee | Feb-Mar |
| Support work on strategies not addressed by the 2020 projects. Communicate with Summit participants who selected these strategies and encourage them to connect with each other to explore action in these areas; offer supports and invite to apply for funding as opportunities become available. | CHF | Feb→ |

*Projects and activities are based on priority strategies selected by AWW Summit Participants, September 2019.

Good News from the Science Desk

Hearing Aids May Delay Cognitive Decline

Wearing hearing aids may delay cognitive decline in older adults and improve brain function, according to promising new research.

Cognitive decline is associated with hearing loss, which affects about 32 per cent of people aged 55 years, and more than 70 per cent of people aged over 70 years. Hearing loss has been identified as a modifiable risk factor for dementia.



University of Melbourne researchers have tested the use of hearing aids in almost 100 adults aged 62-82 years with hearing loss. Participants were assessed before and 18 months after having hearing aids fitted on their hearing, cognitive function, speech perception, quality of life, physical activity, loneliness, mood, and medical health.

After 18 months of hearing aid use, researchers found speech perception, self-reported listening disability, and quality of life had significantly improved for participants. Most notably, 97.3 per cent of participants in this study showed either clinically significant improvement or stability in executive function -- their mental ability to plan, organize information, and initiate tasks.

Women, in particular, showed significant improvements in working memory -- used for reasoning and decision-making -- as well as most other cognitive functions assessed. The study also found more frequent use of hearing aids was associated with greater improvements in cognitive function, and women were much more diligent at wearing the devices than men.

University of Melbourne Associate Professor and Chief Investigator of the study, Julia Sarant, said improvement in cognitive function is something that is not usually seen in older adults.

"Although there are successful treatments for hearing loss, there is currently no successful treatment for cognitive decline or dementia," Associate Professor Sarant said.

"This research is a positive step in investigating the treatment of hearing aids to delay cognitive decline. Further research is underway to compare cognitive outcomes from a larger sample size with those of a healthy aging comparison group of older Australians with typical hearing for their age."

Source: University of Melbourne. "Hearing aids may delay cognitive decline." ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, 26 February 2020.
www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/02/200226171106.htm.

Bringing Family History to Life

By Joan Dow

Would you like to create a record of your family history but don't know where to begin? I can make that happen: just reminisce while I make notes and presto! I will give you a printed transcript of the stories you want recorded, as well as the document on a disk or thumb drive.

It's a lot of fun and gives you a record to pass on to the next generation. That way, when the kids wonder 10 or 20 years later who Uncle Sylvester was, they will have something to refer to. Beats paying a genealogist.

There's no charge, just sharing. You may be surprised at the memories that unfold.

Call me at 360-592-4345 to set up an appointment.

Staying Healthy & Fit While Staying Home

By Elaine Cress

BSAC Health & Wellness Coordinator

Exercise improves our immune system so it is important for us to continue our aerobic and strength training from home while options to exercise in a gym may be limited. Here are some suggested resources.

Resistance Training using elastic bands

Upper body:

- Flexion, abduction, extension. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzTFCZv0--E&t=307s>
- Row, Rotator cuff, arm curl: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WR1W79AWOag>

Lower body:

- Glute exercises: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BXQTHA2deQQ>

Therabands are portable and a nice addition to your workout when machines are not available. Loop sets provide a consistent resistance for lower body glute work but you can also use the straight bands with a knot.

Beginner sets: 5-ft. straight bands; red, yellow, and green (less than \$15)

Loop sets: green, red, yellow, blue, and black (\$11-\$15)

Intermediate sets: 5-ft. straight bands; blue (approx. \$8)

Advanced set: 5-ft. straight bands; black and blue (around \$10.00)

If you're allergic to latex, be sure to check the material. Many are latex-free.

| Theraband Color | Resistance | Muscle Group |
|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Yellow | Thin / Easy / X-Light | Shoulders & shins |
| Red | Light | Biceps & triceps |
| Green | Medium | Legs, Chest & Back |
| Blue | Heavy | Legs, Chest & Back |
| Black | X-Heavy | Legs, Chest & Back |

Resistance Training – Balance Circuit

The NIH (National Institutes of Health) Go 4Life Circuit video runs about 60 minutes or 3 20-minutes circuits of upper and lower body strength and balance. Have water handy to drink.

