



**THE  
THIRTY YEAR  
HISTORY  
OF  
AARP CHAPTER #2613  
BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA**

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## **PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

It is a pleasure to add a few words of thanks to all those who helped in pulling this important Chapter History together. First, Thanks to Denver Bragg our Charter President and all those hardy members who worked so diligently to get our AARP Chapter started in 1975-76. They had some 70 members in that first year, with a dues of \$1.00. Special thanks to all the Presidents, Boards and Committee Members who have kept the Chapter strong and growing the past 30 years. It is clear we have a history of interesting and timely programs, a long standing effort to support community service, ample opportunities for fellowship among folks of similar ages, and a steady membership growth to over 330 members in 2006.

Second, Thanks to all the current members who have worked so long and hard to pull this history together. Special thanks to Jim Gaines, History Committee Chair, researcher, and writer of this history for an extraordinary job well done. This history is the result of more than a year of culling through 30 years of dusty files, minutes, newsletters, and scrapbooks. Thanks also to Carol Crawford, our Newsletter Co-Editor, for preparing the manuscript for this Chapter History and bringing life to the printed page. Our Chapter Webmaster, Connie Anderson has served as editor of the final manuscript, by adding pictures and graphics to liven up the text.

Third, Thanks to the administration and staff of the Blacksburg Community Center, 725 Patrick Henry Drive, Blacksburg. This has been our Board and Chapter Meeting place for nearly 20 years. They have always extended a warm welcome to all activities and provided a rich and inviting environment for us to thrive and grow.

Finally, Thanks to the Administration and Staff at Warm Hearth Village for taking on the sponsorship of printing our Chapter History. In many ways our AARP Chapter and Warm Hearth Village have grown up and matured together over the past 30 years. Many members have lived at Warm Hearth Village and it has been an occasional meeting place over the years. We are especially grateful for their support in taking on the responsibility of publishing our Chapter History.

It is hoped that this Thirty Year History will help current and future members to better understand our past in order to guide us to an even better future for Blacksburg AARP Chapter #2613.

Carl McDaniels,  
President, 2005 and 2006





## **INTRODUCTION**

Are you an optimist? Are you acquainted with the phenomenon known as the Spirit of America? If either one or both of your answers is no, just read four or five pages of this booklet, and your answers will both be yes. The Synopsis contains the barest bones of the publication, that is, the Speakers' topics and the services dealt with. The main body contains the topics and activities, the names of the people involved, and a little of the "flesh" of the story. If you want to know more about one certain story, you will have to go to the archives, where you will find each year's story contained in a big envelope.

**CHEERS!**

**JIM GAINES, CHAIR**

**History Committee**



**BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA**

**AARP CHAPTER #2613  
CHARTER**

**JUNE 29, 1976**



## **30-YEAR BLACKSBURG AARP CHAPTER SYNOPSIS**

**1975** The Leisurees, a small group of seniors, met to talk about a possible organization to enhance the social life and community activities for persons in this age group. Clarence Jencks was chairman.

**March 1976** Investigated AARP for information to form a local Chapter. Secured information from AARP and the State Director. Hesitated on some rules (a state's rights issue).

**April 1976** Organized with Denver Bragg as the first president. Ten years later he was the only original officer still active.

**June 1976** Received Charter and Incorporation. During the first ten years, Membership meetings were held in five different places and Board meetings in two places.

**1977** The Transportation Committee had access to a new bus. Started studying the idea of assisting in preparing income tax forms. Trip to Old Salem. Open meeting on insurance. Bridge played each 2nd Thursday. Barter Theater trip. Dr. Wybe Kroontje presented information on Warm Hearth.

**1978** Bridge each Thursday evening at the University Club. Several trips. Insurance workshop. Recognized the need for visitors and companions for Heritage Hall and with homebound elderly. Lexington trip. Pennsylvania Dutch tour. First picnic on July 18th. Theater tour to London with side trips. George Litton discussed plans and progress on Warm Hearth.

**1979** Meetings held in Squires. Legislative Committee dealt with inflation, health care and equitable taxes. Note from William Wampler. Health Fair with student nurses at Radford University. Legal Aid wanted representatives to help seniors with legal matters. Hunger Hike participants. Annual picnic. Kentucky tour. Speaker from Heritage Hall. Tri-annual review was held.

**1980** Meetings held in Squires. Tour to Southern Living Show. Health Fair held April 18-19. Announced AARP Pharmacy in Washington, DC. Tours to Warm Springs, Barter Theater, Big Stone Gap, Trail of the Lonesome Pine and

Cumberland Gap. Bill Hoy reported government funds for 66 units at Warm Hearth. Town Recreation Center mentioned; Mayor Walrath agreed with needs of AARP and a multi-purpose room.

**1981** First meeting on Inauguration Day brought news of release of hostages in Iran. Committee sign-up sheets circulated. Nominating Committee to serve staggered terms. Fifth Anniversary celebration, June 15. Recreation Center was completed and we have met there ever since. Warm Hearth began construction. Several tours were scheduled – Tangier Island, World’s Fair in Knoxville, Charlotte, and others.

**1982** Officers, Directors and Committees List was distributed. Tours, programs and workshops were discussed. May meeting held at Warm Hearth; Joan Munford spoke. Bus system was discussed. May was Senior Citizen month – speakers were Lucy Lee Lancaster, Al Payne, Cartmel Brown, Carrie Sibold, Myron Shear, Nell Corey, and Bill Hoy. Plan to start a Christmas Store. Tele-A-Care was presented. Bill Wampler, 9th District Congressman, visited and spoke. Pete Ellison was presented a Certificate of Appreciation.

**1983** American Cancer Society asked help taking people to Roanoke hospitals – 12 people volunteered right away. President Kalison reported on Hospice and how to start one. Tours, Legislative report, Blacksburg Transit System, Agency on Aging. Sabbath recognizing the elderly, Silver Haired Legislative Plan, Tour of Warm Hearth, sewing for hospital day care center, beginning of Virginia Tech New Dimensions group for Tech retirees, a van with a wheelchair loader, Christmas Store, 55-Alive Driver Training programs, Madison Marye and Ward Teel, Center for Gerontology at Tech.

**1984** First woman President, Jean Davis, took office. Activities were slide shows for the elderly, legislative aims, supplemental insurance, beverages at meetings, tours, ID Cards for elderly, crime prevention, handicraft. Newsletter started with John Palmer as Editor. Started eyeglass collection, a finance committee, suggestion box, poster project, visit and program at Warm Hearth. Rick Boucher visited and talked.

**1985** Herb Buhrow retired as Silver Haired Legislator. Seven tours from March to September. Collection of eyeglasses and school poster contest. Virle and Al Payne showed slides from a trip to China. AARP Leadership Workshop. Trip to Barn Dinner Theater. 55-Alive Driver Training programs in April, May, June and



Fall. Four-month report to National Office. Program on "Financial Management During Retirement." AARP 25th Anniversary coming up – began with 23 chapters and grew to 3300. Program on Use of Drugs. New Blacksburg Medi-Center. Had three new Town employees explain their jobs.

**1986** The only records were three sheets of paper. Newsletter monthly cost was \$113.18 for printing and \$114.80 for postage. Two dinners were held, Anniversary and Christmas. Total receipts were \$1174.95 and expenses were \$935.55.

**1987** The only records were six Treasurer's Reports, including December, Summer Picnic (receipts of \$287.50 and Christmas Dinner (annual receipts of \$1064). Newsletter cost \$182.21 for printing and \$50 for postage. Al Sturm presented a great lecture for the 200th Anniversary of the signing of the U. S. Constitution.

**1988** Second woman President, Esther Martin, took office. Janice and John Palmer gave a slide show; more slide shows were requested. Ellen Coale, Dietician, spoke about food choices for living well. Denver Bragg and Al Beecher held a plant sale. Tour program was started by the County. Newsletter listed legislation of interest. Trips to Barter Theater. Area Workshop in Wytheville. Town Manager gave his concepts about Blacksburg. Jean McCart and Judy Snoke discussed VOTING IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT. 125 persons had taken 55-Alive Driver Training programs. Fifteen deaths in 1988. Statewide questionnaire was boiled down to four priority legislative items: healthcare, consumer-oriented legislation, in-home services and tax incentives, and adult protective services.

**1989** Talks presented on drugs and recycling. AARP National began the Volunteer Community Service Award. Bob Denton spoke about Reagan's Presidency. The White Elephant Table was begun. County information and referral started with help from our Chapter. We got a phone number for information about AARP supplementary insurance. Al Payne got a special Citation from Tech. AARP Workshop on aging. We helped with a Retirement Fair. Channel 24 gave us 8 minutes to present our Chapter to the community. Letter to Rick Boucher about health care. AARP National surveyed chapter needs. Tech President (McComas) spoke on what's new at Virginia Tech. Held a forum on concerns of retirees.

**1990** Program about needs of the older driver. Caring Committee needed cards. Al Beecher and Denver Bragg raised over \$450 at sales in 1989. Talk about

services available for the elderly. World food supply was discussed. National Biennial Convention announced. Received information about new benefits in Medicare and increase in premiums. Trip to Barter Theater. Information about supplemental healthcare policy. Food Pantry received from our Chapter packages of food and \$60 cash. Workshop on serving on boards and commissions. Fundraising for starting a Christmas Store. Talk about the Mid-East Oil Crisis. Held a joint Holiday Banquet with American Legion.

**1991** Ways and Means Committee was asked to raise \$400. Members asked to bring things for sale. Plea from the Food Pantry. Senior Olympics was held in April. AARP celebrated National Women's History Month in March. Local senior groups held a joint program about planning for the future. A local firm announced it was building housing for assisted care living. Planted a tree to help 'Friends' of South Main beautification. Chris Riegert discussed proper stocking of medical closets. Discussion of enjoying "your money" in later years. Six members died in 1991. Christmas Store was underway.

**1992** We had many top quality programs: Key Issues Facing Virginia Tech, The Hummel Figurine Story, Experiences of a College Football Player, The Electronic Village, a concert by the Blacksburg High School Jazz Band, Hospice Care for the Terminally Ill, the usual auction to benefit the Ways and Means Committee, Health Care and AARP health insurance, Generations, Bridge of Ages, help for the Food Pantry, Habitat Activities in the New River Valley, and some short features. Several trips were held. A write up about a Bill becoming law. Legislation preferences were published. A plea came in for food and cash for the Food Pantry. We gave \$500 and some hands to help build a playground in the Municipal Park. Diabetics were asked to join a blood sugar study at Tech. Donations were asked for the Salem VA Hospital.

**1993** Ten members died in late '91 and all of '92. Programs were: A humorous one by Dr. Steven Anderson of Tech, Production of Pharmaceuticals from Transgenic Livestock, National Health Care, a Bike Ride through Germany, scams and scam artists by the Sheriff's Department, President Clinton's First One Hundred Days, a humor and music program by Rev. Dwane Steele (who was blind), and Warm Hearth. Eight tours were done with County Parks and Recreation, plus trips to the Barter Theater. Our AARP Tax-Aide assistance program was expanded. National health care was a hot topic. Bach's Lunch concerts were begun at Tech. The Damants gave us a new American flag. September 28 was AARP Day at the Virginia State Fair. The Chapter bought nine

copies of Al Payne's book, "*A Community At Prayer.*" 55-Alive Driver Training programs were held. On Election Day many of our members worked at the polls.

**1994** Programs were AARP Tax-Aide Income Tax Preparation for Seniors, Fraud Against Seniors, Home Health Care, exercise, Joan Munford on her experiences in Richmond, a local wife reviewing some of her own works of children's literature, and a joint meeting with New Dimensions. Other activities were healthcare reform, Woman's Week at Tech, quality of life (held at Tech), Bloomin' and Groomin,' annual picnic, Science Fair, food and cash to the Food Pantry, a number of trips, emergency telephone service, possible legislations in Richmond, welcoming Joy Herbert (hired as Senior Programs Supervisor), helping a Tech grad student with a study about developing products, blood donations, a \$125 donation to AARP's Andrus Foundation, an info bulletin, help a "Retire in Blacksburg" expo, healthcare, Holiday banquet, and support for the Christmas Store.

**1995** Monthly meeting programs were: updating wills, the county school system, happenings in Blacksburg, the Town Manager speaking about retiring in Blacksburg, long-term care for older people, a "conversation" with Al Payne, the annual picnic and auction, our heritage of sharing, upcoming State elections, and poetry by retired professors at Tech.

Other topics and happenings were: John Palmer (our Editor) retired from Tech, and he and his wife, Janice, moved back to Wisconsin; correspondence about the danger of impersonators, sign language studies, a certificate from Virginia AARP, district meeting in Wytheville, a need for cards for the Caring Committee, legal council for the elderly, Bloomin' & Groomin,' high school science fair, four morning conversation and coffee sessions, 55-Alive Driver Training programs, the Community Shelter, a long report from the Legislative Committee. Jim Roberts died November 8th.

**1996** Regular meetings dealt with the plight of the homeless, update on Medicare and long-term care insurance, cooking (eat at home for less), Red Cross needs for senior disaster volunteers, Retire Blacksburg, plans for the Nursing Care Center at Warm Hearth, the Humane Society, our annual picnic and auction at Nellie's Cave Park, a HMO Seminar, gospel music, Roanoke Public Library, and a Holiday banquet. Other things were: granting a dues-paying amnesty to members 90 or older, a seniors room at the Recreation Center, nine Thursday discussions, a Senior Advisory Board, a jointly sponsored weekend to promote retiring in Blacksburg, a sound system for the Community Center, the Good Times News for Blacksburg

seniors, the BEV-seniors' classes on computers, the results of the November elections and flu shots.

**1997** Monthly meetings covered program planning and a survey of interests of members, annual Memorial honoring those who died in '96. Blacksburg Senior Center Activities (by Joy Herbert), men's Basketball at Tech (by Bobby W. Hussey), the services of the NRV District Health Department (by Dr. Jody Hershey), the June picnic, Elderhostels, the High School Madrigal Singers, and other entertainment. Other matters were: a lot of timely copy from Dan Fleming about legislative concerns, a Symposium about health issues at the NRV Mall, spotlighting the Ways and Means Committee. A report about selecting health care coverage, an AARP Yard Sale for September 5-6 (which took in \$1806), a list of eleven benefits of Membership in AARP, notice that our first-ever Christmas Luncheon would occur, a State AARP Legislative Forum in Christiansburg, and a half page of commentary about telemarketing fraud – a \$40 billion racket.

**1998** Regular meetings started out with Dan Fleming speaking on Electric Utility Deregulation, followed by programs on Blacksburg's Bicentennial, a review of the Committee on Community Service, a review of the Health Care Committee, changes in Health/Medicare, a report on the building program at Warm Hearth, Civil War events affecting Southwest Virginia, a program on Estate Planning, forums on Social Security, the 4-H programs in Montgomery County, financial planning, the challenge of Civil Society, a discussion on phone fraud, a magic show by Bucky Snider, and the High School Madrigal Singers. Newsletter entries covered membership, electric utility deregulation, Veterans' Healthcare, an inclement weather policy, collection of dues, workshops for new officers and committee chairs, legislative news, seminar on health insurance, stopping junk mail, estate planning, forums on Social Security and consumer tips.

**1999** Membership meetings began with a memorial service for members lost in '98. Programs were on protecting water quality, followed by a briefing by the Superintendent of Schools, meeting the candidates for election, hearing about rivalries, politics and dirty tricks in the early days of our independence, winter feeding of birds, and the Avanti Recorders. A great many projects were done in '99, such as entertainment attractions, legislative activity, NRV Senior Games, breakfast get-togethers, AARP Tax-Aide, volunteer opportunities, questionnaires, a New Dimensions program on "aging alone," a forum to discuss Social Security and Medicare, info about the Andrus Foundation, joining Habitat for Humanity in building two houses and paying for the kitchen ranges, canvassing to ask people to

vote, hosting the District 2 New River Valley Community Council, establishing a liaison with New Dimensions, and several others.

**2000** Started with our sixth woman President, June Schmidt, and new Editors, Amy and Don Elson. The January meeting was snowed out; topics in the following months were the annual memorial service, saving/preserving Social Security, how the Museum of Natural History serves the community, saving our streams and protecting water quality, the Explore Park in Roanoke, creating neighborhood groups for security and community services, a slide show and talk about Shadowlake Village, a "Consumer University" program dealing with internet fraud, Medicare Fraud, End of Life Issues, and Protection; and finally, Lewis Gale Hospital representative presenting the topic "Love Your Heart – Strategies for Keeping It Healthy." Other activities were AARP Tax-Aide, the formation of an Awards Committee, health insurance, the Health Fair held on May 6, a regional workshop, providing rides, the AARP Website ([www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)), Food Pantry contributions, the Free Clinic of the NRV, the establishment of two new awards; AARP Day at the Science Museum in Roanoke, awards to the Free Clinic, Food Pantry, and Voluntary Action Center, a Senior Bloodmobile, a new website called Senior Navigator.com, and flu and pneumonia shots. Our Chapter won the Virginia Chapter of the Year Award.

**2001** Regular meetings started with "Project Underground," a discussion of caving, bats, water quality, and other underground issues; the "Back Pain: A 21st Century Epidemic," Colonial Medicine, Delegate Jim Shuler with an overview of what happened in the General Assembly and in redistricting, a program by County 4-H Club members, the annual summer picnic and white elephant exchange, poetry and storytelling, issues facing the State Government in 2002, Holistic Medicine, and the Christmas Luncheon with music by the Blacksburg Community Band. Other things we delved in one way or another were the Food Pantry, Voluntary Action Center, Free Clinic, Habitat for Humanity, community service awards, bloodmobile, AARP website, a regional meeting, fixing up a home, gift baskets, honoring Korean War Veterans, AARP Tax-Aide, website fraud, stopping soliciting, legislative reports, deregulating electric utilities, eye exams for seniors, a D-Day Memorial trip opening the memorial to the public (almost 100 people went), an AARP booth at the Galax Fiddler's Convention, home security, safe equipment for grandkids, recognition of volunteer efforts in the NRV, legislative reports, Medicare reform, Tech offering adult day care, Gateway discounts, formation of a new committee called Project Planning, forums by the League of Women Voters, and riding in the Blacksburg Holiday Parade.

**2002** Chapter meetings started with "Birds of Costa Rica," then "Fitness Can be Fun," End of Life Issues, Delegate Jim Shuler reporting on the General Assembly outcomes, Improving our Memory, the annual potluck picnic, lessons learned about the human-animal bond, old age ain't for sissies, emergency and preventative health issues regarding seniors, and our December Holiday Luncheon.

Issues and activities for the year were a new, attractive brochure, service awards, AARP Tax-Aide, consumer tips, Free Clinic, attending a Groundhog Watchers meeting, anniversaries, budget, pending legislation, dues, tours, extra money for special projects, expansion of state and national AARP, home modification, independent living, Consumer Universities, Tiger Woods, and hosting a Community Council meeting, using the Internet.

National volunteer hours total of over 2 million (Chapter average 1150 hours), gift baskets, trash collection, donations, the YMCA Open University, the National Debt, the Concord Coalition, the 55-Alive Driver Training program, making a difference in someone's life, the AARP Day of Service, helping with the County comprehensive plan, preparing for the upcoming elections, flu shots, money to other organizations, community volunteer recognition, and the Senior Olympics.

**2003** Topics contributed by speakers were the history of the Hoge Farm near Blacksburg, the secrets of Sinking Creek and Stroubles Creek, osteoporosis, hip fractures, space problems with assisted living, a forum on state legislative issues, Delegate Jim Shuler reviewing the General Assembly, air quality, tax reform, "gadgets, gizmos and other cool stuff," and music made by the Blacksburg Community Band.

Topics, projects, activities and the like were officers' training, volunteer recognition, legislative report after report after report, a joint yard sale with the Mt. Tabor Ruritans, prescription perils, laughter, AARP Tax-Aide, the National Day of Service, "AARP the Magazine," energy foods, donating to our Chapter charity fund, 55-Alive Driver Training programs, Senior Olympics, Walking through Virginia, blood sugar and blood pressure screenings, helping the Senior/Community/Recreation Center obtain more stuff, an AARP Certificate of Appreciation, receiving a donation of a wheelchair in excellent condition, the AARP 10K-A-Day program, a walking program named "Moving thru Virginia," tax reform, summer trips, receiving Honorable Mention from AARP Virginia for our Newsletter, the Andrus Award, get out the vote booths, some members attending the Governor's Conference on Aging sponsored by AARP, AARP publications from Richmond, fundraising for the Senior Center, air pollution related to health, and a plaque for 25 years of serving seniors.

**2004** Regular programs were on the future of Blacksburg, the prescription drug program(s), Beth Obenshain on the New River Land Trust, a memorial to those who died in '03, the Community Foundation of the NRV, Warm Hearth, Jim Shuler and Dave Nutter reporting on goings on in Richmond, a 50/50 cash drawing at each meeting, annual picnic and auction, a special (September) meeting combining our membership meeting with the general public and a forum on Social Security and Medicare, poetry by Nikki Giovanni from Virginia Tech, computerized voting machines, and the usual Holiday Luncheon with the Blacksburg Community Band and citizenship and community service and chapter service awards.

Many, many other things were done starting with an announcement that a Senior Center breakfast in December would become an annual event, then thanks to the AARP Tax-Aide Committee for the fact the Governor wrote Jim Shuler about their good work, a special meeting regarding the prescription drug program, a website to answer Medicare questions, a letter to National AARP expressing dissatisfaction with the national office for supporting the prescription drug bill, an analysis of the Governor's Tax Reform Plan, AARP Tax-Aide, an endowment fund for seniors, Seniors in Action (to bring houses up to code), do-not-calls from telemarketers, buying drugs from Canada and 18 other countries, volunteer recognition, fitness, County activities and tours, the Community Foundation of the NRV, Warm Hearth, the Caring Committee requesting notice when someone was "down," the budget, senior Olympics, transit service, End of Life Caring (a combined seminar), forums on Town Council candidates, a dues increase, displays and information from eight local organizations, and a State award for the best Newsletter of the Year.

The 55-Alive Driver Training programs were held, and also, TV time on Channel 2 in Blacksburg, a write up in the New River Current (section in the local paper), a section on Aging and Retirement in the Volume Two Bookstore, panel discussion on the impact of the media on the 2004 elections, trips and tours, and the Holiday Luncheon with awards and music.

