



May 2013  
Vol. 30, No. 5

<http://blacksburgaarp.org>

### May 21 Chapter Meeting

## Who will be your advocate if you go to the hospital, the emergency room, or a walk-in medical facility?

**Tuesday, May 21 AARP Chapter Meeting will be held at VCOM II.**

A complimentary lunch will be served starting at 11:30 am, Tuesday, May 21 at VCOM II (2280 Kraft Drive--where the Health Fair has been in recent years). There will be pizza and salad, beverage, and dessert provided by VCOM.

President Tom Alston will open the meeting at noon. The program will follow the theme of the year: Who Will Be The Health Care Advocate for Seniors? For the May meeting, the specific topic will be: Who will be your advocate in the emergency room? hospital? walk-in-medical facility? Faculty, students, and staff at VCOM will present the program.

There is plenty of parking and fully handicapped access to facilities.

**Come bring a friend or two to join you!**



Food Pantry  
Donations Needed

**Don't forget to bring a food donation** (a can or box of non-perishable food) to the AARP chapter meeting on May 21. It will go to the Interfaith Food Pantry in Blacksburg.

### President's Column

My favorite time of the year – Spring, has finally arrived. There is nothing like the red buds and the cherry blossoms and the dogwoods to appreciate the beauty of nature. And the weather is finally nice enough to enjoy long walks and to work in the garden. The last freeze date for our area is May 15<sup>th</sup>, and I am ready to transplant my tomatoes.



Our next program is on May 21<sup>st</sup> at VCOM – they are providing pizza, salad, and dessert. Once again, Carl has done a superb job of lining up speakers who will discuss health care advocacy. Also, Sally Anna Stapleton will be collecting can food for the Interfaith Food Pantry.

June 18 is the date for the annual chapter picnic and white elephant sale at Nellies Cave Park in Blacksburg. We have a special guest this year – Fiddler Jack Hinshelwood, Director of SW Virginia's Crooked Road – you won't want to miss it.

The Blacksburg Summer Solstice Fest is scheduled for June 21-22. Some members of our chapter have already signed up for the 5K run (3.1 miles) at sundown on Saturday the 22<sup>nd</sup>. John Hillison is leading the AARP "running team", so if you are interested, please join in the fun.

Tom Alston

### Chapter Picnic is June 18

June 18 will be the Annual Picnic at Nellies Cave Park in Blacksburg (at the end of Grissom Lane). Special music will be provided by fiddle-player Jack Hinshelwood, Director of SW Virginia's Crooked Road. There will also be the annual "White Elephant Sale" so it's also a good time to clean out your basement or attic for summer.

## Blacksburg AARP Chapter # 2613 Financial Statement

April 2013

**Balance at end of March 2013** **\$4,451.86**

### Credits

Reversal of Ck#1343 to L. Bloom	\$ 17.51
Coffee Money	30.53
Interest	.12
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 48.16</b>

### Debits

Kopy Korner	\$ 66.68
L. Bloom (replacing missing check)	30.53
State Corporation Commission (annual fee)	25.00
Beecher Carlson (liability insurance)	105.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 214.19</b>

**Balance end of April 2013** **\$4,293.83**

**Balance in reserve account** **\$ 2,681.83**

## Blacksburg AARP Chapter # 2613 Membership Report

May 2013\*

### Member Profile:

Category	Individual Count	Household Count
AARP 2013 Members	237	145
LifeTime Members	37	22
Life Members	15	14
Comp Members	19	19
Honorary Members	2	1
<b>Total Membership</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>201</b>

Committee: Jim Wightman (chair), Sue Farrar,  
Tom Alston

\*Report prepared May 6, 2013

## 2013 Local AARP Tax Program

By Pat Ballard

AARP Tax-Aide counselors completed another successful year of tax preparation. This was an extremely busy year and the snow contributed to our needing to reschedule some clients. For the year here's what the program accomplished:

- 1058 total clients served
- 900 federal returns for the current year
- 12 prior year returns
- 16 amended returns
- 132 question and answer only
- 60.5 years was the average age (ranging from 16 to 105 years)
- 53% of our clients were single

