

**Have you paid your 2002 dues???**

**2002 BLACKSBURG AARP CHAPTER DUES**

**\$6.00 individual or \$10.00 for husband and wife**

***Please renew your membership.***

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

R. B. "Ben" Crawford

A new year is always a time of hope. No matter what the problems of the past—who can ever forget 911—we renew our dedication and hopes for the future. We've had the usual epidemic of bowl games featured these past few days, and as is always the case, not everyone comes out a winner. Even though our home team, VT, lost once again to Florida State, I'm already looking forward to "next year". The coming of January is a time of looking forward to good health, good fortune and good cheer. May you have an abundance of all three.

I read somewhere that January gets its name from the Roman God Janus, who had two faces. He could look in two directions at once—forward and backward. The ability to look at our past and plan for the future is in the very heart of human experience.

And looking at our past and future is what 14 members did yesterday (January 3) at our first Board meeting in 2002. During this meeting of officers, board and committee members, we examined our Blacksburg Chapter membership brochure -- to be available at the member meeting Jan 15. Special thanks to Frank Lau for making our new, extremely attractive brochure possible. The brochure's front cover is an invitation to JOIN the Blacksburg Chapter of AARP -- and highlights our goals of A DYNAMIC PRESENCE in our community and "To Serve,

Not To Be Served". Some quotes from inside the brochure:

- "By joining (the Blacksburg Chapter) and working together, we make more effective use of our time, talent, experience and expertise to help make the New River Valley a better place to live and work."
- "Members meet every 3rd Tuesday, September through June for lunch at 11:30 am and an interesting program...In June a picnic and in December, a Christmas lunch". Mark your calendars now -- no meetings in July or August.
- "The Board (and committees) meets at 9:30 a.m. each 1st Tuesday in the Community Center. Most chapter business is conducted at Board meetings. All members are welcome to attend" Because of election day, the November Board meeting this fall will be Thursday November 7th. No meetings will be held in July or August.
- "All persons 50 and older are invited to join the Blacksburg Chapter. Persons less than 50 may join as Associate members. Annual (calendar year) dues are \$6 per individual, or \$10 for husband and wife." If you haven't done so already, please send your dues check to Pat Palmer (see address in this newsletter) or give to him at the next meeting. ASK A FRIEND TO JOIN, and bring to our next chapter meeting.

During this first Board meeting of the year, we discussed the new AARP Virginia Volunteer

Staffing Plan that became effective January 1. The new Virginia plan puts emphasis on tasks, not titles, and creates teams, not hierarchies. (For example, we no longer have a District Coordinator and will need to change our brochure) The focus is on outcomes. The structure calls for 51 permanent volunteer positions in Virginia with an unlimited number of "episodic" or short-term volunteers. AARP promises each chapter increased support (if desired & requested) from headquarters, greater support from staff on priority issues, annual training and additional training opportunities; and opportunities for input by chapters in state activities through the chapter president and legislative chair (**Dan Fleming**). It will be interesting to see how the new Virginia Plan unfolds.

The board also spent considerable time discussing our chapter committees -- named elsewhere in this newsletter. We were given a positive financial report, and discussed a number of committee plans and activities looking at both this year and last. Finally, the audit of our financial records has been performed and "...found to be correct." Thanks to our Audit Committee: **Dale Oliver** and **Jim Moore**. Thanks also to our able Treasurer, **Ralph Cecchini**. Minutes of the Board and regular membership meetings are available from our Secretary, **Phyllis Talley** at [vtalley@naxs.com](mailto:vtalley@naxs.com).

Today I received this meditation from a Ruritan friend. I love it!

### Don't Lunge at the Gerbil

"One day, my son brought a gerbil home to live with us. We put it in a cage. Some time later, the gerbil escaped. For the next six months, the animal ran frightened and wild through the house. So did we - chasing it. "There it is. Get it!" we'd scream, each time someone spotted the gerbil. I, or my son, would throw down whatever we were working on, race across the house, and lunge at the animal hoping to catch it. I worried about it, even when we didn't see it. "This isn't right," I'd think. "I can't have a gerbil running loose in the

house. We've got to catch it. We've got to do something."

A small animal, the size of a mouse had the entire household in a tizzy. One day, while sitting in the living room, I watched the animal scurry across the hallway. In a frenzy, I started to lunge at it, as I usually did, then I stopped myself. No, I said. I'm all done. If that animal wants to live in the nooks and crannies of this house, I'm going to let it. I'm done worrying about it. I'm done chasing it. It's an irregular circumstance, but that's just the way it's going to have to be.

