



Jan. 15 Chapter Meeting

Are genetic technologies changing what it means to be human? *by Rebecca Hester*

Advances in genetic technologies, especially synthetic biology, promise such things as eternal life, “super-intelligence,” and designer babies, but can and do they deliver on their promises? More importantly, should they?

This talk will introduce some of the most cutting-edge genetic technologies being undertaken in the United States and will explore the ethics, politics, and economics of pursuing them.

The presentation will give participants a better sense of the ways in which “life itself” is being altered and for what/whose purposes. It will also provide information on ideas regarding what it means to be human and what is the purpose of healthcare are changing in the “biotech century.”



Rebecca Hester is Assistant Professor of Science, Technology, and Society at Virginia Tech.

November Pet Food Drive Results

At our first pet food drive at our November meeting, we collected 60 bags of pet food, several bags of litter, and \$150 in cash. Drivers for Meals on Wheels will distribute the food. Shannon Hammond of the Agency on Aging told us that some homebound seniors are feeding their own meals to their pets because they cannot afford pet food. We can help solve the problem.

The picture at the top of this page shows members with the food they donated.

President’s Column *by Jerry Niles*

A thank-you note to AARP Blacksburg

Happy New year! I hope that this New Year will be filled with opportunities for you to continue to age successfully and that your local AARP Chapter can be an important resource for you in that process. One of the first tasks for my new year is to write my first president’s column for the Newsletter. Doing something for the first time always seems to be challenging. Thus, I thought I would start with something easy. I would like to frame this column as a thank-you note to the AARP Chapter of Blacksburg. I expressed some of my appreciation for the gifts that have come to me from my membership in the Chapter in my closing remarks at our Holiday Luncheon in December, and I would like to expand and specify those remarks more completely in this column.



As I moved from my work life into my retirement life, it became clear to me that I needed to find new sources of meaningfulness in my life. Replacing the meaningfulness that is represented in one’s life work is no small task. Some people plan well and have a sensible path laid out, others not so much. I was not sure what that path would be for me, but I was confident I would find it. I must confess though that I had underestimated how big the task would be to replace the meaningfulness that came from my work. I did have three principles that created a framework to guide my search. I had to be able to do what I wanted, when I wanted, and how much I wanted. Second, I wanted to be able to use my skill set but continue to learn new things. Third, I wanted to do things that would serve the needs of others when possible. Armed with these principles my retirement years so far have been a rich exploration of the unknown and brought me new experiences that I never could have anticipated. AARP Blacksburg has been a big part of that journey.

Upcoming Events

- Jan. 8, LLI registration begins
- Feb. 2, Tax-Aide program begins
- Feb. 19, AARP program, Dancing bees bioindicate habitats’ ability to feed pollinators

Bring your plastic bags to the Community Center for recycling

When you come to the AARP meeting Jan. 15, bring your plastic bags to deposit in the bin by the door. Plastic may include shopping and mailing bags, sleeves for magazines, food packaging (bread, carrots, deli items). The bags should be clean. Remove paper from them.

Pay your dues online or on paper

If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2019, you can use the form on the last page of this newsletter and mail in a check.

OR, you can go online to blacksburgaarp.org/

There you can either download a form to mail in with your check or you can pay with a credit card.

Local dues are only \$15 for an individual or household. You need to be a member of the national organization to belong to the local chapter.

Go here to join national: www.aarp.org/membership/

Holiday Luncheon and Awards 2018

Photos by Peter Magolda more at adlogam.smugmug.com/Organizations/AARP/n-49pk5B/

Pat Hyer receives statewide Andrus Award for Community Service

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



Pat Hyer with Jerry Niles, who drafted the nomination

others creative and dynamic ways of working collaboratively to enact change. Pat Hyer is the quintessential engaged citizen and, for many, the mentor who showed them the way.



Pat Hyer (center) is the 5th member of the Blacksburg Chapter to receive the statewide Andrus Award. Other recipients (L-R) include Virgil Cook (2015), Ben Crawford (2007), and Don Creamer (2016). Carl McDaniels (not pictured) also won the award. Brian Jacks, Associate Director of AARP for SW Virginia, joins them (pictured on the right).



Coreen Mett receives the Community Spirit Award for serving as treasurer of the Radford Association of Retired Employees, maintaining the list of donors at the Christmas Store, helping refugee families with their tax returns in the Tax-Aide program, and serving as statewide counselor, instructor, and technology coordinator in the Tax-Aide program.



Jennie Reilly receives the Chapter Service Award for coordinating the 2018 Health and Wellness Fair, including working with more than 100 volunteers and community partners. They recruited 140 presenters, attracted 430 visitors, and managed logistics. Proceeds of \$6,739 will support charitable giving over the next two years.

President's Message, continued

When I joined AARP Blacksburg five years ago, it was not because of some specific need I had to become part of an organization or that it was compatible with the guiding principles for my retirement. Rather it was in response to an invitation from a couple of members who were deeply involved in the leadership of the chapter and nurturing the development of the membership and the engagement of the chapter in issues that were relevant to the lives of seniors in the New River Valley. Concurrently, I happened to be working with a group of folks who were conceptualizing the formation of a lifelong learning institute in our community. Not surprisingly, we found many elements of mutual interest and benefit and were able to forge a partnership between the Blacksburg Chapter and the emerging Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech around the theme of living well, 50+. These two complementary adventures have enriched my retirement years in surprising ways. In fact, lately I have come to the conclusion that one of the most pleasant surprises of my retirement has been my participation in the AARP Blacksburg Chapter. As I have thought about why this has been such a pleasant surprise, I have become aware of just how much the chapter has given to me over these five years. My reflections on these gifts is what gives rise to my need to write this thank-you note.

One of the dimensions I underestimated from my work life to retirement life was how much different social contact would be. The broad social networks that are embedded in work life change drastically when one is retired. Often, you hear retirees report, "Well, I don't miss work as much as I miss the people." Thus, my first thank you to AARP Blacksburg is for providing the opportunity to be part of a community made up of so many wonderful people. Some of you I have known for years and haven't seen for a while. It is great to get to reconnect and think about good times gone by and to learn about the new and exciting things you are doing in your lives. Next, there are the new folks one gets to meet at each chapter meeting and the new friendships that are forged out of conversations at the meeting or collaboration on service projects. You learn interesting things about their lives and how they are finding meaning in their retirement years. You see numerous models of successful aging that you file away for future reflection and think, "Isn't it amazing what so and so is doing." It gives you inspiration when you see chapter members from up and down the age spectrum attend meetings, ask great questions, say hello or just share a comfortable smile. All of that human connection contributes to the meaningfulness in one's life on many levels.

As I reflect upon what happens in monthly meetings, I began to identify many "small things" that added up to bigger feelings of social connectedness that affected me in positive ways. Let me share a few of those that are most salient for me. (I would love to hear some that mean the most to you as well.)

- When I walk through the door of the Community Room, being greeted by Jim Whiteman's engaging smile and being handed my nametag for the day (which I never would remember if I had to bring it to each meeting).

