



Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success. –Henry Ford

Looking Down the Road

The Whatcom Council on Aging requires it, the Leadership Council needs it, and members will benefit from it: a strategic plan to steer Bellingham At Home toward a shared vision of our future. A five-year plan and one for 2017 will guide the ongoing development of BAH. The 2017 plan will result in hiring a part-time staff person to support our operations.

Fifteen people attended BAH's first Strategic Planning Meeting in November—Leadership Council members, volunteers, WCA's executive director Mary Carlson, and facilitator Jim Reid. A five-hour meeting resulted in an outline of goals and potential actions, with deadlines for the near-term ones. The planning process will continue until April, with details being spelled out and leaders assigned.

Given a little luck and a lot of work, by the end of 2021 BAH will have:

- Increased the number of members to 1150.
- Paved the way for a transition to future generations.
- Strengthened community partnerships.
- Strengthened its fundraising capacity.
- Refined its organizational structure.
- Developed and executed a strategic outreach plan.



Attending the first BAH strategic planning meeting, left to right: Joan Dow, Joanne Knittel, Mary Carlson, Angela Mercy, Lorraine Barnes, Robin McGuire, Kate Birr, Nanette Davis, Steve Morris, Marilyn Burlingame (we know she's back there!), Elaine Cress, Bob Baker, Matsumi O'Connor, Howard Furst, and Barb Evans.

The next steps for our planners include reviewing, refining, and formally adopting these goals; and identifying the top priorities to achieve in 2017 and 2018.

What are your thoughts about this plan?

Webinar Update

The watch party for the live Beacon Hill Village Anniversary Webinar, featuring Atul Gawande, will take place Feb. 13, at 2 p.m., at the Downtown Co-op Connections room on Holly (next to the bakery; park behind the building). Call the office if you need a ride.

Dr. Gawande is a renowned surgeon, public health researcher and writer, who will speak about the value of community and opportunities as we grow older. While Dr. Gawande's seminal book *Being Mortal* alludes to death, the stories in it are actually about life.



Dr. Atul Gawande, author

It's a Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood



Remember neighbors? People who lived on your block or down the street or around the corner that you knew well enough to borrow an egg or hitch a ride from? So many of us today only know our neighbors to wave at. If you miss that kind of close-at-hand familiarity, you'll be glad to know that Bellingham At Home has made it easy for you to connect with other members who live in your own neighborhood.

Maybe you'd like to have a few people over for coffee, or see about carpooling to a concert, or take a walk with someone without having to get in your car. You could arrange any or all of these things using the Member Directory on our website. Here's how:

1. Go to Bellinghamathome.org and sign in.
2. Click on Membership Services.
3. Open the Membership Directory.
4. Click on Search.
5. From the drop-down "Search by" menu, choose Metro Area.
6. Click on your neighborhood.

You'll then see a listing of all BAH members who live in your neck of the woods—phone number, email, address. These are your neighbors! Reach out and touch someone.

From BSAC: Something Old, Something New

What could be older than love? And what better way to celebrate love than a Valentine's Day Dinner Dance at the Leopold? Join other BSAC members at 5pm for prime rib and swing music courtesy of the Swing Connection big band, featuring tons of great old love songs and soloists from the Whatcom Sound Jazz Singers. The price is an amazing \$10 but space is limited, so call the Leopold now at 360-733-3500 to purchase your ticket.

New this year is Saturday Duplicate Bridge at BSAC, every Saturday from 10:30-2:30 in Room 16. This is the ONLY duplicate bridge game available on Saturdays between Vancouver and Seattle! Players are expected to know Stayman, Transfers, and Weak Twos (whatever they may be) and are welcome to bring in their own lunch if they like; coffee and tea available at the Coffee Bar. For more information, contact Paul at 360-656-6976 or paul@bellinghamaces.com.

New LC Members Invite You to Join Them

Howard Furst came to Bellingham 44 years ago to attend WWU; he was a carpenter, general contractor, software engineer, and business owner before retiring in 2014, having sold his built-from-scratch Infocare records storage and management business to a national vendor.

Linda Knudsen McAusland, who just moved here from Seattle last June to be closer to nature, has more than 35 years' experience in public policy, program, organization, and community development for cultural organizations, including four years introducing cultural mapping and community dialogue processes in Ukraine.

Currently enjoying her family's five-acre farm just outside of Bellingham, **Robin McGuire** was until her recent retirement a director of property management in Minneapolis. Her specialty was continuing care communities and independent senior housing.

All three have just joined BAH's Leadership Council, bringing all that great professional experience, along with their personal enthusiasm, to the work of growing BAH into an organization that meets its members' needs for community and mutual support and fun. We're hoping you will consider following their example.