**2005** Topics for the year were what we should eat, the fitness and fundraising arm of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, a memorial service, volunteer student work in our community, a review of geriatric concerns of the College of Osteopathic Medicine affiliated with Virginia Tech, Habitat for Humanity, the legislative session in Richmond, home modification for low income seniors, a book review of Warren Strother and Peter Wallenstein's book about President T. Marshall Hahn, Jr., the annual picnic and white elephant auction, a general meeting combined with other entities to plan and conduct the Health and Wellness Fair, our legislative hopefuls telling us why they should be elected, flower arranging, the Christmas Store, and ending with a bang-up good Holiday Luncheon featuring

food, music, awards, and fun. Other things that came up were: a Chapter website became operational under Connie Anderson, brochures to other retiree groups, one-year free memberships to program presenters, 55-Alive Driver Training programs, a home repair project, volunteer recognition, maintaining a current and continuing P. O. Box, a Health Fair that required literally months of work and was highly successful, Social Security received a lot of attention, a meeting at the Governor's mansion, a joint AARP/Town bloodmobile, 120 people were helped by AARP Tax-Aide, a Virginia Tech Service Learning Center student helper, a letter from Senator George Allen about Social Security, praying and hoping for the success of Dan Fleming's liver transplant, AARP Virginia program on long-term care, an explanation of the Funeral Consumers Alliance, Hurricane Katrina brought on a lot of work in preparing our area to receive displaced victims, elections, update on the Blacksburg Museum, the availability of the "5 Wishes" booklet, volunteering with the Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society, helping the Literacy Volunteers/Salvation Army/Christmas Store/American Cancer Society/Kroontje Health Care Center; from this President Carl got the idea of establishing partnerships – we've got the horses and they've got the money.

**2006** Our AARP Chapter held meeting programs on "*Blacksburg Transit: What's available for our older citizens;*" "*Our Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan: Update and Progress;*" "*How to Make your Home Safe and Comfortable as you Age;*" and also featured Virginia Delegates, Jim Shuler and Dave Nutter, reporting on the 2006 Virginia General Assembly activities. In June, our Blacksburg AARP Chapter will hold their Annual Picnic, Auction and Antique Car Show. The Picnic will be a celebration of our Chapter's 30th Anniversary and an opportunity to present our membership with this 30-year Blacksburg AARP Chapter History Booklet sponsored by the Warm Hearth Village Organization.





## THE THIRTY-YEAR HISTORY OF BLACKSBURG AARP CHAPTER #2613

*Paul M. Reaves, AARP Chapter Historian, wrote an annual historical report for the first ten years of the chapter's existence, which is summarized as follows. For the full text of the "The First Ten Years," see Appendix I.*

**1975** The origin of the formation of an AARP Chapter in the Blacksburg area started with a small group of seniors living in the Blacksburg Area called *The Leisurees for Social Life and Community Activities*. This gathering of senior individuals met to talk about a possible organization to enhance the social life and community activities for persons in this particular age group. Clarence Jencks was named the chairman of The Leisurees.

**1976 March:** Investigated AARP for information to form a local Chapter; secured this information from AARP and the Virginia AARP State Director. There was hesitation on some formation and organization rules (a states rights issue). See Appendix II for the History of AARP.

**April:** Blacksburg AARP Chapter #2613 was organized with Denver Bragg as the first president. Ten years later he was the only original officer still active in the chapter. See Appendix III for the List of Chapter Presidents.

**June:** Received Blacksburg Charter and Incorporation information. During the first ten years of Chapter history, the membership meetings were held in five different places and Board meetings in two locations. Began as The Leisurees for Social Life and Community Activities. AARP Origin: Chartered and incorporated on June 29, 1976. Annual Dues were ten dollars thereafter.

**1977** The Transportation Committee had access to a new bus. Started studying the idea of assisting in preparing income tax forms. There was a trip to Old Salem, and an Open Meeting on insurance. A Bridge group played each 2nd Thursday of the month. There was a Barter Theatre trip scheduled. Dr. Wybe Kroontje presented information on Warm Hearth.

**1978** Bridge meetings were held each Thursday evening at the University Club. Several trips were taken and an insurance workshop was given. A need for visitors and companions for Heritage Hall residents and with homebound elderly was mentioned. A Lexington, Virginia trip and a Pennsylvania Dutch tour were taken.

First AARP Chapter picnic was held on the 18th of July. Theater tour to

London with additional side trips was organized and enjoyed. George Litton discussed plans and progress on the Warm Hearth Retirement Community.

**1979** Most meetings were held in Room 316, Squires Student Center, Virginia Tech Campus. Legislative committees were involved with controlling inflation, reforming health care and more equitable tax program. Note from William Wampler, Virginia State Senator, on what Congress has done for Seniors. Health Fair sponsored by student nurses at Radford University. Discussed possibility of a senior citizen's section in proposed Town of Blacksburg Recreation Center. Legal Aid Society asks for representatives and plans to help seniors on legal matters. Members participated in the Hunger Hike; attended the Annual AARP picnic, and took a Bardstown, Kentucky tour. Our Legislative Committee was active in attending meetings to speak about our needs and mention our voting power; concerned issues were named. There was a meeting speaker from Heritage Hall; a tri-annual review was held.

**1980** Meetings took place in Room 316, **Squires Student Center**, Virginia Tech Campus. A Tour to the Southern Living Show in Winston Salem, North Carolina was taken. A List of officers, directors and all committee members were distributed. William Hoy reported that Warm Hearth may get underway beginning in 1981; the administrator was Robert McNichols. A Health Fair was held on April 18-19 of



Squires Student Center

this year. AARP Pharmacy in Washington, DC was announced. Tours were taken to Warm Springs, Barter Theatre, Big Stone Gap, Trail of the Lonesome Pine, and Cumberland Gap. September meeting was a salad potluck at the Presbyterian fellowship hall with a talk by Richard Bohlin of Wheat Securities about investments. Mr. Hoy reported government funds had been secured for 66 units of Warm Hearth; application for 100 more units in the works. Meetings moved to Room 340, Squires Student Center, as more and better space is needed. Town Recreation Center was mentioned again as a possible meeting site. Mayor Walrath indicated agreement with the needs of AARP and mentioned a multi-purpose room. December meeting included door prizes.

**1981** First Chapter meeting of 1981 was held on Inauguration Day with news of the release of 52 hostages in Iran. Schedule of meetings was distributed, to be held in Room 316, Squires Student Center. Committee sign-up sheets were circulated. Program was on Keeping Healthy. Several tours were discussed. Members of the

Nominating Committee would serve staggered terms. Discussed making art contest an annual event. Updated Help and Health Care information. Fifth Anniversary celebration will be held on June 15. Tangier Island tour was scheduled. Recreation Center completed and may be used by AARP for \$17 per meeting. Warm Hearth has begun – a road has been built, water lines are laid, ready to put in sewer lines; buildings should start in the fall. September meeting was a salad and dessert lunch. Tours are available, some through Christiansburg and Montgomery County Recreation Departments. October and November meetings will be held at the new Recreation Center on a trial basis. Historian was authorized to purchase a metal filing cabinet. Several tours were announced. Wes Judkins gave a program on Investing in the Stock Market. Al Beecher announced a 3-day tour of the 1982 World’s Fair at Knoxville, Tennessee, June 3-5; also a trip to Charlotte, North Carolina, and Christmas Show were announced. The AARP Board unanimously voted to meet at the Blacksburg Recreation Center henceforth.

**1982** Meetings are to be the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm, with a bag lunch followed by program and business. Cost will be \$16.67 per meeting. Officers, Directors and Committees List was prepared and distributed. Various tours and programs were discussed. Workshops were also proposed. May meeting will be held at **Warm Hearth Village** to showcase it;



Warm Hearth Village

speaker was Joan Munford telling of her experiences in the General Assembly. Trips were made to the World’s Fair in Knoxville, Tennessee. Warm Hearth now has two buildings under construction and private houses for sale. Programs were presented on Agency on Aging for the New River Valley and Montgomery Health Department and a directory of social services.



Lucy Lee Lancaster

Proposed Blacksburg-Virginia Tech bus system was discussed. Regional Library open house event held on April 18. Vern Hillman presented a gavel and block to President William Hoy. May was Senior Citizens Month – **Lucy Lee Lancaster** told of her early days here, as did Al Payne, Cartmel Brown, Carrie Sibold, Myron Shear, Nell Corey and William Hoy. Summer tours were announced. Rev. Glen Tyndall gave a slide talk on the plan to start a Christmas Store.

Special Anniversary Program was held in June – many old things presented by many people. Herb Buhrow reported telephone contact for home-bound people. The Picnic was held in July. Herb Buhrow published a 20-page booklet of services available to senior citizens, paid for by the National Bank of Blacksburg. Tele-A-Care was presented and explained.

The Board voted a \$25 donation to the Christmas Store. District Juvenile Court Services Unit appealed for help giving encouragement on a one-to-one basis. Tours were presented and talked about. October speaker was Bill Wampler, Congressman for 9th District. He talked about Federal Legislation Affecting the Elderly and actions in Congress. At the Christmas Dinner, William Hoy expressed our appreciation for the Recreation Center, a "convenient place with ample parking." A certificate of appreciation was presented to Pete Ellison for his many services to the Chapter.

**1983** January meeting was at the Recreation Center with a brown bag lunch and Seymour Kalison presiding. Discussed numbers, previous Christmas dinner and July picnic. Last year's Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer have agreed to serve another year. American Cancer Society asked for help to take patients to Roanoke hospitals – 12 people volunteered right away. Al Beecher reviewed last year's tours. February: President Kalison made a report on hospice and gave information on starting one in Montgomery County. H. C. Agee (Legislative Committee) reviewed some measures in current session. Future tours were discussed. Mike Connelly, Manager of Blacksburg Transit System, gave the program. Budget was discussed. Pete Ellison is a member of Council of the Agency on Aging and will bring reports of meetings. Al Payne will contact churches about a special Sabbath recognizing the elderly in April. Trip to the Grand Old Opry was announced. Ellison Smyth and Carrie Sibold gave talks on their early experiences as students at Tech. Herb Buhrow explained the **Silver Haired Legislative Plan**, a committee of elderly people to meet in Richmond, to be a liaison with the State Legislature.

Silver Haired Legislators are Seniors, age 60 plus that are elected by their peers, and in some cases supported by the Local Area Agency on Aging, Title VI American Indian Programs and the Older Americans Act.

The Tour of Warm Hearth was well attended. Del Dyer talked on "*The Volunteer Scene in the Bifocal Years*," stating there is a rebirth of volunteerism. Our Chapter voted to join the sewing project for the hospital's day care center. Gave \$5 to the Tech YMCA Hunger Hike. Trip to Pipestem was announced for June 14-15. The average age of AARP membership has lowered from 55 to 50. The May Mental Health Month, brought a great program by Mrs. Roland J. Stipes, which concluded that the healthiest people are those involved with helping others. Dr. Gunnar Teilman, for 30 years a missionary in Singapore, spoke giving advice and comments. President Kalison was selected as our representative to a new program, the **Virginia Tech New Dimensions**, for Tech retirees. The Annual

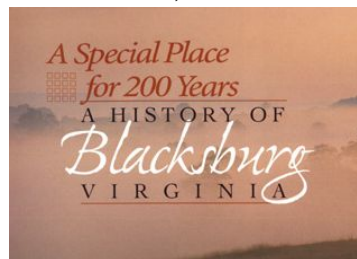
**"THAT WE MAY SERVE"**  
is the motto and guiding spirit of New Dimensions

picnic was held on June 21. At the September meeting, H. E. Agee summarized the work of the state committee for the good of the elderly. Agee also talked about a Blacksburg van equipped with a wheelchair loader that was available to handicapped and seniors for half-fare, and regular bus trips to hospitals. Tours and Christmas Store were discussed. A Bill will be introduced in 1984 to give discounts on auto insurance to seniors who complete the 55-Alive Driver Training program. Our chapter will send three people to a meeting of "*Blacksburg in the 80's*" on October 26. At the Christmas dinner meeting Herb Buhrow reported on Silver-Haired Legislature meeting: over 400 ideas were reduced to 35 bills, later reduced to 26. Some of the subjects were drunken driving, utility rates, mentally ill, pornography, state lottery, insurance, legal assistance, elimination of tax on food and drugs, health costs, lower tax rate on homes. Madison Marye reviewed his legislative work over past 10 years and accomplishments of the Democratic party, especially no higher taxes. Ward Teel reviewed his experiences and beliefs. Dr. James McAuley talked about the Center for Gerontology at Virginia Tech.

**1984** Our first woman Chapter President, Jean Davis, took office and her Secretary was Lucy Lee Lancaster. A new activity was approved, slide shows for the elderly, will be held the 4th Tuesday of each month. We supported the legislative aims of AARP. H. E. Agee will call insurance agencies about supplemental insurance. We needed supplies for beverages at Chapter meetings, and will be financed by kitty box. Tours were discussed.



ID cards for the elderly would be made at the Wesley Foundation by the Agency on Aging. Ed Mundie will follow the idea of adding a Seniors wing to the **Blacksburg Recreation (Community) Center**. The March Program was about our citizens' role in crime prevention. A Slide show was presented on crime in our area – the secret is to remove the opportunity. In April, Cynthia Spencer, Director of Chamber of Commerce, talked about "*Blacksburg, A Special Place*." The May Program was a



'show and tell' with handicraft. In July, we held our picnic; in August, a tour was taken; and in September, slides were shown by Wes Judkins. In October, our program was about 'rambling through history of Blacksburg and Montgomery County.'

Abraham Lincoln was quoted as saying that no nation or AARP Chapter could "long endure" without a newsletter, so on October 16th, Volume 1, Number 1, of the Blacksburg Chapter newsletter was published with John G. Palmer as Editor. It was one sheet of paper, front and back with eight headings. The message (our motto) was clear: "*To Serve,*

*Not to be Served.*" Al Payne had previously spoken about the desirability of a newsletter.

Some Chapter Board News for 1984: Homer Dickerson asked that we make an eyeglass collection as a chapter project – this was approved. Wes Judkins suggested various tours. Al Sturm was elected our Registered Agent with the Virginia Department of Taxation. We received a report from Blacksburg Transit System. In March, President Davis appointed a finance committee. Plans for enlarging the Blacksburg Recreation (Community) Center were being considered. Suggestion box is now available. Poster project on value of elderly will be continued. Kay Green presented a small American flag from American Legion Auxiliary No. 182. Beginning April 30th, a Blacksburg Transit bus will go to Montgomery Regional Hospital. Jefferson Stafford of Giles County gave an overview of the 1984 General Assembly. Cartmel Brown reported on the AARP Workshop at the Red Carpet Inn in Pulaski. American Cancer Society has a need for local drivers. Literature was presented on Mental Health Month.

Ken Farmer talked about buying and selling antiques. Montgomery County sponsored a road show on health. Made a visit and held a program at Warm Hearth. Announced a Virginia Tech forum series for seniors. Donated \$25 to Halloween program for children. Blacksburg Transit bus to hospital being used very little. Jim Faist gave a program on "*Landscape with Vision.*" **Rick Boucher** talked about programs in Congress dealing with the seniors.



Rick Boucher

The Community (Recreation) Center plans for addition were underway. Moved the Board meetings to Methodist Church. Revised Standing Rules were duly filed with AARP. Al Beecher talked about the Blacksburg Townscape Committee. Our Christmas Dinner was held this year at the Blacksburg Baptist Church with George Litton as the speaker.

**1985** Officers, Board, Committees and Programs all got started in the usual way. The newsletter was prepared each month by John Palmer. Herb Buhrow had run his course as a Silver Haired Legislator and wanted someone else to run; he had forms for House and Senate. Cora Miller attended a meeting about drunk driving. Set up seven tours from March to September. Dues should be paid by February 28. 55-Alive Driver Training program will co-op with Virginia Tech New Dimensions, to begin in April. Collection of eyeglasses and school poster contest will continue. February program was: A Trip to China, presented by Virle and Al Payne. The March program: President Sturm covered correspondence and calls regarding new Standing Rules and dues. Annual AARP Leadership Workshop was held April 18 at the Radford Senior Center. Trip was taken to the Barn Dinner Theater. 55-Alive Driver Training program was offered in April, May, June and in



the Fall. Vial-of-Life program was discussed: a vial stored in refrigerator listing medications, allergies, etc., and a sticker on the door alerting emergency people.

Dr. Keith Roberts, retired from Radford University, spoke as a candidate for Senator of the Silver Haired Legislature. Three tours were scheduled for the summer. Mentioned free May programs at Montgomery Hospital. Four-month report sent to National AARP Office. Herb Buhrow reviewed survey of our concerns – they were hospital and healthcare costs, in-home care, community services, rising utility costs, and income tax exemption levels. The Chapter Picnic was held on June 18.

Esther Martin chaired a program on "*Financial Management During Retirement.*" In September, the 25th Anniversary of National AARP was coming up; it began with 23 Chapters and had grown to 3300; also a program on Use of Drugs. October – met in the new enlarged meeting room at the Recreation Center. Jean Davis reported opening of new Blacksburg Medi-center. There was also a program to showcase three new employees of the Town explaining their jobs., and one on Social Services and Legal Problems related to helping people at home. The final meeting was the Christmas Dinner.

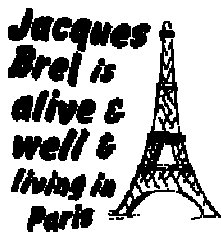
**1986** The only records found were three sheets of paper containing the **Budget**, the Treasurer's Report and the Financial Report. Membership numbered 301, but not all dues were paid. The newsletter was produced at costs of \$113.18 for printing and \$114.80 for postage. Caring was done at a cost of \$46.32. Two dinners were held, the Anniversary dinner (\$227.52) and the Christmas dinner (\$756). Regular operating expenses were paid. Total receipts were \$1174.95 and total expenses were \$935.55. The Financial Report differs from the Treasurer's Report, so the Treasurer's Report was used for this review. Al Beecher was President.



**1987** The only records found were six Treasurer's Reports; the sixth one is for December, and covers receipts and expenses for the year, so it will be reported here. A Summer Picnic (receipts of \$287.50) and a Christmas Dinner (receipts of \$1064) were held. The newsletter was produced - (\$182.21 for printing and \$50 for postage). Community service cost \$69.16. Regular operating expenses were paid. Herbert Buhrow was President. Al Sturm presented a great lecture for the 200th Anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution.

**1988** Our second woman Chapter President, Esther Martin, presided that year. In January, Janice and John Palmer gave a slide show about their summer travels in

the north central states. Others were invited to give slide shows about other parts of the United States or for that matter, anywhere in the world. Ellen Coale, Cardiac Therapy Dietician at Tech, spoke about "*Great Food Choices For Living Well.*" The March newsletter contained an accolade for Al Sturm pertaining to his presentation marking the Bicentennial of the U. S. Constitution, plus a full page of Al's comments about signing the Constitution, overhauling it, adopting the Bill of Rights, amendments and other matters. Denver Bragg and Al Beecher held a plant sale. The Tour program of the Montgomery County Parks and Recreation Department was explained and highly recommended to our Chapter members. The 55-Alive Driver Training program was recommended to everyone. The April newsletter listed legislation of interest. May newsletter announced tentative plans



for a trip to Barter Theatre, plus a long accolade for Herb Buhrow for his many, many community activities. Five members attended an AARP Area III Workshop in Wytheville. *Jacques Brel is Alive and Living in Paris!* That's the title of a light-hearted matinee at the Barter Theatre that Catherine Edwards arranged with Montgomery County Parks and Recreation Department at a cost of \$22 that included bus fare and ticket. In September, Robert Stripling, former Town Manager, presented his concepts about Blacksburg. In October Jean McCart discussed "*Voting Is Not A Spectator Sport.*"

Beginning in September, the newsletter was and still is mailed to each member before monthly meetings. At first it was done with all volunteer help, but copy centers just naturally called for some changes. 125 persons had taken the 55-Alive Driver Training program. Main events were again the Summer Picnic (June 21) and the Christmas Party (December 6). The Board of Directors met at the Blacksburg Methodist Church, and in June placed flowers on the altar to express our thanks. Judy Snoke from the League of Women Voters spoke to the Proposition that "*Democracy Is Not A Spectator Sport!*"

Fifteen member deaths occurred in 1988. Frank Maher, Chairman of the Legislative Committee, asked each attendee of the November meeting to mark the five most important from a list of fourteen legislative items to be considered by the 1989 Virginia State Legislature. These items were summarized. From response by 81 Virginia Chapters, the AARP State Legislative Committee selected four priority items: health care costs, consumer-oriented legislation, in-home community based services and tax incentives, and strengthen adult protective services. Nominations for AARP Chapter Board members for 1989 were presented in October. Dues for 1989 were set at \$4 single and \$8 couple.

In November, Mrs. William (Martha) Rogers gave a slide show and talk on the Holy Land. Members were asked to check blocks preceding committees they were interested in; a list was provided in the newsletter that included Caring, Chaplains, Community Service, Financial Planning, Health Care and Insurance,



Hospitality, Legislative, Membership, Program, Public Relations, Publishing, Telephone, Transportation, and Discount Book.

**1989** George Foresman, a local Pharmacist, gave a talk entitled "*Over the Counter Versus Prescription Drugs.*" A group called ECOCYCLE compiled and published a list of Recycling Collection Centers. AARP National began the Volunteer Community Service Award. Dr. Bob Denton, Head of Communication Studies at Virginia Tech discussed the "*Primetime Presidency Of Ronald Reagan*" from the "media" standpoint. The White Elephant Table was begun to raise extra money for the Ways and Means Committee. Montgomery County Community Services' pink booklet, "*Where to Call in Montgomery County: Information and Referral*" came into being with help from our Chapter. The Annual Picnic was held on June 20. A summer trip to Barter Theatre was held on August 9. The Christmas dinner was scheduled for December 5.

A professor in the United Kingdom wanted to exchange his house and car with someone for the summer. The Blacksburg High School Symphonic Band represented Virginia at the Bicentennial celebration of the French Revolution in Paris; they raised about \$120,000 throughout the area; they gave two performances in Paris and one in London. Mary Tom Long, MD, gave a phone number for anyone wanting information about the AARP Prudential supplementary insurance program.

A 4-day, 3-night trip was made to the Festival Houses in Charleston, SC; the price was \$260. Dr. James I. "*Bud*" Robertson gave a talk entitled "The Civil War Nobody Knows." Irene Leach, Extension Specialist, presented information on the Catastrophic Health Care Act plus a 15-minute presentation by two representatives with the Department of the Treasury on the merits of direct deposit and new initiatives concerning government issued checks; this program was repeated in New River Community College, Floyd, and Giles Senior Center. **Reverend Al Payne** received a SPECIAL CITATION from the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors. Millie Beecher, Mary Tom Long, Jim and Lula Roberts, and Louise Russell attended the Area AARP Workshop on Aging in Wytheville. The YMCA sponsored several seminars about retirees, and from this was formed a financial club. Our Chapter sent people to help with a Retirement Fair at the Christiansburg Senior Center; attendance was poor. Our Chapter supported the Montgomery Regional Hospital effort to get twelve skilled nursing home beds.