- Being inspired by Sandy Birch's invocations that remind me in such a remarkable way of the meaningfulness of the human condition and my place in it.
- Being able to relish and consume one of Thais Beams' fresh Carol Lee Donuts without feelings of guilt.
- Watching someone win \$23 in a 50/50 drawing who has never won anything in a drawing in her or his life.
- Participating in one of Sally Anna Stapleton's creative food drives to support mothers or seniors with pets.
- Listening to programs that keep me informed on relevant issues in my life like staying safe online and how to age in place successfully.
- Viewing the incredible photos taken by Peter Magolda that capture the spirit of community and positive attitudes toward aging successfully that are reflected in the faces of chapter members during our meetings and events.

In addition to the good feelings about successful aging that come from the monthly meetings, I have appreciated the numerous opportunities in the Blacksburg Chapter service portfolio to work collaboratively with members on projects that are focused on supporting others in the community in their efforts to age successfully. It has been good fun trying to problem solve ways for our chapter to be a relevant voice and resource in our community for individuals 50+. These smaller project-focused meetings are filled with laughter, goodwill, and a collective need to do something constructive for the common good.

Blacksburg AARP is truly a special Chapter. I hear that all the time and I am now beginning to understand why. If you look back over the 40+ years of history of the chapter, you can see the impact of the effective leadership and engaged membership. In a time when some chapters in the state are challenged by decreasing membership, the Blacksburg Chapter is optimistically planning for its future. With the terrific support we receive from the state AARP led by Jim Dau and regionally from our good friend and supporter Brian Jacks, Blacksburg AARP is confident as it seeks new challenges in its pursuit of supporting successful aging of its members as well as others in our community who are 50+.

My goal for this year is to work with the Board and the membership to continue the tradition of the chapter for responsive leadership in which we continue to pursue opportunities to serve our community, learn something new, and support efforts to engender the successful aging for ourselves and others. I invite new and returning members to let me know what they like about the chapter and how it meets your needs. At the same time, if you have ideas about how we might add new features or change others to meet your needs, please bring those forward. Finally, if there are ways you would like to engage in chapter activities, let me or other Board members know. One of the things that you can count on is that the AARP Blacksburg will help you do what you want, how much you want and when you want to do it as you pursue your goal for successful aging.

Chapter Highlights 2018

Recognition

Pat Hyer was awarded the top honor for AARP Virginia, the Ethel Percy Andrus award, at the 2018 All Volunteer Assembly. This award recognized Pat's broad and deep commitment to AARP issues and programs.

Member Services and Communication

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

Published 9 chapter newsletters (thanks to Carolyn Rude and Sandra Griffith for editing and to Judith and Roy Jones for preparing the newsletter for mailing)

Maintained 13 active committees, reporting at monthly board meetings

Maintained a chapter website with up-to-date information about the chapter and chapter activities (thanks to Don Creamer, Peter Magolda, and Lisa Moose)

Established a credit card payment system for payment of health fair participants (thanks to Don Creamer and Lisa Moose)

Co-hosted (with LLI) a fundraising event at Whitebarrel Winery

Co-hosted (with LLI) a friend-raising event, Bluegrass and Barbecue

Provided hospitality at each public event (thanks to Thais Beams)

Developed an album of photos from chapter events (thanks to Peter Magolda)

Community Partnerships

Maintained and developed robust partnerships: AARP Virginia, VCOM, NRV Agency on Aging, Lifelong Learning Institute at VT, Center for Gerontology at VT, VT Retirees Association, Community Foundation of the NRV, Blacksburg TimeBank, Blacksburg Community Center, Christiansburg Recreation Center, Montgomery County Christmas Store, Micah's Soup for Seniors, Retired Senior Volunteer Program

Community Support

Led the biennial AARP/VCOM Health and Wellness Fair, with VCOM and the Christiansburg Recreation Center; engaged 140 exhibitors and provided services and information to over 430 visitors. (Thanks to Jennie Reilly and others, \$6,739 in proceeds will support charitable giving over the next two years.)

Served 1,326 clients through the Tax-Aide program (thanks to Pat Ballard and a dozen AARP volunteers)

Collected more than 1,000 bags of food for the Blacksburg/Christiansburg pantries. Launched a food drive for Mother's Day and a November pet food drive to help seniors be able to feed and keep their pets (thanks to Sally Anna Stapleton)

Contributed to charitable organizations that serve seniors in the NRV, including the Warm Hearth Foundation fundraiser—Cheeseburger in Parrot-dise, Blacksburg's Leading Lights, and GiveBig NRV.

Initiated "Arts Across the Generations" to highlight artistic work in the NRV including seniors and made \$500 in awards (thanks to Wendy Baldwin and Peter Magolda)

Exhibited at Blacksburg's annual Steppin' Out festival

Education, Citizenship Support

Partnered with the Lifelong Learning Institute to present an LLI special event with the Aging in Place Task Force

Presented an orientation class on the TimeBank program

Participated in state AARP Virginia Advocacy, Legislative, and Volunteer meetings

Supported OneVirginia2021 (nonpartisan redistricting effort)

Tracked Virginia and National legislative initiatives related to AARP objectives; reported findings at chapter board meetings, and published in chapter newsletters and website (thanks to Val Coluni)

Met with Congressman Morgan Griffith, Delegates Joseph Yost and Chris Hurst, Senator John Edwards, and staff members of Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine

The AARP Tax-Aide program

The 2019 tax-aid program begins February 2 and ends April 15. The location is the Christiansburg Recreation Center (Senior Activity Room). If you need help with your taxes, please call to schedule an appointment: 382-2349.

Counselors will be available for preparing taxes:

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

9:00 am – noon, Saturday

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

Grants to Community Partners

At the holiday luncheon, AARP-Blacksburg presented a total of \$3,000 to charitable organization in the New River Valley that provide services for seniors. Funds to support this giving come from proceeds of the Health and Wellness Fair.

Representatives of the organization are pictured L-R:

Ellen Stewart, NRV Time Bank; Joy Herbert, Blacksburg Community Center—Senior Center; Tina King, Agency on Aging; Jessica Wirgau, Community Foundation of the NRV, Blacksburg Senior Center Endowment Fund; Dianne Krallman, Soup for Seniors (St. Michael Lutheran Church); Mandy Hayes, RSVP Supplies for Seniors; Brad Epperly, Christiansburg Community Center Senior Programs; Norma Cox and Lisa Holland, Montgomery County Christmas Store—Seniors



1. Loans through a Confession of Judgment. A GOOD DEAL OR A SHAM?

These loans are usually used by borrowers to expedite the loan process and to avoid excessive paperwork. These contracts are terrible as they give the lender total control over all the borrower's assets. They are not legal in many states. They are used by retirees (some AARP members) and the unemployed who are starting a business. The lender requires the borrower to sign a Confession in order to obtain the loan. In some states judges have sometimes ruled that the borrower has given up all legal rights, and when problems occur the courts, cannot be used to settle differences. Many borrowers do not obtain legal advice first as they are anxious to begin their work and they believe the lender has "courted" them so well any problems will be quickly resolved. A MAJOR MISTAKE!! When violations of the contract take place (late payment, missed payment, an unforeseen emergency), the lender does not have to accept any condition to give temporary relief. The lender quickly gets a judgment in the courts and immediately begins taking control of the borrower's assets. It's been reported that many times the borrower is not even aware that a judgment has been made against them. Sometimes the lender has classified the loan as a merchant class advance to avoid adverse actions. These judgments are very big business. Since 2012 such judgments have totaled 25,000, resulting in a loss to borrowers of \$1.5 billion. These judgments are almost impossible to overturn. What is surprising there is little evidence that state and federal regulators are aggressively policing these loans. And we have a couple of states who are very willing to let the abuses go on as it helps the budget. The message for us is NEVER, NEVER SIGN these contracts/advances without first getting legal advice.

