

Serving the greater New River Valley, Virginia

May 17 Chapter Meeting

How Safe are Senior Drivers? Answers from Naturalistic Research

[rescheduled from January]

Dr. Jon Antin from the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute will join us to share some of the groundbreaking research currently being conducted by the Center for Vulnerable Road Users Safety at VTTI. Jon is Director of the center, which focuses its research and outreach not just on seniors, but also teens, bicyclists, and pedestrians.



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

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

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

President's Column by Don Creamer

After 40 years, have we matured yet?

May is named after the Greek goddess, Maia, who is identified with the Roman goddess Bona Deam, goddess of fertility.

May is International Respect for Chickens month. :)

Mother's Day occurs in May in the U.S. and in 1870 Julia Howe wrote the first Mother's Day proclamation asking women everywhere to join for world peace.

The month of May also contains the day of my birth. I will reach a milestone of sorts: 80 years old. I am pleased about having lived this long and look forward to 90 and beyond, having lived well, productively, and joyfully.

What can our chapter do to encourage and facilitate all in our community to live life fully?

Is our chapter doing all that it can do to make our community vibrant? We certainly have made some inroads on this pathway toward vibrancy through community events such as the Health and Wellness Fair, the LivingWell@50+ conference, our involvement in the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech, and the Dr. Bill Thomas performance last month. These are very good examples of actions our chapter can take. Should we do more?

Here is a possibility. Just prior to the writing of this column, I was contacted by our colleague, Tina King with the NRV Agency on Aging, to determine if I might help with the spread of the **New River Valley Time-bank network**. My initial reaction was positive; that is, I would like to help, but my time is limited by previous commitments. Then, it occurred to me that this may be

Upcoming Events

June 17: annual picnic

Sept. 14: Health/Wellness Fair

40th Anniversary Picnic

The AARP Blacksburg Chapter will celebrate 40 years of continuous leadership and service to the NRV community on June 17.

Date and time: Friday, June 17, 5:00–8:00 pm.

Social time 5:00–6:00; Panjammers provide music at 6:00.

Location: Farm home of Terry Wildman and Sue Magliaro, 3335 Elk Creek Drive, Christiansburg (6 miles outside of Christiansburg); phone: 540.320.5599

Food: chicken BBQ + sandwiches from Jimmy John's. Bring an appetizer, side dish, or dessert to share.

RSVP: on paper at the May 17 meeting; or at <http://tinyurl.com/j4uexdd>; or 540.951.4968

Directions and more information in the June newsletter.



Blacksburg Chapter #2613

Chapter meetings are the third Tuesday of each month, except July and August, at the Blacksburg Community Center, Patrick Henry Drive at 11:30 am. Board meetings are the first Tuesday of each month at the Blacksburg Community Center at 10:00 am.

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

Ben Crawford: NRV "Leading Light"



Ben Crawford has been recognized as a New River Valley "Leading Light" for his extensive volunteer work. The honor celebrates strong community involvement, proven leadership, demonstrated lifestyle of dedicated, continuous longterm involvement in the community, and creativity in initiating and implementing projects that lead to a better quality of life.

Ben embodies the spirit of volunteerism, contributing generously and widely to a variety of organizations. In the NRV, Ben is one of the founders of the Community Foundation of New River Valley and the co-founder of Kiwanis Blacksburg. He has served in numerous leadership roles, including Executive Director of Ruritan National, President of the Association of Virginia Ruritans, and President of the Ruritan Club. He has volunteered with the American Red Cross, Appalachian Regional Commission, Blacksburg Housing Board, National 4-H, RSVP, Soup for Seniors, and the YMCA at Virginia Tech.

In the AARP Blacksburg Chapter, Ben has been president, is currently vice-president, and will be president again in 2017. At the state level, he has served on the policy board and the Executive Council. He received the AARP Blacksburg Chapter Award for Community Spirit in 2005 and for Community Service in 2007. He received the statewide AARP Ethel Andrus Award for Community Service in 2007.