Al Payne

Blacksburg's Channel 24 gave our Chapter an eight minute broadcast to present ourselves to the community. Our Chapter wrote Rick Boucher asking him to support four enumerated health care issues. The National AARP conducted a telephone survey about chapter needs. The Christiansburg and Radford Chapters

invited our members to attend one of their meetings. Accolades were expressed to Louise Russell for keeping our image before the public. In October, nominations for 1990 were made and published in the newsletter. In September, Dr. James D. McComas discussed "*What's New At Virginia Tech.*" A forum was held entitled "*Current Concerns Of Retirees.*"

**1990** This writer, Jim Gaines, found a pink activities report with the word "kegs" handwritten at the top – no idea what it means. In January, Jim Rakes of the National Bank of Blacksburg talked about "*Banking In The 1990's.*" Dr. Amy O'Leary with the Virginia Transportation Research Council gave a 5-minute talk about needs of the older driver. The Caring Committee Chair asked for donations of nice greeting cards; she had mailed over 200 cards in two years, and the supply was "mighty low." In January a list of committees was placed on a table, and people were asked to sign up. Al Beecher and Denver Bragg and others raised over \$450 at their plant sales in 1989. In February Debbie Palmer, New River Agency on Aging talked about services available for the elderly. In March, Wayne Purcell, Agricultural Economics, opined about the "*World Food Supply.*" The 1990 National AARP Biennial Convention was announced for June 12-14 in Orlando, Florida. Our Editor, John Palmer, presented a resemblance to a crossword puzzle using the surnames of the members of the Chapter. Robbie Coiner, Legislative Committee, received notice about new benefits in Medicare: Respite Care, Expanded Home Health Care, Mammography Screening, and Hospice Care. The benefits were to be paid for through an increase in premiums. In April, Andy Huddick, a Financial Advisor, presented ideas to help us better understand the topic. The Ways and Means Committee held a white elephant sale at the April meeting. In May, **Marshall Fishwick**, Humanities, gave a humorous travelogue entitled "*Is Our Far West the Far East?*" June 19th was the date for the annual picnic and auction, held at Nellie's Cave Park.

Helen Judkins said 41 cards had been sent so far in 1990, and thanked Jo Obenchain for her gift of cards. August 8th was the date of a trip to Barter Theatre; \$35 paid for a bus trip, restaurant meal, and ticket. In September Ken Farmer, a local auctioneer, broker, appraiser gave a talk entitled "*Estate Settlement – Boon Or Boondoggle?*" Ken Martin provided information in regard to enrollment in a supplemental health care policy. Twenty-five cans or packages of food were collected and donated to the Interfaith Food Pantry, plus \$10 cash. Our Chapter donated a tree to plant on the edge of the Huckleberry Trail. Members of the Board of Directors made a \$50 donation to the Food Pantry. An "Ad-Hoc" committee of Herb Buhrow, Mary Tom Long, and Jim Moore was formed to study about a



M. Fishwick

senior center. Ways and Means Committee continues to need paperback books.

On August 29th, Jim and Lula Roberts represented our Chapter at a workshop in Wytheville entitled "*Serving on Boards and Commissions.*" Lula Roberts also attended a Virginia Tech Extension Service meeting on consumer concerns. On October 16th, Wes Judkins showed photos and talked about "*The Architecture Of Flowers.*" Nominations were made for 1991. October 1st was the official "kick-off" of the 1990 Fund Raising Campaign for the Montgomery County Christmas Store. Contributions were solicited. Our Chapter had an exhibit at the Montgomery County Celebration of Age on Sunday, October 28. Our Sunshine Chairperson, Fannie Reynolds, asked again for donation of cards. The November meeting was highlighted by Dr. Djavad Salehi-Isfahni, Economics; his topic: "*The Mid-East Oil Crisis.*" December 4th was the date of the Christmas Party/Holiday Banquet, a joint affair with The American Legion, held at Custom Catering. The newsletter contained a list of names of members who died in 1990. Severe shortages of available items at the Food Pantry were reported.

**1991** Our newsletter editor, John Palmer, gave a January 15th travelogue based on his forest and forest products research entitled "*Favorite Forest Fotografhs.*" The February 19 meeting was a talk by Wes Judkins entitled "*The Horticulture We Eat.*" Al Beecher reported that the Ways and Means Committee had been asked to raise \$400. Members were asked to bring things for their sale and buy things others bring. A complete list of officers and chairs was published, followed by a list of committee names and descriptions. Another plea was made for help relieving severe shortages at the Food Pantry. The March 19th program was given by Ron Secrist about "*Blacksburg: Present and Future.*" He brought the Chapter up to date on needs, problems, and plans. The New River Valley Senior Olympics was announced for three days in April. A number of Spring gardening community programs were included in the March newsletter for general information. Attention was called to AARP's celebration of National Women's History Month during March. Many outstanding women were mentioned and credited with their contributions.



Dr. Lyons

The April 16 program was by **Robert Lyons**, Horticulture, about "*Perennials for Blacksburg.*" May 10th was a joint federation program for seniors prepared by local senior groups. "*Planning for the Future*" was the theme, and it lasted most of the day and covered four main topics. The May 21st program provided information on "*Everything You Wanted to Know About the Voluntary Action Program*" by Allison Limoges. June 18th was our annual Picnic Day with its usual auction and the meal was a potluck affair. Kenneth Martin, Health Committee, informed all that Brian Allen of Colonial Penn Life

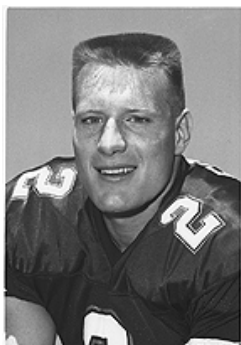
Insurance would answer questions about Medicare periodically. Barbara Blanton was the contact person. Snyder-Hunt, a local construction firm, announced it was developing housing to provide assisted care for seniors. Al Beecher, **Wybe Kroontje**, and Al Payne joined "*Friends of the South Main Landscape*." This led to our Chapter contributing \$350 to purchase and plant a tree. Individual contributions were invited. Summer trips were arranged by Mildred Beecher to Mill Mountain Theater on July 6th and the Barter Theatre on August 7. Helen Judkins, Caring Chair, received our annual Chapter Volunteerism Award for 1991 from President Mary Tom Long. Nell Corey was pictured and Ellison Smyth was mentioned in the New River Current newspaper for their original writings in a workshop led by Nikki Giovanni. The October 15th program featured Chris Riegert, Hospital Pharmacy, who discussed what you should and should not have in your medical closet. Fannie Reynolds was featured in the newsletter for her 85th birthday and all the cards she has sent to members over the years. The Food Pantry still had a severe shortages of available items. The November 19th meeting featured a panel moderated by Esther Martin to discuss "*Enjoying your Money in Later Years*." There was also a raffle, election of officers for 1992, and sale of tickets for the December 3rd Christmas Party (\$9). 1992 Committees were listed in the October newsletter. The Holiday Banquet happened as planned at 6 pm on December 3rd at Custom Catering (chicken, potatoes, beans, dessert and salad). Entertainment was a musical program by the Trillium, a trio of ladies. New officers for 1992 duly installed. Six Chapter members died in 1991. Harriet Damant, Community Service, asked for (1) support of the Christmas Store, (2) make friendly visits all year, and (3) help the transport of those who need it.



Wybe Kroontje

## 1992

January 21st meeting: Dr. Wayland Winstead, Director of Planning at Virginia Tech, spoke on "*Key Issues Facing Virginia Tech*." The 1992 Officers and Committees were listed in the newsletter. The February 18th speaker was Dr. Dean L. Hummel who spoke on "*The Hummel Figurine Story*." Millie Beecher announced several trips to the Southern Spring Show in Charlotte, NC (more than 500 exhibits). Fannie Reynolds, Sunshine Committee asked for cards of all kinds. The March 17th meeting featured **Will Furrer**, 1991 Tech Quarterback and academic All-American who related "*Experiences of a College Football Player*." Millie Beecher announced two tours: Shatwell Springs on April 14th and Bramwell, Wes Virginia, on May 16. Virle Payne announced YMCA Thursday Noon Slide Shows at the Cranwell International Center, and put dates



Will Furrer



and titles for six weeks in the newsletter. Page 2 of the February newsletter was "*How a Bill is Introduced and May Become Law in the Virginia State Legislature*," brought to the Chapter by Herb Buhrow. Page 3 was all about Chapter Committees. Jean Davis asked for church representatives on the Caring Committee. The April 21st meeting featured Robert Heterick, Vice President Emeritus, who presented "*Blacksburg - The Electronic Village*." There was also a concert by the Blacksburg High School Jazz Band. May 19th, Susan Whitiker, a much experienced nurse spoke on "*Hospice Care for the Terminally Ill*." **Jim and Mary Ellen Moore** received the AARP Community Service Award to honor their dozens of Community activities. Results of the legislation preferences were on Page 3 of the May newsletter. Ray Murley announced a meeting of seniors of many groups to discuss activities for seniors at the Christiansburg Armory on May 22. The June 16th Picnic was a potluck at Nellie's Cave Park, and included the usual auction to benefit the Ways and Means Committee. There was a great need for food and cash for the Food Pantry.



Jim & Mary Ellen Moore

After our usual summer break, the September 15th meeting was about health care. The national office of AARP was pushing a plan for a national health insurance program, training people and put out a VCR movie, and George Thompson, a local retired teacher/principal was certified to present pros and cons of "*The AARP Health Care Proposal*." The October 20th meeting was a luncheon affair at Custom Catering. The program was entitled "*Generations, Bridge of Ages*," and suggested many ways in which older and younger persons may interact. Ken Martin, Health Care chair, cautioned that everyone should keep up with health care developments, and write State Legislators and others. Another plea came in for food and cash for the Food



Pantry. Volunteers were asked for to work in shifts constructing the "*Hand in Hand Playground*" in the Municipal Park near the "red caboose." Our Chapter contributed \$500. Help was asked for Dustin Fagan, an 8-year old boy with brain cancer, whose family needed \$250,000 for the treatment he needed. Dr. Liz Glynn, Department of Human Nutrition at Virginia Tech, asked for diabetics to participate in a study of blood sugar response to

peanut butter and crackers. Our Chapter, thru Bob Blanton and Jim Moore, endorsed the program of the Federation of Senior Citizens in Montgomery County. John Palmer, our Editor in those days, was awarded a PULLET-SURPRIZE at the June picnic.

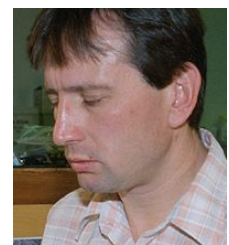
There was another showing of the AARP health care film at the Wesley Foundation on October 25th between 1 pm and 2 pm. The local Mental Health

Association asked for donations of \$30 per person for gifts for Veterans at the Salem Virginia Hospital. Many of the vets have no known relatives and no visitors. On November 17th, Fred Dodson, Executive Director of New River Valley **Habitat for Humanity** told about "*Habitat Activities in the New River Valley.*"



The members also elected officers for 1993; the list of nominees was included. Tickets were on sale for the Holiday Banquet at \$9. At this same meeting (November 17), Mr. Phil Conner, Community Center Supervisor, asked for volunteers from our Chapter to help develop a program for senior citizens. Three classes were started: Weekly Coffee Social, Monthly Brunch, and Potluck Dinner and Dance. December 1st the Holiday Banquet was held at Custom Catering, followed by installation of 1993 officers, and dancing to 1930's music by the Ken Epperly Band. Our Board of Directors voted to purchase an American flag with stand to display at the Recreation Center. John Palmer included an utterance that he attributed to Cartmel Brown: "It ain't started until it's begun!"

**1993** The January 19th meeting was a commemorative service for the ten members who died in late 1991 and all of 1992, followed by a humorous program by Dr. Steven Anderson, Professor of Communication Studies at Virginia Tech. All elected officers, board members, committees and committee members for 1993 were listed in the newsletter and also included with the Membership list that was distributed later. Our Chapter supported and stressed Montgomery County Parks and Recreation tours to Claytor Lake Homestead Inn on January 27th; Staunton Antiquing on February 2nd; Pipestem Dinner Theatre February 6th; New Market Battlefield Park February 23rd; and Southern Spring Show on February 28-March 3. A Special Meeting was held for a discussion of the financing of the AARP Plan to Reform American Health Care, a matter of great concern in the early months of the Clinton years. On February 16th, the program was given by **Dr. Bill Veland** of the Chemical Engineering Department of Virginia Tech to discuss Genetic Engineering, specifically: "*Production of Pharmaceuticals from Transgenic Livestock.*" County Supervisor Jim (a different one) Moore (and a member of our Chapter) asked people to fill out a survey about Montgomery County Issues. More tours were announced: Smith Mt. Lake on March 22nd, Old Salem Moravian Village on March 24th, and a Montgomery County Historical Tour on March 15. Agnes Higgins, Chapter Tour Committee, gave notice of eight plays at the Barter Theatre. The Community Service Committee stated its needs: help with Senior Olympics; bring visitors and home-bound people; a reader to tape books and other items for a young blind



Bill Veland

person; a computer owner-operator to work on records; and noticing shrub and branch obstructions. Jean Davis, Caring Committee Chair, announced new committee members and requested notices of illnesses and deaths; Fannie Reynolds sent cards as needed. Our Chapter's AARP Tax-Aide program was advertised and expanded. Jim and Lula Roberts noted that both hospitals had information packets for new mothers at \$3 each, and our Chapter was considering a donation; for information call New River Valley Reading Council. Helen Wills, Budget, worked very diligently to prepare and report the Budget. Mention should be made of the fact that for years previously there had been a notice offering rides to anyone who needed a ride to any meeting; this was chaired by Early Gallimore, and his slogan was: "Hey, if you need a ride, call Early early."

Jim and Lula Roberts, Ways and Means Committee, requested items and books for the table sale. National health care was mentioned again as a hot topic and one that easily deserves comment to one's national and state legislators. In March 1992, John Palmer, Editor, published some Burma Shave sign poems; this caught on, and others sent some, and in February 1993, six more appeared. At the March 16th meeting everybody took a "*Bike Ride Through Germany*" with Emily and Bob Stuart and Virle Payne. Al Payne gave the prayer at this meeting (later included in the book, "*A Community At Prayer*," published by the local Pocahontas Press), and the prayer may be found as Appendix IV of this History.

Six more tours were announced in March, plus Agnes Higgins pushing "*The Miracle Worker*" at Barter Theatre. People were asked to bring other people to meetings. On March 26th there was a meeting of the NRV Council to discuss help



Bob Denton

projects that require several chapters. The Caring Committee mailed seven cards in February. April 20, 1993 (notice the year, 1993) we had our first meeting devoted to scams and scam artists, presented by the Sheriff's Department. Bach's Lunch concerts at the Virginia Tech Chapel were announced. John Palmer, Editor, wrote a 16-line paragraph about Thomas Jefferson on his 250th birthday; it was very good, and ended with: "That government is best which governs least, because its people discipline themselves," and "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just." The May 18th meeting was an evaluation of "*President Clinton's First One Hundred Days*" by

**Dr. Robert Denton**, Professor and Head of the Communications Department at Virginia Tech (also Bob Denton on PBS). June 15th was the day of our annual Chapter picnic at Nellie's Cave Park complete with the usual auction.

Several AARP people were in the News over the Summer: Reverend Ellison and Mary Linda Smyth reviewed long lives lived in Blacksburg (and a book by Ellison); Arthur J. (Torchy) Walrath was featured in the Roanoke Times for his many community activities and his 80th birthday; and Al Payne had a building at

Virginia Tech named for him. Results of Jim (the Taller) Moore's opinion survey were published and discussed. Eight summer tours were announced. Harry and Harriet Damant gave our Chapter a new American flag, and **Wes Judkins** made a stand for it. Our Chapter donated \$125 to the AARP Andrus Foundation for research pertaining to seniors. The September 21 meeting was by Joan Rowe on how seniors can help children in stress. September 28 was AARP Day at the Virginia State Fair in Richmond, and local members set up a "telephone tree" to foster message transfer. A full page of the September newsletter was given to the topic of all of us keeping up with current affairs and writing our politicians to state our positions. The Chapter Board approved a resolution to support development of the Huckleberry Trail. Jim Roberts said that \$112.80 was made from the picnic auction, and asked for items to be donated and sold at three monthly meetings.



Wes Judkins

The Chapter bought nine copies of Al Payne's book, "*A Community At Prayer*," to give to speakers. Jim (the Shorter) Moore turned in a committee report on the need for a senior center in Blacksburg; after much travel, study, and work the committee felt a special facility was not justified. More Burma Shave signs. The October 19th meeting was at the new Custom Catering on North Main Street, Blacksburg. It was a \$5 catered lunch, and a humor and music program by Reverend Dwane Steele, pastor, Gladesboro Lutheran, Hillsville, who was blind. October 20th Virginia Leadership Council gave a "*Workshop on Economic Security*" in Roanoke. In October, 55-Alive Driver Training programs were held in Radford. On November 2nd, Election Day, many of our members were working at the polls, and all were asked to vote. The November 16th regular meeting featured a Mr. Murray who spoke at length about Warm Hearth. December 7th was our annual holiday banquet. Three tours were announced for November.

*Take a friend  
to vote.*

Nominations for Chapter officers were published for 1994. The Washington, DC, addresses and telephone numbers of National Legislators were listed. Wava Teilman reported that old folks are worth a fortune, with silver in their hair, gold in their teeth, stones in their kidneys, lead in their feet, and gas in their stomachs. The Tech YMCA Crafts Fair was held at Squires November 12-14. Elections were held for 1994. Around town the Christmas Store was alive and well, and asking for help thru calls to Harriet Damant. Torchy Walrath advised that a Virginia Legislative Update was available 4 or 5 times a year, and explained how to get it. John Palmer published a couple of "headline goofs," namely (1) Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers, and (2) Collegians are turning to Vegetables. All of our members were admonished as follows: Don't forget food for the less fortunate - Take gifts to the Food Pantry. Our Chapter and other agencies will receive such donations all year long!



**1994** Do you remember the **Blizzard of 1993-1994**? It was a doozy. It was so bad there was no January newsletter and no January Regular Meeting, so we move to February, which was Black History Month and contained the usual February 14th Valentine's Day. The February 15th monthly meeting was held on Shrove Tuesday; it was presented by Jim Costner, an AARP specialist from the Roanoke Chapter, entitled Income Tax Preparation for Seniors. On March 15th, at 10:00 am, our meeting featured Betty Blakemore, State Director of Consumer Services (from Richmond), who discussed Fraud Against Seniors. At 12 noon, Home Health Care was discussed by Nancy Root of Home Health Care, Inc. Officers and Committees were presented in the newsletter. Torchy Walrath reported that long-term care would be dropped from the proposed federal healthcare reform package unless there was an outcry. Jim Moore, Ad Hoc Committee for Senior Recreational Programs requested that everyone fill out a questionnaire about needs and interests, etc. March 22nd was the start of Woman's Week at Virginia Tech. March 24th was the date of a conference entitled "*Quality of Life at the End of Life*," held at Virginia Tech. Several specialists discussed many specific problems. The conference was supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. April 16th was "Bloomin and Groomin" day and Mary Ellen Moore led a group who helped. On April 19th, the regular meeting was about exercise. Scott van Geluwe, a graduate student in intervention and cardiac programs at Virginia Tech, spoke about exercise, incentives, and better self-care. Notice was given of our Annual Picnic in mid-June. Everyone was asked to please follow developing proposals in healthcare legislation. Mary Ellen Moore, Community Services, reported \$75 sent to Science Fairs in the area, and said the Voluntary Action Center needed people to help with typing, stage set preparations and other essentials for their summer musical.



Catherine Edwards scheduled two trips for April: **Barter Theatre** on the 27th to see Peter Pan (\$44), and Staunton Historic Gardens on the 30th (\$38). Jonathan Kies, a graduate student in Industrial and Systems Engineering at Virginia Tech asked for volunteers to try a prototype Emergency Telephone Service that should help seniors with health problems. Mike Kipps, a member of our Chapter, received a custom-made award from the Rotary Club for 65 years of perfect attendance. Fannie Reynolds received a plaque from our Chapter for many years of service on the Sunshine Committee. The May newsletter included the officers, committees, and complete membership list. The May 17th regular meeting featured Joan Munford, our State Representative for a number of years, who spoke of her experiences, especially with regard to Health

Problems. May 19th, there were Discussion Groups for Seniors at the Recreation Center featuring places of interest, and the Center was blessed with a half-time Director to start July 1. Jim Moore and town officials worked this out. On May 24-26 State and National AARP joined the Virginia Tech Center for Active Retirement in presenting a Workshop on Post-Retirement Planning on the Virginia Tech campus. June 21st was the date of the Annual Picnic and Auction at Nellie's Cave Park. For additional information members could call Jim or Lula Roberts, Margaret Dawson, Linda Horstor, or Bill Haas. A page and a half of the June newsletter was devoted to listing and discussing summer activities in and around Blacksburg. **Dr. Mary Tom Long**, a long-time member of our Chapter, was cited in the local papers following her elevation to *Honorary Life Membership in Presbyterian Women*; her service as Public Health Director for the New River District as well as her activities in health services and AARP were noted.



Torchy Walrath finished compiling results of preferences among 15 possible legislations that should be considered in Richmond in 1995. The five winners were: (1) A healthcare system which will increase access, ensure quality, include prevention and long-term care, and provide home and community-based care; (2) Ensure that the integrity of the public school system is protected; (3) Increase consumer protection against fraud and unfair practices; (4) Tax credits or deductions to caregivers who provide care to an impaired person; and (5) Preserve resources by recycling materials, preserve soil, water and air quality. Our usual summer break was taken during July and August.

The September 20th meeting started out with tidings of great Joy.... Joy Herbert, that is, who was hired by the Town to be our Senior Programs Supervisor. Initially she was to work 20 hours per week dealing with the needs of people in our age group. Accordingly, she was the speaker at our meeting, and talked about activities for all seniors in our town. She has shown herself to be a vibrant and enthusiastic person who is open to comments and suggestions at all times, and has done a great job. Special mention was made of our October 18th meeting, a soup and sandwich affair held at Custom Catering, because we had to pay \$5 for a ticket and be counted in advance. A Tech graduate student, Ms. Julie J. Lin, asked for members to help with a study about developing products to be more accessible and usable to seniors with special needs, and how features on controls relate to persons with vision problems; this was done by the Department of Industrial Engineering at Virginia Tech. Everyone was asked to participate in such studies whenever we can.

Over the summer good deeds of our members were recognized in the local media. Ken Martin, Health Care Chairman, received a State distinguished service award; Chapter members and Rotarians were cited for work on Nellie's Cave Park (Bill Rogers, Jim Moore, and Frank Elmore); and blood donations were made by a

number of members. President Ray Murley reported receiving much literature from the AARP National office urging support of the campaign on health reform. Our Chapter donated \$125 to AARP's Andrus Foundation to support research on problems of aging. Severe shortages were reported at the Food Pantry, accompanied by cries for help. Our Chapter (at the hands of Jim Moore) produced an Information Bulletin, which was taken to the Blacksburg Chamber of Commerce Office. Ruby Murley (Ray's wife) needed help in finding families that need help. Jim Moore was active in planning a "*Retire in Blacksburg Exposition*" for 1995. The sample ballot for 1995 elections accompanied the October newsletter. The October 18th meeting arrived and occurred as scheduled. It was a "Soup and Sandwich" affair, and featured Lou Kassem, a local author of note and the wife of Shaky Kassem, who reviewed some of her own works of Children's Literature.

The November 15th meeting concerned information for all seniors, and was a joint meeting with Virginia Tech's retiree group, New Dimensions. David Murray of Warm Hearth assembled a panel of local specialists to discuss: "*Health Care Options: Present and Future.*" In addition, the 1995 Election of Officers was held. Also, the Christmas banquet was loudly announced, and \$9 tickets were sold by Margaret Dawson and Linda Horst. In due course, the Holiday Season Banquet



was held at Custom Catering, beginning at 5:30 pm with socializing, dinner at 6:15 pm, installation of 1995 officers, and a program by Fay Hoy on the History of Blacksburg and Vicinity. It was announced that the **Montgomery County Christmas Store** would be held across from Hill's Shopping Plaza in Christiansburg, and volunteer help, gifts and cash would be welcome.