2. Gerrymandering (drawing voter districts). The U.S. Supreme Court now has our Virginia issue for the third time. Republican leaders in our General Assembly asked the court to overturn a lower court ruling which went against them (re-drawing districts for the 2019 Virginia election). Previously the Governor and the House were requested to redraw our districts because they were illegal but they could not agree on a solution so the issue is back in the courts. Our assembly members feared that to redraw the districts so close to the elections would cause great confusion for our voters. The U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear their appeal in Spring 2019.

In addition to court activity one of our very active state organizations (OneVirginia2021) is trying to end this threat to our democracy by proposing an independent redistricting commission to draw these districts in the future. This will give our voters a real choice in electing our representatives. This action would require a constitutional amendment including a vote by all Virginia voters. Virginia is ranked as one of the most gerrymandered states in the country both on the congressional and state levels. See more information at onevirginia2021.org.



Research participants needed!

Volunteers are needed in a research study on **balance training**. Participation involves 6 sessions, totaling approximately 6 hours.

You are eligible to participate if you:

- are 50–75 years old
- are able to stand or walk for 30 minutes without pain or mobility aid
- have not had a bone fracture within the last 10 years
- do not smoke
- are not currently in physical therapy

Participants will be compensated \$100 for completing the study.

For more information, contact Leigh Allin at lallin@vt.edu.

Sign the petition to support ratification of the ERA

<http://varatifyera.org/petition>

Virginia could become the 38th and final state to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, to make it part of the Constitution. 86% of constitutions around the world guarantee gender equality, but the U.S. Constitution does not offer the same guarantee to women. Laws supporting equal rights can be repealed, ignored, or interpreted widely. Only the Constitution guarantees rights.



Blacksburg Chapter #2613

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

Chapter Officers 2019

- President • Jerry Niles, niles@vt.edu
- Vice President • Don Creamer, dgc2@vt.edu
- Secretary • Pat Hyer, hyerp@vt.edu
- Treasurer • Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu
- Assistant Treasurer • Ruth Anne Niles, rniles2@icloud.com

Board of Directors

- 2019—Tamara Hodsdon, Peter Magolda, Jim Montgomery, Wanda Smith
- 2020—Isabel Berney, Jeananne Dixon Bame, Hugh VanLandingham
- 2021—Doug Feuerbach, Judith Jones, Lisa Moose, Leslie Pendleton

Newsletter editors: Carolyn Rude, Sandra Griffith

Photographer: Peter Magolda

Weather Policy


The Blacksburg chapter follows the weather policy of Montgomery County schools. If schools are closed, the chapter will not meet. If the school opening is delayed, the chapter will will meet.

AARP Website www.blacksburgaarp.org



Blacksburg Chapter #2613
 Jerry Niles, President
 P.O. Box 10082
 Blacksburg, VA 24062

**Nonprofit
 Organization
 U.S. Postage
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 Blacksburg, VA
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Blacksburg Chapter  Member Application for 2019

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: .

AARP Blacksburg Chapter • P.O. Box 10082 • Blacksburg, VA 24062

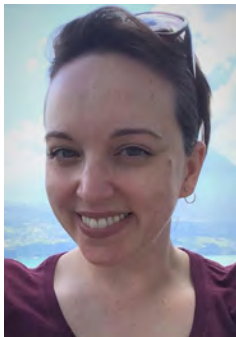


Feb. 19 Chapter Meeting

Dancing bees bioindicate habitats' ability to feed pollinators

by Maggie Couvillon

The recent pollinator crisis exemplifies how public interest in scientific issues can be a mixed blessing, raising awareness of pollinator decline, while generating rallying cries for untested solutions.



Lack of forage contributes to bee declines. Everyone wants to feed hungry bees. We offer help with best intentions, but we do not know when and where bees lack forage.

Here we explore how waggle dance, a behavior in which a honey bee forager communicates to her nestmates the vector from the hive to an important resource, usually food, may also be a powerful tool for ecology. Because honey bees perform dances only for the most profitable resources, these data provide spatial information about the availability of good quality forage. Thus, one species and methodology gives a novel measure of a landscape's profitability that may be relevant not just for honey bees, but also for other flower-visiting insects.

You will learn the background on the honeybee waggle dance; how we know what we know with the waggle dance and using waggle dances in research; and what we can still find out, the current state of the field, and future directions.

You may view two videos here that will provide context and some details of this presentation:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMU1KOF_Tck

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tcXkQBY0i0k&t=1s>

President's Column by Jerry Niles

The Blacksburg Chapter of AARP ushered in the New Year with a lively January chapter meeting. At one of our largest monthly meetings ever, 50+ members gathered to hear Dr. Rebecca Hester take us to the frontier of new technologies with an inside look at how new understandings in biology will affect us in the future and the challenges that this new biologically driven technology presents to society. Dr. Hester's impressive knowledge and understanding of the intersection of science, technology, and its potential impact on society left us with lots of questions and an admiration for her extensive knowledge and passionate approach to this exciting and sometimes unsettling area of research and public policy.



In addition, during the meeting we were invited to participate in a cutting edge research study on balance by Dr. Karen Roberto, a University distinguished professor from Virginia Tech. Dr. Roberto's invitation is an opportunity for some of our members to learn about and incorporate new strategies for developing better balance in their daily lives to avoid that one misstep that can lead to the fall that we all dread. If you have any interest in finding out more about the study contact Leigh Allin at lallin@vt.edu and explore whether or not participation in the study is right for you.

New Membership Processes

As January is the beginning of our annual membership, I wanted you to know that we are working on validating and streamlining our membership process. Often, I am asked, Did I join this past year? In fact, I know I have asked myself that question more than once. As with most administrative matters, the membership process has multiple layers. Now that we have two paths for membership application forms, online and hard copy mail-in, we think it is the perfect time to tweak our membership processes. For example, we realize we need to incorporate a step in our membership process in which we send you noti-

please turn to p. 4

Upcoming Events

Feb. 2-Apr. 15, Tax-Aide program

Mar. 19, AARP program, Dr. Michael Friedlander, Executive Director, Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at Virginia Tech Carillion School of Medicine

Inside this issue

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* *Meet new board member Leslie Pendleton* (p. 4)



2019 Food Drive: February

The Community Service Committee, with support of the Board, will be conducting four food drives in 2019. The food drives will be held at the monthly AARP chapter meetings. The first will be in February.

We will collect non-perishable food items needed most by families. The items collected will be donated to local food banks. Please consider donating the following (no glass containers, please):

Peanut Butter	Jelly
Canned Meats/Fish	Soups
Hot/Cold Cereals	Crackers
Canned Vegetables	Canned Fruit
Macaroni & Cheese	Pasta/Rice

Remember to bring your plastic bags to the Community Center for recycling

In Memory of Peter Magolda

By Terry Wildman and Don Creamer

We were close friends with Peter Magolda and his wife Marcia Baxter-Magolda and wish to share some thoughts about Peter and our relationship with him with our friends in the AARP Blacksburg Chapter.