I let the gerbil run past without reacting. I felt slightly uncomfortable with my new reaction - not reacting - but I stuck to it anyway. I got more comfortable with my new reaction - not reacting. Before long, I became downright peaceful with the situation. I had stopped fighting the gerbil. One afternoon, only weeks after I started practicing my new attitude, the gerbil ran by me, as it had so many times, and I barely glanced at it. The animal stopped in its tracks, turned around, and looked at me. I started to lunge at it. It started to run away. I relaxed. "Fine," I said. "Do what you want." And I meant it! One hour later, the gerbil came and stood by me, and waited. I gently picked it up and placed it in its cage, where it has lived happily ever since. The moral of the story? Don't lunge at the gerbil. He's already frightened, and chasing him just scares him more and makes us crazy. Detachment works.

Today, I will be comfortable with my new reaction - not reacting. I will feel at peace".

## **FUTURE MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMS**

**January 15:** "Birds of Costa Rica" **Jerry W. Via**, PhD, Virginia Tech. Dr. Via's specialty is ecology and natural history of birds with a particular interest in bird songs and calls and the biology of neotropical birds. He leads field trips around the state and to Costa Rica for bird watchers; gives presentations for bird clubs and for Virginia State Parks; and teaches Elderhostel programs across the state.

Future programs are in the planning stage.

## LOCAL CHAPTER AWARDS

The annual Christmas Luncheon on December 4, 2001 was the event where the Blacksburg Chapter honored two of its outstanding members. The first award was the Chapter Service Award presented to **George Gray**. The Community Spirit Award was presented to **Clara Jane Billig**. Clara was also our chapter nominee for the Lenna and Jim Moore Citizenship and Community Service Award. Sixty-nine members enjoyed lunch while being entertained by the members of the Blacksburg Community Band playing Christmas selections. (Sorry, no pictures)

## VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION CELEBRATION -- December 8, 2001



**Nelda K. Pearson** (center) winner of the Lenna and Jim Moore Citizenship and Community Service Award and Volunteer Recognition Celebration sponsor representatives. L to R: Darrell Clowes, AARP; Mary Ellen Moore, American Red Cross; Pearson; Cheryl Coolley-Newman, Volunteer Action Committee; and Emily Stewart, YMCA.

A "New River Valley Volunteer Recognition Celebration" to raise awareness of the important role volunteers play in our community took place December 8. The purpose of the celebration was to recognize volunteers nominated by community organizations and to honor the 2001 recipient of the Lenna and Jim Moore Citizenship and Community Service Award.

The Celebration was held from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., December 8, at the Blacksburg Community Center. The Blacksburg AARP Chapter, with funding from the State AARP Chapter, spearheaded the Celebration. Working with us to organize the Celebration was the New River Valley Voluntary Action Center. Other sponsors contributing financial support included Carilion Hospitals of the New River Valley, Columbia Regional Hospitals Electra, and the Blue Ridge Association for Volunteer Administration (BRAVA). Additional organizations that helped with the Celebration were the Blacksburg Senior Center, the New River Valley Agency on Aging, and RSVP.

Volunteers were nominated by community organizations, with a total of 18 volunteers nominated. The Blacksburg AARP Chapter's nominee was Clara Jane Billig. Master of Ceremonies for the event was Dan Level, our AARP District Coordinator. As each nominee was recognized and came forward to receive a special "volunteer pin," the nominee's picture was taken with Ben Crawford and June Schmidt who served as co-chairs for the Celebration. Photographer was Ken Martin. The nominees have been sent copies of their pictures.

The nominee selected as recipient of the Lenna and Jim Moore Award was Nelda K. Pearson who was recognized with a special plaque. She is founder and pro bono executive director of Beans and Rice, a non-profit organization providing Community Learning Centers in three low-income housing units located in Radford, Pulaski, and at an Hispanic Center in downtown Pulaski. The Lenna and Jim Moore Award is sponsored by our AARP Chapter, the YMCA at Virginia Tech, the American Red Cross, and the Voluntary Action Center. The Award presentation was made by Cheryl Cooley-Newman, Executive Director of the Voluntary Action Center.

We received many favorable comments regarding the Celebration which also featured entertainment by the "Sweet Adelines" and heavy hors d'oeuvres, prepared by Custom Catering. Our chapter Hospitality Committee assisted with registration, while many others from our chapter helped to assure that all went smoothly. The program concluded with remarks from our Chapter President, Darrel Clowes. He emphasized the importance volunteerism plays in our society.