**1995** The Palmers left us. They moved back to Wisconsin. John Palmer was the Editor of the newsletter from its inception through 1994. Our Chapter received correspondence from the IRS about the danger of impersonators. The 1995 Sign Language Studies were announced. We also received a Certificate from the State AARP commending our Chapter for efforts to achieve affordable, accessible, and long-term healthcare. The amount of \$50 was approved for the restoration of Solitude on Campus. There was no newsletter in January, so the notes from the Board Meeting were used. A luncheon was held at Custom Catering for the Palmers. It was agreed and approved that the Chapter will pay for Speakers' meals. There was a memorial service for the members who died in 1994. John Shoulders and Denver Bragg revised the By-Laws. **Bob Blanton**, Jim Roberts and Dan Fleming



Bob Blanton

attended an AARP District Meeting in Wytheville. Mary Ellen Moore asked for names of people who need cards. The speaker at the January 17th meeting was Marilyn Buyhoff, who talked about updating wills. Bill Haas, Ways and Means Committee, needed volunteers. There was a plan for a yard sale.

At the February 21st meeting, Jim Sellers of the Montgomery County School Department talked about the school system. Wilda Siburt and Alice DeWitt sold \$5 tickets for the March meeting. The February newsletter (among other things) included the 1995 officers, board, committees, committee members and dues notice.

The National AARP office reminded us about the existence of their Legal Counsel for the Elderly. March 21st was a big day. At 10 am our Chapter, the New Dimensions Club, and National Association of Retired Federal Employees presented Doug Martin, University Benefits Manager at Tech, who gave a State Benefits Update for Seniors. The meeting ended in time for our Chapter to hold a luncheon at Custom Catering honoring Janice and John Palmer, who were leaving Blacksburg in April. The featured speaker was Bonnie Svrcek, Assistant Town Manager, who talked about Latest Happenings in Blacksburg. Ray Murley wrote a paragraph thanking John Palmer for his many great newsletters and other activities; Lenna Moore did the same, thanking Janice Palmer for her wonderful service over the years.

At the April 18th meeting, Ron Secrist, Blacksburg Town Manager, spoke on "*Retire Blacksburg EXPO '95.*" Our Chapter donated \$25 to "Bloomin & Bloomin," and \$50 to the High School Science Fair. Enclosed in the April newsletter was the customary full listing of the Membership. The May 16th meeting was rescheduled for May 18th because of a conflict with the New Dimensions Annual Spring Luncheon.

So on May 18th at 11:30 am, Brian Allen, an Independent Insurance Broker, spoke about Long Term Care for Older People with a workshop following his talk. Brian became a member of our Chapter and has served as an officer of our Chapter in a number of ways. On May 25th there was a Discussion Group meeting billed as a Conversation with Al Payne, one of our best known and best loved Chapter members.

Two Cosco Card Tables were presented to Dr. William Winfrey and Joy Herbert for use at the Senior Center. The Annual Picnic was held at noon on June 3rd at Nellie's Cave Park, followed by an auction put on by Bill Haas, Tom Sterling, Jim Roberts and Denver Bragg. Our July and August break came and went.

The September 19th meeting featured Jim Olin, a retired GE Engineer and Congressman from the Virginia 6th District. He was also Co-chairman of the Concord Coalition, and talked about "*Our Heritage of Sharing.*" The September newsletter listed four morning "conversation and coffee" sessions during

September and October. Two sessions of the **55-Alive Driver Training program** were scheduled for October 16 and 18. The October 17th meeting consisted of a short business meeting followed by a discussion of the upcoming elections by State Senator Madison Marye, Senatorial Candidate Pat Cupp, State Delegate Jim Shuler, and Delegate Candidate Larry Linkous. The November meeting was a \$5 Luncheon at Custom Catering, featuring poetry by Jeff Mann, LuAnne Keener, and Katherine Soniat, nationally known Poets who are Professors of English at Virginia Tech. Rose Teixeira of the Community Shelter spoke about their work. A list of Nominees for 1996 was in the October newsletter. The Christmas Party was held at 6 pm at Custom Catering on December 5th, under the direction of Wilda Siburt. Results of elections for 1996 were in the November newsletter. It was reported that Jim Roberts died on November 8. Legal tips from AARP Legal Counsel for the Elderly occupied half a page. No Editor's name appears on the 1995 newsletters.

The AARP Driver Safety Program is the nation's first and largest refresher course for drivers age 50 and older that has helped millions of drivers remain safe on today's roads. The course is designed to help you:

1. Tune up your driving skills and update your knowledge of the rules of the road.
2. Learn about normal age-related physical changes, and how to adjust your driving to allow for these changes.
3. Reduce your traffic violations, crashes, and chances for injuries.
4. Qualify for an auto insurance premium reduction or discount. Specific state insurance laws vary – please consult your insurance agent for specifics in your state.

**1996** The Speaker at the January 16th regular meeting at the Recreation Center was Rose Teixeira, Director of Montgomery County Community Shelter, who spoke on the plight of the Homeless. Committees and their Chairpersons were published in the newsletter. Computer classes for Seniors were announced. The February 20th speaker was Kenneth Martin, Chair of Healthcare Committee, who spoke on "*Update on Medicare and Long Term Care Insurance.*" The March 21st program was by Ruby Murley on "*Cooking, You Can Eat at Home for Less.*" Our Board (and presumably, our Chapter) voted to exempt those 90 or older from paying dues. AARP's Tax-Aide Program came into being at the hands of George Gray, Jim Hardell, and Robert Swain. Also, at the March 21st meeting, Jim Moore discussed Red Cross needs for Senior Disaster Volunteers. A message from Dan Fleming was in the March newsletter saying that the State Senate Joint Resolution to establish a Commission on Block Grants was passed on February 29th, and was sent to the Governor.

The Senior rooms at the Recreation Center began operation in January; ground rules were given, and mention to call Joy Herbert for information. Nine Thursday Discussions at the Community Center were listed in the newsletter.

Listings of Standing Committees and all members were attached to the newsletter, as well as Computer Classes, 55-Alive Driver Training programs, and an announcement and explanation about a Senior Advisory Board. The April meeting featured Ron Secrist, Blacksburg, Town Manager, to speak on "*Retire Blacksburg EXPO '96.*" The Town of Blacksburg and Virginia Tech sponsored a weekend June 6-9 to promote "*Retirement in Blacksburg.*" There was a full page message from the Ways and Means Committee in the April newsletter saying our Chapter would buy a sound system for the Community Center and give it to the Town, asking for donations, which the Chapter would match, and other details. At the May 21st meeting, David Murray, Director of Development and Marketing, Warm Hearth, spoke on plans for the Nursing Care Center and future plans. Preceding the program, Ron Brown, Humane Society, made a 5-minute presentation on the Society, their Store, and the need for volunteers.

The Ways and Means Committee reported the Public Address (PA) System for the Blacksburg Community Center had been ordered. Attached was a list of all Officers and Committees and names, as well as a complete list of paid members as of May 1. The June 18th meeting was, as usual, our Annual Picnic "Potluck" at Nellie's Cave Park, which was

***PRESS RELEASE:***

The Blacksburg AARP Chapter recently donated a PA system, an overhead projector, and a portable screen to the Town of Blacksburg. This equipment will be used in the Community Center and was purchased with contributions from 116 individuals and matching funds from the chapter treasury. The fund drive raised a total of \$3835.

The Blacksburg AARP Chapter has 255 members. It is the largest chapter in the Roanoke and New River Valley areas. The donation is the chapter's way of thanking the Town of Blacksburg for its support.

followed by the usual auction. No meetings were held in July and August. Included in the June newsletter was a report of the Fund Drive for a Public Address System: 113 individual gifts totaled \$2430; the Chapter put in \$1250. This bought a PA System, an overhead projector, and a portable screen. A security cabinet would be bought soon thereafter. The names of all donors were listed.

The September 17th meeting was a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) Seminar moderated by Jim Owen and given by Kenneth Martin, Rebecca Wright (from a HMO), and Donovan Young (from a HMO). The Senior Programs' Thursday Discussions were mentioned, the Good Times News for Blacksburg Seniors, the BEV-Seniors classes on Computers, the PA System, the Community Shelter directed by Rose Teixeira sheltered 86 people in seven months, and Bob Blanton reported 255 members in good standing. The October 15th meeting was a \$5 luncheon at Custom Catering featuring Gospel Music presented by Al Sublett. The Chapter received a letter from Mayor Roger Hedgepeth thanking us for the PA System. Nominees to serve in 1997 were listed and were voted on at the November 19th meeting. A plaque for the Chapter Community Service Award was presented



to Lula Roberts for the work she and Jim did during 1995-1996. The November 19th meeting was a talk presented by Carol Tuckwiler, Virginia Room of Roanoke Public Library. Results for the November 19th elections were listed, five new members were listed, the Board mentioned a visit from Karen Roberto, PhD, Director of Center for Gerontology at Virginia Tech, who spoke about her work. Flu shots were discussed by the Board and all members were asked to consider them. The Christmas Party was held at Custom Catering on December 3rd at 6 pm.

**1997** The January newsletter started out with a letter from the 1997 President, Kenneth H. Martin, theme of which was attendance and participation. The January 21st Meeting was devoted to program planning and a survey of interest of members, as well as our annual Memorial Service honoring those who died in 1996. The Committee names and chairs completed the January letter. The Editor for the 1997 newsletters was the President, Ken Martin. The February newsletter began with a letter from Dan Fleming, Chair of Legislative Committee. He reported on a meeting in Richmond of over 700 AARP members who listened to three speakers and then visited with their respective delegates and senators. Dan mentioned following bills about a tax credit, funding for nutritional needs, and standards about essential protections. This was brought about by the Virginia State Legislative Committee, and the Committee presented an award to Senator Stanley C. Walker of Norfolk for advancing the goals of AARP.



Joy Herbert

The February 18th meeting was presented by Ms. **Joy Herbert**, Senior Programs Director, whose topic was the Blacksburg Senior Center Activities. The March newsletter had a letter from AARP Legislative Update about President Clinton's 1998 Budget Proposals. Notice was given about a Symposium for Health Issues at the Community Room of the New River Valley Mall. The March 18th meeting featured the Assistant Men's Basketball Coach, Bobby W. Hussey. Committee Chairs were asked to bring complete list of members, and the Committee on Community Service was highlighted. The April newsletter spotlighted the Ways and Means Committee. Dan Fleming did a "fantastic" job of summarizing the activities of the General Assembly in a two-page attachment to the newsletter. Notice was given about our Chapter Picnic in June. The April 15th meeting featured Dr. Jody Hershey, Director of the New River Valley District Health Department, who presented an overview of the services of his agency. In May the usual detailed listing of officers, board members, committees, and their members, past presidents, and roster of all members in good standing was published and distributed to all members.

The May newsletter gave a report from Wynell York, Health Care Chair,

about selecting Health Care Coverage. It contained some very weighty considerations. The June Picnic and Auction were mentioned. The May meeting was about Elderhostels, and was presented by Mrs. Pauline Trish. An AARP Yard Sale was planned for September 5-6, to be chaired by Mary Ellen and Jim Moore; suggestions and details were given. The June newsletter gave a half page to details about the Picnic at Nellie's Cave Park. Because of the Yard Sale mentioned above, no auction was held. No meetings were scheduled for July and August. The June letter concluded with a list of eleven benefits of having Membership in AARP. A rare occurrence, an August newsletter was published. This was probably a way of preparing for a big Yard Sale on September 6th, because the main items in the newsletter were plans, suggestions, details, and pep talk about the Yard Sale.

There was a notice about the September regular meeting, a long congratulatory message about the budget reconciliation bill being passed (thus safeguarding health care), appreciation to Mary Ellen and Jim Moore for doing the Yard Sale, and a list of upcoming programs; there was no September newsletter.



Custom Catering

The October 21st meeting was a \$5 luncheon at Custom Catering, handled by Wilda Siburt. The Nominating Committee submitted names for the 1998 Officers, the election to occur at the November meeting. The Yard Sale Committee thanked everyone for supporting and helping, reported a take of \$1806.70 and listed 34 helpers in the October newsletter. The December newsletter, as you might expect, gave all the information and encouragement about our first ever Christmas Luncheon

to be held at **Custom Catering** on December 2nd at noon. The High School Madrigal Singers were scheduled to sing, along with other "suitable" entertainment, all handled by Wilda Siburt. Cost was \$10. Notice was given about a State AARP Legislative forum in Christiansburg on November 24th, to talk about Electric Utility Deregulation, Managed Health Care and Long-Term Care; information contact was Evelyn Miles, AARP District Coordinator. A half-page "caution" was published in the December newsletter about telemarketing fraud, a \$40 billion national criminal enterprise at that time.

**1998** The January newsletter was a long one. It included six pages of enclosures about Membership Interest, Electric Utility Deregulation, and Veterans' Healthcare. An Inclement Weather Policy was published. Our annual Memorial Service during the January meeting was noted, Chapter dues were solicited, and Committee Chairs were listed. The January regular meeting speaker was Dan Fleming speaking on "*Electric Utility Deregulation: Good News or Bad?*" A detailed report was included in the February newsletter. The February 17th



meeting speakers were **Bonnie Svrcek** and Anne Campbell on the topic of "*Bicentennial: Walling Town of Blacksburg.*" Dues were solicited, the Committee on Caring was spotlighted, and future meeting dates were given. The March newsletter asked for dues, reviewed the Committee on Community Service, Lincoln Taylor, Chair. Annual workshops for new chapter officers and committee chairs were announced for Monday, March 30, from 9 am to 3 pm at Holiday Inn in Salem. The Health Care Committee, under Violet and Charles Drake, was reviewed. The March meeting featured Brian Allen and Kenneth Martin about changes in Health/Medicare, and Ray Murphy gave a report on the building program at Warm Hearth. The April newsletter included a two-page review of Legislative News by Dan Fleming.



Bonnie Svrcek

The Giles County Chapter No. 445, sponsored a seminar on health insurance at the quarterly meeting of the New River Community Council on May 18. The newsletter also included the procedure to stop Junk Mail. The Membership list would be distributed with the May newsletter. The April 21st meeting speaker was



Bob Meadows

**Dr. Robert R. (Bob) Meadows**, Virginia Tech 4-H specialist and Civil War historian, who talked about events affecting Southwest Virginia and particularly Blacksburg and Montgomery County. The May newsletter announced a three-part program at the Blacksburg Senior Center on Estate Planning, and senior information from Joy Herbert. It was also announced AARP would sponsor four forums in Virginia on Social Security. At the May 19th meeting Dr. Joyce Martin, Extension Agent at Tech, discussed "*The 4-H Programs in Montgomery County.*" AARP Consumer tips were included in the newsletter on Telemarketing Sales Rules and Medicare Fraud. The June newsletter gave the

details of our annual picnic at Nellie's Cave Park. Future meetings for September, October, November and December. News about Social Security payments to "notch babies" was relayed in our newsletter. No meetings during July and August.

AARP Consumer Tips on Smart Investing were printed and distributed. The September newsletter included a full page review of "*Great Social Security*" debate by Dan Fleming. The September 15th meeting featured Ms. Sue Croft, a certified financial planner, who talked about choices and considerations. Then the October 20th meeting was announced in September, so members would have time to reserve and pay \$5 for a luncheon at Custom Catering; the program topic was "*The Challenge of Civil Society in Montgomery County,*" and the forum was three speakers. The October newsletter listed the Nominations for 1999, the Luncheon on October 20, future chapter meetings, a Health Committee report, and a short discussion on phone fraud. The November 17th meeting in the Community Center

offered a magic show by Bucky Snider. The December meeting and AARP Christmas Luncheon was on December 1 at Custom Catering. The High School Madrigal Singers entertained. Cost was \$10, coordinator was Carrie Coil. No Board meeting in December. Meeting of officers and directors for January 5. Contacts with National AARP were listed.

**1999** On January 5th, Bill Keeney chaired an open discussion of the board on the theme and objectives for 1999. Some of the suggestions were that the club: (1) continue the fellowship and social functions, (2) reach out to other groups, (3) be a source of information for its members, e.g., benefits, recreation facilities, and others, (4) service to members and the community, (5) coordinate with other groups, and (6) strengthen the club (grow, become stronger and more influential). Bank balance was \$2,916.84. The January Program was a memorial service for members lost in 1998, a business meeting, and a program by **Harriett Cooper** on protecting water quality. Committee chairs and duties were presented. Entertainment attractions at Tech were in the January newsletter. The President's Message in the February newsletter stressed Volunteering and included a flyer titled Volunteer Opportunities, by the Volunteer Action Committee. Legislative Activity was covered in some detail, listing eight proposals of interest; the General Assembly was considering some 3,000 bills. The program was led by Jim Moore and Bill Keeney, a fun session titled "*Guess Who I Am.*" NRV Senior Games were announced for May 3-5. Breakfast Get Togethers and AARP Tax-Aide were also announced. The Editor's Message in the March newsletter said the Volunteer Opportunities flyer mentioned in February was a monthly thing, and would be included in the AARP newsletter. Members were requested to fill out the questionnaire from the NRV Agency on Aging and send it in. Under the heading of Legislative Activity it was announced that Deregulation of Electric Utilities passed, and it would be bad for SouthWest Virginia. The General Assembly passed a reform package about HMOs and Managed Care. Seven other bills were discussed, all of interest to senior citizens. Virginia Tech's New Dimensions Club announced a March 25 program on "*Aging Alone,*" presented by Dr. Rosemary Blieszner, a Tech Gerontologist.



Harriett Cooper

A very important April 28 Forum was announced: AARP and the Concord Coalition jointly sponsored the forum to discuss Social Security and Medicare; there were two speakers, one from the Coalition's National Policy Director and one from the AARP National Staff. This was handled by Dale Oliver, Darrel Clowes and Jim Moore. The March Chapter meeting took place at 11:30 am on March 16; the title was "*Heartlinks Experience,*" and the speaker was Barbara Southard, RN.

The April newsletter began with a long and impassioned plea that everyone attend the Forum announced in March. The April Chapter meeting was held at the Blacksburg Community Center on April 20 at 11:30 am, and the program was a briefing by the Superintendent of Schools, Fred Morton, on the status, progress and plans for Montgomery County Schools.

The Andrus Foundation was introduced and explained in the April newsletter; briefly, **Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus** founded, among other things, AARP in 1958, and



Dr. Ethyl Andrus

achieved many good works that have benefited seniors. She died in 1967. Lincoln Taylor represented our Chapter at the "Aging Alone" talk by Dr. Rosemary Blieszner, and staffed a table with information about our Chapter. Final call for dues was in the April newsletter. Jim Moore reported that our Chapter would join Habitat for Humanity in building two houses in Blacksburg in 1999 and pay for the kitchen ranges. The May newsletter started out with a lengthy report on the Forum about Social Security and Medicare; about 70 people attended. The speakers were Annie Lee from the Concord Coalition and Mary Jo Nickodem from AARP. The problem was said to be that the program will shift from an annual surplus to an annual deficit in 20 years. One whole column

was given to asking for donations for the two kitchen stoves for the Habitat houses. Our Chapter's Legislative Committee wrote a letter to the County Supervisors pointing out that their planning process for approving water and sewer projects was flawed and needed to be revised. The 1999 membership list was enclosed in the newsletter. The June meeting was the usual annual potluck picnic at Nellie's Cave Park on June 15. A good time was had by all. A paperback book exchange took place in a "fun way" that only the Program Committee understood. The June newsletter reported the results of the Agency on Aging's Survey, dealing with nine services considered to be critical. Contributions for the kitchen ranges for the Habitat houses were a little over \$400, and \$500 was needed; keep asking! At this point the July and August break "happened."

The September meeting was held on September 21. The program topic was "*Meet the Candidates*" and the two candidates for State Senator addressed the Chapter and visited. Our Chapter was asked to host two District events in 2000, and told the District Office we would answer them in October. The League of Women Voters asked for canvassers to cover the Oak Forest Trailer Court to encourage citizens to vote in the upcoming election. Donations were asked for the kitchen stoves for the Habitat houses. Our Chapter hosted the District 2 New River Valley Community Council meeting on October 18. Lenna Moore passed away suddenly on July 5; she received a nice obit and remembrance. The October meeting was the Chapter's usual Fall Luncheon on October 19 – a potluck

luncheon in the Blacksburg Recreation Center. The program was by **Dr. Daniel Thorp** of the History Department at Virginia Tech on the subject of "*Rivalries,*



Daniel Thorp

*Politics, and Dirty Tricks used by the Founding Fathers in the Early Days of the Republic.*" Nominations were made for 2000, to be voted on in November.

The October newsletter started with a highly favorable report on September's Pancake Brunch; 78 attended and enjoyed pancakes, sausage, bacon, coffee, and orange juice, prepared by the Jim Moore Senior Chefs. Both Jim Moores helped, along with **Roy Blaser**, Pat Palmer, George Hawkins, Ray Murley, Lewis Barnett, Bob Blanton, and Ralph Cecchini. The voluntary contributions covered the cost plus \$121 for the stoves for the New River Valley Habitat for Humanity. The ad hoc committee considering the two District meetings in 2000 recommended going ahead with the consumer university project and taking the health and independent living fair to the Community Council, in order to get a wider participation....more later.



Roy Blaser

The November meeting was held on November 16th at the Blacksburg Recreation Center; brown bag lunch and a program about winter feeding of birds by Phyllis Crooks, Manager of For the Birds, to be followed by a business meeting to include elections for 2000.

The December meeting was announced in the October newsletter: a Christmas Luncheon to be held on December 7th at the Red Lion featuring the Avanti Recorders, a quartet including our own Harriett Cooper, and installation of officers for the year 2000. At the November board meeting it was decided that we needed a liaison individual to work with Virginia Tech Retiree's New Dimensions Group to coordinate scheduling meetings. A tentative date of October 19 and 20, 2000 was set for the AARP Chapter-sponsored Health Fair; and Jean Davis reported there had been four deaths in 1999. Thus ended the 1999 news and reports.



June Schmidt

**2000** Our Chapter welcomed its sixth woman President, **June Schmidt**, who embarked upon an ambitious year by surveying the interests of members and asking for support of and copy to the new Editors of the newsletter, Amy and Don Elson. From that beginning, the Elsons embarked on a five-year career in which they

brought themselves and our Chapter the honor of producing the best newsletter in Virginia. June asked for attendance, interest, hard work, and attention to the needs of members and the needs of the Community, and her efforts would culminate in our Chapter being designated as the Commonwealth's Outstanding Chapter. The January 18th meeting was snowed out, so the Chapter missed out on our annual Memorial Service and a program by Lynn Sharp from the Museum of Natural History. The AARP Tax-Aide program was announced to run from February 1 through April 11. Included with the January newsletter were a two-page survey of Interests and a list of Officers and Board Members. At the Board meeting February 1st, we received a visit from the AARP Community Coordinator, Dan Level, who encouraged us to continue the good work and form an Awards Committee. Dan Fleming, Legislative Committee Chair, was exploring "all the avenues" of health insurance, and he contributed a full page in the February newsletter about General Assembly actions dealing with seniors. Judging from the newsletters, over the years Dan has been the No. 1 contributor to our Chapter.