Peter Magolda was a very easy man to like. We have spent time with Peter on many occasions and always profited from the experience. The conversation with him was easy and congenial, we learned useful and interesting things, and there was always a generosity

of spirit. We tended to leave these encounters looking forward to the next opportunity to visit. And over time we continued to learn new things to appreciate about our friend.

Peter was a very good photographer, perhaps a great one. Everyone in our chapter who interacted with Peter certainly knew that much about him. However, looking at all the very cool photos he did of us doesn't reveal all that much about why he was so good at photography. He did have a big sophisticated looking camera that often accompanied him, and he obviously knew how to use it. What we may not know is that picture taking is just the beginning for a good photographer. Peter also employed a very sophisticated editing system that fixed typical problems and allowed for a strong element of artistry. In many cases the subject or object we thought we knew could be transformed in some new and revealing way. That is why we often react with surprise and pleasure when we see what Peter has done.

Of course, photography is simply one element of Peter's life. He, like most of us, had a long and productive career, enjoyed his family and friends, developed special interests, and generally dealt with all the things that life tends to throw our way. Perhaps one of the reasons we have begun with Peter-the-photographer is that it serves as a useful metaphor to reveal a so much more about him. For example, let's begin with the idea that Peter really loved people. As revealed by his photographic and academic work he was interested in and cared about people—all kinds of people. In New Orleans, for example, he would literally stalk the French Quarter with his camera looking for people, artifacts, and scenes that could bring the culture of the place alive. He was so curious to find the essence of things. He found and documented the invisible people that we casually pass by with little notice, and saw what they were doing.

Peter was, well, crazy about music. He amassed over time a huge library of music both in digital and vinyl form. He loved

music events and made it part of his life each year to be at the New Orleans Jazz Festival, which is a massive event celebrating every type of music. One year Terry and Sue, with Jerry and Ruth Niles and another couple close to us were hanging out in front of the Cajun music venue, when here comes this familiar looking guy, walking fast, sweating in the heat, carrying a big camera with long range lens, charging to a venue next to us where some famous musical group was playing. This was before Peter and Marcia had moved to Virginia and we didn't know Peter all that well, but Terry moved quickly to intercept the big guy and managed a brief conversation. He was on his way to see and photograph The Mavericks, a group we were planning to see also, so we got a chance to see Peter in action. It was good to see a passionate music lover and photographer doing what he loved to do. And, by the way, after this event he didn't stay long to visit, but charged off to another venue.

So, combining passion and curiosity, it might not be surprising that Peter could find even the most mundane of things hiding some artistic element—old farm tools, a small intersection in a roof line, a steaming stew pot, a sleeping dog, whatever it might be. He was also very generous when someone might want some particular event documented and he could always be counted on to find elements of people's lives to highlight that would be treasured well beyond the event. He loved to find new experiences where a camera might offer some useful insight. Such was an occasion where he showed up to document the lighting of a massive burn pile on Terry and Sue's property—actually an annual event. Apparently, Peter had never been very close to a raging inferno and aside from being amazed that Terry would actually light off such a thing he set about revealing with his camera some of the scary but actually beautiful colors a fire can produce.

A camera was not the only research instrument that enabled Peter to document important aspects of life and the world we live in. He liked to call himself a participant-observer. His well-received book documenting the vital role that campus janitors play in college life showed his keen interest in people, including those who ordinarily receive scant attention, by using this research skill. When Peter joined our chapter he quickly became an important contributor because of his experience, range of skills, and willingness to take on projects that required, for example, technology expertise. He was generous with his time and congenial in his manner. He was a very easy person to like.



We will go on with our work with AARP, and our personal lives, knowing that we had much more to learn from Peter, but happy for the time that he came our way.

The Humanity that Peter Magolda Saw and Shared

Peter took hundreds of pictures of AARP Blacksburg members and events over the past several years, creating an astonishing archive of people and community. Here is a small sample of recent ones. Find more at adlogam.smugmug.com/Organizations/AARP/n-49pk5B/

To download: click on the photo of your choice, then find the download icon. ↓

The photo should appear in your downloads folder.



fication of the receipt of your renewal or a letter of welcome to new members. We also need to revalidate our process to get Jim Wightman, our keeper of the chapter nametags, current information on new members so he can make the new tags. Finally, we need to make sure that Don Creamer, master of our Mail Chimp contact system, is notified to add a new member to his list.

Building Social Connectedness

I took this time to talk about the membership process because it reflects something bigger than good administrative practice. Having a good handle on our membership roll helps fulfill one of the important beliefs of our chapter and AARP in general, that the creation of social connectedness is foundational to living well. There is ample research evidence and good common sense that tells us that to age successfully, one needs a rich web of social connections. There are multiple ways the chapter goes about providing that social connectedness. As I mentioned last month, I find the monthly meetings, the participation in chapter supported service opportunities, the newsletters, and the socials as ways to connect socially and constructively with others. We are certain there are more ways to create opportunities for connection among members in support of their efforts to living well. Having a good grasp of who are members will help us continue to build a more member-centered chapter.

Care Committee: New Directions

Consistent with the effort to strengthen our communication network with members, one of the chapter's new Board members, Leslie Pendleton, has proposed a reconceptualization of the chapter's Care Committee. Leslie, licensed counselor and leader of the chapter health and wellness fair, will help lead the chapter in considering new ways that it can reach out to support the members in their effort to live well from social, emotional, physical, and cognitive perspectives. You will be hearing more about the Care Committee's directions in the future and will be receiving an invitation to participate in a broader conversation about what the concept of Care might be for our chapter.

Successful Aging—and an Assignment

One final thought I would like to share in this column is about the concept of successful aging. You don't have to look too closely in society to find the negative representations of aging that permeate public conversation. In fact, using the term successful aging sometimes confuses people as they see the aging process so negatively. The bottom line is that others see those of us who are on the aging "fast track" becoming less able. AARP and specifically the Blacksburg Chapter are working at changing that negative perspective. To that end, I am giving you an assignment this month: think about ways that you are better right now than you were 10, 15, 25 years ago. Identify at least three. Then think about some ways over the next year that you will be even better yet! Sure, there are things we are not as good at as we used to be, but I'll bet you surprised yourself with the new understandings, skills, and attitudes that you have developed since you noticed you were aging. That's what successful aging is all about—not going old. As Sir Frances Bacon, the English philosopher and scientist told us many years ago, "I will never be an old man. To me, old age is always someone who is 15 years older than I am."

Meet New Board Member Leslie Pendleton

I grew up in East Tennessee and Gate City (Scott County), thus explaining what lingers of my original "hick" accent. I arrived in Blacksburg in fall 1976 to pursue my undergraduate degree at what was then called VPI. Like many other VPI/VT graduates, rather than leave town after completing my B.S. degree, I stayed. I had decided to take a year off before pursuing graduate study in Social Work at Virginia Commonwealth University. In the meantime, I took a full-time job with my Work Study supervisor, Dr. Irving John ("Jack") Good, a University Distinguished Professor of Statistics who had been a cryptanalyst under Alan Turing at Bletchley Park in the United Kingdom during World War II. In that year, I also met many special friends and a guy from Delaware who had settled in Giles County. So I never left.