His entire life has been one of service. Ben served in the Korean War. After graduation from Concord College, he became District Executive of the Blue Ridge Council of the Boy Scouts of America and worked for Concord College in their Center for Economic Action. Later, he worked for the Governor of West Virginia as Director of State Planning and Resource Development. Ben earned a Master of Science degree from Virginia Tech in 1964 and was employed by West Virginia University as an assistant professor of management. In the early 1970s, he became the Director of the National 4-H Center in Washington DC. He assumed the Chief Executive Officer position of Ruritan National in 1983. Ben joined Virginia Tech in 1993 in the role of faculty member in the Institute for Leadership and Volunteer Development. He retired in 1995.

This review of his volunteer work represents highlights of a lifetime of service and achievement. As Don Creamer says, "All of us are able to live richer lives because Ben cared enough, invested enough of himself, and exercised sufficient leadership through his volunteer activities to make the world more responsive to human needs."

Dr. Bill Thomas Wants to "Disrupt Aging"

by Don Creamer and Pat Hyer

Childhood and adulthood are well-known labels for stages of life. Dr. Bill Thomas—author, entrepreneur, musician, teacher, farmer and physician—believes that elderhood is a third life phase that gets little or no attention or respect in American culture. While adulthood is all about "doing" (caring for family, endless to-do lists, intense focus on work), elderhood puts more weight on "being"—nurturing relationships, savoring moments of beauty, joy, and connection, learning something new to satisfy a curiosity or for sheer enjoyment, and sharing wisdom. Not all older adults "graduate" to elderhood since the culture sends a powerful message that those who "still" perform like adults ("still" running marathons at 76, "still" driving at 92, "still" working at 80, and so on) are the ideal model of aging.



Dr. Bill Thomas presents his vision for elderhood in Blacksburg

Dr. Thomas addressed an audience of more than 250 on Saturday, April 23, at a lecture hosted by AARP Blacksburg Chapter and the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech, with additional support from other community partners. Best known for his health care system innovations, Thomas is the founder of a global non-profit, The Eden Alternative, which works to improve the care provided to older people. Through books, talks, and performance, he pursues a passionate mission to transform the treatment of vulnerable elders and increase the options for all to live an enriched rather than diminished elderhood. Thomas challenged the audience to question their own stereotypes about aging as a period of loss and decline and to become part of a counterculture to change society's views on the subject.

A luncheon following the main event allowed leaders in the community, university, and state organizations to engage in lively discussion about what is currently underway in the New River Valley consistent with Dr. Thomas's vision for elderhood. There is much to build on: The Aging in Place Action Plan, a co-housing model for seniors in Abingdon, an about-to-be launched Timebank for sharing services, project funding for home improvements so Giles County seniors can stay in their homes and community as they age, and the renovation and repurposing of Prices' Fork Elementary School, to name just a few.



Scenes from the Bill Thomas event

Left: Tom Sellinger, Sally Anna Stapleton, and Shirley Peterson work the AARP table

Right: table displays

Below right: Pat Hyer enjoys a light moment

Photos on these pages by Peter Magolda



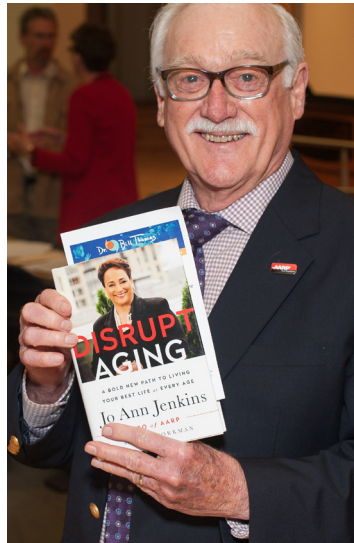
(President's Column continued)

an opportunity for the entire chapter to become engaged in helping with the widespread use of the new Timebank and, consequently, to enrich our lives.

Timebank is a neighbor-to-neighbor network to share skills and services. It is based on reciprocity: those who give also receive, those who receive also give--all depending on needs and talents. For more information, see <http://52.32.67.219>, email nrvtimebank@gmail.com, or phone 540.251.4345.

Representatives from the Timebank initiative—including Ellen Stewart, Elisabeth Willis, and Shelley Fortier—visited our May Board meeting to help us learn more about possibilities for chapter involvement. Members of the Board reacted positively; however, we will wait until the June Board meeting to consider official action.