The February 15th meeting held the annual Memorial Service which was cancelled in January, and a program by Bob Richert, Program Manager at General Electric, entitled "*Saving/Preserving Social Security for Our Children.*" Bob was assisted by Don Starkweather, retired educator and AARP Sixth District Coordinator from Roanoke and Tom Rogers of the Concord Coalition in Charlotte, NC. The February newsletter announced the Health Fair for May 6th, handled by Bill Keeney, Ben Crawford, Darrel Clowes, and Bob Blanton. There was a regional workshop for chapter officers and committee chairs on February 7th in Salem. Five members of our Board were present. The AARP Tax-Aide program was mentioned again. Volunteers were asked to provide rides as needed. The March newsletter listed a schedule of the programs for all the rest of the year, an outstanding feat for the Program Committee, Harriett Cooper and Ken Martin, Co-Chairs, along with Ben Crawford, Don Elson, and Joe Maxwell. The Health Fair on May 6th was mentioned again, with all the names and details. Our Chapter was the Lead Sponsor; Co-sponsors were New Dimensions at Virginia Tech, National Association of Retired Federal Employees, Agency on Aging, Blacksburg Senior Center, and the Voluntary Action Center, as well as a number of Exhibitors. A call for volunteers to work with committees was made.

The March newsletter mentioned an online resource for many topics of interest to Seniors, the AARP Website ([www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)). The April newsletter started with a plea from our President for help and attendance at the Health Fair on May 6. June then went on to mention events and welcome suggestions. The program for April 18th was the one that was snowed out in January. Lynn Sharp, Museum of Natural History, discussed how the Museum serves the community; topics were saving our streams and protecting water quality. Food Pantry contributions were requested. Dan Fleming had a paragraph addressed to



participants in the state's Medicare Eligible Option/program. Volunteers were asked to come forward and work with the various committees; committees and committee chairs were listed. 55-Alive Driving Training program was set for April 18-19. VICAP Insurance Counseling was mentioned, the Counselor being Bob Gribben, and the meeting schedule was given. The list of Officers, Board, District Offices, Programs, and Teacher Association was reported. The Bulletin from the Voluntary Action Center was included, and a circular about the Health Fair.

The May newsletter told of the success of the Health Fair, the entities involved, the people, the exhibitors, and the proclamation made by **Roger E. Hedgepeth**, Blacksburg Mayor. Included was the usual annual lists of officers, committees, and individual members. The May 16th regular meeting was presented by Scott Sarver, Director of Long Term Projects for the Explore Park in Roanoke. Food Pantry collection was mentioned. Dan Fleming had written a paragraph about the Virginia Caregivers Grant Program. Mayor Hedgepeth's proclamation was attached to the newsletter. The June newsletter made mention of our



Mayor Hedgepeth

Chapter's annual picnic on June 20th at Nellie's Cave Park, a \$100 contribution to the Andrus Foundation, the Food Pantry contributions, the Board Meeting June 6th, and the formation and functions of an Awards Committee. The Free Clinic of New River Valley asked our Chapter for Volunteers to help people who had no health insurance. The September newsletter reported that the Board discussed the Lenna Moore (our 1995 Chapter President) Award that was being established by our Chapter, the Red Cross, the Voluntary Action Center, and the YMCA at Virginia Tech. Our nominee was Bob Blanton; he and the nominees from the other organizations were recognized at a luncheon at the Farmhouse. Ben Crawford, Chair, Dan Fleming, and Ken Martin worked on creating the Awards Committee.

Our September 19th regular meeting was a discussion of a contemporary approach to creating communities for people who want a safe, supportive neighborhood. The program was presented by Nancy Mignone, a slide show and talk about Shadowlake Village, a community that was being built at that time. Food Pantry contributions were requested. Joe Maxwell, Membership Chair, reported the Chapter had 214 members. Two new awards were announced for Fall 2000, the Community Spirit Award to any person that exemplifies the goals of AARP, and the Chapter Service Award to a member of AARP for activities in AARP. October 8, 2000 was designated as AARP Day at the Science Museum in Roanoke. In October, June Schmidt was touring China, so Darrel Clowes, 1st Vice President, took over the Board meeting and the President's Message in the newsletter. The Lenna Moore Award went to Bob Stuart of the Voluntary Action Committee. Members were asked to help a graduate student looking for elderly

males in a study of reactions of customers to salespersons' attire. The Board approved awards of \$250 to the Free Clinic and the Food Pantry, and \$500 to the **Voluntary Action Center**. Dan Fleming contributed a three-paragraph report on closing a loophole in Medicare payments. Nominations for 2001 were included in the October newsletter.



The October 17th meeting was a Luncheon at Custom Catering, and the program was a Consumer University, chaired by Darrel Clowes with Moderators Jim Moore and Carl McDaniels. This was sponsored by National AARP, Charles Bittenbring, Representative. Subjects were Internet Fraud, Medicare Fraud, End of Life Issues, and Consumer Protection, all spoken to by excellent speakers. Blood Bank supplies were very low, so our Chapter joined New Dimensions and the Senior Center in having a Senior Bloodmobile on December 6.

A new website was announced for Seniors; it was called SeniorNavigator.com, and it was to supply healthcare information. In the November newsletter, June Schmidt mentioned some of the accomplishments for the year and thanked her colleagues for their help. Food Pantry contributions were mentioned. Flu and Pneumonia Shots were offered, to be given November 17. At the November 21th regular meeting, Betsy Zarske of the Cardio-Vascular Unit of Lewis Gale Hospital presented the topic: "*Love Your Heart – Strategies for Keeping It Healthy.*" The Christmas Luncheon was held at the Red Lion Inn on December 5. Cost was \$10. It was announced in the newsletter that the Consumer University held in October drew 225+ people, and was deemed a great success. Nominations for 2001 were included in the newsletter.

**2001** The January newsletter started with a lengthy epistle from Darrel Clowes, the new President. He gave eloquent praise to the two previous administrations, and said the officers and committee chairmen and members would try to keep up the pace with the Food Pantry, Voluntary Action Center, Free Clinic, New Dimensions, Habitat for Humanity, and whatever else. The list of names of officers, board members and committee chairs was included. The January meeting was entitled "*Project Underground,*" and presented by Carol Zokaites. She discussed caving, bats, water quality, and other underground issues. At the December 2000 Christmas luncheon two awards were presented, and needed to be recognized in the January 2001 newsletter. First, Bob Blanton received the Community Spirit Award for his many community activities. Next, Ray Murley was recognized for service to our Chapter and many community activities. Our Chapter sponsored a senior bloodmobile, under Jim Moore's leadership, and 38 pints were collected. Support and donations were asked for the Food Pantry. The



inclement weather policy was published. The AARP website was listed and explained. Fraudulent websites were mentioned, and a procedure for dealing with them. The Free Clinic asked for volunteers and gave a contact person name and number. The February meeting was held February 20th; the topic was "*Back Pain: A 21st Century Epidemic*," presented by Dr. Glen Augustine. The February newsletter said June Schmidt went to a regional AARP meeting and came back with two jobs for us to do, namely, spend \$1,000 from National AARP fixing up some elderly person's home, and join with the Christiansburg Chapter to provide gift baskets for 20-25 families. So we did it. Help for the Food Pantry was asked. Everyone was invited to a short public ceremony to honor Korean War Veterans on



Frank Lau

February 25. Our own Reverend Al Payne gave the invocation.

AARP Tax-Aide, handled by **Frank Lau**, was announced. The Free Clinic still needed more volunteers. Names and numbers were published in the newsletter for stopping soliciting by six major sources of trouble. The March 20th program was entitled "*Colonial Medicine*," and was given by Kitty Brennan. A pancake breakfast was scheduled for April 17th, and announced in the March newsletter. Dan Fleming published half a column of Legislative Report covering the car tax rebate, prescription drugs, health credits for seniors, deregulation of electric utilities, eye exams for senior drivers, and the effort by Governor Gilmore to draw from the state retirement fund to fund the operating budget. The D-Day Memorial Trip, under the leadership of **Frank Lau** was announced and explained. The Bloodmobile and regional blood supply were written up in detail, and everyone who could donate was asked to do so. The April 17th meeting was a Pancake Breakfast by Jim Moore and his assistants, and at noon, Virginia General Assembly Delegate Jim Shuler gave an overview of what happened in the General Assembly and with redistricting.

Official word was published in the newsletter that our Chapter won the **Virginia Chapter of the Year** for large chapters for the year 2000 under the leadership of June Schmidt. The home improvement project was proceeding nicely under Joe Maxwell. The Gift Baskets project, under Barbara and Bob Blanton was also well underway. People were asked to pay their dues. The D-Day Memorial trip was up to 98 reservations, a fantastic response. The blood supply and Bloodmobile were written up again with



about a page of copy. All the other usual projects were noted.

The May newsletter said Ben Crawford was orchestrating an AARP presence at the Galax Fiddler's Convention in the summer. The May 15th meeting arranged by Ken Martin was done by Montgomery County 4-H Youth members. Dues were coming in slowly (150 paid). Frank Lau reported that three tax preparers in Blacksburg did 46 returns, and Christiansburg did 236. Virginia Tech's Center for Gerontology asked for people 70 or older to participate in research about perceptions and functioning in assisted living. D-Day, blood, website, Free Clinic. Chapter of the Year 2000 was mentioned. The June meeting was, as usual, the annual summer picnic at Nellie's Cave Park, with a "White Elephant Exchange" to liven up the proceedings. The Home Improvement Project was completed very successfully. The Independent Living Baskets were assembled and delivered to 20 elderly in Blacksburg and 20 elderly in Christiansburg, also very successfully. Frank Lau submitted a one-column review of the D-Day Memorial trip, some of it good, some of it bad, and he said: "I am glad that I went." Then, dutifully, Frank announced the 50th Anniversary Commemoration of the Korean War, an overnight trip to Washington, DC, on July 26-27, sponsored by the Red Cross. Cost was \$90/person/double and \$125/person/single. A full page was included in the newsletter giving tips on home security and safe equipment for grandkids. The June and July summer break occurred here.

The September Meeting took place on the 18th, it was presented by Clyde Kessler, a more or less local poet and storyteller. The newsletter told of a significant change in the dues, to bring us more in line with general AARP policy. We went to a membership fee of \$6 but a couples' fee of \$10. Then came a new initiative – an activity to recognize volunteer efforts in the NRV - a cooperative effort with local agencies and financial support from State AARP, Carilion, and Electa. Dan Fleming turned in two Legislative reports, one on health care issues and one on tax reform. The one on tax reform was to alert members about a meeting to be held September 26th at the Blacksburg Municipal Building featuring Dr. Tom Morris, State Senator John Edwards, **Joyce Lewis**, and Mary Biggs, to be moderated by Elizabeth Obenshain, all powerful speakers. Notice was given of a Medicare reform meeting September 12th in the Blacksburg Recreation Center, the speaker to be Tom Hawley from the New River Agency on Aging. Inclement weather policy, AARP websites, fraud websites, and the Free Clinic were mentioned.



Joyce Lewis

The October 16th meeting was on issues facing Virginia Government in 2002, by the Honorable R. Creigh Deeds, House of Delegates, District 18. Several items of general interest were included in the President's Message, such as a perspective

on grief and loss, Virginia Tech offering an adult day care service, Gateway providing discounts on computers and support services, and a memorial for Vern Baldwin, one of our deceased members. A sub-committee reported on planning a volunteer recognition celebration for December. We formed a new standing committee (Project Planning) to identify projects and funding activities. Nominations for 2002 were published. Dan Fleming asked for nominations for the Community Spirit Award and the Chapter Service Award by October 27. Three bag-lunch forums by the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County and the Senior Center were given notice in our newsletter. A Scam Alert was issued to warn our members, interesting AARP Facts were published, and other interesting things were mentioned.

The December meeting was the Christmas Luncheon at the Red Lion Inn on December 4. Entertainment was by the Blacksburg Community Band and the 2002 Officers were installed. Cost \$10 per person. Our financial and membership status was pronounced solid at the end of 2001. June Schmidt had the Chapter awards ready for the December 8th Volunteer Recognition Celebration. Our Chapter designated Charlotte Beamer, Cerrie Coil, Darrel Clowes and Don Elson to join the Blacksburg Holiday Parade in Don's Model A Ford. A Ways and Means Committee was reestablished. The Project Planning Committee under **Ben Crawford** proposed a number of activities, all of which created momentum for the fresh start in 2002. The November meeting received no mention, but it was a program on "*Holistic Medicine*" by Dr. Linda Cheek. Gateway entered the picture on December 17, with a technology talk, and an appeal to seniors. Thus ended 2001.



**2002** Ben Crawford, having been duly elected at the Christmas Luncheon the month before, took over as our 26th President. On January 3rd, he and 13 other board members spent a long time charging their batteries for the year ahead. Ben thanked Frank Lau for producing a new, attractive brochure, and reviewed some of the information in it. A new AARP Virginia staffing plan became effective January 1st that put emphasis on tasks and teams rather than titles and hierarchies. They also discussed committees, finances, and the annual audit (by Dale Oliver and Jim Moore). The January 15th meeting was entitled "*Birds of Costa Rica*," by Dr. Jerry W. Via of the Biology Department at Virginia Tech. It was announced in the newsletter that the Chapter Service Award for 2001 went to George Gray, and the Community Spirit Award went to Clara Jane Billig. The recipient of the Lenna and

Jim Moore Award was Nelda K. Pearson. The award is sponsored by our Chapter, the YMCA, and the Voluntary Action Center. AARP Tax-Aide was announced to run from February 12 to April 2, when Frank Lau, Gene and Jim help with tax returns. Inclement weather, AARP Websites, consumer tips, and Free Clinic were mentioned, as well as the 2002 list of officers, board, editor, and committees.

The February meeting was at the **Blacksburg Senior Center** on February



19th, and our own Paul Smeal told the members how "*Fitness Can Be Fun.*" The President's message in the newsletter started off with a good story about four of our members attending the annual Groundhog Watchers meeting at Concord College in West Virginia, to watch Concord Charlie and Charlene. To be brief, Charlie did not see his shadow, so Spring was nigh. They had fun. Deliberations at the board meeting centered around: 2002 was the 100th Anniversary of 4-H in the United States, and

Centennial activities were in the offing, February 8th was the 92nd Anniversary of the Boy Scouts, and National Volunteer Week was April 21-27, a time to "*Celebrate the American Spirit.*" Darrel Clowes was a judge in the VFW District 6 Essay Contest January 22. Under Dale Oliver's leadership, the Financial Committee presented a budget for the year which was tabled until the board could come up with some ideas to solve our financial dilemma. Dan Fleming reported on pending state legislation. Over two thousand bills and resolutions were filed, and Dan named and commented on several bills of special interest to seniors. Dues and AARP Tax-Aide were also mentioned. Five tours and trips for seniors were listed. The Senior Olympics were set for Friday to Wednesday, April 26 – May 1.

The March 19th meeting dealt with End of Life Issues. The March newsletter came out with long and lengthy support for the Senior Olympics, followed by a plea for someone to come up with a plan that would bring in \$500 to fund philanthropic projects. It was reported that AARP had opened 29 new state offices recently. The Virginia 2002 State Plan included 8 Medicare Forums, 3 Social Security programs, 4 grandparenting forums, 4 home modification projects, a number of independent living projects, and 6 Consumer Universities. Ten other items were repeated from previous newsletters, along with the names of officers, board, and committees. The April 16th meeting was at the Blacksburg Community Center, and Delegate Jim Shuler reported on the General Assembly outcomes. In the newsletter, President Ben Crawford mentioned Tiger Woods' phenomenal career as a prelude to mentioning the phenomenal "career" of AARP, namely, offices in every state plus Puerto Rico and DC. Our Chapter hosted a Community Council meeting at the Senior Center on April 25. More Senior Center Tours and



trips were listed, a membership update, a suggestion for use of a Listserv 2613 to deliver the newsletter, and four repeat notices rounded out the April newsletter.

The May 21st meeting was timely for an AARP Chapter. It was "Improving our Memory," by Anne Glass. The May newsletter President's Message had some very nice things to say about community service and how it is growing. A condensed national report for 2000 said of 1813 chapters reporting, the total number of volunteer hours was 2,086,689. Chapter members volunteered 2,442,845 hours in other organizations. Each Chapter reported an average of 1150 hours. Average Chapter membership was 106. Our membership was 174. Fifty percent of Chapters had a newsletter. Our Chapter was preparing 20 gift baskets for independent living, to be assembled at the May 21st meeting. The Korean War Memorial Trip was set for July 25-27, cost \$125/person (two night stay in DC). Six more topics were repeated from previous mention. The June 18th meeting was the annual potluck picnic at Nellie's Cave Park. The Town presented a demonstration of the new trash collection system. The response to our membership enrollment and donation campaign was outstanding. As of May 30th it was \$709 from 39 members. We also got \$96 in dues from 18 new members. This gave us funds to assist those less fortunate and provide community service. The AARP E-mail Listserv became usable. Our Chapter made 20 gift baskets for delivery to seniors. Members who are 90 or older do not pay dues, and in 2002 we had nine people on the list – quite a bunch! Tours and trips for seniors were numerous; the newsletter listed six. At this point the July and August break occurred.

The September 17 program at the Senior Center was presented by **Dr. Marie Suthers-McCabe**, College of Veterinary Medicine at Virginia Tech. Her topic



Dr. Suthers-McCabe

was: "*Lessons Learned About the Human-Animal Bond at Ground Zero*." President Ben's message in the newsletter recommended the YMCA's Open University (69 courses in six areas). He also said each person's share of the national debt was \$21,000, and the Concord Coalition would present three Monday evenings about budgeting and spending. The 55-Alive Driver Training program was announced for October 30-November 1. AARP's National Day of Service was September 26. Each member was asked to make a difference in someone's life.

Nominations were asked for our two service awards to be presented in December. **Dr. Charles Walcott**, Political Science Department at Tech, spoke on "*Illusions of Progress: The Search for Campaign Reform*" on September 24th at the Senior Center. Listserv, tours and trips, and the list of officers, directors, and committees



Charles Walcott

rounded out the September newsletter.

The October 15th program at the Senior Center was entitled "Old Age Ain't for Sissies!" and presented by Betty Davis, Director of Adult Day Services at Tech. The President's message in the October newsletter gave more than a page of coverage to AARP's Day of Service in September. A great deal of good was done in many kinds of service for a total of 117.5 hours.

**Meghan Dorsett** of the Montgomery County Planning Department asked our Chapter to help with the County Comprehensive Plan, and we accepted.

We received word that AARP's 2003 public policies would appear in February 2003. We were all urged to vote "for" the bond issue in the November 5th Special Election; it was meant to help citizens of all ages.

Dan Fleming turned in almost a page of copy about two proposed amendments and two proposed bond issues to be voted November 5. It was the perfect way to prepare for the upcoming elections. Membership updates were given. Joy Herbert sent us a notice about Flu shots on November 14.



Meghan Dorsett

Trips and classes for Seniors were included, and Listserv was said to be usable. Frank Lau reported on the November 19th meeting at the Senior Center: Eileen Hadbavny, a retired Army Nurse, spoke about handling emergency and preventative health issues geared to seniors.

In his "message" President Ben Crawford made an accounting of his stewardship with respect to the \$858 of "over and above" money that was donated; the board decided to allot \$50 to the Christmas Store, \$250 to the Volunteer Action Center, \$125 to the Andrus Foundation, join the YMCA, Red Cross, and VAC in sponsoring a volunteer recognition event, and participate and finance the NRV Senior Olympics.

Our regular budget, made up entirely of dues, was spent on the newsletter, our Charter with the State Cooperation Commission, and awards and entertainment at the Holiday Luncheon. Ben reviewed the 2002 topics and activities; it took up more than a page and it was mind boggling. Our Holiday Luncheon, was headlined in the newsletter, and mentioned again on Page 3.

Membership programs, updates, and lists were mentioned, along with our Community Spirit Award and Service Award, E-mail Listserv, announcements of workshops, meetings, and thank yous. The November Board meeting minutes were included, probably for the sake of completeness. On December 3rd at noon at the Red Lion Inn, our Holiday Luncheon took place. The Community Spirit Award went to Jim Faiszt and the Chapter Service Award went to Darrel Clowes.



**2003** We started the year with Pat Palmer as our President, but his health deteriorated, so he turned the reins over to **Brian Allen** in less than one month. So I will credit January to Pat and the rest of 2003 to Brian. Pat noted the death of Ralph Cecchini, our Treasurer and a long-time member, and announced Ray Murley, Associate Treasurer, would assume the duties. Jim Moore was elected Associate Treasurer.



Brian Allen

Phyllis Talley, Pat Palmer, Ben Crawford, and Dan Fleming attended the officers' training meeting in Christiansburg on January 22. The January 21st meeting was held at Walnut Spring, farm and home of Dr. James Otey Hoge, Professor of English at Virginia Tech, who talked about the fascinating history of his home. The home was built before the Civil War and has been in the family since then. The Volunteer Recognition Celebration was proceeding as planned, under the able leadership of June Schmidt. A highlight of it was the awarding of the Jim and Lenna Moore Citizenship and Community Service Award.

Dan Fleming filed a Legislative report that dealt with health care, prescription drugs, predatory lenders, caregivers' grants, public guardianship, personal maintenance allowances, Medicaid waivers, a stronger telemarketing law, identity theft, a long-term care plan, and full payment of unemployment insurance for seniors. Our Chapter joined the Mt. Tabor Ruritans to plan and hold a joint yard sale, under the leadership of Frank Lau, who was the 2003 President of Mt. Tabor Ruritan. Our inclement weather policy was published. Prescription Perils were included in the January newsletter, a serious concern for all seniors. The January Board minutes were included in the newsletter. So the February newsletter contained a President's message from Brian Allen. His message covered well over a page, was excellent, and dealt with a number of topics; he strongly recommended our February meeting, a talk by Doug Martin, Personnel Director at Tech, entitled "*The Secrets of Sinking Creek and Stroubles Creek.*" Doug Martin can definitely make you laugh!

Future meetings were also mentioned by Brian, as well as a nice paragraph praising and recommending laughter. The Volunteer Recognition Celebration was scheduled for April 5th, described in detail, needed help, and nominations were requested, all under the direction of Joyce Martin, June Schmidt, and Mary Ellen Moore. AARP Tax-Aide, being handled by Frank Lau, was scheduled and recommended.

The National Day of Service was announced for May 8. AARP the Magazine was announced. The five best energy foods were presented (taken from Fitness October 2001); they were Yogurt, Bran Muffin, Hard-boiled Egg, Peanut Butter,

and Trail Mix. The March 18th program was by **Dr. Karen A. Roberto**, Director of the Center for Gerontology at Tech; she spoke about chronic pain associated with osteoporosis, hip fractures, prevention strategies, and space problems with assisted living. Brian asked everyone to seriously consider donating to our charity fund. Our Chapter co-sponsored the Volunteer Recognition Celebration April 5th at the Blacksburg Senior Center, to recognize outstanding volunteers. A large turnout was requested.