Virginia Tech and Blacksburg soon became my permanent home. My then husband and I had two children, eventually moved to Dublin, and later divorced. While I raised my children and worked at Virginia Tech (first in the Department of Statistics and later in various student services capacities within the College of Engineering), I earned two more degrees (M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Counselor Education). In 2002, my children and I moved from Dublin to Blacksburg. For a long time, I felt trapped and dreamed of moving elsewhere, but I couldn't move my children away from their father, and I had become Jack's primary caregiver in his later years. Eventually I felt peace in the realization there was really no other place I would rather be. I remarried in 2015; my husband, Dave Edwards, works in engineering at Appalachian Power and likes the area, too.

My children, Andrew and Caitlin Miller, and their significant others also graduated from Virginia Tech. Andrew is CEO of OLIO Financial Planning (formerly JSW Financial) with offices in Blacksburg and Falls Church. Caitlin lives in Charlottesville and works for the Virginia Department of Agriculture. I have placed my order for grandchildren; in the meantime, I very much enjoy my granddogs Finn, Izzy, and Judy.

After 36 years of service, and feeling like I needed change, I retired from Virginia Tech in 2016. I stayed busy that first summer. My husband and I moved into our new house in Indian Run Subdivision just outside Blacksburg, and I prepared my other house to rent to three incoming Veterinary Medicine students. We brought home our golden retriever puppy Henry. In August 2016, I took a part-time job at Fringe Benefit in downtown Blacksburg where I met many nice customers. These activities allowed me to unwind from what had become a too demanding, stressful, and thankless job. Fast-forward two years, and I realized that I wasn't ready to forego my counseling profession. My work on the health fair planning committee was opportune. I made a connection with "Living Well Counseling and Support Services" at the AARP/VCOM Health and Wellness Fair in September 2018. Now I am working there as a private practice counselor. The practice name is so appropriate to my role with AARP Blacksburg.

I do devote time and commitment to those activities I planned for retirement. Henry and I are training to be a pet therapy team. I take bluegrass banjo lessons on my grandfather's 1940s Kay banjo at the Handmade Music School at the Floyd Country

Store. Last August I took classes on natural indigo dyeing at the Marshfield School of Weaving in Vermont, and I'll go back again this coming August for advanced classes. I enjoy live music, lifelong learning, mid-century modern architecture and design, gardening, nature, knitting, reading, and traveling. Last summer, I marked travel to Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Island off my bucket list. This summer we'll travel back to Maine for a second time to explore further up the coastline to Acadia National Park. Finally, I am enjoying volunteerism. I'm Treasurer of our Indian Run Homeowners Association, member of the local chapter of the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI), member of the AARP/VCOM Health Fair Planning Committee, and Board member with the AARP Blacksburg chapter.

For many years prior to my retirement, I pondered existential questions: What can I do to make a contribution? What will be my legacy? I think those questions have finally been answered. Whew! Having been a caregiver in some context since early childhood, it seems only fitting to connect counseling and caregiving to my work with AARP Blacksburg. As a start, I was excited to bring the broad theme of "wellness" to our health fair in September 2018. Wellness, a multi-dimensional concept, includes physical, emotional, social/cultural, environmental, intellectual/occupational, spiritual, and financial wellness. How can we better care for the needs of our membership? What does it mean to live well? What will help you live well? Please email your ideas (lkpendleton@gmail.com) for how we can better care for our membership through caring and ongoing wellness-focused activities.



Blacksburg Chapter #2613

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

Chapter Officers 2019

President • Jerry Niles, niles@vt.edu
Vice President • Don Creamer, dgc2@vt.edu
Secretary • Pat Hyer, hyerp@vt.edu
Treasurer • Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu
Assistant Treasurer • Ruth Anne Niles, rniles2@icloud.com

Board of Directors

- 2019—Tamara Hodsdon, Peter Magolda, Jim Montgomery, Wanda Smith
- 2020—Isabel Berney, Jeananne Dixon Bame, Hugh VanLandingham
- 2021—Doug Feuerbach, Judith Jones, Lisa Moose, Leslie Pendleton

Newsletter editors: Carolyn Rude, Sandra Griffith

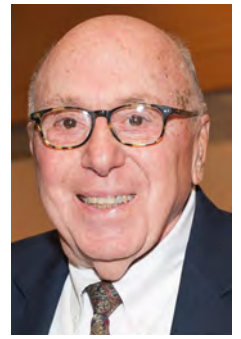
Weather Policy

The Blacksburg chapter follows the weather policy of Montgomery County schools. If schools are closed, the chapter will not meet. If the school opening is delayed, the chapter will meet.

AARP Website www.blacksburgaarp.org

Blacksburg Chapter #2613

Legislative Report *by Val Coluni*



1. Legislation: Prescription Drugs.

There have now been several proposals in the General Assembly to reduce drug prices, some by our legislators and some others by federal administration members. These proposals cover a number of different options: let Medicare negotiate prices directly with the drug companies; let Americans import cheaper drugs from Canada; others favor letting the free market do their usual job; others favor federal rules and regulations. These proposals will require SINCERE bipartisanship efforts to resolve the significant differences in order to select one best solution and/or combining two or more alternatives. The drug companies have responded to some of the recommendations by stating "they have specific flaws which would "wreak havoc on our health care system as well as possibly limit access to some medicines and/or compromise safety standards." While these talks are going on some drug companies have recently raised prices. The average price bump for all has been estimated at 6.3% (percent) well above the pace of inflation. The Federal Administration claims drug prices declined in 2018. Looking at the whole of America's prescription drug market many of the experts in the field state their numbers are not accurate. AARP wants results now and to help get there they have instituted an advocacy campaign to protect seniors and remind all that all parties to this issue have made past promised to do just that. Again we need your support to get behind this effort by calling your representatives now! The General Assembly is in a short session this year so don't delay.


2. Legislation: Schools (Repairs, modernizing, new construction)

The General Assembly and the Governor now appear to agree that the condition of schools is a crisis and requires significant action. The urgent needs are in some of the larger cities and in rural areas. Prior estimates were that \$18 billion was required to adequately fix the problems. That estimate was made in 2008 and in prior years when this subject was on the to do list of some of our government officials. Now one additional problem has come out and is resulting in a political battle between the Attorney General (Herring) and Senator Bill Stanley): WHO is responsible for paying these expenses? The Attorney General says regional and local communities are responsible. He points to a state account (Priority Account) that was set up to do this. Senator Stanley responds that this account was never funded adequately to handle such large expenses. Today many of these communities are in former coal-producing areas which are now "sick, broke and have been left behind" by their government. In addition, the senator believes that these conditions hinder efforts to attract new employers to our state and to motivate our current employers to stay here and expand their operations. A final note in his argument is that these conditions could be used to charge us with violating federal laws and regulations which require states to ensure that the conditions of the school's physical plants must not deny students an equal opportunity for a quality education.



Blacksburg Chapter #2613
Jerry Niles, President
P.O. Box 10082
Blacksburg, VA 24062

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Blacksburg Chapter  Member Application for 2019

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: .

