



Real Possibilities with
Blacksburg
VA Chapter #2613

Blacksburg Chapter
NEWS

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www.blacksburgaarp3org

Serving the greater New River Valley, Virginia

January 19 Chapter Meeting

**How Safe are Senior Drivers?
Answers from Naturalistic Research**

Dr. Jon Antin from the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute will join us to share some of the ground-breaking research currently being conducted by the



Center for Vulnerable Road Users Safety at VTTI. Jon is Director of the center, which focuses its research and outreach not just on seniors, but also teens, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Jon also serves as program coordinator for a unique transportation safety graduate program administered by VTTI in conjunction with four other departments at Virginia Tech. Given the nature of his work with seniors he serves as a faculty affiliate in the Center for Gerontology.

In terms of education Jon received his B. S. degree in psychology from LSU, then going on to achieve his master's and Ph.D from Virginia Tech in the area of human factors engineering. His work has included stints at AT&T, the NASA Johnson Space Center, the Naval Air Station at Patuxent River, and N.C. State University. Delving deeper into his resume and background one would find a large number of publications, grants, and outreach activities.

During this presentation Dr. Antin will share a bit more of his background and the extensive work going on at VTTI, but focusing mostly on the unique methods currently being utilized to gather naturalistic data on seniors' fitness to drive.

President's Column

by Don Creamer

"The flower symbol of January is snowdrop & carnation."

"January is named after Janus (Januarius), the god of the doorway."

With these compelling tidbits in mind, we begin a new year for our chapter with many new initiatives to embrace. Foremost among these initiatives is to acknowledge that 2016 marks the 40th anniversary of AARP Blacksburg. The original charter for our chapter



was issued on June 29, 1976. Planning for events to honor this milestone is underway.

The venue for the 2016 Health and Wellness Fair has changed. The event will be held at the Christiansburg

Recreational Center since VCOM is unable to make their usual space available to us as it is needed for classes. Jennie Reilly, Angela Little, and Wendy Baldwin compose the planning committee and they have been at work for a couple of months already. We are hopeful for an even larger event than in the past and, possibly, an extension of the variety of events. More will be reported when known by the planning committee.

You may know by now of the new partnership between the chapter and the Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI) at Virginia Tech. Our chapter will work to help provide courses, lectures, and events to be showcased as a LivingWell@50+ event. This

Upcoming Events

January 6: Registration for spring LLI courses opens

January 27: "Great Decisions" preview event (p. 7)

February 1: Tax-Aide program begins (see p. 3)

Dues are Due!

If you haven't yet paid your dues for 2016, please use the form on the back of this newsletter.

If you have paid, consider an additional contribution to the local chapter for its projects and expenses. Thanks!



Blacksburg Chapter #2613
Chapter meetings are the third Tuesday of each month at the Blacksburg Community Center, Patrick Henry Drive at 11:30 am. There are no meetings in July or August. Board meetings are the first Tuesday of each month at the Blacksburg Community

Please bring a food donation (a can or box of non-perishable food) to the AARP chapter meeting. We collect food at each monthly chapter meeting for the food banks in Blacksburg and Christiansburg.

LLI Spring Courses Begin Early February, registration opens January 6

Participants in courses and events for the fall term of the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech gave enthusiastic reviews of the courses and faculty.

A new term begins February 8, with registration opening January 6. See more details about these courses or request a catalog at www.cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning. Also see details of six special events.

MONDAY

Digital Storytelling

Marc Zaldivar and Daniel Yaffe, instructors. 9:00-10:30

Introduction to iPad / iPhone (3 weeks each)

Carolyn Shockley, instructor. 1:00-2:30

Living Life Mindfully

Alan Forrest, instructor. 3:00-4:30

TUESDAY

VT CLASS Sampler at Warm Hearth

9:00-10:15

Living Well to the End

Tina Smusz, Anne Judkins Campbell, and Jerry Niles, instructors. 10:30-12:00

Shenandoah National Park: The Untold Story

Katrina Powell, instructor. 1:00-2:30

WEDNESDAY

Modern Africa: Challenges of Nation Building

Josiah Tlou and Joseph Mukuni, instructors. 9:00-10:30

Tracing Your Family Genealogy

Linda Phillips, instructor. 9:00-10:30

Intermediate Printmaking

Rebecca Ghezzi, instructor. 9:00-12:00

Great Decisions

Offered in partnership with the League of Women Voters
11:00-12:30

Turning Your Experience into Art: Writing Life Stories and Personal Essays

Richard Gilbert, instructor. 3:00-4:30

THURSDAY

Making Sense of the Latest Health Research: Nutrition and Exercise. Various faculty. 9:00-10:30