Karen Roberto

It was announced in the March newsletter that AARP Virginia staff would be in Blacksburg on April 15th at Custom Catering to host a forum on state and federal legislative issues and pay for lunch. Dan Fleming reviewed eight bills from the 2003 General Assembly (7 out of 8 were favorable to AARP). Our Chapter hosted 55-Alive Driver Training program on March 19 and 21. NRV Senior Olympic Games were announced for May 1 to 7. The Walking/Exercising Through Virginia activity was announced. The March Board meeting minutes were included, along with an application form, announcements of an open house, and trips offered by Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department, dates for Blood Sugar and Blood Pressure Screenings, and a list of officers and committees.

The Volunteer Recognition Celebration was held as announced, on April 5th, to recognize all Volunteers and confer the Annual Award on James "Dan" Level for his many services to the community. Our Chapter members who helped were June Schmidt, Frances Martin, Ken Martin, Mary Ellen Moore, Clara Jane Billig, and Ray Murley. Our April 15th regular meeting at Custom Catering was the previously mentioned forum on federal and state legislative issues. Dan Fleming reported on the goings-on in the General Assembly about the repeal of the Estate Tax. A number of items were repeated, board minutes were included, an application form, and the list of officers and committees.



Don Elson

The May 20th Chapter meeting was rescheduled for 9:30 am to hear Delegate Jim Shuler, who gave us a review of the General Assembly legislation. We appreciate Jim Shuler very much, and usually have a large turnout to show him our keen interest in how he votes for us in Richmond. Our board voted unanimously to help the Senior Center obtain items for the facility; they had a wish list of six different things that totaled a minimum of \$1960. The May newsletter also contained a membership update, a request to notify Ray Murley or **Don Elson** of changes in the membership list. Dan Fleming reported on the Legislative tax reform study. It was expected that substantive changes would be made. It was complicated and far

reaching and Dan did a great job of laying it out for us. The AARP Virginia Advocacy team was heavily involved in taking positions on changes and interested in hearing from AARP members everywhere. Dan began a study of these matters, and invited anyone interested to join the group. The board meeting minutes were printed in the newsletter.

Our Chapter received an AARP Certificate of Appreciation awarded in recognition of our steadfast support of the AARP Foundation. The community and committee reports were also included in the May newsletter. There was also a membership application and a list of officers and committees. The completed membership list was also included. June 17th was the date of our annual picnic at Nellie's Cave Park. All, despite the wet weather, had a good time. The June newsletter reported that we received a wheelchair in excellent condition. It was given by Ross Kirk and Carol Crawford; it had been used by their Mother, Alene Kirk. Paul Smeal reported our Chapter was participating in the AARP 10K-A-Day Program; we purchased 75 pedometers, which we resold for \$2 to members and \$3 to non-members. Paul also reported that over 50 people had signed up for the "*Moving thru Virginia*" walking program done by the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department. The committee to study tax reform was created; it was made up of Ben Crawford, Gerald Darby, Carl McDaniels, Jim Moore, Morton Nadler, June Schmidt, and Dan Fleming, Chair. Summer break was July and August, and the September meeting rescheduling Doug Martin was set for September 16. Frank Lau reported that the July 25-27 trip to DC for the Korean War 50th Year Commemoration was taken over by the Mt. Tabor Ruritans; the other details were about the same as in 2002. Senior Center Summer Trips were announced, under the care of Joy Herbert. National AARP presented a Special Award to Bob Blanton, and a pin for his outstanding community service efforts; the Citation was wonderful. The June board meeting minutes were included. Ben Crawford was recommended for the Andrus Leadership Award. Frank Lau moved the Chapter discontinue Listserv; the same information appears on BEV Seniors Listserv. At this point our July and August break occurred.

On September 2 our Board "jump" started the Fall with a meeting and an uncommonly long list of actions. Jim Moore, with the help of the Custodian, had opened the AARP filing cabinet in the Senior Center, for the first time in a long time. Jim asked all committee chairs to submit appendices as an attachment to the Standing Rules. Nominating Committee members were asked to pick a Chairman and present a slate of officers at the October 7th Board meeting. Joyce Martin reported 249 members. Dan Fleming, Legislative Committee, gave a summary of the Tax Study; the committee had met three times and would meet at least one more time to iron out issues to recommend to AARP Virginia Legislative Committee. Our newsletter received Honorable Mention from AARP Virginia; the Chapter submitted an Andrus Award to honor Ben Crawford. The next session of

55-Alive Driver Training program was held at the Senior Center November 20-21. Harold Walts was the Instructor; cost was \$10; the Mt. Tabor Ruritan Club gave our Chapter \$100 to support the activity. Our Chapter co-sponsored with the League of Women Voters a program on air quality on November 14. Carrie Coil and Charlotte Beamer were thanked for staffing a "Get Out the Vote" booth at the Dublin Fair.

The September newsletter noted that Doug Martin would speak at our September 16th meeting, and it should provide many a laugh. On September 25th, some of our members went to Richmond to the Governor's Conference on Aging sponsored by AARP Virginia. There were 6 workshops and a public forum with Jane Woods, Secretary of Health and Human Services, and Jay DeBoer, Commissioner of Department of Aging; then a 2-pm speech by Governor Mark Warner (cost \$45). Brian Allen ordered AARP publications from Richmond and made them available at our meetings. Fundraising for the Senior Center was reported to be \$188 cash and a wheelchair. Corrections and additions to the membership list were invited by Joyce Martin or Don Elson. An application form and the list of officers and committees ended the September newsletter.



John Edwards

The October 21st meeting was on Tax Reform. Senator **John Edwards**, Delegate Dave Nutter and Delegate Jim Shuler participated. It was reported that we had a great turnout in September for Doug Martin's talk (95 to 100 people) and a great time was had by all. Christmas luncheon reservations were being taken for December 2. Don Elson repeated the request for donations to the Senior Center. Membership update and Member List were covered. Back to the Tax Reform meeting: The legislators were given 16 questions in advance; the questions were taken from the tax reform study committee mentioned earlier. A copy of the results of the study was included in the newsletter. A summary of the October 7th board minutes were included, and also a summary of Committee Reports. Our Chapter relayed an announcement from the League of Women Voters about Air Pollution and Health. The usual membership application form and list of officers and committees were also included. The November 18th Meeting was a topic that needs to be revisited periodically, because the situation changes almost daily. Presented by Dan Level from AARP Virginia, the topic was "*Gadgets, Gizmos and Other Cool Stuff.*" It is a moment in time when we inform ourselves about what is "out there" that can make us safer, more comfortable, more independent, *i.e.*, generally better able to cope. With respect to the Tax Reform Forum held in November, 80 to 90 people attended, and all of them left the meeting better informed and better able to decide what they supported.

Details about our Holiday luncheon on December 2nd were in the November



newsletter. Don Elson reported on donations for the Senior Center. Ray Murley provided the following accounting: Chapter account, \$232; members, \$135; estimated value of donations, \$455 (Total is \$822). In the membership update, dues for 2004 were requested. Frank Lau published his usual annual call to all those who need AARP Tax-Aide. This is a service of which we are all very proud. The board minutes from November 4 were included. Brian Allen passed around a plaque received by our Chapter from National AARP for serving the seniors of Blacksburg for over 25 years. The Mt. Tabor Ruritan Club gave us \$100 for the 55-Alive Driver Training program.



Dale Oliver

Two "outside" announcements were made in our newsletter, one by the League of Women Voters and one by the Voluntary Action Center. A membership application and a list of officers and committees ended the November news. On December 2nd our Holiday luncheon took place at noon at the Red Lion Inn (Cost \$10). Deadline for reservations was November 27. The Blacksburg Community Band played, food and fun was had by all, two awards were made, and officers for 2004 were installed. **Dale Oliver** received the Community Spirit Award and June Schmidt received the Chapter Service Award. Thus ended 2003.

**2004** Our new President was our old President. Apparently Brian Allen did not get enough satisfaction from serving 11 months in 2003, so he took on another whole year as president. This, of course, accrued to our benefit. He started his January Message by thanking the Hospitality Committee for a wonderful Holiday Party on December 2nd; then he thanked all those who helped with the Senior Center breakfast on December 10th, announcing that this breakfast would become an annual event. Brian gave many thanks to Dan Fleming and his tax committee for their work and for their report; our Governor wrote Jim Shuler saying: "*The Blacksburg Chapter pinpointed some areas that should be addressed in any restructuring.*"



Bill Kallio

We had two meetings on January 20th: the first was our regular meeting at our regular place in which Paul Lancaster, Planning Commission, told us the future of Blacksburg; the was followed immediately by a Special Meeting presented by **Bill Kallio** and Madge Bush, AARP Virginia, entitled "*The New Prescription Drug Program.*" Dan Fleming prepared questions in advance and sent them to the speaker. The newsletter gave us a website to answer Medicare questions.

Dan Fleming wrote a long and strong resolution to National AARP, which

was passed by our board and forwarded to President of AARP, James Parkel, by Brian Allen, in which we expressed strong dissatisfaction with AARP for supporting the new prescription drug bill. We labeled it "badly flawed," and went on to explain exactly why (in Dan's words). Dan was a very busy man right at this time, because he was also busy formulating and writing an analysis of Governor Warner's Tax Reform Plan; Dan concluded the plan might have been the best that could be achieved, but he didn't really like it.

There was a membership update and a request for any corrections to the membership list, a list of future meetings, AARP Tax-Aide notice from Frank Lau, and board meeting minutes with committee reports. Ben Crawford reported on January and February programs. Carl McDaniels commended (in a motion) the Hospitality Committee for the success of our Holiday lunch in December.

Connie Anderson told us about an Endowment Fund for the Blacksburg Senior Center, and suggested we schedule a speaker from Warm Hearth to discuss how people living there may be permitted to pay resident fees for programs at the Blacksburg Senior Center.

In the newsletter, there was a membership application form, an announcement about classes, and the list of officers and committees. Our February 17th meeting featured Beth Obenshain, Executive Director of the **New River Land Trust**.



She gave an excellent talk on how people can leave their land in trust and know it will remain natural. We also had a short memorial service to remember those who died in 2003.

Brian noted that we were under-funded for 2004, and asked for additional voluntary donations. He asked each member to contribute \$10. Brian also invited anyone to join a small group called "*Seniors in Action*;" these people would bring houses up to code.

Dan Fleming filed a half-page about legislation before the Assembly that AARP supports, such as SB128 which would eliminate the offset to unemployment insurance, do-not-calls from telemarketers, several tobacco tax bills, driver's safety legislation, and being able to buy drugs from Canada. Then Dan filed another half-page about the Medicare Prescription Drug law, dealing with the long-range costs, negotiating for prices, Medigap insurance, and closing the "doughnut hole." Members were urged to contact their members of Congress.

The Volunteer Recognition Celebration was written up at length. AARP Tax-Aide was mentioned again. Minutes of the board meeting were included in the February newsletter.

Announcements about "Fit" Activities and Aerobics were made, application for membership, County activities and tours, and the list of officers and committees finished the February newsletter. The March 16th meeting was double-



barreled: Andy Morikawa talked about the **Community Foundation of the New River Valley**, and John

Robertson talked about Warm Hearth. President Brian Allen started his message by saying



we had collected \$150 of the \$500 we needed to fund the budget. Frank Lau and his AARP Tax-Aide helpers had been really busy (45 returns so far).

April 3rd was the date for another Volunteer Recognition Celebration, and our own Dale Oliver was nominated. Six repeat announcements were included. State Financial Problems were analyzed in a whole page of discussion from AARP Virginia. The Caring Committee asked to be notified when someone was "down." The 2004 Budget was approved, but was still under-funded. Board minutes were included, along with notice of the County Comprehensive Plan meeting, the Town Council elections, League of Women Voters, Community Center activities, application form, Senior Olympics writeup, and the list of officers and committees. Then along came April, and on April 3rd the volunteer Recognition Celebration was held, and all four winners were members of AARP, a landslide of epic proportions.

It happened this way: Blacksburg AARP, the Voluntary Action Center, the American Red Cross, and the YMCA at Virginia Tech jointly sponsored the event to recognize outstanding volunteers from throughout the New River Valley. Eighteen individuals were nominated. Bob Blanton, the nominee from the Lions Club, received the Jim and Lenna Moore Citizenship and Community Service Award; Ben Crawford received his award as a nominee of the YMCA; Jim Moore received his award as a nominee of the American Red Cross, and Dale Oliver received his award as a member of our Chapter; then along came a fifth award to a member of our Chapter -- Mary Taylor accepted recognition on behalf of her late husband, Lincoln Taylor (always know as "*Link*") as a special nominee of the YMCA. All this happened under the able leadership of Joyce Martin and June Schmidt, with other contributors, namely the Blacksburg Senior Center, the Retired Senior Volunteer Programs of Floyd, Pulaski, Giles and Montgomery-Radford; money also came from the Montgomery Regional Hospital and the Carilion Hospitals of the New River Valley. Dan Level, AARP Community Organizer, was the Master of Ceremonies; other helpers were Don Elson, **Cerrie Coil**, Clara Jane Billig, **Mary Ellen Moore**, and Connie Anderson. Whew! Now back to the more or less normal treatment of the April news.



Hospitality Co-Chairs  
Mary Ellen Moore (L)  
and Cerrie Coil (R)

Our April 20th meeting featured John Robertson, the activities director of

Warm Hearth, who talked about people moving to Warm Hearth, how people flow from one part to another, money, and whatever. The Senior Olympics were a big success, judging from grunts and groans and laughs and pure gold(?) medals and over 200 participants (door prizes, too). Thanks were expressed to Paul Smeal, John Robinson, and Joy Herbert. President Brian Allen wrote an official letter on behalf of our Chapter supporting a community development block grant to establish transit service at Warm Hearth Village.

Dan Fleming obtained a video from National AARP showing Walter Cronkite discussing the new Medicare Reform Bill; this specific videotape had various showings in the area. Jim Moore announced a May 8th seminar by AARP, NARFE, Senior Center, and Red Cross on End of Life Caring. Last year's program drew 150 people and a lot of comment, so they did it again in the form of a seminar. It featured Dr. Anne Glass from Virginia Tech and four speakers. The public was invited, and it was held at the Senior Center. More later. Lula Roberts, Caring Committee, said if someone is ill or has passed away, please call her.



Virgil Cook

AARP Tax-Aide: Frank Lau reported 100 people were helped, and 34 were E-filed (two counselors). Inclement weather policy was printed. Excerpts from board minutes of April 6th: Jim Moore reported a balance of \$1692; voluntary donations were accounted separately and were not available. **Virgil Cook** was formally elected Secretary. Incidentally, Virgil is blind, but it made not a particle of difference.

Our newsletter received an honorable mention from AARP Virginia. We encouraged our friends and neighbors to vote. Paul Smeal filed a full page on Fitness; the classes contained at least 100 seniors; add the "*Movin' thru Virginia*" people, and it comes to 150 seniors. Paul said there was more than 150 doing fitness on their own.

There was room for more in all classes. Paul gave a summary of the new "*Fitness Across the USA*" program, wherein each person received a tee shirt (for 12 bucks) with an outline of the United States and the states, and color in a state as they completed the requirements; there is no further information on the success of this program and its participants – we must all hope they survived.

Blacksburg and Christiansburg held forums on the Town Council candidates, under the auspices of the League of Women Voters (televised on WTOB, Channel 2, our local Blacksburg channel). The moderator in Christiansburg was Carl McDaniels, a member of our Chapter. Co-sponsors were American Association of University Women, government classes at Blacksburg High School, the NAACP of Montgomery, Floyd and Radford, and the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy.

Medicare information, dues/membership application, and list of officers and

committees finalized the newsletter for April. The May 18th meeting was a report from our elected representatives, **Jim Shuler and Dave Nutter**; there was also the previously-mentioned showing of the 12-minute video "*Navigating the New Medicare Prescription Law*." The vote was held on having a 50/50 cash drawing at each meeting, and it was approved by a large majority. Tickets cost \$1 each or 5 tickets for 3; purely voluntary. Announcement was made of our June Picnic on June 15th: good food, antique cars, then a revival of our white elephant auction with a real auctioneer, Wayne Garst. The money goes to the charity fund.



Delegates Nutter (left) and Shuler

Dan Fleming filed a page and a quarter about the Virginia Tax Changes; he said it was unlikely that another attempt would be made at tax reform for many years, and that little was done. The 2004 Membership Roster was included with the newsletter. Future meetings were mentioned. The dues for 2005 were increased to \$10 per member and \$15 per couple. Board minutes were included, as well as dues/membership form, and a list of officers and committees.

The month of June: the Annual Picnic was held as planned at Nellie's Cave Park on June 15. All went very well. The auction netted \$235 for our charity fund. There were some openings pending on our committees, and volunteers were invited to apply. The summer break (July and August) occurred here.

The September 21st Meeting was a really big thing. It was a special affair combining our regular September meeting with the general public at Custom Catering to include a free Continental breakfast and a forum on Social Security and Medicare. Reservations were required. A crowd of 300 people attended from all over the New River Valley. Door prizes were given. News releases were sent out. The whole nine yards! This Meeting was very well received.

National AARP, Vice President of Audit/Finance Doug Holbrook spoke on "*Challenges Facing Social Security: The Real Story*." Bill Kallio, AARP Virginia Director, discussed "*Challenges Facing Medicare: The Latest Update*." Questions and answers were admitted from the audience and after the meeting as well. In addition, at least eight local organizations set up displays and dispensed information. Ben Crawford pointed out that hundreds of thousands of Medicare beneficiaries in Virginia have no other medical insurance.

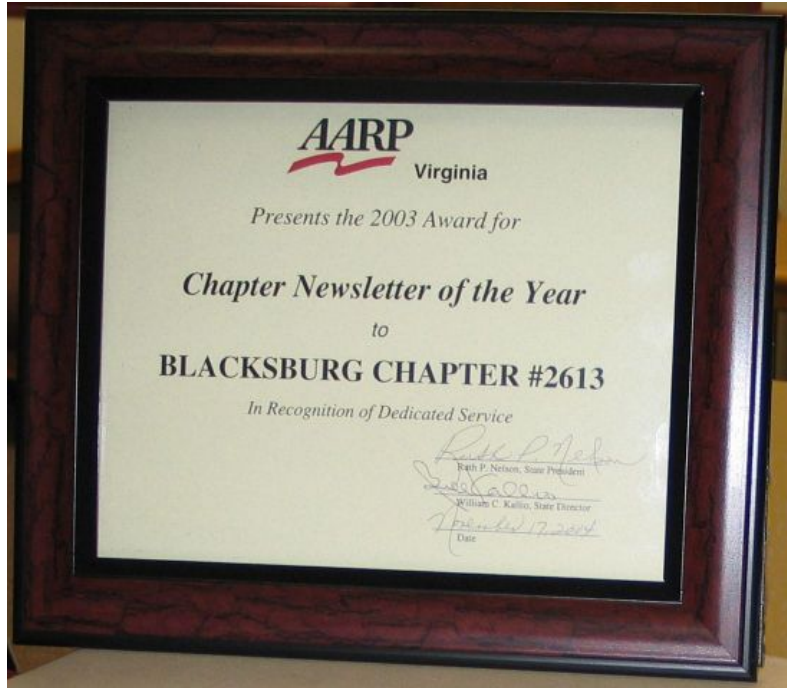
Frank Lau reported that we lost one of our tax preparers (he moved away), and asked for someone to take said person's place. It's amazing! Somebody always comes forward. Membership update, membership roster, future meetings, and Caring Committee were covered. Board meeting minutes of September 7th were

summarized. *Our Chapter newsletter received an award from AARP Virginia for the best Chapter Newsletter of the Year; Don Elson, the Editor who won this tremendous distinction, was retiring at the end of 2004.* Don stated that keeping the membership list, preparing the whole list for distribution, preparing the mailing labels, and printing nametags were too many responsibilities just for one person, and recommended that more people be brought into the process. Ben Crawford reported that our Chapter had again been requested to sponsor a 55-Alive Driver Training program and we agreed to do it.

The Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department announced their new publication, *The Recreator*, it's Fall Program Guide.

Seniors were invited to participate in the listed programs and registration was required. Dues/membership form was included, and a list of officers and committees. The October 19th Meeting at the Senior Center was a new twist. It was given by Nikki Giovanni of Virginia Tech, a widely known Poet. Belated thanks were given to Ben Crawford and Carl McDaniels for putting the September Forum together. We picked up 30 new members, mainly due to Joyce Martins' efforts. Frank Lau and Mt. Tabor Ruritans sponsored the TV time on WTOB, Channel 2 in Blacksburg. Dawn Baumgartner Vaughan gave our Blacksburg AARP Chapter a nice write-up in the New River Current newspaper. Lula Roberts and others worked hard. June Schmidt won the top door prize, dinner for two at Mountain Lake Hotel. She never has said who she took along. The proposed slate of officers for 2005 was published in October newsletter.

Dan Fleming urged everyone to write John Warner and George Allen and ask them to support S2328, the Dorgan-Snowe prescription drug importation bill, that would allow the importation of FDA approved drugs from 19 countries. Frank Lau filed an appeal that we get our AARP news via E-mail rather than the newsletter; his appeal got nowhere. Frank also repeated his request for another tax preparer. In the newsletter, there was a dues/membership update, program roster of future meetings, and Caring Committee notices were included. The October 5th Board meeting minutes were also included: among many things, the December luncheon





was moved from the Red Lion to the Holiday Inn because of the closing of the Red Lion Inn (cost per person was \$14). Ben Crawford moved that we not buy Liability Insurance because we don't own any property and therefore don't need any insurance. The motion passed. Under the heading of Announcements, Carl McDaniels mentioned that Volume Two Bookstore opened a new section on Aging and Retirement.



Karen Hult

Next was notice of a panel discussion on the impact of the Media on the 2004 Elections; speakers were Gerry Davies, the Roanoke Times; **Karen Hult**, Tech Political Science Professor; and Sam Riley, Virginia Tech Journalism Professor. Moderator was Beth Obenshain, former Editor, known to almost all our members. Paul Smeal announced two trips, one to New River Trail State Park and one to Claytor Lake State Park. Montgomery County Parks and Recreation announced two trips. Dues/membership form and the list of officers and committees also appeared. This brings us to the last newsletter published in November, the last one of the year because we don't publish in July, August, and December. The November 16th Meeting featured Craig Brians, Political Science Department at Virginia Tech, who spoke about computerized voting machines and presidential elections; we jointly sponsored the meeting with the League of Women Voters. Election of Officers for 2005 also took place at the November 16th meeting.