AARP Blacksburg Chapter • P.O. Box 10082 • Blacksburg, VA 24062



March 19 Chapter Meeting

Things that go right and things that go wrong in our brains throughout the lifespan, by *Dr. Michael Friedlander*

In his presentation, Dr. Friedlander will discuss how the normal healthy brain develops to become a high performance system to mediate life's myriad processes from sensation to movement to thought to memory to emotion. He will discuss how the brain changes as we age. He will also highlight some recent work on things that can affect this normal progression and certain disorders that affect the young developing brain, the mature brain, and the aging brain.



Dr. Friedlander is the founding Executive Director of the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at Virginia Tech Carilion and the Senior Dean for Research at VTC School of Medicine.

His research concerns cellular processes that underlie plasticity in the brain in health, development, and after brain injury.

Dr. Friedlander is a recipient of an Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Fellowship in Neuroscience, an NIH Fogarty Center Senior International Research Fellowship, a Lucille Markey Foundation Center Award, a W.M. Keck Foundation Center Award, the American College of Physicians' Menninger Award for Mental Health Research, the University of Illinois Distinguished Alumnus Award in Molecular and Integrative Physiology and the Distinguished Scientist Award from the Society of Experimental Biology and Medicine. He has held visiting Professorships at Oxford University, the Australian National University, and the University of Paris.

President's Column by Jerry Niles

Memories and Remembering

Included in this newsletter is the representation of one of my favorite traditions of the Chapter. I am struck by impact that Sandy Birch's carefully chosen words describing our friends, colleagues, and chapter members has on my memories of many of these individuals. This meaningful tradition has a unique way of evoking memories that is good for one's soul as well as paying well-deserved tribute to the departed.



At its heart, this tradition is made possible by the miraculous human trait of a well-developed memory. It is our memories that enable us to take away so many good feelings from sharing remembrances. It is no wonder then that the decline of memory is one of the primary concerns for many of us on the journey of aging. We often judge ourselves on whether we still "have it or not" by how sharp we think our memory is. How many times in the last week have you encountered a memory challenge in one way or another and worried about the state of your memory?

I know that when I entered my 60s I began monitoring the functioning of my memory closely. I thought it was an indicator of how successfully I was aging. I kept track of the glitches and wondered if this was the beginning of the slippery slope of memory decline. To my surprise, as I have reached my mid-70s, I find that I have begun to worry less about it. I also have found that the less I worry about how well my memory is working, the better it seems to work. I think I might have stumbled on one of the secrets to successful aging: to appreciate the memory capacity that I have. The more I relax and make peace with my memory, the better it seems to function.

I thought I might share some of the discoveries I have made about my memory as I have thought about it over the last decade or so. I am certain each one of you has made your unique memory

Upcoming Events

- Feb. 2–Apr. 15, Tax-Aide program
- April 6, Virginia Tech "Big Event" (p. 4)
- April 16, AARP meeting, "Town Hall" with Jerry Niles
- April 24, Community Foundation, "Give Big NRV"

Inside this issue

- Remembrance of friends who died in 2018 (p. 2)
- Meet new board member Judith Jones (p. 4)
- Legislative report (p. 5)

April 24, 2019



GiveBigNRV encourages charitable giving in the New River Valley to dozens of nonprofit organizations serving our region. The giving website allows donors to give easily and securely online to their favorite nonprofit organization or to any of the endowed funds of the Community Foundation of the NRV.

AARP Blacksburg sponsors GiveBigNRV.

To give on giving day, go to cfnrvgivebig.org.

Remember to bring your plastic bags to the Community Center for recycling.

Remembrance of friends who died in 2018

In our February AARP newsletter and in many newsletters before that, we'll find pages filled with lovely and flattering pictures of our AARP family. We were seen through the eyes and camera of our dear friend, **Peter Magolda**, who passed away suddenly on January 2. He was a professor emeritus at Miami University of Ohio, who during his retirement, devoted significant time to his many passions and interests: music, photography, bird watching, politics, and travel. Peter was a board member of our AARP chapter and worked on political issues on our behalf. He was a kind and gentle man—big old teddy bear, and we will miss him.

So today, with the thoughts of how teddy bears and other stuffed animals may have comforted us in our childhood, including these two special bears saved for us by our mothers who knew someday they'd help with an AARP program, we remember 16 of our loving and faithful friends.

Curtis Finch died on January 20 after a long illness. A Penn State graduate, earning his doctorate in education in 1969, Curtis was designated an Outstanding Alumnus of the college just 20 years later. He was a Virginia Tech Professor Emeritus, and a retired Lt. Colonel in the US Army Reserves. A fan of vintage Corvettes, Curt and Karen drove off from their 50th anniversary celebration in a 1972 red Corvette, reminiscent of the 1957 red Corvette that had whisked them away from their wedding reception. Curt was 79.

James Owen died peacefully at home with his family on January 31. He was a stalwart Hokie fan and a competitive bridge player in a group formed over 50 years ago by members of the VT English and Math departments. Jim had joined the English Department in 1957, and over his 35-year career he was often recognized for teaching excellence. In 1987, Governor Baliles presented him with the Commonwealth's highest honor for teachers in higher education, the Outstanding Faculty Award. Jim was 92.

Curtis Roane passed away on February 10 at his home in Warm Hearth Village. Curtis was professor emeritus of Plant Pathology, Physiology and Weed Science at Virginia Tech. He and his dear wife Martha, who predeceased him, loved bird watching, identifying fungi, chasing trains, and Boy and Girl Scouting. He was a member of the Blacksburg Presbyterian Church and a regular at the Blacksburg Sports Club luncheons and the Christiansburg IHOP. Curtis was 96.

Joseph Fontenot passed away on April 17. Joe joined the Departments of Animal Science and Biochemistry at Virginia Tech in 1956 and retired 40 years later. He served in many leadership roles in professional organizations, including president of the national American Society of Animal Science. He traveled extensively, usually with his wife Eula to whom he was married 71 years. He served in many roles at St. Mary's Catholic Church and was a proud Pioneer season ticket holder at Lane Stadium. Joe was 90.

Marylou passed away on April 29. She loved Blacksburg, where she and her family moved in 1963, often proclaiming that the

Lord blessed Blacksburg as "Heaven on Earth." She loved bright pink, from her lipstick to her flowing ribbons painted on the sides of her car. She ran her own firm, Marylou Limited, Realtor, until retirement in 2007, and happily volunteered constantly for many civic organizations, including selling tickets at the Lyric Theatre well into her 87th year. She was 87.

T.O. Williams III passed away on March 10. After completing the duties as Drum Major in the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadet's Highty-Tighties in 1959, T.O. went on to an illustrious career with the U.S. Air Force, retiring as Base Commander at Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio with the rank of Colonel. T.O. brought his experience to the civilian world, serving in positions such as the Montgomery County Public Schools Director of Personnel to Chairman of the Board of Directors, Virginia Tech Corp of Cadets Alumni. T.O. was 80.

James "Rick" Ellison died peacefully at his daughter's home on June 14. A graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, he was a chemical engineer in the petroleum industry who transitioned to computer engineering when the first computers appeared in oil refineries. Over the years, Rick was an avid gardener, amateur photographer, and Civil War re-enactor who collected period medical instruments and manuals, now donated to Virginia Tech. Rick was 90.