Dr. Bill Thomas' presentation on April 23 was a smashing hit! You can read more about the event on page 2, but I want say that it was a great privilege to meet him in person. He was charming and engaging with every person he contacted. But it is not just charm that attracts one to him. He also is an author, farmer, entrepreneur, performer, musician, and an international authority on geriatric medicine and eldercare. And, by the way, he is a fantastic presenter. He held an audience of 200+ in rapt attention for 90 minutes on April 23 during an event sponsored by your chapter and the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech. Following his presentation, he met for for lunch for more than an hour with representatives of many exciting initiatives in the New River Valley. He learned a lot about us, but he inspired us to do more. (This spark within me to do more in concert with our organization partners in the NRV is a direct result of being with Dr. Thomas for about three hours.)



Don Creamer, President of the AARP Blacksburg Chapter, shows a new book by Jo Ann Jenkins, CEO of AARP

As a part of our concern for chapter impact on its members and its community, we are in very early stages of launching a **social media campaign**. Details of exactly what the nature of this campaign will be are vague at the moment since a new Standing Committee of the Board has just been created and they are carefully crafting the shape and scope of the service. This committee is composed of Peter

Magolda, Wendy Baldwin, and Wanda Smith. I only can say at this point that we hope to strengthen our own communities within the chapter, promote community interest in our chapter, and inform social network members of sources of knowledge associated with our chapter goals.

Make preparations for the **June picnic** to be held on June 17 from 5:00–8:00 pm at the home of Terry and Sue Wildman. **We will celebrate our 40th anniversary as a chapter** and will enjoy food, drink, conversation, and music by the Pan-jammers.

Be sure to be there. Bring a friend or two. Look for more information in the June newsletter.

Meet Board Member, Ryan Martin

Ryan Martin still has a decade or so before he can qualify by age for membership in AARP, but he is already contributing to the organization as an engaged member of the board. He brings to AARP his leadership experience and community connections from serving as Executive Director of the YMCA at Virginia Tech as well as in local and regional nonprofit organizations.



Ryan grew up in Roanoke and went to Virginia Tech. His professional background is in higher education, alumni affairs, marketing, and fundraising. After graduation, he worked in the Office of Annual Giving at Virginia Tech. He was recruited by Old Dominion to become their Director of Annual Giving and then by Eastern Virginia Medical School to rebuild their development program. He returned to Blacksburg

and was hired as Executive Director of the YMCA in 2013.

Through the YMCA, Ryan likes having an impact on the community every day. The VT YMCA runs a Thrift Shop and Community Gardens, offers numerous community classes and international programs, and provides volunteer and leadership opportunities for Virginia Tech students and others. Ryan likes to engage Virginia Tech students in the community as volunteers. As they learn how to give back to the community, they experience the New River Valley as a home away from home.

In addition to serving on the AARP board, Ryan is on the Program Committee of the Lifelong Learning Institute. He works with Downtown Blacksburg Incorporated, the Blacksburg Partnership, and NRV Leading Lights. He has also served on the boards of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Virginia and the Hampton Roads March of Dimes.

Volunteer service and his YMCA position require more than a full-time commitment of time, but when he can, Ryan likes outdoor activities including high ropes courses and ziplining.

Ryan admires AARP for leveraging the rights of seniors, helping the world listen to the voices of older citizens, and meeting needs of this population. He would like to help educate the people of his own generation, now advancing to their retirement futures, to understand what AARP does and how important it is to continue to have a voice in the world.

For now, our chapter is benefiting from Ryan's strategic planning ability and his understanding of how organizations work in partnership with one another to make their communities responsive to needs and opportunities. Thank you, Ryan, and welcome to this chapter.



Tax-Aide Program Serves 1,235 Clients with 25 Volunteers

The 2015 tax filing season has come to an end, and your AARP Tax-Aide site was very busy completing tax returns and offering assistance to seniors and low-income residents in the New River Valley. The volunteers meet with clients in the Senior Room of the Christiansburg Rec Center.

Here are some of the stats for this year:

25—total volunteers doing tax counseling and greeting clients

1,235—total clients

977—federal and state returns prepared

25—amended returns

316—question and answer

29% of our clients were new this year.

62.3 was the average age (range was 17 to 112 years of age).

54% were single

40% were joint returns

2% were married filing separately

5% were Head of Household



Pat Ballard
AARP Tax-Aide Program
Coordinator

Thanks to Pat Ballard, Tax-Aide Program Coordinator, and the volunteers who contributed hundreds of hours to the program. This service is a meaningful gift to the community.