The program concluded the tax season on April 15. The AARP Tax-Aide program had 21

volunteers working for the tax program this year – 4 client facilitators and 17 counselors. Our client facilitators were: Linda Akers, Betty Greene, Nancy Shields and Dot Finch. Counselors: Dave Armstrong, Marilyn Armstrong, Pat Ballard, Mike Dumin, Janet Hahn, Jim Hardell, Bea Knautz, Larry Lawrence, Richard Marchal, Coreen Mett, Julian Moore, Diane Rencsok, Brian Sanchez, Bob Swain, Lewy Whitescarver, Jim Wilson and John Wonderly.

The program operates out of the Christiansburg Rec. Center on Monday & Saturday mornings, Tuesday evenings, and Thursday afternoons. We made a trip over to the Senior Center in Giles Co. and one to the Shawsville Library to prepare taxes.

Counselors are required to pass an IRS test before they can prepare taxes. We are limited in scope by what forms we have received training to prepare. If it is out of scope we will send you to a paid preparer.

The Tax-Aide program is always looking for new volunteers. There are positions with this program that are administrative in nature and do not require someone to pass the test to be a tax preparer. Examples would be public relations, marketing, local coordinator. If you or anyone you know may be interested in working with the Tax-Aide program, please have them get in touch with Pat Ballard at 540-382-1189 or by email at pballard@vt.edu.



This cake was presented to the volunteers who made such a significant contribution to the tax service this year.

### AARP Blacksburg Chapter #2613

Chapter meetings are the third Tuesday of each month at the Blacksburg Community Center, Patrick Henry Drive at 11:30 a.m. There are no meetings in July or August. Board meetings are the first Tuesday of each month at the Blacksburg Community Center at 10:00 a.m.

PO Box 10082

Blacksburg, VA 24062

[www.blacksburgaarp.org](http://www.blacksburgaarp.org)

## Ashley Hardin receives AARP Scholarship for VCOM student in gerontology



My name is Ashly Hardin and I am from Bessemer City, North Carolina. I have told my parents I wanted to be a doctor when I was in fifth grade. That goal took various forms over the years, but after my experiences

with my grandparents and working in home health while in college I decided to specialize in geriatrics.

I had the privilege of living next door to my grandparents for the majority of my childhood. My grandfather was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease shortly after his first leg was amputated. When my grandpa first experienced symptoms of memory loss he asked my Mom to make sure he remained in his home. My parents made the decision that we would move next door to make his wish possible. Shortly after our move, my grandpa had his other leg amputated as well. Growing up in this situation allowed me to see what patients and their caregivers go through. I was able to spend every afternoon after school at my grandparents' house helping out. I gained many skills that made me be a better nursing assistant and I am confident that these experiences will make me an even better physician. One instance, in particular, was the summer my grandmother had cardiac bypass. My family took turns spending the day with my grandparents caring for both of them, but there were times between caregivers that I would fill in. I learned how to change dressings, pack wounds, how to thicken liquids for those who have difficulty swallowing, and how to deal with additional concerns regarding insurance and Medicare. My grandparents were both unable to read and write as they were pulled out of school during the Great Depression. To see their

struggles and how hard they worked throughout their lives still inspires me today. My grandfather passed away in his home with his family by his side as he wished. My family was able to take care of my grandmother and keep her at home also until she passed away 5 years later. Growing up in this environment may not have been typical, but it shaped my life and will make me a physician that can relate to my patients and help families in similar situations.

My time spent working in home health care also had a great impact on my direction in medicine. I was able to help care for an amazing woman with Parkinson's disease while pursuing my undergraduate degree at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. I spent most evenings after class and some weekends with her for over a year before she passed away. This time spent with her changed my life more than she or her family would ever know. She remained a strong, graceful woman until the end and I was honored to assist in her care. The experiences with my grandparents and in home health care have made me extremely passionate about family practice, geriatrics, incorporating home visits into my practice, and working with an adult care.