Pathways to a Fulfilling Life in Retirement

Janelle Anderson, instructor. 12:00-1:30

The Supreme Court: Presidents, Justices, and Cases

Jack Call, instructor. 2:30-4:00

FRIDAY

Intermediate Watercolor

Jessica Pace-Berkeley, instructor. 10:00-12:00

AARP Establishes Permanent Partnership with LLI

by Don Creamer

Following a successful *Living Well@50+* conference on September 8, the Board of Directors has endorsed a plan for additional programming under this theme for chapter meetings and in conjunction with the Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI) at Virginia Tech. The chapter will develop and propose content for courses, workshops, lectures, or events that would fit the theme and be designated under the *LivingWell@50+* banner in the LLI catalog. The chapter will form a new committee, an LLI Partnership Committee, to propose appropriate content/programming to the LLI Program Committee each term. The chapter committee will draw on the resources and expertise of other partners who participated in the *LivingWell@50+* conference (Center for Gerontology, NRV Agency on Aging, VCOM, and others) as it develops proposed courses or events for LLI, building on the successful collaboration over the last year. The LLI program and steering committees have welcomed the proposed ongoing partnership with the AARP Blacksburg Chapter.

The evolving LLI partnership and continued collaboration with organizations and agencies in the area are part of an emerging vision for the chapter. Among the tentative goals for this emerging vision are:

- Strengthening partnerships with other community agencies and organizations
- Expanding chapter membership and increasing diversity among chapter members
- Identifying more member-leaders for chapter activities
- Invigorating volunteerism among chapter members
- Involving more community leaders directly in the work of the chapter
- Widening the impact of our AARP chapter in Blacksburg and all surrounding communities.

Two commitments remain at the core of this new vision: To serve, not to be served; and *LivingWell@50+*.

(President's Column *continued*)

partnership holds great promise for the chapter and may lead to other activities for us.

For the last two years, we have recruited new members to the chapter to serve in important roles on the Board of Directors. This recruitment results in six new members of the chapter and an endless variety of ideas for our chapter coming from these community leaders. Please welcome them and join hands with them to make our chapter even stronger.

To carry out the planning for the LivingWell@50+ conference held on September 8, 2015, a new partnership was formed composed of nine community-oriented organizations. This partnership proved invaluable for the conference planning and the launching of the LLI at Virginia Tech. The good news is that this partnership still is active and will be used continuously as we plan chapter events and activities. Not surprisingly, the program focus for the chapter monthly public meetings for the foreseeable future will be LivingWell@50+.

We face many new challenges as we move into a new year. Among those challenges are a need to recruit new members and new leaders from the membership. We also intend to give priority to establishing working relationships with organizations representing minority populations of the NRV.

It is evident that we have a full plate of work to be accomplished this year. Please lend your support and your talents to these efforts.

The AARP Tax-Aide program

The 2016 tax-aide program begins February 1 and ends April 15. The location is the Christiansburg Recreation Center (Senior Activity Room). If you need help with your taxes, please call to schedule an appointment: 382-2349.

Counselors will be available for preparing taxes according to this schedule:

1:00 – 4:00 pm, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday

9:00 am – noon, Saturday

If you are interested in volunteering with this program, please contact Pat Ballard: pballard@vt.edu • 382-1189

Remembering Leslye Bloom

Leslye Bloom was president of the Blacksburg Chapter of AARP in 2014 and active as well with state and federal AARP initiatives. With a PhD from Penn State, she taught art education, specializing in digital based art. Her death on November 27, 2015, stunned and saddened her friends and colleagues. Ben Crawford and John Hillison remember her here.



Ben Crawford. Leslye loved driving her red car around Blacksburg with the top down. She also loved her dogs. Leslye was full of ideas, always positive and fun to be around. You were never bored around her.

