



*We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give. –Winston Churchill.*

## **BAH Rolls out a New Health Advocacy Service**

*By Nanette Davis*



**Health Advocate trainees (left to right): Anne Mikkelsen, Joan Dow, Susan Vaughan, Nanette Davis, Judith Koontz, Barbara Lancaster and Carie Patterson (intern) Missing: Jan Claussen and Nancy Simmers.**

Bellingham At Home is rolling out a new volunteer service to help members through a medical crisis: health advocacy. The twin pillars of our advocacy efforts will be protection and support. We will be holding two informational meetings in January to introduce the service to members.

Health advocates will receive specialized training to prepare them to provide a variety of supportive services, starting with accompanying members to doctor's visits and taking notes for them. As our program develops, advocates will be available through pre- and post-surgery, hospitalization, rehabilitation, palliative care, hospice care, and bereavement following the death of a member or a member's loved one.

We plan to launch the first service, Note Taking in the Doctor's Office, by mid-February, 2018, following a January training workshop in Medical Notetaking for incoming advocates. In this way, volunteers can work to facilitate the relationship between doctor and patient and serve as a second pair of ears.

We currently have a team of health advocates lined up from all walks of life who are looking forward to starting this important work, and we invite enthusiastic individuals to join the team. (You must be a BAH volunteer already to apply.)

*Call or email Nanette Davis to get on board for this exciting opportunity for volunteer service, 360-671-1686; [drnanettej@gmail.com](mailto:drnanettej@gmail.com)*

**☉ Come All Ye BAH Members & Volunteers...**

**to our gala holiday party at the Bellingham Golf and Country Club on Thursday, December 7, at 6 pm.  
As we go to press, there's still space available, so call the office now to make your reservations.**

## Can't Get out? Let Meals on Wheels Come in



Did you know that you are eligible to receive Meals on Wheels temporarily if you are laid up or otherwise homebound? Meals on Wheels and More is a fellow program of the Whatcom Council on Aging that delivers 80,000+ nutritious meals to hundreds of at-risk older adults every year (seven per person per week); they also serve 95,000+ hot lunches to seniors at 12 locations (including BSAC) throughout Whatcom and San Juan Counties. Participants are asked to donate what money they can for the service (\$3 to \$5 per meal is suggested) but no one is turned away if they can't pay.

To sign up to receive Meals on Wheels, call their office, 9 am to 3:30 pm Monday through Friday, at 360-746-6480. Staff will gather basic information and set a delivery date to get you started. Usually they send an assortment of meals for your first order; a registered dietitian will follow-up with you after that first delivery.

Dijon chicken on rice with winter mix vegetables and peach crisp, anyone?

## Put the Village on Your Holiday List

Here it comes, ready or not: the end of the year. As you think about what has enriched your life in 2017 and what gifts you'd like to make, we hope you'll think about BAH. As a nonprofit organization, we have been able to succeed financially so far due mostly to memberships and donations.

Our purpose is to help each other, and giving a gift to the village is a great way to do that; gifts of any amount will keep us strong and help us sustain what we've started and continue to grow. (And they're tax-deductible, of course 😊.) So think about adding us to your holiday list.

A big thank you to those who already donated to Bellingham At Home this year: Ingeborg Paulus, Kate Birr, and Janice Claussen—your generosity has made a big difference for our day-to-day operations, events, and scholarship building.

## Bringing Back Boundless Inspiration, Ideas from Baltimore

*By Janet Simpson*

After representing BAH at the 9th Annual National Village Gathering in Baltimore—2½ full days of events on the theme Enhancing the Power of Aging—Angela Mercy and I have returned inspired and energized about the Village Movement.

There are currently 230 Villages in operation and 130 more in development; 390 representatives were there from all across the country. At every encounter, our first questions were, "Where's your village? How long have you been in operation?" Everyone was eager to share and trade information.

One takeaway was how many different kinds of villages there are. One in Brooklyn, for instance, has 500+ members and operates mostly as a social group, meeting in each other's homes; people there walk or use public transportation so they have no need for volunteer drivers. Three villages in Washington DC pooled their resources to fund a case manager

to help members in a variety of ways. Many have paid executive directors; in California they have a state coordinator. Some groups focus on using technology, while more rural areas don't even have Internet access. In Delaware, towns are small and spread out so volunteers sometimes drive 35 miles or more.



Angela Mercy and Janet Simpson (2nd from right and right) with two new friends at a reception in Baltimore.

General sessions focused on the digital revolution (products being developed to meet the needs of older adults), mental wellness (did you know most intellectual functions do not change with age and forgetting names is universal over age 35?), brain science (minds aren't fully mature until ages 45-50!), and ways to build or adapt a home for later years (e.g., the Toilevator which goes *under* a toilet to raise it). We learned that we have economic power (50% of purchases in the US are made by people over 50) and voting power—we just have to use it.