November 17th was the day Don Elson was honored for producing the Newsletter of the Year in 2003. The place was the Tanglewood Holiday Inn in Roanoke. We had vacancies for awards chair, newsletter editor, and secretary. A secretary was needed because Virgil and Elaine Cook moved to Fredericksburg to be closer to family. The proposed slate of officers for 2005 was published, and nominations could be made from the floor. Jim Moore and Ben Crawford started taking reservations for the 55-Alive driving course, scheduled at the Community Center for the afternoons of January 19 and 21. Frank Lau announced a look at the Tax-Wise software at the Recreation Center on November 15th, and repeated his call for more help. The usual membership update, the call for corrections to the membership list, and the Caring Committee request for notification were included. We needed a driver and an antique car for our part in the Blacksburg Holiday Parade on December 3. We included in our November newsletter a notice that the Blacksburg Townscape Committee was sponsoring a community meeting to discuss the future of the former Blacksburg Middle School. In the November news there was the usual dues/membership form and the list of officers and committees. We finished the news of 2004 with mention of the Holiday Party Luncheon at the Holiday Inn on Price's Fork Road (Cost \$14). Cerrie Coil was handling reservations. The menu appeared in the newsletter, and the Blacksburg Community Band played. A special recognition award (Citizenship and Community Service)

was presented to Mary Ellen and Jim Moore for their selfless work through the Red Cross. Their award symbolized the Community Spirit which fills the world around here and elsewhere. Don Elson was next with reception of our Chapter Service Award for many years of service capped off by production of the award winning newsletter in the State.

## 2005

This brings us to our thirtieth year under Charter as a Chapter. Our



Carl McDaniels

President was Carl McDaniels, and as you will see, it was a whirlwind of a year that turned out to be a tremendous accomplishment. The January meeting speakers were Kathy Hosig and Jan McGilliard. Kathy is Associate Professor at Virginia Tech, and she spoke on the topic "*What Should We Eat?*" Jan McGilliard, a faculty wife at Tech, had the short program slot. Her topic was "*Team in Training*" to explain the fitness and fundraising arm of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. The January Board meeting brought the news that our Chapter website, the first in the state, was operational under Connie Anderson; Frank Lau spoke of several proposed

changes in the newsletter, one being the goal of replacing the print copy with e-mail, but this idea did not get far during 2005; Jim Moore, outgoing Treasurer, announced a balance of \$2,178.21 and submitted detailed reports for December and for 2004. Brian Allen took over as Treasurer. Dale Oliver and Ken Martin audited the books for 2004. Committee chairs were announced. Carrie Coil secured the locations for the June picnic and the December luncheon. The Chaplain, **Ken**



Ken Dawson

**Dawson**, conducted a brief memorial for departed members at the January meeting. Joyce Martin announced distribution

of brochures to other retiree groups, and phone messages to members who had not paid dues. Jim Moore moved to accept the motion, and Jane Lane seconded, that all program presenters be given free membership for a year. The motion passed.

The 55-Alive Driver Training program (32 people) was held on January 19 and 21. The AARP Tax-Aide Program was scheduled. The compilation of a 25-year history was announced (and later expanded to 30 years). Planning began for a health fair at the Senior Center in September. A home repair project was announced for the summer. June Schmidt reported on the area Volunteer Recognition Program and asked if our Chapter wished to participate and make a donation. Our Chapter made a \$150 donation and participated. A complete roster of Officers, Board Members, Editors, and Committee Chairs was included in the



January newsletter. February activities began with a Board Meeting on February 1st at the Community Center at 9:30 am President Carl introduced Mary Ellen Moore as new Hospitality Chair and Glen Mitchell as new Legislative Committee Chair. Brian Allen reported a balance of \$2,208.34 and presented a report for January 2005. Dale Oliver, Financial Planning Chair, presented the proposed budget of \$3,495 for 2005. Budget was accepted. Discussion was held about complimentary memberships, forms showing Brian Allen as Treasurer, the current P. O. Box, notices in the Current, presenting programs and listing programs. A Health Fair date of September 20th was secured.

At our Chapter General Meeting February 15th our featured speaker was Perry Martin, son of Doug Martin. Perry was Assistant Director of the **Virginia Tech Service-Learning Center** talking about Volunteer student work in our Community. Betty Jahn, H2U Director of the Montgomery Regional Hospital, gave a short program about her work with the Gift Shop, volunteer



services, and a display about "*Health To You.*" The "*Topic of the Month*" was Social Security, so Glen Mitchell, Legislative Committee Chair, turned in almost a page of copy about Social Security. June Schmidt included a full-page report for the newsletter about the Volunteer Recognition Celebration. In the March newsletter, President Carl repeated our oft-repeated notice and invitation about monthly meetings third Tuesdays because we get new members this way; then he announced our membership goal of at least 300; then he reviewed the current issue of interest, namely, Social Security and asked for views and opinions.



James Wolfe

The March 15th General Meeting featured our own Chapter member, Jim Wolfe as **James F. Wolfe, Ph.D.**, President of the Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM), affiliated with Virginia Tech; his topic was "*A Review of Program Plans with an Emphasis on Geriatric Concerns.*" The 5-minute program was given by Terri A. Fitzwater-Palmore, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity, and she talked about "*Current and Future Programs.*" The newsletter included a half-page advance announcement about the Volunteer Recognition Celebration set for April 9. Our Chapter is a co-sponsor along with four other entities. The notes from the Board Meeting of March 1st were included in the newsletter; they covered reports, balance, paid membership, program planning, newsletter design, the new Chapter website by Connie Anderson, AARP Virginia items of interest, Ben Crawford's attendance of a meeting at the Governor's Mansion, Glen Mitchell's Legislative report, and discussion of a flyer regarding a "*Community Strength Pledge Certificate.*" Jim Moore reported on the 55-Alive

Driver Training program and the joint AARP/Town Bloodmobile.

The main purpose of our April 18th General Meeting was to spotlight the recently concluded legislative session in Richmond. Our featured speaker was Bill Kallio, State Director, **Virginia AARP**, who gave us his impressions of the session as an outside observer interested in the results. Then to get the impressions from insiders who could talk about the blow-by-blow treatment given each bill, we had



## VIRGINIA Update

John S. Edwards, 21st Senatorial District Representative, and our own Chapter member Jim Shuler, 12th House of Delegates District Representative. Senator Brandon Bell and

Delegate Dave Nutter were invited, but they had to decline because of scheduling conflicts. It was a great meeting.

President Carl McDaniels used the podium to give notice and discussion to a day of home modification for low income seniors, working with Virginia AARP, Home Depot, and the New River Valley Habitat for Humanity. More about this in the June newsletter. The April 5th Board Meeting had the usual lengthy agenda and succession of reports and discussions. Briefly, **Joyce Martin** reported for Treasurer Brian Allen, a bank balance of \$3098.82, an astronomical figure compared to many, many years of almost no money. Frank Lau noted 75 electronic tax returns file through the Tax-Aide program, part of a total of 120 persons helped in more than 134 volunteer hours. Glen Mitchell and President Carl McDaniels presented draft letters to our congressmen about Social Security.



Joyce Martin

The May newsletter included a full-page report about the Volunteer Recognition Celebration (April 9) at the Blacksburg Community Center. The Celebration was sponsored by our AARP Chapter, the Voluntary Action Center, the Red Cross, and the Virginia Tech YMCA to recognize outstanding volunteers throughout the New River Valley. Nominations came from sixteen organizations.

Mary Ellen and Jim Moore, nominated by our Chapter, received the Jim and Lenna Moore Citizenship and Community Service Award; their list of community services runs into the dozens. A number of other entities contributed to the Celebration. Joyce Martin, Dale Oliver, and June Schmidt worked on planning and execution, and others helped with individual chores.

The May 17th General Meeting featured a review of a book by Warren Strother (Chapter member) and Peter Wallenstein entitled "*From VPI to State University: President T. Marshall Hahn, Jr. and the Transformation of Virginia Tech, 1962-1974.*" The authors were present to speak about the book and take questions; the Virginia Tech Bookstore had copies for sale at a special discount;

**Dr. Hahn** attended to visit and sign copies. Our Chapter co-sponsored the program with the Virginia Tech Retirees Association. In his opening notes, President Carl



Dr. Hahn

McDaniels reiterated his invitation for 10-20 members to co-op with three other groups to fix up the home of an 80+ year old widow in rural Pulaski County. The mission is to make it possible for seniors to stay independent in their own homes. More about this next month.

Glen Mitchell repeated his urging that we all take part in the Social Security issues. President Carl McDaniels submitted a note saying The Home Depot encourages AARP members to apply for employment. The Board, through Joyce Martin, thanked our Virginia Tech Service Learning Center student, Catherine Malone, for her efforts on our behalf. Ben Crawford turned in a note saying the Bureau of Labor Statistics announced the 2004 estimate of the value of volunteer time was \$17.55 per hour, up from \$17.19 in 2003.

Ben also reported the June 21st meeting would be the annual picnic held at Nellie's Cave Park. June Schmidt requested a motion to transfer a balance of \$684.45 to the Virginia Tech YMCA to reserve for the 2006 Volunteer Recognition Celebration; motion passed. The Treasurer's report showed a balance of \$3,082.66. Our President (and our Chapter) received a one and one-half page letter from Senator George Allen pertaining to Social Security. We wrote to three people, but we received a reply from only Senator Allen. The June 21st General Meeting was our usual picnic and white elephant auction. Wayne Garst again conducted the auction. The **Antique Car Owners** were with us again so we could admire their beautiful cars and envy them. A great time was had by all. It was a blast! The President's notes in the June newsletter started with a rousing State of the Union (oops, I mean Chapter) address discussing the status of our Chapter. As he summarized our status: "In a word, it is GREAT!!!"



Then, as promised last month and the month before, the newsletter had a detailed report on our National AARP Day of Service on May 12, to wit: Our Chapter was one of 10 chapters in Virginia to receive AARP Virginia support (money) to do a home modification. We teamed with Home Depot, Habitat for Humanity, and the NRV Agency on Aging to help an 80-year-old widow in rural Pulaski County stay in her 100-year-old house. Our Chapter Hospitality Committee prepared a delicious lunch for the entire group. Volunteers from our Chapter were



Tom and Kathy Jeffers, **Jim Gaines**, Jim Moore, Jim Wightman, Carl McDaniels, and Dick Schmidt; they were joined by Bob Kelly and Terri Fitzwater-Palmore from Habitat for Humanity and Doug Whichard and his people from Home Depot. Elsewhere in Virginia more than 40 AARP and Virginia Retired Teacher Association (VRTA) members participated in the May 12th event. An estimated 1200 AARP and VRTA members were involved in the national AARP Day of Service. Notice was given by Jim Moore of the Fall AARP Bloodmobile at the Recreation Center from 1 pm to 6 pm. Minutes of the June Board meeting mentioned that Dan Fleming is at the hospital awaiting a liver transplant (at this writing Dan has received a transplant and is back home, minus a few pounds).



Jim Gaines

The May 1st AARP Chapter account balance was \$2,804.44. Health and Wellness Fair was scheduled for September 20, 2005 and a dozen or so details were discussed.

The Blacksburg AARP Chapter website [<http://civic.bev.net/aarp/>] was mentioned and all were encouraged to view. The Virginia Tech Center for Regional Strategies is publishing: "*Aging in the Region*," and working on a conference. The September 55-Alive Driver Training program was mentioned for September 28 and 30. AARP Virginia held a public hearing on Long Term Care, June 17th at the Salem Civic Center; it covered improvements in care, services in our area, and other things. Six events in the local July 4th Celebrations were listed. A Senior's Ice Cream Social on August 18th was printed. The June newsletter ended with a complete list of officers, board of directors, editors, committees and chairs, and webmaster. Here the summer break of July and August occurred.

This brings us to September and our Showcase event of the year, the Health and



Health & Wellness Fair

Wellness Fair, Tuesday, September 20, 2005 at the Blacksburg Community Center. This was both the General Meeting and the Special Meeting, the Feature of Features. Notices were given in posters, papers, radio, TV, and shouting from the roof tops. We had displays, demonstrations, exhibits, seminars, door prizes, giveaways, screenings, food, and the **AARP Voter Information Van**. Sponsors were our Chapter, the Blacksburg Community and Senior Center, Tech Adult Day Care Center, and the Virginia Tech

Retirees Association. All the beforehand information was summarized in the September newsletter, and all the results were summarized in the October newsletter. The September newsletter gave all the times, places, seminars, exhibitors, thirteen major sponsors and three regular sponsors. The event was

chaired by **Darrel Clowes**, and it was a half-time job for months and a full-time job for months, and a huge sigh of relief was given after it was over. The Blacksburg Community Center staff estimated more than 400 persons attended. There were 55 exhibitors, and they want to be included again next year. We awarded some 40 door prizes. Hourly seminars were held from 10 am to 2 pm: Nutrition, End of Life Issues, Social Security Update, Medicare, and Long Term Care. WTOB (local public service television, Channel 2) filmed a segment. A four-page program was passed out. Our Chapter picked up about 15 new members, bringing the membership to 315, a new high. The 4-H Club sold every bit of the food. The Voter Express Van was a definite PLUS. By all accounts, it was a huge success. No complaints were forthcoming.



On Left: Darrel Clowes

Now to other things. In the September newsletter: Glen Mitchell reported that not much was happening legislatively, but vigilance and study were necessary regarding Social Security. Don Elson requested nominations for the Chapter Service and Community Spirit Awards. Brian Allen presented a financial report for June through August showing a balance of \$3,324.93. Connie Anderson requested that Bob Abraham be asked to take pictures at the Health Fair. The 55-Alive Driver Training program for September 28 and 30 was announced. Isabel Berney reported a program about the ethical dilemmas that medical advances create, and explained the Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Virginia Blue Ridge. HURRICANE KATRINA!!! Ann Hess and Darrel Clowes submitted a page and a half of copy pertaining to a greater "*Montgomery Hurricane Response*." The plan is magnificent: churches, camps, organizations (especially the Red Cross), many others. All went very well.

October: Usually a quiet month – nothing much going on. However, November elections would soon take place, and they cried out for our attention, so Ben Crawford managed to get our Legislative hopefuls to come to our General Meeting on October 18 to tell us why they should be kept in office or be put in office, or whatever. We held a Forum. Delegates Jim Shuler and Dave Nutter, along with challenger Barbara Chrisley participated. Shuler’s challenger did not respond. It was a very good program. The 5-Minute Program was by Donna Barnhart, the Executive Director of Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley. The Mount Tabor Ruritan Club was a co-sponsor of the Forum. Brian Allen turned in two financial reports; one was breakdown of income and expenses from the Health and Wellness Fair, and the bottom line showed a profit of \$729.70; the other was the financial report for September credits and balances, and the bottom line was a balance of \$3,468.44. A new attendance figure for the Health and Wellness Fair

was given us by the Community Center representatives Joy Herbert and Jack Leahy (350 to 400). We donated one-half of the Health Care Profits to the Blacksburg Community Center. Ben Crawford presented the Election Committee report of Chapter Nominations for 2006. The November 15th General Meeting was announced to be about flower arranging. We were invited to attend a Giles County Senior Life Style Program. The December 6th Holiday Luncheon was mentioned by Carrie Coil. Connie Anderson reported 900 hits on our Website, thought to be a great response. A joint Bloodmobile was held on October 5. Ten new members' names were listed in the newsletter, because they came on board after our Membership list was distributed. On October 18th, Jessica Wirgan, Director of the **Blacksburg Museum**, presented an update on the Museum's progress.



Alexander Black House

November: The final newsletter of the year. Not just any year. The 30th year, the end of this story, for awhile anyway. This is not a formal book. It is a super-long memorandum, written in a casual style that gives the names and community services rendered by a small town AARP Chapter that grew from small to medium to large in numbers on a small budget that has stayed small. The total amount of service given by these people is absolutely astounding.

Back to the newsletter: Our General Meeting on November 15th, arranged by Harriett Cooper, Program Chair, was presented by Dr. Alan McDaniel of the Virginia Tech Horticultural Department, entitled "*A Design Almost Good Enough to Eat.*" Alan teaches Floral Design at Virginia Tech. He made the whole thing delightful and informative. The 5-minute program was presented by Elva Miller (a Chapter member) about the Montgomery County Christmas Store. She has done a fabulous job and several of our members assist this valuable program. After the General Meeting, a few lines about our Treasurer, Brian Allen was mentioned; Brian gave us a bonus program about Medicare Part D Plan. He is in a unique position to do this because he is in the business and therefore, must know how to understand it and explain it.

At the November Board Meeting, the Treasurer, Brian Allen, presented a report showing an October 1st balance of \$4,085.15, and a revised detailed account of the Health and Wellness Fair which showed a profit of \$1,229.70. The Board immediately proceeded to give money away, donating \$615 to the Blacksburg Community Center, \$300 to the NRV Free Clinic, \$200 to the Food Pantry, and \$100 to each of the following: AARP Matching Relief Fund, Montgomery County Red Cross, Montgomery County Christmas Store, Women's Resource Center of



the New River Valley, and the New River Valley Habitat for Humanity. This required more than the \$1,229.70, but we seem to do better with a low bank balance. Joyce Martin reiterated we were ending the year with 315 members, a 20% growth over 2004.

Darrel Clowes moved that we place the newsletter on our website; the motion passed. By the way, our website has received over 1100 hits, and Connie Anderson is an absolute marvel.

AARP Tax-Aide was mentioned in a "then and now" form; we started studying, preparing, and doing AARP Tax-Aide in 1977, and right now our group of helpers is gearing up for the 2005 Tax Filing season.



AARP Chapter Meetings at the Blacksburg Senior Center

Glen Mitchell filed a Legislative Report dealing with Social Security, long term care services, public transportation, payday lending reform, and also thanked all for voting and contacting their legislators. Brian Allen also had with him copies of the "5 Wishes" booklet at \$2 per booklet; these can be filled in to describe your medical care wishes in case of disability.

Angela Little gave us half a page of information about volunteer opportunities with the SouthWest Virginia Legal Aid Society, the Special Olympics and Literacy Volunteers, the Salvation Army, the Christmas Store, the American Cancer Society, and the Kroontje Health Care Center. Committee Assignments for 2006 were discussed by Frank Lau.

Nominations for 2006 officers were presented by Ben Crawford. Our Chapter sponsored the Senior Breakfast at the Blacksburg Senior Center on December 5th, as our Thank You for the Community Center's "no cost" meeting facilities.



This brings us to our **Holiday Luncheon at the Holiday Inn University** on December 6th from Noon to 2 pm (Cost \$14 per person). We shared a meal, of course, enjoyed holiday music, announced and installed new officers, and enjoyed our feature event, the presentation of our two major awards of the year, Community Spirit and Chapter Service.



*Left:* Our Community Spirit Award went to R. B. "Ben" Crawford, who has been involved with every facet of our operation for many years.  
*Right:* The Chapter Service Award went to Dan Fleming for his many years of exemplary service in many areas, especially on the Legislative Committee.



**2006** Our AARP Chapter began the New Year in January with a truly 'moving' program featuring "*Blacksburg Transit: What's available for our older citizens,*" by Tim Witten and Harland Brown, from the Blacksburg Transit System. They discussed how Blacksburg Transit can help if you have difficulty getting around our Blacksburg Area due to illness or disability.

Our February meeting was held jointly meeting with the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, with a program of interest to both memberships. The topic, "*Our Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan: Update and Progress,*" featured Meghan Dorsett of our county's planning department, and Karen Drake, from the Blacksburg Planning Department.

A large number of AARP members braved March 21st's cold weather to hear a most interesting and informative talk by Tim Lawrence, a certified Aging-in-Place Specialist of Blue Ridge Home Improvement, on "*How to Make your Home Safe and Comfortable as you Age.*"

In April, the AARP Chapter meeting, held a discussion on a major issue in Virginia today regarding the traffic along the I-81 corridor. David Foster, Executive Director of RailSolutions was the featured speaker.

Our May program featured Virginia Delegates, Jim Shuler and Dave Nutter, reporting on the 2006 Virginia General Assembly legislative activities.



Jim Wightman

Our 2006 Membership Chair, **Jim Wightman**, has actively recruited new members with a 350-number goal. This history will document how many ways we serve our community. In June, our Blacksburg AARP Chapter will hold their Annual Picnic, Auction and Antique Car Show. The Picnic will include a celebration of our Blacksburg AARP Chapter's 30-Year History.



## **2006--IN PROGRESS**

Technically, our 30th year ends June 29, 2006. Exactly 30 years after receiving our Charter from National AARP--then the American Association of Retired Persons. This our 30th year continues the steady increase in membership, quality programs, opportunities for fellowship, strong links to area Community Service, a great newsletter, and a hard working Board, Committees, and membership. We do have a unique activity which has broaden our contact with our members and the general public--a web site. Connie Anderson our Web Master originated our web site in 2005 and it has received over 2000 hits. The Web Site carries a wide variety of timely information, including program notes, newsletter, Board & Committee Chairs, a Brief History, as well as some vital links to Virginia and National AARP web sites. Be sure to take a look at: <http://civic.bev.net/aarp/>

Blacksburg AARP Chapter #2613  
P. O. Box 10082  
Blacksburg, VA 24062

## THE FIRST TEN YEARS



### **Blacksburg A.A.R.P. 1976-1985**

*by Paul M. Reaves, Historian*

A small group of people got together to learn more about the attractions and entertainment in the area. It was to be a fun group strictly for pleasure. So they named the group the 'Leisurees.'" Clarence E. Jencks was elected chairman. Some suggested that they looked into A.A.R.P. to see if it could offer what they wanted. A representative from Roanoke reviewed the work of a chapter and the responsibilities. There was hesitation because of certain rules and regulations.

A.A.R.P. State Director A. L. Akers came and discussed the details necessary for organization. Even though some rules seemed unnecessary routine, it was decided to organize. On April 5, 1976 a meeting was called for the purpose of organizing. Denver Bragg was elected president, Jack O. Rowell, Vice President and Margaret Blair, Secretary.

Board of Director members were elected and committees appointed.

The Blacksburg, Virginia Chapter received Charter No. 2613 on June 29, 1976. The Virginia State Corporation issued a Certificate of Incorporation, also, on June 29, 1976. This has to be renewed each year. There were 119 members.

Meetings were first held at the Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall, then in the Squires Student Center on the Virginia Tech Campus. Members could eat at the cafeteria, bring their lunch or just come for the program. Board meetings were held at the University Club, as were social meetings.

Tours were arranged, some with Blacksburg Park and Recreation Department or with other groups. One day to a few days trips were included. While the majority were to special places in Virginia (Barter Theater, lunch and Abingdon Festival were favorites); a number were to out of state attractions and activities such as the World's Fair at Knoxville, Tennessee; Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee; Old Salem, North Carolina; Florida, Kentucky, and Dutch Country in Pennsylvania. There was a trip to London.

Each meeting had a business session and a speaker on a topic of interest to this adult group. This area is blessed with an abundance of interesting, informative and entertaining speakers without fees. Many use slides and other visual aids. Local workshops and regional workshops and joint meetings with neighboring chapters have been means of keeping abreast of A.A.R.P. programs and activities.

The Community Service Committee has had a number of programs and projects. Art students at Blacksburg High School have prepared posters dealing with the elderly. These were shown at banks and other business places in May each year. A continuous program during the year has been collecting used eye glasses to

be salvaged for those needing glasses. Another project has been the "Vial of Life" program. A vial with health information enclosed is placed in refrigerator with a door sign indicating its location. Members have helped in Health Fairs as volunteers, guides, giving information and as registered nurses.

The annual picnic in June was either pot luck or catered. The Program and Social Committee made the arrangements. It was held at the Town picnic shelter.