Equipment:

Chair with arms – back that is waist height

2 tennis balls or substitute (play dough)

2 weights – 5 lb dumbbells, or substitute (water bottles, cans of food)

Endurance Training

Fortunately we live in a beautiful environment with great trails and moderate climate. We can get endurance exercise by going for a walk or bike ride.

For more endurance options, check out https://go4life.nia.nih.gov/sample_workout/learn-about-endurance-exercises/.

You can see all NIH resources at: <https://go4life.nia.nih.gov/exercises>.

Questions? Please feel free to reach out to me at ecress@whatcomcoa.org or 360-733-4030 x1033.

Use Your Library Card, and More

You can read the following newspapers in full on the library website (if you have a card to sign in with):

- [Bellingham Herald](#)
- [Seattle Times](#)
- [Tacoma News Tribune](#)
- [Olympian](#)
- [Kitsap Sun](#) (Bremerton)
- [Tri-City Herald](#) (Kennewick, Pasco, Richland)

And you may have noticed that paywalls are down on some national news publications to allow unpaid access during the pandemic. *The New York Times*, for example, is letting web users read content about the coronavirus without charge.

Childhood Memories

Spotlight on Marijke Abbott

By Lauren Phillips



*Marijka after WW2, at age 17.
Note: Cameras were not allowed
during the occupation.*

Marijke (muh-RYE-kuh) was six, the fourth of six children, when the Nazis moved into her city in the northern part of Holland in 1940. Her school, where her father was principal, was commandeered for quarters for the soldiers. Suddenly there was rationing.

“One person in the family would go to the central kitchen. They would ask, How many in your family? And we would say eight, and they would splash eight ladles full of horrible-tasting food in your pot—plop, plop, plop. It had dirt in it; when you scraped the bottom of your plate, you could hear the grit. But we were hungry, so we ate it to the last bite. It was a rude awakening.”

Marijka’s father joined the resistance but there were also collaborators in town, so “we had to be very careful about who we talked to. For a child this is confusing.” She prayed a lot of rosaries, she said, when Allied bombers flew low over their house on their way to targets in Germany, which was just 200 kilometers away.

Still, she says, they were kids, they still had fun.

“They were interesting times, with lots of deprivations, but it also nurtured our imaginations. We learned to make do.” There was no leather to be had, so when shoes wore out, people turned to their old wooden clogs. Clever people, including Marijke’s mother, a tailor, would cut up the leather and nail it into the wooden shoes. “You should have seen me run in those shoes, my brother and I could run so fast.”

Marijke says that, no matter how forgetful she becomes, she will always remember the day the Canadians liberated her town in 1945. “I couldn’t describe to you the joy we felt. All these tanks were surrounding our yard and my mother said, ‘You don’t have to go to bed tonight, let the soldiers sleep in your bed.’ We had a piano and one soldier knew how to play and suddenly our house was full of music, of soldiers singing.

“They set up a tent camp close to us—and they offered us chocolate. Oh my God—I ate so much chocolate! We would sort of walk around the tents and I would deliberately put on a nice dress so they would give me more. It was almost like prostitution.”

She was lucky, she says, and not for the last time in her life.

I asked Marijke how her experience of war as a child affected who she is today. It made her a better person, she thinks, because she doesn’t take anything for granted. She remembers coming home from skating in the winter during the war and slipping between the wall and the stove that heated their living room to get warm.

“I’m so grateful that when it’s cold here, I can come home to a warm house. And I can choose food that I want to eat. I always think of the homeless people downtown, and I wonder—why was I so lucky?”

Editor’s Note: *We loved our interview with Marijka Abbott, and we’ve decided to start a new feature. We’re asking members for their childhood memories. If you have something you’d like to share, please contact Lauren Phillips to discuss your ideas. She’s got a real knack for asking the right questions and then writing up interviews.*

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

April



Don Phillips

John Schene

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.