Earl Neal Boyd died June 16 at the Crossings. He served in the Army during World War II and went on to earn his Ph.D. in dairy technology from Ohio State. After working in the private sector and for the US Department of Agriculture, Neal came to Virginia Tech in 1968 as the first head of the Department of Food Science and Technology. He was an avid Virginia Tech sports fan and this past year attended almost all of the men's and women's basketball games. At age 90, he shot an 88 in golf. Neal was 95.

John Hosner died on September 13, after the first and only night he had ever spent in a hospital. He was the professor emeritus and honorary founding Dean of the College of Natural Resources and Environment, originally known as Forestry and Wildlife. As a devoted runner, John set records in his age group during every decade in which he ran both nationally and internationally, exciting the Blacksburg running community when he set the world record for the indoor mile at the age of 75. John was 93.

Helen Miller passed away on September 22. She was the secretary and office manager for the Virginia Crop Improvement Association until her retirement in 1982, beginning a second career as a world traveler. One of the notorious "Golden Girls" supporters of Virginia Tech women's basketball, Helen was also a dedicated New River Valley Mall morning walker and a long-time member of the Blacksburg Baptist Church. Helen was 100.

Marshall Marchman passed away on October 5. When she and Jim moved to Blacksburg in 1968 for Jim's faculty position at Virginia Tech, Marshall taught sixth grade at Margaret Beeks Elementary School until the couple adopted two infant daughters. After the twins began public school, Marshall returned to teaching, retiring as a Library Aide in 2010. She was active at Blacksburg Baptist Church, using her musical talents playing piano and playing in the church bell choir. Marshall was 74.

George Allen, Jr., passed away on October 8. George served in the Army Air Corps during World War II and after receiving degrees from Virginia Tech and Montana State University, he served as a County Extension agent and an Extension Sheep Specialist in the VT Animal Science Department. During his 35 years of service, retiring as Virginia Tech Professor Emeritus of Animal Science, he received many recognitions including membership in the Virginia Livestock Hall of Fame. George was 95.

Edith Carter passed away on October 14. She played an active role in musical activities of the New River, playing the violin or viola with the New River Strings and with the New River Valley Symphony Orchestra. Many area children and adults started lessons on string instruments under Dr. Carter's direction. Edith received her doctorate from Virginia Tech and taught at New River Community College and Radford University. She was 82.

Ellen Coale passed away on October 28. An accomplished woman with a significant work ethic, Ellen served her community with her whole heart. Her joy for life was contagious and her laughter was well known. Many enjoyed her company at the Blacksburg Sports Club lunch table. Ellen and husband Charlie were married over 59 years, and a scholarship in her memory has been established in his department, Agricultural Economics, at Virginia Tech. Ellen was 82.

Juanita Wightman died on December 18 at her home after battling cancer and dementia for nearly five years. Juanita was a long time member of Blacksburg United Methodist Church and taught third grade Sunday School for 20 years. Monday nights eating out with friends at McDonald's and lunch at the Blacksburg Sports Club were weekly must-attend event as well as playing Canasta once a month. She and Jim, her husband of 62 years, enjoyed summers at their cabin in Gloucester County. Juanita was 83.



While we may have been comforted by soft and faithful toy animals in our childhood, may these toys, presented in memory of sixteen loyal and loving and faithful friends, the last—a teddy bear for Peter—bring comfort to children in our community. All will be donated to the Women's Resource Center, to children of families who have experienced domestic violence. Today we share a little love in little packages. Amen

president's message, continued from p. 1

discoveries as well. Think about your relationship with your memory as you read along and add your wisdom to this list.

The most important thing I have learned about my memory health in successful aging is that I must keep a positive attitude toward my memory. More recently I have begun to look for positive and complex examples of my memory performance like recalling a special family occasion or trip or relating the thesis of an important book or article I have read. Giving yourself credit for remembering these complex scenarios will balance your feelings the next time you momentarily forget the name of someone you know well. When you do face a memory challenge like forgetting someone's name, relax, keep faith in yourself that it will come to you later in the day, tomorrow, or Monday of next week. When it does come to you, and it will, smile at the accomplishment. Your memory has been hard working on recalling that name for you as your daily activities went.

Quit or at least reduce multitasking. Nothing causes more disruption of memory than multitasking. Try organizing and structuring your life to do one thing at a time. Ok, maybe two but never three. If you have the stove on or water running, definitely do only one. Remember, most of us are retired. What's the rush?

One characteristic of a good memory that does not fade during the aging process is our ability to be selective. With age comes wisdom and with wisdom comes a sharpened ability to remember what is important to you. In fact, there is some research evidence that shows that our demographic is actually better at remembering more essential information than those from a significantly younger population.

Finally, look for ways to be good to your memory. This is not cheating. It is being prudent. Help it with all the little tricks you have learned over the years. Make your lists, put your keys in the same place, buy at least 4 pair of reading glasses, write post-it notes, take pictures with your cell phone of things you want to remember, send yourself emails with essential information, and when someone whispers a word to you that is stuck on the end of your tongue, smile and say thank you. Be a memory helper for others when they with need a little help.

Thus, for your successful aging homework for the month of March, enjoy the marvels of your memory. Notice when it works well and brings you recollections of the good things that have happened to you over your life. Give yourself a pat on the back when you slip in to your old ways of multitasking and you don't forget to take the grocery list or your cell phone with you. And when you encounter one of those inevitable memory challenges, relax, smile, and accept it, you have earned that privilege.

See information on page 5 about two memory classes offered by Virginia Tech.

Meet New Board Member Judith Jones

I was born and grew up in Richlands, Virginia, the daughter of a coal miner and a homemaker/hospital worker. I was very proud of my father's service in WWII in the Battle of the Bulge and my mother's work at the Radford Arsenal building munitions for the troops.

My parents created a loving, hard-working family, and I adored them. During the summers, I was fortunate to spend time visiting my aunt who lived on a farm in West Virginia and who was an avid 4-H leader. I now realize that my mother planned all this! My aunt would take me to 4-H events and summer camp where I learned so many new and exciting things. My eyes were opened to a world of possibilities, and, to this day, I credit 4-H with steering me to go to college. At the age of fourteen, I started working in the office at the local hospital after school, on weekends, and during the summers. I remember my parents taking me to the Tazewell County Courthouse to



obtain a work permit. The hospital administrator, for whom I worked, took an interest in giving me more and more challenging tasks to do and encouraged me to go to college and study business. Little did I know that I would hold some type of paid employment for the next 47 years and love every minute of it.

My first college was Clinch Valley College in Wise, Virginia, a two-year branch of UVA, now known as UVA-Wise, where I majored in business administration and was the only female in the program. That was tough, and it made me very tough. The first day of accounting I walked into the classroom, and the male teacher asked me what I was doing in his class. I replied that I was registered for the class. He said there must be some mistake because I belonged in secretarial science. I sat down without saying a word. On a major project on which I had no errors, he had marked it 99 in red ink. He handed it to me and said, "I'll be damned if I'll give you 100."