The Legislative Committee has worked with the state A.A.R.P. committee regarding legislative action on programs affecting the elderly. H. E. Agee was very active in Senior Citizens' concerns on taxes, sales taxes, utility rates on electricity, gas and telephone services. Herb Buhrow is much interested in the Silver Haired Legislature and served as a delegate from this area for two terms.

In 1979, while the Blacksburg Town Council was preparing plans for the Town Recreation Center, a committee with the then President Ed Mundie as leader was active in the contact with council and Town Manager in an effort to have a senior citizen's room. When the building was constructed in 1981 there was a large room which was made available to us at a nominal fee. This gave more room, tables for brown bag lunch and facilities for preparing coffee and tea. Also, the adjoining parking space was available for us. In 1985, when the Recreation Center was enlarged, a large room became available to us.

Warm Hearth, a Retirement Center, was built near Blacksburg. Several members live at the Center, some in separate homes, and others are in the Showalter Health Center with apartments, a dining room and nurse on duty. Our Chapter has members who are directors of Warm Hearth.

In 1984 John Palmer accepted the editorship of the Newsletter for the Chapter. It is published monthly and distributed at the monthly meeting.

The Charter collected information, assembled it and published: "Senior Citizen's Guide to Essential Community Services in Montgomery County." It includes a classified directory of local businesses offering discounts on goods and services to senior citizens.

The transportation committee, H. E. Agee, Chairman, conferred with and kept in touch with the Blacksburg Transit Committee promoting the bus going to the Montgomery Hospital. This was approved on a limited basis.

Al Sturm, with some assistance, revised "The Standing Rules (By-Laws) by which the Chapter operates. After approval by the Board and the membership and with minor adjustment by the National A.A.R.P., it was accepted and became effective.

The "55 Alive Driver Training Program" was a priority for 1985. It was organized in cooperation with the New Dimensions - the Retired Faculty and Staff of Virginia Tech. There were 9 classes taught in April, May, June and October; 204 persons took the course with 112 being A.A.R.P. members. There were 17 instructors of which 14 were A.A.R.P. members. Wesley Judkins, Forrest Rollins,



and Torchy Walrath each taught 3 courses.

The Nominating Committee presents its slate of officers and directors at the October meeting. Election is in November and installation is in December.

The final activity of the year is the Christmas dinner with entertainment and limited business. For the first time it was held in the new large meeting room at the Blacksburg Recreation Center in 1985.

***Presidents***

1976 - Denver Bragg	1981 - Wesley P. Judkins
1977 - E. P. Ellison (deceased)	1982 - William Hoy
1978 - William Abbott (died in office)	1983 - Seymour Kalison
1978-79 - Edward Mundie	1984 - Jean Davis
1980 - Thomas Larner	1985 - Albert Sturm
	1986 - Al Beecher

***Secretaries***

1976-1981 - Margaret Blair  
1981-1982 - Helen Judkins  
1982-1984 - Lucy Lee Lancaster  
1985 - John Palmer

***Treasurers***

1976-1979 - Esther Critchfield  
1980-1983 - Elizabeth Abbott  
1984 - Virginia Jencks  
1985 - George Gray

***Newsletter Editor***

October 1984 - John Palmer

Historian - Paul Reaves

The Blacksburg Chapter operates with 6 officers, 8 directors, 13 committees and 274 members (as of December 1985).



## **AARP HISTORY**

### **AARP Vision**

*"A society in which everyone ages with dignity and purpose and in which AARP helps people fulfill their goals and dreams."*

### **AARP Mission**

*"AARP is dedicated to enhancing quality of life for all as we age. We lead positive social change and deliver value to members through information, advocacy and service."*

### **Introducing AARP**

With over 35 million members, AARP is the leading nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization for people age 50 and over in the United States.

The group is known for providing a host of services to this ever-growing segment of the population by:

- Informing members and the public on issues important to this age group
- Advocating on legislative, consumer and legal issues
- Promoting community service
- Offering a wide range of special products and services to members

Membership in AARP is open to any person age 50 or above. With 25 percent of the U.S. population in the 50+ category, nearly half of all people in this age bracket are AARP members. However, U.S. citizenship is not a requirement for membership; over 40,000 members live outside the United States. People also do not have to be retired to join. In fact, 44 percent of AARP members work part time or full time. For these reasons, AARP shortened its name in 1999 from the American Association of Retired Persons to just four letters: AARP. The median age of AARP members is 65, and slightly more than half of them are women.

### **History of the Organization**

Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, a retired high school principal, founded AARP in 1958. AARP evolved from the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA), which Dr. Andrus had established in 1947 to promote her philosophy of productive aging, and in response to the need of retired teachers for health insurance. At that time, private health insurance was virtually unavailable to older Americans; in fact, it was not until 1965 that the government enacted Medicare, which provides health benefits to persons over age 65. Dr. Andrus approached dozens of insurance

companies until she found one willing to take the risk of insuring older persons. She then developed other benefits and programs, including a discount mail order pharmacy service. Over the years NRTA heard from thousands of others who wanted to know how they could obtain insurance and other NRTA benefits without being retired teachers. After ten years, Dr. Andrus realized the time had come to create a new organization open to all Americans. Today, NRTA is a division within AARP.

In 1963, Dr. Andrus established an international presence for AARP by founding the Association of Retired Persons International (ARPI), with offices in Lausanne, Switzerland, and Washington, D.C. While ARPI disbanded in 1969, AARP has continued to develop networks and form coalitions within the worldwide aging community, promoting the well-being of older persons internationally through advocacy, education and service.

Since its inception in 1958, AARP has grown and changed dramatically in response to societal changes, while remaining true to its founding principles:

- To promote independence, dignity and purpose for older persons
- To enhance the quality of life for older persons
- To encourage older people "To serve, not to be served"

## **Organizational Structure**

To help achieve its mission of addressing the needs and interests of persons 50 and older, AARP is organized into a central headquarters, an office in every state, as well as the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico, and over 2,500 local chapters.

AARP's national headquarters is located in Washington, D.C., allowing staff and volunteer leaders access to the federal government. National headquarters coordinates the activities of the field operations and state offices, and provides support to the chapters, which are separately incorporated groups that provide members with opportunities to come together to volunteer in their own communities.

The Association's state level presence creates and enhances volunteer and community service opportunities; identifies areas of AARP's legislative concern and advocates for positive change; and supports volunteers and staff as they work toward accomplishing the goals and objectives of the Association and its members.

## **AARP's Affiliated Entities**

AARP has two affiliated groups:

### **A. AARP Foundation**

The AARP Foundation is AARP's affiliated charity, its mission is to build a

society in which everyone ages with dignity and purpose. The Foundation leads positive social change to help people 50 and older, especially the most vulnerable, by delivering information, education and direct service to communities and families.

Specific AARP Foundation programs include:

1. A work training program for low-income persons age 55 and over
2. Free tax preparation and counseling for older Americans
3. Improvement to legal hot lines through technical assistance and training
4. Training and assistance for aging advocates in elder law and advocacy
5. Support for housing counselors in their work with older homeowners seeking reverse mortgages

In addition, the Foundation supports AARP Foundation Litigation, a national group that focuses on major litigation benefiting older Americans.

### **B. AARP Services, Inc.**

AARP Services, Inc. (ASI) is a wholly owned subsidiary of AARP. ASI manages a range of products and services made available to AARP members, provides marketing services to AARP and its member service providers, and manages the AARP website.

ASI is also responsible for developing new products and services that reflect the changing needs and interests of AARP members.

Among the programs ASI manages are the following:

1. Medicare supplement
2. Long-term health care
3. Automobile, homeowners and life insurance
4. member discounts and savings on prescription drugs, eye-health services and eyewear products

ASI also oversees discounts on hotels and motels, auto rental, airlines, cruise lines, vacation packages, entertainment products and consumer goods.

### **Financing AARP**

Among the continual challenges facing organizations like AARP is the need to maintain financial stability and to have a steady, reliable income in the face of constant change and growth. For AARP, this income is derived from a number of sources. These include: membership dues; revenue from advertising in AARP's periodical publications; and additional funds from the royalty fees paid by the commercial companies that provide AARP-endorsed services for members, and from fees charged for certain member programs.

Each year as part of its annual report, AARP publishes a consolidated statement of the Association's finances for its members and the public to review.

## **Information and Education**

Members of AARP receive bimonthly magazine. "AARP Magazine" launched in 2002, addresses the needs and concerns of the 50+ population, including the 76 million strong baby boom generation. The magazine covers a broad range of topics, including health, finance and leisure.

Members also receive the "AARP Bulletin," published 11 times a year, and packed with news and practical information. The "Bulletin" carries reports about national and state legislation and programs affecting older persons. An online version featuring daily news and analysis for people 50+ started in 2001.

"Segunda Juventud" is a quarterly Spanish-English newspaper targeting the booming Hispanic community age 50+. AARP produces the newspaper, and "La Opinión," the largest Spanish daily newspaper in the United States, contributes editorial content.

AARP Web site provides online information, services and tools to help people 50+ get the most out of life. AARP's website offers information on a broad range of topics, including AARP's public policies, answers to financial planning questions, guidance on health and wellness, tips for coping with difficult life transitions, as well as opportunities to contact elected government officials, and participate in discussion groups and online courses.

Publications on a variety of subjects such as health and fitness, financial and retirement planning, housing, and more are available free to both members and nonmembers. In addition to consumer education, AARP conducts and publishes research on aging issues and analyzes related national and state policies through its Public Policy Institute. It also researches issues from an international perspective and examines approaches developed by other countries to address the challenges of aging. The results of these studies are used to help draft the Association's public policy positions.

Another invaluable source of information on aging both within and outside of the Association is AARP's Research Information Center, the nation's leading library specializing in social gerontology, and its online database, AgeLine.

AARP also produces "Prime Time Radio," a weekly interview program focusing on the interests of people 40 and over, and "Mature Focus Radio," which offers daily brief discussions on topics of interest to older people. Other broadcast activities include radio features in English and Spanish, educational documentaries and TV video news releases.

## **AARP Advocacy Activities**

One of AARP's goals is to educate and inform opinion leaders and the public at large about the realities and challenges facing an aging America. AARP's mission has always included representing the interests of members and all older Americans. Its advocacy activities help millions of individuals participate in the



nation's legislative, judicial, and administrative processes. AARP represents a diverse population of rich and poor, healthy and frail, workers and retirees. Developing policy for such a diverse group is not easy, but advocacy for their needs and interests is a major reason why millions of people join AARP.

AARP's advocacy activities include monitoring issues affecting older Americans, taking public positions and expressing those views to state and national lawmakers and regulatory agencies. The Association also undertakes selective litigation in age discrimination, pension, health care, economic security and consumer cases.

AARP reviews existing data, conducts its own research and surveys members to gather information on their concerns and views. AARP's Board of Directors is tasked with discussing and balancing these perspectives. They hear from renowned experts, elected leaders, representatives of business and industry, critics and the National Legislative Council, a special advisory body made up of 25 volunteers. The Council makes recommendations to the Board of Directors, which then approves the federal, state and local policies. The policies are published in various forms, including "The Policy Book: AARP Public Policies," and they guide the advocacy efforts of AARP volunteers and staff throughout the year. AARP's top advocacy priorities include important issues such as health, financial security, independence and long-term care and consumer protection.

AARP lead volunteers often appear before the U.S. Congress to testify about a wide array of issues affecting people over 50. They keep daily watch on proposed federal legislation and work hard to keep legislators informed of AARP's views. AARP also participates in coalitions with other national groups to support or oppose specific legislation.

AARP attorneys identify cases whose outcome could have a significant impact on a broad segment of the older population and/or could set important precedents. AARP files amicus briefs and supports third party lawsuits to promote the interests of older persons.

At the state level, AARP trains volunteer members on how to deal with lawmakers and government officials on local issues. These volunteers work closely with state legislators in drafting and promoting legislation to benefit their state's older citizens. The AARP state offices alert members in their states about crucial legislation and help organize public events and letter and telephone campaigns to communicate members' views. AARP encourages all of its members to make lawmakers and policy makers aware of their individual views.

Although AARP is a nonpartisan organization and does not have a political action committee (PAC), endorse political candidates, or contribute money to political parties or candidates' campaigns - it does engage in voter education. In an effort to educate members and the public about issues of concern to older Americans and their families, AARP solicits and publicizes candidates' views on

specific issues so voters can make more informed choices in elections. AARP volunteers in the various states arrange workshops to educate voters on important issues, and candidate forums where voters can question candidates about their positions.

At the international level, AARP works to raise awareness of aging issues through presentations at major international conferences, expert group meetings and sessions of the United Nations. It convenes and participates in issue caucuses, and collaborates with other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), U.N. member states and other specialized agencies to ensure that the concerns of older persons are heard. Through global outreach and exchange, AARP shares its knowledge and expertise and, in turn, learns from the experiences of other countries.

All of these advocacy activities contribute to AARP being perceived as a leading voice for older persons.

### **AARP Programs**

AARP is creating a new integrated approach to achieve ambitious social change goals through the use of media, community outreach, community service, education and advocacy.

#### ***AARP Independent Living/Long-Term Care/End-of-Life Issue***

AARP Independent Living/Long-Term Care/End-of-Life Issues is a large scale, multifaceted effort to improve the way people age by addressing prevention, empowerment, expanded options in services and care settings, and increased tools for financing care and support. The Physical Activity initiative works to increase the number of people making physical activity a daily part of their lives in order to reduce health care costs and prevent onset of disease. The Predatory Lending Campaign is aimed at reducing the incidence of fraud against older homeowners who are targeted by unscrupulous lenders.

In addition, AARP offers a variety of educational and community service programs for AARP members and older persons in general. Most of these programs are conducted by local volunteers who contribute their time and talents to help others improve their lives.

#### ***AARP Driver Safety Program***

The AARP Driver Safety Program is an eight-hour classroom refresher course designed for drivers age 50 and older. It covers rules of the road, defensive driving tips and normal physical changes that accompany aging and ways to compensate for them. Many states offer automobile insurance discounts to those who successfully complete the course.

### ***AARP Tax-Aide***

AARP Tax-Aide is a free tax counseling and preparation service for all taxpayers with middle and low incomes, with special attention to those age 60 and older. Each year, from February 1 through April 15, trained and certified volunteers serve over 1.7 million taxpayers at 9,000 sites nationwide. This program is administered through the AARP Foundation.

### ***AARP SCSEP***

AARP SCSEP (Senior Community Service Employment Program) is a work-training program for low-income persons age 55 and older. Those who qualify receive paid, temporary assignments where they develop the skills, experience and confidence to find a permanent, unsubsidized job. This program is also administered through the AARP Foundation.

### ***Volunteering***

Some people say that one secret of AARP's success is the thousands of members who volunteer their time, experience and enthusiasm on behalf of others, in keeping with the Association's motto: "To serve, not to be served." It is the Association's volunteer leaders who set policy, advocate and carry out community service programs at the national, regional, state, and local levels. While supported in these endeavors by the Association's paid staff, it is the members themselves who energize AARP's advocacy and activities.

AARP provides its volunteers with orientation, training and informational updates appropriate to their role and consistent with the vision, mission, and goals of the Association. Volunteer training and development opportunities address specific needs that help volunteers carry out AARP strategic priorities. Topic areas include building expertise on specific issues important to AARP members and their communities; leadership skills; organizing for effective community service; legislative, regulatory, and governmental advocacy and voter education; becoming an AARP media spokesperson; and delivering training and education to other volunteers, to name a few. AARP supports volunteer learning through self-study materials, volunteer and/or staff facilitated sessions, AARP publications, consultation, and increasingly through the use of the Internet. Our local and national training and development efforts enable volunteers to meet their responsibilities, better utilize their skills and expertise and reach their potential for service, while enjoying an opportunity for lifelong learning.

In the wake of the events of September 11, 2001, AARP initiated a call for a National Day of Service to honor those who were lost. Eight national organizations partnered with AARP to provide its members volunteer opportunities beyond AARP's existing programs. In addition, countless smaller organizations across the country offered hands-on opportunities for community service. The new annual

campaign encourages members, as well as AARP staff and others, to renew and strengthen the American tradition of helping others through volunteering.

People volunteer for many reasons. Some people may want to learn a new skill; others want to make new friends or contribute their time and talents to improving the well-being of others or society in general. Many people enjoy a sense of accomplishment and making a difference in the lives of others through their volunteer activities. Research indicates that people who participate in their communities through activities like volunteering may lead healthier, happier, and longer lives. AARP encourages all citizens, including older persons, to consider volunteering in their communities.

### ***Member Services and Discounts***

From the beginning, AARP has responded to its members' needs through the provision of services created especially for them that might otherwise not exist or be conveniently available with comparable quality, service and value.

The first such service for AARP members was the Association's historic group health insurance plan. This was followed by the establishment of a mail-order pharmacy service and the subsequent development of additional services. Today, AARP members can also take advantage of:

- Automobile and homeowners insurance
- Life insurance
- Long-term health care insurance
- Extensive Travel discounts and programs
- Eye health services
- Investment program
- Credit card services
- Motoring plan
- Legal services network

While some member services, such as the insurance programs, are only available within the US, many of the goods and services offered are also available internationally.

AARP, through AARP Services, Inc. (ASI), strives to make available products and services that do not duplicate those already in existence, but instead fill the gaps left uncovered by commercial providers or to provide features that are specifically designed for the older consumer. Although the services AARP makes available to its members are generally provided by outside vendors, ASI continually monitors all aspects of each service's operation to make sure the provider is meeting the Association's stringent standards for quality and service. Members know that, in their dealings with any of the Association's selected service providers, ASI acts to see that complaints are adequately and quickly addressed.

## **Working with Other Organizations**

AARP cooperates regularly with organizations that share similar concerns and goals. This takes many forms. AARP provides funds to cosponsor research, works with other associations to organize seminars and conferences, forms coalitions with other groups to advocate legislative action at local, state, and national levels, and also undertakes other nonlegislative advocacy activities.

## **International Outreach Programs**

AARP has been active internationally since its founding, serving as a premier international source of information, exchange, and advocacy on issues affecting older persons worldwide. This is accomplished through global outreach and exchange, worldwide partnership and coalition building, expert knowledge and data source development, and international advocacy.

As part of its educational outreach, AARP's Global Aging Program assists in the continuing campaign to remove negative stereotypes about persons in countries where these exist; to get aging issues on the agenda of appropriate national and regional conferences and meetings; and to find ways to engage governments and the media in this effort. Global campaigns have emphasized human rights from the perspective of older persons, and the contributions of older volunteers.

With consultative status as a nongovernmental organization (NGO) at the UN Economic and Social Council, AARP is able to submit statements and make recommendations to ensure that the concerns of older persons are addressed in major initiatives and official documents. AARP was a founding member of GINA, a Geneva-based organization composed of representatives of the World Health Organization, the city of Geneva, NGOs, and other UN agencies with international activities related to aging. AARP works with many organizations, including AGE, the new European Union commission created to further dialogue and policy formation on an E.U.-wide basis.

AARP presents papers and conducts workshops at international conferences and meetings, collaborating with other organizations to provide technical assistance and share information about best practices. It offers seminars on AARP's expertise in grassroots advocacy and working with volunteers. It conducts and disseminates research on global aging issues and convenes and participates in policy forums with leaders in government, business, nonprofits, and others. Through participation in the international social and economic policy debates, AARP assists in developing a global response to the challenges of an aging population.

As the older population continues to increase in countries around the world, more and more governments, organizations, and individuals are seeking ways to enhance older persons' contributions to society. AARP welcomes inquiries and opportunities to exchange information with those who share these concerns.

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization for people 50 and



over. We provide information and resources; advocate on legislative, consumer and legal issues; assist members to serve their communities; and offer a wide range of unique benefits, special products and services for our members. These benefits include AARP website at <http://www.aarp.org>, the bimonthly "AARP Magazine," the monthly "AARP Bulletin" and "Segunda Juventud." Active in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP celebrates the attitude that age is just a number and life is what you make it.

*--[http://www.aarp.org/about\\_aarp/aarp\\_overview/a2003-01-13-aarphistory.html](http://www.aarp.org/about_aarp/aarp_overview/a2003-01-13-aarphistory.html)*

**BLACKSBURG AARP CHAPTER #2613  
LIST OF PRESIDENTS**

*Chartered and incorporated on June 29, 1976*

<b>Year</b>	<b>President</b>
1976	Denver D. Bragg
1977	Edward P. Ellison
1978	H. Wm. Abbott
1979	Edward W. Mundie
1980	Thomas Larner
1981	Wesley P. Judkins
1982	William Hoy
1983	Seymour Kalison
1984	Jean Davis
1985	Albert Sturm
1986	Albert Beecher
1987	Herbert Buhrow
1988	Esther Martin
1989	Mildred Beecher
1990	James E. Roberts, Sr.
1991	Mary Tom Long
1992	John R. Coiner (Robbie)
1993	Bob Blanton
1994	Ray Murley
1995	Lenna Moore
1996	Jim Owen
1997	Kennith H. Martin
1998	Dale Oliver
1999	Bill Keeney
2000	June Schmidt
2001	Darrel Clowes
2002	R. B. Crawford (Ben)
2003	Pat Palmer (1 month) Brian Allen (11 months)
2004	Brian Allen
2005 -2006	Carl McDaniels (2 years)

**MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in 1976 was reported at 70 members. There has been a steady increase in membership over the past 30 years with 314 members at the end of 2005.

The goal for 2006 is 350 members!



**MEMBER DUES**

Likewise, member dues which started out at \$1.00 annually in 1976, have risen to \$10.00 for an individual and \$15.00 for a couple in 2006.

Life Memberships were introduced in 2006 at \$100.00. There are six Life Members.

## ASSOCIATION FOR RETIRED PERSONS

Meeting: March 16, 1993



*"A Bike Ride Through Germany" - a slide show by Emily and Bob Stuart and Virle Payne" presented during the "Blizzard of 93"*

A prayer can have beautiful language - but if it doesn't reflect our deepest thoughts and feelings, it may not get off the ground.

You may recall the King's prayer in Shakespeare's Hamlet, where he said:  
"My words fly up; my thoughts remain below  
Words without thoughts never to Heaven go."

### **Let us pray:**

Thou who are Lord of Nature as well as religion,  
Who can reveal thy power and unpredictability (as well as our human limitations)  
through the unusual depth of snow;

Thou who at the same time can bring us together to share the pleasure and  
adventure of riding bicycles along the Danube;

Thou who unites us all in communion with brown bag lunches and coffee:

We are grateful for many things - not least of which is an organization like AARP,  
That still believes in the appropriateness of public prayer.  
We are grateful too for the quality of life as well as its length,  
And for friends who care and can be depended upon.

Help us, we pray, to use our remaining years  
To reflect upon the spiritual realities of it all;  
To better appreciate the traditional values of freedom and responsibility;  
And to be better able to interpret them for those coming along;  
To accept the inevitability of change,  
And the responsibility for any part we ourselves may have played in difficulties  
our nation now faces.

Book: A Community At Prayer, Page 147

Author: Alfred C. Payne

Publisher: Pocahontas Press 1993

Reprinted by personal permission of Al Payne's wife, Virle Payne