The AARP Tax-Aide Program is always in need of volunteers to help prepare tax returns. If you (or someone you know) would be interested in learning more about this program, please contact Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu, or 382.1189.

40th anniversary 2016



1. General Assembly Scorecard: Bills introduced—2352; bills passed—889; remaining bills were either deferred until next year (242) or rejected by either House or Senate or both (1221). A number of experts evaluating these results consider these outcomes acceptable performance as several major bills were approved with a great deal of give-and-take by representatives from different interest groups. Are you aware of the role your representatives played in this effort?

2. SW Virginia Legislator's Scorecard (includes our Representatives): Our Regional Chamber of Commerce believes this session showed a new degree of unity and political clout by the SW Virginia participants. Some examples of this: bond money for the expansion of the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute; rejecting the budget request to study closing the Catawba Hospital; a significant investment in public education at all levels without increasing taxes; and bringing a major new car parts manufacturer to Botetourt County.

3. Now some bad news! Lack of transparency in some of the General Assembly decisions. This year 834 bills “died” with no one recorded as being for or against. This was an increase over last year. Faith in our democratic institutions is based on truth and openness. One Virginia organization—Transparency Virginia—is closely monitoring this and urging the Assembly to make major changes in their procedures. You can help by asking your representatives to explain this.

4. Elderly Financial Abuse. It's happening as well to professionals, managers, executives, and their families—primarily in unauthorized trading in stocks, high fees, inappropriate investment advice, and breach of fiduciary duties. The Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC) has an extensive library to help us do “due diligence” on such matters (www.sec.gov/investor). In addition, they have a financial ombudsman who takes complaints on suspected financial fraud (202.551.3330). Their current caseload is high so they are not always able to offer an immediate response. In such cases contact a local attorney.



Alison Galway and Val Coluni report on legislation and advocacy for the Blacksburg AARP chapter.

Alison's photo by Rick Griffiths, VT photo library
Val's picture by Peter Magolda



Mark your calendar *now* for the **AARP Blacksburg-VCOM Health and Wellness Fair**, Wednesday September 14, 2016! We are having a great time organizing this very special event for all of us to learn about new services, fun facts, and a myriad of ways to stay connected in our community.

The Christiansburg Recreation Center is offering a great space for all the health happenings. We'll continue all the great medical services from the VCOM students and faculty, and we'll also have everything from hearing, vision, vein, to skin screenings. One of our Gold Sponsors, Lewis Gale Hospital Montgomery, will provide blood sugar screenings, PT/OT screenings and education, and along with several other sponsors, free flu shots.

We also welcome Warm Hearth Village as another Gold Sponsor. Come and learn all about the multiple housing options available in the beautiful woodland setting. But, not only housing—come to hear about their **Warm Hearth at Home** program and many educational and community events held on their campus. We love attending Lifelong Learning Institute classes at the new Village Center at Warm Hearth.

Not only will we learn about physical health care and housing at the Fair, there will be a fun center for mindfulness. Try out the Brain Games and adult coloring books (very therapeutic), and stay connected to the community by visiting the Volunteer Booth. Learn about the numerous organizations that have volunteer opportunities for every interest and talent. Enjoy a healthy smoothie served by RU Nursing students, and sign up on the spot for your new volunteer adventure. Then work off those smoothie calories at the different exercise demos—have you ever done Qi Gong or Zumba???

Watch the newsletter for more highlights of the Health Fair! Questions or suggestions? Contact Wendy Baldwin, wendybburg@gmail.com, 646.352.3936; Angela Little, anglitt33@gmail.com, 540.808.8007; or Jennie Reilly, jenmik@vt.edu, 650.230.5565.

Chapter Officers 2016

President • Don Creamer, dgc2@vt.edu
Vice President • Ben Crawford, ben.crawford@vt.edu
Secretary • Sally Anna Stapleton, sanna418@gmail.com
Treasurer • Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu

Board of Directors

• 2016—Tom Alston, Tina King, Sally Anna Stapleton
• 2017—Pat Hyer, Jerry Niles, Shirley Peterson
• 2018—Wendy Baldwin, Ryan Martin, Ray Van Dyke

Visit Your AARP Chapter Website at www.blacksburgaarp.org



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 **Member Application for 2016**

Name: _____

Spouse/Partner: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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

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

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

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

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

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