Leslye and I both volunteered for AARP making numerous trips together. We visited Virginia congressmen and our state legislators in Washington, Roanoke, and Christiansburg to advocate for seniors. We traveled to AARP chapters in Pembroke, Radford, and other places, speaking at their meetings and promoting AARP's **Create the Good** program.

When he learned of her passing in October, 2015, here is what AARP Associate State Director Peter Goldin said in an email to volunteer leaders in Virginia.

Very sad news to report. Leslye Bloom passed away.... Last I spoke with her she was in her usual high spirits and anxious to return to work with AARP. Leslye was one of my most outgoing and enthusiastic volunteers and her presence will be deeply missed on the team...

John Hillison. I first met Leslye Bloom in 2010. She was just starting to participate in volunteer activities after the loss of her husband, Al. We worked together on the AARP program called You've Earned A Say. Leslye was a great partner, despite our different talents and backgrounds. She was right-brain dominant as an artist and I was left-brain dominant as an agriculturalist. The differences came together in what we called synergy energy. We also served as fellow officers for the Blacksburg AARP Chapter and the Virginia Tech Retirees Association.

Few have ever been as dedicated to AARP as Leslye Bloom. She worked tirelessly on both the chapter and state levels. Her dedicated hard work and creativity will be missed a great deal.

Scenes from the December Luncheon: Leaders and Award Winners



Peter Goldin, Associate Director, Virginia AARP, installs officers and new board members December 1.
L-R: Pat Ballard, Ray Van Dyke, Wendy Baldwin, Don Creamer, Sally Anna Stapleton, Ryan Martin, and Ben Crawford



Above:
Sharen and John Hillison, winners of last year's Chapter Service Award, present this year's awards to Pat Hyer and Don Creamer for their work in organizing the Living Well @ 50+ conference, held in September after a year of planning. Don organized a set of 9 key partners to support the conference. Pat co-chaired the Program Committee. The conference had 235 participants. The evaluations were uniformly positive.

Right: Jim Wightman presents Pat Ballard with the Chapter Spirit Award. Pat serves as treasurer of the local chapter and also heads the Tax-Aide program, which served 1,188 clients in 2015.





Virgil Cook holds the flag that flew over the state capitol recognizing his Andrus Award. His wife, Elaine, stands by him. Del. Joseph Yost read a tribute (excerpts follow) at the holiday luncheon.

Virgil Cook Wins Andrus Award

AARP’s commitment to volunteer service can be traced to its founder, Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, whose motto “to serve, not to be served” has shaped our community service efforts at the national, state, and local levels. Each year, AARP honors the legacy of Dr. Andrus with the AARP Virginia Andrus Award for Community Service.

The annual Andrus Award for Community Service is AARP’s most prestigious and visible volunteer award. It recognizes individuals who are sharing their experience, talent, and skills to enrich their communities in ways that are consistent with AARP’s mission, vision, and commitment to volunteer service, and that inspire others to volunteer. Only one Virginia volunteer can receive the Award.

Virgil Cook served as Secretary of the AARP Blacksburg Chapter for seven years (2007–2014) and as a chapter officer before that. He has been an advocate for AARP with legislators, participating in AARP Day at the General Assembly in Richmond. Cook has also worked closely with state and national AARP leadership and programs. On the Divided We Fail campaign, he helped plan and conduct a variety of activities leading up to and including the presidential debate.

He served on the Town of Blacksburg as Secretary of their Para-Transit Subcommittee 1988–1992. As a member of the Board of Directors of the Blacksburg Master Chorale, and as Vice President, he coordinated publicity for all concerts and chaired the Search Committee for Music Director.

He has served as a Sunday school teacher, member of the Board of Deacons, choir, and Music Committee of the Blacksburg Baptist Church; as President (2002–2004) of the Blacksburg Host Lions Club and is currently their Program Chair and Chair for the Bland Music Contest; as Secretary (1991–92 & 1995–97) and member, Board of Visitors of the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind, appointed by Governors Tim Kaine and Bob McDonnell through 2015; and as President (1987–1989 & 1991–1994) of Voice of the Blue Ridge and has served on their Board since 1986.

He retired from Virginia Tech in 2002 as Associate Professor of English. During his 40-year tenure there, he authored several publications and chaired/served in many volunteer groups including the Faculty Senate, University Council, University Building Committee, Commission on Undergraduate Studies, Graduate Studies and Research, Upward Bound, Academic Policy Group, Accessibility Advisory Panel and the Search Committee for Director of the University Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, as well as the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act). He received numerous awards including the Lifetime Achievement Award.