### NRV Leading Lights Awards Banquet

Blacksburg AARP Past President, Dr. Paul Smeal, was recognized as Blacksburg AARP's nominee for the Leading Lights Award at the NRV Leading Lights Awards Banquet on Thursday, April 11, 2013. NRV Leading Lights is a community-wide project that recognizes volunteers in the New River Valley who make community-changing impacts and serve as role models to inspire others. They are selected based on their strong community involvement, proven leadership, demonstrated lifestyle of dedicated, continuous, long-term involvement to our community, and creativity in initiating and implementing projects that lead to a better quality of life. Paul exemplifies the spirit of Leading Lights through his long career of dedicated service. We are proud to have him as one of our chapter's "Leading Lights" and to have nominated him for this prestigious award.

## Community Conversations on Aging

Tina King, Executive Director  
New River Valley Agency on Aging

During the month of April, the New River Valley Agency on Aging facilitated five (5) Community Conversations on Aging. The events were held in the Counties of Floyd, Giles, Montgomery and Pulaski and the City of Radford. The attendance level at the events varied. Not including the staff at the Agency on Aging, Floyd County had the highest attendance level at 34 and Montgomery County had the next highest at 27, followed by Giles County and Radford each having 11 attendees, and Pulaski had 10.

The Conversations were held for older adults, adults with disabilities, caregivers, local, state, and federal government officials, long term care service providers and health care providers to talk about the strengths and resources in each community and the challenges and gaps in supports with assisting citizens to "age-in-place." (The definition used for aging in place is : the ability to remain in one's own home or community in spite of potential changes in health and functioning in later life, benefitting older adults, their families, communities and governments.)

All of the events had some level of representation of older adults, adults with disabilities and/or caregivers from the community, except for Radford. At each event, with the exception of Floyd (local administrators and local elected officials could not attend due to a meeting) there was representation from state and/or local elected government officials and administrators. All events had good representation of providers of long term services and supports and public agencies. Those attending each event were given a packet of information on some of the services available in each community, a survey to complete and information on various topics and demographic data pertinent to our aging population and population of adults with disabilities.

A common thread throughout all of the 5 events, was the desire and need for older adults and adults with disabilities to be able to stay "connected" to their communities as they become unable to drive and to have safe, accessible and affordable housing. In most areas generally the housing stock is older, lacks accessibility and is not energy efficient. Based on the level of supportive services and health services already in place in each community, there were varying levels of concern and discussion regarding the

need for more services and new types of services. Additionally, across all events, the need for information on services and supports that already exist was expressed.

Montgomery County participants indicated there are several areas in which Montgomery County is doing well in regard to supporting citizens to age in place. It was noted that the public transit system provides accessible and affordable transportation to those in the Blacksburg and Christiansburg areas and there is availability of some human services transportation options for medical trips and scheduled shopping in outlying areas such as Shawsville, McCoy, etc. Recreation opportunities are plentiful as are volunteer opportunities. Several commented on the many ways that older volunteers "give back" to the community and provide valuable services. Healthcare providers including home health agencies were also considered adequate in Montgomery County.

Housing options were discussed with concern for housing that is older and in need of repair and modifications. Volunteer programs and grant and loan programs were mentioned as a means to address some of the needs that older adults have with the need to repair and /or modify their existing home; although the need for this seems to be greater than the current resources. It was noted that funding to support affordable and accessible rental housing seems to be decreasing at a time when the need appears to be growing. The project on Grissom Lane in Blacksburg that will include 8 income based rental units with universal design features and 4 fully equipped for individuals with disabilities was cited as a model project of housing that addresses current and future needs of those desiring to age in place and stay in their communities. A few participants noted the role that pets play in providing companionship and that some people are reluctant to move to rental housing because of the limitations that it sometimes puts on pet owners. Some also mentioned the challenges of affording vet bills and food for pets. A growing need for financial assistance among older adults in general was also mentioned.

As in other communities, Montgomery County lacks assisted living facilities that can afford to offer "beds" to individuals unable to pay the full private pay cost. There is an adult foster care program in Montgomery County that can utilize auxiliary grant (public) funding and find

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homes for qualifying individuals in need of supervision and assistance. However, most of the adult foster care homes for Montgomery County citizens are located outside of the County which means they must move to an unfamiliar community.