The fact is, many members of the LC have poured countless hours over several years into getting BAH up and running and they're, well, tired. Some of them are longing for replacement on the council so they can enjoy being BAH members and volunteers at a slower pace.

If you are in a position to up your commitment to BAH to the next level of responsibility and creativity, we would love to discuss the possibilities with you. Yes, being on the LC is a lot of work. It's also exhilarating, satisfying, and empowering.

Let's Clear Something up

If this headline immediately made you think yeah, my office (or garage or living room or, sigh, entire house/life), run, don't walk, to Wellness Wednesday on Feb. 1 for "Clearing Clutter to Simplify Your Life," a workshop led by Carolyn Koehnline. Stacks of paper, unproductive thinking, time-wasting activities... clutter, according to Carolyn, is anything that drains your energy, gets in your way, and distracts from your priorities. Learn how to evaluate the clutter—physical, emotional, or schedule—in your life and find guidelines and resources to help you clear it up. (1 pm, Room 16)



Carolyn Koehnline, Licensed Mental Health Counselor and clutter coach

Membership Matters

Spotlight on Richard and Jody Porter

The Porters are people people. Ask Jody Porter to tell you something about herself and the first thing she says is "I'm an encourager." "She really is," says her husband Richard admiringly. It must have been an especially useful quality in her job, teaching college prep at a community college. This was in Eastern Oregon, where Richard dealt in loans for farms, ranches, and water systems for the federal Farmers Home Administration.

Ask Richard the same question and without hesitation he says "I like people." He *really* likes people, Jody says admiringly. He also likes helping people, which is something you may have experienced for yourself when Richard arrived to drive you to an appointment or weed your lawn as a BAH service volunteer. Jody is looking forward to being able to volunteer once she's wrestled her current back pain into submission. "Even if I have a cane I could still drop by to see someone and *listen*."

Having moved to Oregon from the more metropolitan East coast, they found the Snake River Valley to be a revelation. "I grew to love having animals around and the smell of sagebrush," Jody says. "And I came to appreciate the sons and daughters of cowboys that I taught. They were quite provincial and they opened my eyes to a broader perspective."



Richard and Jody Porter

The couple retired to Bellingham in 2010 at the suggestion of their son, who lives in Glacier, and was lucky enough eventually to find just the house they wanted: very private, on a quiet street, with a big garden for Jody to work. Richard likes gardening, too, but first and foremost he is a reader and a hiker. Not so much a cross country skier anymore since he got his new hip.

Wanting to help others isn't the only reason the Porters joined Bellingham At Home. They can see that they themselves will probably need outside support someday and they think what the organization is doing for the community is vital. "I remember my father having to leave his home because he didn't have the kind of services BAH provides," Jody says. She appreciates how well organized BAH is, and "I like that even if they don't have a volunteer able to do a particular job, they'll help you find one."

And while they seem wonderfully content in each other's company, the Porters plan on moving into BAH's social circle when Jody is well—so we can all enjoy their company.

Stats! Hot Stats! Get Your 2016 Year-End Stats Right Here!

114	number of members
92	number of households
65	number of total volunteers
135	number of service requests

Interest Groups Are Catching on

Interested in movies? There's a group for that! Likewise for books, meditation, hiking, and soon, classical music. Some of these groups only have a couple of like-minded people so far, but it's a start! To join a group, check the list that accompanies the calendar for times and contact information for the founding member. To start a new one, call Nanette Davis.

The possibilities are endless, really... Games players, pastry cooks, day trippers—give it some thought. Didn't you want to learn Italian?

♥♥♥♥ MUSIC ♥♥♥♥ TALENT ♥♥♥♥ STORYTELLING ♥♥♥♥ GOOD EATS ♥♥♥♥

Don't miss the **Valentine Talent Show & Potluck**

Friday, February 17, 6 p.m.

WECU Education Bldg., 511 E. Holly St. across from the Holly St. WECU

Watch for an e-blast with potluck details.

Sign up to share *your* entertainment.

Call or email Nanette Davis, 360-671-1686, drnanettej@gmail.com.

♥♥♥♥ Bellingham At Home's got TALENT ♥♥♥♥

♥♥♥♥ COMEDY ♥♥♥♥ JUGGLING ♥♥♥♥ DANCING ♥♥♥♥ GOOD EATS ♥♥♥♥

Bellingham At Home Contact Information

Location: Bellingham Senior Activity Center, Room 17, 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.

These links will download PDF files from our website:

[February 2017 BAH Events Calendar](#)

[February 2017 BAH Interest Groups](#)