Angela and I chose breakout sessions that generated lots of great ideas, which we'll be sharing with the Leadership Council.

Overall it was exciting to feel part of such a vibrant, creative movement. Ask us about it and you'll get a rush of information! We appreciate the LC supporting our trip and encourage you to think about going next October, when the conference will be in San Diego.

## BAH Reaches Out for More Members and Volunteers

It seems BAH is gaining visibility, with organizations such as PeaceHealth asking to display our brochures and commercial service providers asking to be referred to our members, according to Leslie Jackson, program coordinator. Leslie reports that we welcomed three new members last month, bringing our total membership to 96. (Welcome, Caroline Balzer, Rick Hermann, and Lee Wilson!) We also have 58 volunteers, including 34 members.

Not content to rest on our laurels, BAH is launching a new outreach initiative to bring in more members and volunteers. Our first informational meeting took place on November 15 at BSAC and drew a small group of interested Bellinghamsters.

Further efforts are planned, including some meetings during evenings and weekends for working people who want to participate, so watch for announcements. We will post event notices on *Nextdoor*, which a lot of our neighbors see, and on the *Bellingham Herald* and *Cascadia Weekly* calendars, as well as on local bulletin boards. Members will get e-blast notification and are welcome to attend and bring along friends and family who may have questions about what we're up to; we'll have informational materials and volunteer applications on hand and lots of time for questions and conversations.

## Membership Matters

### *Spotlight on Janice Claussen*

By Lauren Phillips

After her husband's death in 2016, Janice Claussen did some downsizing. Among the things she got rid of was a locked trunk, which went to the RE Store. Happily, after breaking open the lock, the store called her to say they thought she might want the papers they found inside—a major understatement, as it turned out. It was stuffed with mementos of a life filled with acting, politics, and “70 great years” with Stan: their wedding album, Stan's letters from Korea when he was in the service, her diaries from grade school in Anaheim, CA, where she and Stan, close neighbors, were first fierce academic rivals and then high school sweethearts.

“We always had a lot of fun. If he couldn't laugh, it wasn't worth doing.”

Once he was out of uniform, Stan became a high school history teacher and Janice went back to school at University of California, Riverside.

“I wanted to study art history or drama, but I couldn't afford the books for either, so I was a lit major. I fell in love with Faulkner, Steinbeck, and Henry James.”



In 1995, after many dusty years in Santee, a suburb of San Diego, they hit the road in a 23-ft motor home, ending up on Orcas Island where Janice fell in love with the rain and the green. (Janice, you may have noticed, falls in love easily. She is an embracer of life, then and now.) After seven years of island life, they moved to Bellingham in 2003.

It was on Orcas that the couple, who had always been active in local theater, took their acting to the next level. They attended an intensive, week-long workshop and then started working with a training company that used role-playing. Among other assignments, they helped train organ donation coordinators in Spokane on how to talk with the newly bereaved.

“We got the coordinators and the pastors, each of whom felt that it was their job to solicit organs, to work together as a team—and donations went up. It was so satisfying.” Janice played a grandmother, a role she has since made her own in other venues, including occasional commercials. “It pays a little money, enough so that I can go down to Seattle and see theater.”

The couple also started Midnight Mystery Players at the radio museum (now the Spark Museum). You can hear the radio dramas on Sunday evenings on KRME.

At heart, though, Janice “is a political animal.” She worked for McGovern in '72, she worked for passage of the ERA, she worked for incorporation of Santee. Once Santee became a town in 1980, she ran for city council, the only woman on a slate of 25 candidates, and won. She later became mayor. In 1995, she was one of 18 representatives from the San Diego area who went to the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Women, in Beijing, organized by the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Having adopted and raised two kids, Janice is now a great grandmother offscreen. Peripheral neuropathy and two bum knees have slowed her down some but her life is still very much a work in progress. If you call BAH for a ride, it may be Janice who picks you up. If you call for a friendly visit, it may be Janice who arrives. In either case, try to remember to ask her how she and Stan got eight rooms in their motor home. (Hint: It involves a medicine cabinet with shelves just the right size for paperback books.)

## **Just around the Corner: Neighborhood Clusters**

*By Lorraine Barnes*

As we reported last month, members participating in our August annual meeting repeatedly said that they wanted to get to know other members in their neighborhoods. You asked and we're answering!

We've formed a task force and are developing an action plan, which we will present to the Leadership Council in early December. Once it's approved, we'll be looking for you to jump in and help implement the plan. Our goal is to foster cluster groups in every neighborhood in 2018.

*Along with Lorraine as chair, the task force includes Lynn DeFehr, Linda Knudsen McAusland, and Molly Hite.*

***Best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year for the entire BAH family.  
As you celebrate, keep in mind that BAH and BSAC will be closed  
December 22 and 25 and January 1.***

### **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](mailto:info@bellinghamathome.org)

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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.