At the December 1 luncheon, the Blacksburg AARP chapter presented checks to eight NRV agencies that serve seniors. The chapter gets this money from meeting raffles and proceeds from the Health Fair. Ben Crawford (center) presented the awards. L-R: Sally Anna Stapleton, MCEAP; Roz Nelson, Community Health Center of the NRV; Pam Teaster, VT Center for Gerontology; Mandy Hayes, RSVP; Ben Crawford; Theresa McNeil, NRV Agency on Aging; Diane Krallman, Soup for Seniors (St. Michael Lutheran Church); Jack Lahey, Town of Blacksburg; and Jessica Wirgau, Community Foundation of the NRV.

Chapter Activities and Leadership 2015, 2016

Highlights of Chapter Achievements 2015

by Terry Wildman, 2015 president

Virgil Cook wins the coveted **Andrus Award**—one given in Virginia each year

Hosted the **LivingWell@50+ conference** in September with the help of 8 community partners. 210 participants enjoyed keynote talks and luncheon, 14 workshops, and an Opportunity Fair.

Continued and developed robust **partnerships**: AARP Virginia, VCOM, NRV Agency on Aging, Lifelong Learning Institute at VT, Warm Hearth Village Retirement Community, Center for Gerontology at VT, VT Retirees Association

Conducted **8 public meetings** featuring a variety of programs plus June picnic and December Holiday Luncheon

Published 10 **Chapter newsletters** (thanks to editor Carolyn Rude)

Tax-Aide program: served 400+ clients (thanks to Pat Ballard)

September 13 annual food drive: collected 2,460 lbs. of food for Blacksburg and Christiansburg pantries (thanks to Sally Anna Stapleton)

Participated in **Supplies for Seniors Walk-A-Thon**

Participated in **state AARP Advocacy, Legislative, and Volunteer meetings**, including Rally Day event in Richmond

Summer Solstice 5K race participation yielded medals once again

2016 Health Fair: recruited and formed a new committee

Maintained **website** with up-to-date information about the Chapter and Chapter activities (thanks to Don Creamer)

Served as **sponsor for Warm Hearth Foundation fundraiser**— Cheeseburger in Parrot-ise event

Exhibited at **Hokie Wellness Health & Benefits Fair**

Tracked **Virginia and National Legislative initiatives** of interest to AARP objectives (thanks to Alison Galway and Val Coluni)

Initiated **Senior Chronicles** (see www.blacksburgaarp.org for details)

15 active **Chapter committees**, reporting at monthly board meetings

Chapter Officers 2016

President • Don Creamer, dgc2@vt.edu

Vice President • Ben Crawford, ben.crawford@vt.edu

Secretary • Sally Anna Stapleton, sanna418@gmail.com

Treasurer • Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu

Board of Directors

• 2016—Tom Alston, Tina King, Sally Anna Stapleton

• 2017—Pat Hyer, Jerry Niles, Shirley Peterson

• 2018—Wendy Baldwin, Ryan Martin, Ray Van Dyke

2016 Committee Chairs

AARP of Virginia Liaison—Ben Crawford

AARP Tax Preparation—Pat Ballard

Virginia Tech Retirees Liaison—June Schmidt

Town of Blacksburg/Community Center Liaison—Joy Herbert

Awards—Shirley Peterson

Caring—Violet Drake

Chaplain—Sandy Birch

LLI Partnership—Pat Hyer, Don Creamer

Community Service—Sally Anna Stapleton

Financial Planning and Audit—June Schmidt

Health Fair—Jennie Reilly, Angela Little, Wendy Baldwin

History—Sally Anna Stapleton

Hospitality—Thais Beams

Membership—Tom Alston

Newsletter—Carolyn Rude

Program—Terry Wildman

Website—Don Creamer

Membership Report 2015

Category	Individuals	Households
AARP 2015 Members	230	136
LifeTime Members	35	22
Life Members	17	15
Comp Members	22	22
Honorary Members	2	1
Total Membership	306	196

Membership Committee: Tom Alston, Chair; Jim Wightman

State AARP Announces Legislative Priorities for 2016

by Val Coluni and Alison Galway

A. Nurses' authority to heal. Currently Advanced Practice Registered Nurses cannot practice to the full extent of their education and training. This has a significant adverse impact on those who need care. AARP will support appropriate and effective efforts to break down these artificial barriers.