Adult day services are available at the Virginia Tech Adult Day Services program along with other supportive community based programs and in-home services. Some noted the helpfulness of the health insurance counseling program provided by the Agency on Aging and supported with RSVP volunteers and office space, along with the income tax preparation assistance and tax relief program for the elderly and disabled citizens meeting income and resource requirements. The waiting list for homemaker service and a need for chore services was mentioned. Support groups for various issues, especially care giving were discussed as being vital. Several indicated a need for a "central resource of information" on existing community supports and support groups. It was noted that the Agency on Aging is a good resource for comprehensive information on long term supports and services.

The information gathered from the events along with survey results will be considered as the Agency on Aging prepares an annual Area Plan of Aging Services and it will also be shared with each locality and with those working with the Livability Initiative to be considered in future planning. We plan to continue having Community Conversations as we believe there is great value in hearing from individuals and learning more about the unique strengths and challenges that are faced in each locality.

For more information on services, programs, and presentations geared to serving older adults, adults with disabilities and caregivers, contact the New River Valley Agency on Aging by phone at 980-7720 or by e-mail at [nrva.org](mailto:nrvaoa@nrva.org).

## **Letter from the Blacksburg AARP Chapter Board of Directors about rezoning the old Blacksburg Middle School property**

*The following letter was sent by the local Blacksburg AARP Chapter Board of Directors to Anne McClung, Director of Planning for the Town of Blacksburg.*

Dear Director McClung:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Blacksburg AARP chapter, I wish to convey some concerns to you about the proposed development of the old Blacksburg Middle School (OBMS) property in the hope that you can insure their inclusion in the final recommendation to the Blacksburg Town Council.

First, our chapter believes strongly that any plan approved for the OBMS property development include housing for seniors. We are aware that some doubt whether the market is strong for such housing, but some data about our growing senior constituency may convince developers otherwise. For example, more than 17,000 persons over the age of 50 now live in the county of Montgomery. Of these, more than 4,000 reside in the Town of Blacksburg, almost 5,000 in the county of Floyd, more than 3,000 in the county of Giles, more than 12,000 in county of Pulaski, and more than 3,000 in the city of Radford. These numbers represent a significant percentage of the entire populations of these entities. In the New River Valley, it is estimated that 26% of the population is aged 50 or more. These data reflect a large and ever-growing senior population in our region. In fact, the New River Valley Livability Initiative asserts that the senior population in these areas will nearly double in 20 years. This development project of the OBMS represents a propitious opportunity for the Town of Blacksburg to recognize this demographic reality and respond to it in this and all other housing projects.

Second, we believe that all new housing in this development project should be accessible to handicapped persons. Frankly, we believe that the Town of Blacksburg should adopt a policy that all new housing anywhere in the municipality be handicapped accessible. In this immediate case, however, such a requirement is mandatory in our opinion. It is a widely accepted axiom that all people benefit when accessible facilities are constructed, not just the currently handicapped. We hope that you will require the developers to proffer this condition in their proposal.

Finally, our chapter requests that any new housing in this project be affordable. This site may attract residents from all over the New River Valley, but only if housing units are affordable to the majority of citizens. Such a prime location may entice many citizens to consider moving

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 closer to downtown Blacksburg.

We are concerned that this property currently is not earning taxes from anyone and we urge action to make this property more beneficial for Blacksburg citizens.

Respectfully,  
 Tom Alston  
 President  
 Blacksburg AARP  
 Chapter 2613

### Call for Blacksburg Chapter Award Nominations

All chapter members are invited to send nominations for several awards given each year by the Blacksburg AARP Chapter. These include the following awards: (1) Chapter service award, (2) Community service award, and (3) Leading Lights Award. Nominations should be mailed to:

Juanita Wightman  
 1300 Westover Dr,  
 Blacksburg VA 24060.

