



Bellingham  
At Home

## Your Village Voice – July 2016

*Those among you who will be truly happy are those who have sought and found how to serve. —Albert Schweitzer  
(Hint, hint)*

### **Hey, We're Open for Business!**

Let us pause (briefly) to send up hosannas, along with our thanks to everyone who has helped us get up on our feet—and an urgent call for service volunteers. For the moment, we're asking members to call rather than email your requests for service: 360-746-3462, 9 am-4 pm, Monday through Friday. And please give us three days' notice. OK—back to work, everybody!

### **Membership Soars, Service Volunteer Numbers.... Not So Much Yet**

The good news first: Membership had risen to 95 as of press time—a gratifying sign of support for the concept that aging well is, indeed, a team sport and a ringing endorsement of the Leadership Council's efforts so far. Way to go, LC!

Now the good news about the bad news: It isn't all that bad. It's just that we have more members than service volunteers at this point, when our goal is the other way around. The solution is straightforward—we all have to redouble our efforts to recruit people to join the volunteer ranks as quickly as possible. By people, we mean neighbors, relatives, friends, colleagues, dry cleaners, hairdressers, and, of course, members—by which we mean you. Of course not everybody wants to volunteer or is able, and membership entails absolutely no obligation to do so.

But if you've been tossing the idea around, wondering what you have to contribute and what it would involve, if you have some extra time and are itching to spread your wings a bit, we'd love to talk with you. And we encourage you to talk with any likely prospects you come across—keep in mind, people like to be needed. You can direct them to our website or give them our number; we'll take it from there.

### **Getting to Know You (Soon)**

The members of the Membership Task Force would like you to know they are sooooo grateful for your patience in waiting (if you are still waiting) for your Membership Interview. More Task Force volunteers are being trained all the time and they are now going out to members' homes in pairs and conducting 10 to 15 interviews a week, so you should get a call or email soon to schedule a time that works for you. Once your interview is completed, your membership kicks into gear and we're at your service! (Rest assured that your membership year will not start until that time.)

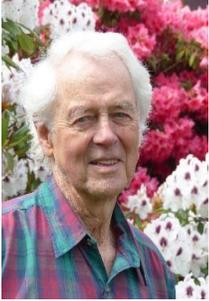
The thing you should know about the Membership Interview is this: It's not just useful in making sure Bellingham At Home grows in the directions members want, it's fun. (It's also short, usually about an hour.) By all accounts, the volunteers are enjoying getting to know members up-close-and-personal and members are glad for the chance to be known—to share their interests, their needs, their ideas, along with a bit of background.

Lauren Phillips, for one, was a tiny bit dubious about the need to answer all these questions face-to-face when forms are so much more, well, expeditious. She gets it now, she says. "The volunteers were so warm, and interested in me and my husband! We made a human connection and I feel that I belong to something real now."

## Our New Website Is up and Ready for Company

Want to know more about service providers, or how to donate to the organization, or what the membership eligibility criteria are? Pretty much everything there is to know about Bellingham At Home is now available at <http://bellinghamathome.org> -- schedule of events, how to apply to be a volunteer, our village boundaries. This spiffy site is the work of Bob Baker, so if you see him around, a pat on the back would not be out of order. We know for a fact he'd welcome your suggestions.

### Membership Matters: *Spotlight on Richard Abbott*



Richard Abbott was not the founding father of Bellingham At Home, but he is without question a member of the immediate family: first leader of the committee that worked out the memorandum of understanding between BAH and the Whatcom Council on Aging (WCOA) in 2013; liaison between the newly formed BAH steering committee and WCOA and developer of the first operating budget in 2014; head of the newly formed Finance and Administration Task Force in 2015; a founding member of the Founders Club of people who donated \$1,000 or more to the organization; and, until about a minute ago, head of the Finance Task Force.

June 29<sup>th</sup> was Richard's last day on the Leadership Council (LC) but he says he plans to hang around "as long as I can be useful." Happily for us, that should be a good long while.

"I'll continue to be very involved as a Task Force volunteer, working with Bob Baker on finances, providing office support, and doing Member Interviews." Now that BAH has launched, he is also looking forward to being a service volunteer, doing driving and minor home maintenance. Did we mention that he's giving a travel talk on Afghanistan on Tuesday the 26<sup>th</sup>? (We did; check the Calendar of Events.)

Richard brought both expertise and experience to BAH: He was an international businessperson and consultant in agriculture and food processing, making good use of both his chemical engineering degree (UC Berkeley) and his MA in international relations (Johns Hopkins). But he appears to have talents that he hasn't yet brought to bear on our behalf! For instance, he is a member of the Whatcom Chorale. For another instance, he is an expert in Ragtime music. Hmmm, maybe a workshop on piano jazz? What about a BAH singing group?

It's not that we're not eternally grateful for your service thus far, Richard. We just think this music stuff is something we should explore...

### Volunteer Ice Cream Social

Bellingham At Home volunteers on the Service Providers task force socialize regularly over ice cream at the Senior Center. Join us for July's task force social on the 20<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m.

Left to right: Howard Furst, Jeanne Uhles, Joan Dow, and Tim Myhre.



### Bellingham At Home Contact Information

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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.