B. Financial exploitation. Our elderly citizens are very vulnerable to this type of exploitation. And it is increasing in number and dollar loss. In Virginia in 2014 the number of substantiated cases increased to 1079 from 1013 in 2013. AARP supports legislation requiring the state agency to report suspected financial exploitation to law enforcement when it exceeds \$50,000 in assets. The aim here is to increase the prosecution of the perpetrators.

C. Long-term care ombudsmen. Currently this state program is underfunded. It is designed to help vulnerable and frail persons in nursing homes and other adult care facilities to seek outside help when their problems cannot be resolved internally. In Virginia overall the current staffing ratios do not meet the standards in the Virginia State Code. AARP seeks to correct the deficiency via a budget amendment.

D. Respite care. The current program is for caregivers who care for special needs persons when they reside full time in the same household as the person receiving care. Now the program is funded by both federal and state grants. Vouchers are provided to the caregivers (limit \$400.00 per family) to reimburse caregivers for uncompensated costs associated with their caregiving duties. This program helps those in need get proper care, reduces costs to the state, and helps individuals remain in their homes. The federal grants will end soon. AARP supports a budget amendment to expand the state program and offset the loss of federal funds.

State budget hearings were held on January 7, 2016, in four locations, including one at Wytheville Community College. Val Coluni and Alison Galway attended.

Great Decisions Program Begins Feb 10

The Montgomery County League of Women Voters and the Lifelong Learning Institute of Virginia Tech invite the public to participate in **Great Decisions**, an annual eight-week nonpartisan community discussion on international affairs. This award-winning program, prepared by the Foreign Policy Association, is in its 62nd year and is presented in many locations nationwide.

Great Decisions begins Wednesday, February 10, 2016, from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm and will continue for eight consecutive Wednesdays. Sessions will be held at the German Club Manor on Southgate Drive in Blacksburg.

Discussion topics for the 2016 program include: Middle East Alliances; Islamic State; The Kurds; Migration; The Koreans; United Nations; Climate Change; and Cuba and the U.S.

Great Decisions helps you make sense of these complex topics and rapidly changing events. Read a short essay from a briefing book and view a video prepared by the Foreign Policy Association, then join a discussion with community members facilitated by a local expert, usually a faculty member.

Great Decisions is one of 16 courses offered by the Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI) in Spring 2016. Course participants will be required to become LLI members (\$20), but there is no course fee for Great Decisions, in recognition of the partnership with the League of Women Voters. The Great Decisions briefing book may be purchased for \$25. A copy will also be on reserve in the Blacksburg library for in-library use.

Register for Great Decisions and all other LLI programs at the LLI website: www.cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning. If you need registration assistance, please email or call Tammy Stevers, LLI Registrar, tames@vt.edu, 540-231-5182 or 540-231-1779.

Great Decisions Preview

Wednesday, January 27, 3 – 4:30 pm

German Club Manor, 711 Southgate Drive, Blacksburg

- check out the new venue for 2016
- partake of light refreshments
- pick up a briefing book (if you have ordered one)

Short program:

Dr. Deborah Milly

Associate Professor, Political Science, Virginia Tech

"Immigration in Japan"

You are welcome at this event even if you haven't registered and just want to know more.

Visit Your AARP Chapter Website at www.blacksburgaarp.org



Blacksburg Chapter #2613
Don Creamer, President
P.O. Box 10082
Blacksburg, VA 24062

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 **Member Application for 2016**

Name: _____

Spouse/Partner: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Annual (*Calendar Year*) Dues: **\$15.00** (*includes spouse or partner*)

New _____ Renewal _____ 90+ years old (free) _____

Please consider an additional donation to support our AARP chapter and its projects. \$10____ \$25____ \$50____ \$100____ Other \$____

Donations to the Blacksburg Chapter help us carry out our mission and community service activities while keeping member dues as low as possible. However, donations to the chapter are not tax deductible.

Please make your check payable to "Blacksburg AARP Chapter #2613."
Mail the check and this form to: .

Tom Alston - P.O. Box 10082 • Blacksburg, VA 24062