### Recent releases in large type titles available at your public library

By Mary Mott, Library Services Specialist of the Blacksburg Library



Celebrate these beautiful spring days by lying in a hammock with a good book from the Blacksburg Library! We just received some great new large type titles, including these recent releases that run the gamut of genres:

***Standing In Another Man's Grave*** by Ian Rankin is the latest in the popular Detective John Rebus series, set in modern day Edinburgh, Scotland. Rebus has come out of retirement to join the cold cases department, and immediately becomes involved in the investigation of a young woman who disappeared without a trace on a road where two other women have also gone missing. *Reader's Digest* calls the book "vintage Rankin... [a] thoroughly absorbing, endlessly twisting tale".

Fans of cozy mysteries will enjoy Joanne Fluke's latest Hannah Swensen mystery, ***Red Velvet Cupcake Murder***. In this go around, Hannah becomes the target of a murder investigation when her romantic rival, the scandalous Doctor Bev, dies after eating one of Hannah's cupcakes at a party. The sheriff's secretary may hold the secret to the mystery, but she is near death after a fall at the same party. The book includes 26 recipes to try.

***Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker*** by Jennifer Chiaverini features the character of Mary Todd Lincoln's personal dressmaker Elizabeth Keckley (fans of the movie "Lincoln" may remember her character from that film, as well). Ms. Keckley, a free black woman, befriended and supported her employer through difficult times, all the while dealing with her own tragedies. *The New York Post* says that *Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker* is "required reading . . . The story of First Lady Mary Todd Lincoln and Lizzie Keckley, a former slave who became Mrs. Lincoln's seamstress and confidante."



Ever-popular author Clive Cussler has a new historical adventure, ***The Striker***, starring young detective Isaac Bell. It's 1902, and Isaac is hired to hunt for radical unionist saboteurs in the coal mines of West Virginia. When he witnesses a terrible mining accident, he starts to suspect that company provocateurs may be involved. *The Associated Press* says that ***The Striker*** "[Might] be the best yet in the series. . ."

Popular romance author Linda Lael Miller is back with a new western romance, ***Big Sky River***, set in rural Parable, Montana. This time it is sexy Sheriff Boone Taylor's turn to find romance. He sets his sights on his new neighbor Tara Kendall, a sophisticated chicken farmer from New York City who has always dreamed of moving to the country. Although Boone and Tara are wary of falling in love, they cannot deny their overwhelming attraction. *Library Journal* says "a passionate love too long denied drives the action in this multifaceted, emotionally rich reunion story..."

## **Blacksburg AARP Board of Directors Meeting Blacksburg Community Center May 7, 2013**

**Call to Order:** President Tom Alston called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

**Officers Present:** Tom Alston, Leslye Bloom

**Board Members Present:** Carl McDaniels, Val Coluni, Margart Kates, John Hillison, Edd Sewell, Ben Crawford, Jim Montgomery, Nola Elliot, Doris Abraham, June Schmidt, Terry Wildman, Sally Anna Stapleton, Mary Ann Hinshelwood

**Visitors:** Wendell Hensley

**Approval of Minutes:** Don Creamer moved and John Hillison seconded that the minutes from the April Board meeting be approved. Motion passed.

**Program Committee:** Committee Chair, Carl McDaniels, reported that the May 21 program is set for meeting at VCOM II. John Hillison announced that the VCOM scholarship recipient and will be present at the meeting. The meeting will focus on who will be your advocate in ER, hospital, and other medical-related facilities. Carl expressed gratitude for Joseph Yost's presentation in March and the Warm Hearth presentation last month. He asked for input for September and October meetings that will focus on advocacy for end-of-life issues. The November program will focus on staying in your home during illness.

Some discussion was held about inviting Delegate Joseph Yost and his opponents/colleagues to some public meeting. Bloom suggested that they be invited to the June picnic.

**Hospitality Committee:** Leslye Bloom announced that the June 18 event is mostly set. She sought volunteers to help with setup and cleanup.

**Legislative Committee:** Val Coluni provided a written report summarizing legislative actions pertaining to The Affordable Care Act, the Virginia Medicaid expansion, financial abuse of the elderly, and payday lender abuse. He urged Board members to vote in the June elections of Delegates to the Virginia legislature.