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## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Pat Palmer is our Membership Chair. If you have friends who should be members, please bring them to the next meeting and encourage them to join. Dues can be paid at the meeting or sent to Pat. His address follows:

**Pat Palmer**  
**2003 Scott Drive**  
**Blacksburg, VA 24060**

Have I paid my dues for 2002? Check the mail label on your Newsletter. If "2002" appears on the label, you have paid.

Those of you who are 90 years old and older do not pay dues. Your label should read "Life Member." The current membership list has the following members that are 90 years of age or older:

Edna Amos	Alice Dewitt
Fay Hoy	James McCann
Edward Mundie	Beverly Printz
Nelle Trent	Lottie Trimm

If you know of corrections to this list, please tell Pat or Don Elson so that our membership records are correct.

## TAX-AIDE FOR SENIORS

Frank Lau

Our Tax-Aide group will be back again to help our members, as well as others in the Blacksburg community. Our times will be from February 12th to April 2nd, from 11:30 - 2:30 p.m. In order to give everyone appropriate time, we ask that you make appointments through Joy Herbert at the Center (961-1134).

Gene, Jim, and myself ask you to collect NOW, all your deduction papers. When 1099's come in, add them to the pile, as with any mortgage 1096's. And don't forget Social Security statements. We shall prepare your Tax returns by computer, but do not do electronic returns.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

The Board of Directors, at its January 1998 meeting, adopted the following policy relative to Board and/or chapter meetings during inclement weather:

AARP Board and/or chapter meetings will be canceled if Montgomery County Schools are closed due to inclement weather on days AARP Board and/or chapter meetings are scheduled."

## **AARP WEBSITES**

AARP has its own website, called AARP Webplace, which features information about the Organization's activities and issues of interest to older persons. To access information on a host of topics please visit the site at <http://www.aarp.org>. Some of the information featured includes membership benefits, legislative issues, and health and wellness concerns.

## **CONSUMER TIPS FROM AARP: TRAVEL BARGAINS**

No one wants to waste money on travel arrangements. But sometimes what sounds like a great deal may turn your dream trip into a nightmare. Here is some sound advice from the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) on how to avoid travel package scams.

Stay away from travel offers that sound too good to be true, especially those that come to you over the phone, e-mail, or by a certificate in the mail.

Never give your credit card number or any information about your bank account or income over the phone unless you placed the call and are confident about the company's honesty.

Get complete details in writing about any trip before you make any payment. Study all specifics about the trip before you sign up.

Walk away from high-pressure sales presentations that don't allow you time to evaluate the offer and compare the details with other trips. Legitimate businesses don't expect you to make snap decisions.

Check out any company with the ASTA, Better Business Bureau, your state's attorney general, or your local consumer protection office to see if any complaints have been filed against it.

For more information, go to:

[www.aarp.org/getans/consumer/travfraud.html](http://www.aarp.org/getans/consumer/travfraud.html)

## **FREE CLINIC OF NEW RIVER VALLEY**

The Free Clinic of New River Valley needs and welcomes volunteers to join in meeting the needs of residents without health insurance in the New River Valley. A full range of volunteer opportunities is offered including office and clerical, marketing, and all health care professions. For more information, contact Amy Vaughan at 381-0820.

R. B. Crawford, President  
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1 <sup>st</sup> Vice-Pres.	Pat Palmer
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice-Pres.	Lewis Barnett
Secretary	Phyllis Talley
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Assoc. Treasurer	Ray Murley
Past President	Darrel Clowes

Class of 2003

Darrel Clowes  
Lula Roberts  
Vincent Talley

Newsletter Editor

Donald Elson

Committee Chairs

Caring  
Chaplain  
Chapter Awards  
Community Service  
Financial Planning  
Health Care  
Hospitality

Lula Roberts  
Ken Dawson  
Bob Blanton  
Louis Barnett  
Dale Oliver  
Darrel Clowes  
Clara Jane Billig and  
Cerie Coil  
Dan Fleming  
Pat Palmer  
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(open)  
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Harriett Cooper

Class of 2003

Charlotte Beamer  
Ray Murley  
Lula Roberts

Class of 2004

Dan Fleming  
Paul Smeal  
Shirley Strother

Registered Agent

Jim Moore

Nominating Committee

Class of 2002

Mary Ellen Moore  
June Schmidt

Virginia Tech Retires Association

Jim Moore