**Update on Blacksburg Planning Committee:** Wendell Hensley/Ben Crawford reported on Planning Committee concerns for the old Blacksburg Middle School property. Many issues with latest developer proposal for the property were raised including storm water runoff, pedestrian traffic in and around proposed development, student housing in the project, and facilities for senior citizens.

Discussion eventually called for the Board of Directors to take a position on some of these issues and to communicate them to the Planning Director, Anne McClung. Leslye Bloom moved and John Hillison seconded a motion that a letter be sent by the current president stating these positions. Motion passed. Don Creamer was asked to draft the letter.

**Treasurer's Report:** Don Creamer moved and John Hillison seconded that Treasurer's report be accepted. The motion passed.

**Website Editor Report:** Don Creamer informed the Board of the changes made to the chapter website and asked that all members visit the site and offer suggestions for improvement. Purposes of the site include functionality for the Board of Directors, useful information for chapter

members, and hosting inviting materials for prospective members.

**Newsletter Editor:** Edd Sewell reported that newsletter material has been sparse for the past two months and called for more input from the Board. Don Creamer was asked to send the letter to be drafted for the Planning Commission to Edd for inclusion in next newsletter.

**History Committee Task Force Report:** John Hillison reported that the task force reached several recommendations about the History Committee and believe that the committee should be continued and that the duties of the committee be expanded to include keeping annual chapter membership lists; annual memorial ceremony scripts; pictures of chapter activities; media material of chapter activities; annual reports of committee chairs, Board members, and officers; and hard copies of the monthly newsletters. Jim Montgomery moved and Sally Anna Stapleton seconded a motion to approve the Task Force recommendations and to extend thanks to the members of the group. The motion passed.

A suggestion was offered to create task forces for each committee of the Board to clarify duties. The Board members generally expressed agreement with this idea.

**Membership Report:** Tom Alston reviewed the report. No significant changes in membership were noted from the past month.

**Community Service:** Sally Anna Stapleton reported that the Town of Blacksburg had extended an invitation to the chapter to have a table at the summer Stepp'n Out event. No interest was expressed. Food drive s will occur September 8 through the 15<sup>th</sup> this fall and Sally Anna will seek volunteers to help with the drives. A Hunger Summit work team was created for various food banks and Jane Wallace will head the activity. The new group will create a manual to guide food drives in Virginia.

**Public Relations:** Terry Wildman reported notices of public meetings will be published as usual. Information on June picnic was sought including the vintage car show and music.

**Award Committee:** Jim Montgomery reported for Juanita Wightman that she needs nominations by September.

**Caring Committee:** Margaret Kates reported that a bus tour of new buildings on the Virginia Tech campus is planned for May 23. She also reported that the Retirees Association plan to hold the Spring luncheon on May 31.

**AARP VA Liaison:** Ben Crawford called attention to an article in the most recent AARP magazine by national AARP president. Ben Crawford and Tom Alston attended a meeting on aging in Bedford area. He summarized the meeting noting that Social Security programs are for all citizens of all ages, senior abuse is rampant, livable communities are desired by all, and our groups should work with other agencies at all times.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 pm.

Don Creamer  
Acting Secretary

**Tom Alston, President  
AARP Chapter #2613  
P.O. Box 10082  
Blacksburg, VA 24062**

**Nonprofit  
Organization  
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***Put these dates on your calendar!***

**Tuesday, May 21 is the AARP Chapter meeting which will be held at VCOM II. Lunch is provided at 11:30 a.m. and the program begins at noon. The program, presented by the faculty, students and staff of the Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM), is on the topic “Who will be your advocate if you go to the hospital, the emergency room, or to a walk-in medical facility?” Bring a friend and enjoy this informative meeting.**

**Tuesday, June 18 will be the Annual Picnic at Nellies Cave Park in Blacksburg (at the end of Grissom Lane). Special music will be provided by fiddler Jack Hinshelwood, Director of Southwestern Virginia's Crooked Road. There will also be the annual "White Elephant Sale" so it's also a good time to clean out your basement or attic for summer. Look for more information on the picnic in next month's newsletter.**

***Visit the new Blacksburg AARP website at [www.blacksburgaarp.org](http://www.blacksburgaarp.org) and let Don Creamer know what you think of it!***