Later in life, after I earned my bachelor's degree at Radford College, a master's degree at Virginia Tech and my Ph.D. at UNC-Chapel Hill, I thought of him and smiled...no, maybe I guffawed. He had only a master's degree. My work experiences after college included teaching and coaching in public schools and working as a federal grants writer and administrator. As a public school teacher in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, I was appointed Title IX Coordinator and plunged into seeking equity for girls' sports. Then, I was fortunate to begin working at Virginia Tech where my jobs included Coordinator of Disabled Student Services, Director of Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action, Assistant Provost for Extension, and Associate Director of Virginia Cooperative Extension. During the year before I retired, I was privileged to serve as Interim Extension Director and Associate Dean in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

My volunteer activities have been as varied as my work experiences. I chaired the Legal Defense Committee of the NAACP, for

which I was awarded and cherish the Fight for Freedom Award. I served on the Montgomery County School Board, the New River Valley Friends of the RSO, the Virginia Tech Retirees Association including two terms as president, the BHS Athletic Boosters Board, University Club Board, Blacksburg Sports Club Board, served as assistant treasurer of Montgomery County Christmas Store, and was President of the national Journal of Extension Board. In 2016, I was awarded the Women in American History award by the DAR for lifetime achievement. I am an elder in Blacksburg Presbyterian Church and a Virginia Master Gardener.

I thoroughly enjoy serving on the program committee for the Lifelong Learning Institute. I get a real charge out of talking my friends into doing courses, and I must say I have recruited excellent instructors. During the last three years, I have served as District Director for the Daughters of the American Revolution in honor of my fourth great grandfathers, Charles Kilgore (Battle of King's Mountain), Joseph Culbertson and Joel Ramsey. I am thoroughly enjoying serving on the board of Blacksburg AARP as Program Committee Chair.

My husband Roy and I have five grown daughters, Britt, Ingrid, Meredith, Jennifer and Katherine, and five grandchildren with another one due in July. We are very proud that all five daughters have bachelor's degrees, two have master's degrees, and a third is working on her master's. Roy and I enjoy camping in our little Scamp camper and traveling to Italy nearly every summer. At some point, we will slow down, but not yet.

...

The "Big Event": Virginia Tech April 6

Saturday, April 6

Submit a job request here:

<https://registration.vtbigevent.org/jobrequest>



The Big Event at Virginia Tech is a student-run community service effort that has grown into the 2nd largest event of its kind in the nation. Every spring, thousands of students, faculty, and staff come together to complete hundreds of community service projects throughout Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and the New River Valley.

Projects are completed regardless of need or socioeconomic status; instead, it is The Big Event's goal to simply say, "Thank you." Seeded in our university's motto of *Ut Prosim* (*That I may serve*) students and community members come together for a truly unparalleled experience. The Big Event: "One Big Day. One Big Thanks."

Homeowners might like help with painting, garden preparation, moving outdoor furniture, and the like.

Legislative Report *by Val Coluni*

1. Legislation on redistricting—SUCCESS!

Ending gerrymandering. The General Assembly has passed the first crucial step by approving legislation reforming the way Virginia draws its legislative district maps. This took place as a result of terrific bipartisan support within the Assembly.

First let's review some first events before their vote. A federal court (Eastern District) had previously given final approval to redraw the election maps to be used in the upcoming General Assembly primaries. These maps were drawn by an OUTSIDE court-appointed expert. Some in our Assembly did not agree with the maps. As a result, our House and Senate developed two separate bills calling for a constitutional amendment that would create a hybrid commission of eight legislators and eight citizens to re-draw other maps. After frequent and much bipartisan discussion, they agreed to recommend an amendment to the Virginia Constitution. This action was intended to reform the current map process which allowed the political parties when in power to draw the maps solely for their benefit.

This action will require another vote by the General Assembly in their next session (Jan–Feb 2020). If approved it will be



submitted to the Virginia voters in the November elections also in 2020.

We still have a long way to go for implementation of this plan. It is so important as it will give our voters more control in selecting their representatives. Your support will be required to convince our legislators to vote for the above actions again and to insure you vote in support of the plan in November 2020. IT'S A MUST!

2. New scam: Phone call reporting fraudulent use of your Social Security Number. It works like this. A telephone call to you saying that your social security number is being used for illegal purposes and legal action will be taken against you. To make it official the caller will ask you to check your caller ID as it will show the official number of the Social Security Office (800-772-1213). The scammers can do this as a result of their electronic technology. If you don't have caller ID, they will give you the number and tell you to call it later. At that point they will ask you for your social security number so they can record it on their files and then they will notify the police on your behalf.

Unfortunately, many people give them their number and then they can use it to file fraudulent tax returns and to open credit card accounts and use it in other ways for their benefit. Never give out that card number! What you should do immediately is to contact the Social Security fraud hot line (800-269-0271) and report this matter to them.

Contact Adult Day Services at Virginia Tech to register 540-231-3161

MEMORY

Masterclass

Memory Masterclass When: M/W 4pm-5:30pm March 25th -May 1st Where: Hahn Horticulture Gardens Cost: \$75 for 6-week course on practical lifestyle strategies you can implement to support brain health.	Brain Engage When: Monday/Wednesday March 25th-May1st, 2pm-3:30pm Where: Hahn Horticulture Gardens Cost: \$75 for 6-week course exploring strategies for living a cognitively engaging lifestyle.
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Memory Masterclass is a six-week course on practical lifestyle strategies that you can implement to support your brain health. In the class we will learn about proper diet, beneficial exercise, good sleep habits, stress management, and ways to get your brain engaged. It is never too late to invest in your brain health. Even if you are noticing changes, research shows that lifestyle strategies can help you keep your brain working as long as possible.

In **Brain Engage** we explore strategies for living a cognitively engaging lifestyle. This six-week course will dive into the benefits of leisure activities, brain games, and mindfulness practices. Together we will try several new stimulating activities and develop a lifestyle that is brain engaging. This course is a launching pad to staying involved and keeping our brains fit.



Blacksburg Chapter #2613

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

Chapter Officers 2019

President • Jerry Niles, niles@vt.edu
Vice President • Don Creamer, dgc2@vt.edu
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- 2019—Tamara Hodsdon, Peter Magolda, Jim Montgomery, Wanda Smith
- 2020—Isabel Berney, Jeananne Dixon Bame, Hugh VanLandingham
- 2021—Doug Feuerbach, Judith Jones, Lisa Moose, Leslie Pendleton

Newsletter editors: Carolyn Rude, Sandra Griffith

Weather Policy


The Blacksburg chapter follows the weather policy of Montgomery County schools. If schools are closed, the chapter will not meet. If the school opening is delayed, the chapter will will meet.

AARP Website www.blacksburgaarp.org



Blacksburg Chapter #2613
 Jerry Niles, President
 P.O. Box 10082
 Blacksburg, VA 24062

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Blacksburg Chapter  Member Application for 2019

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: .

AARP Blacksburg Chapter • P.O. Box 10082 • Blacksburg, VA 24062



April 16 Chapter Meeting

Town Hall, with Jerry Niles and Leslie Pendleton

Jerry Niles and Leslie Pendleton will lead a discussion to hear members' ideas about what the Blacksburg chapter of AARP does well and what some possibilities are for reimagining its services.

Board members will facilitate conversation at tables of six. They will use a discussion guide and ratings pages for various projects and activities.

See more details in the president's column, and come to have conversations with members and to share your own ideas.

Mother's Day Food Drive May 21

Last year our Mother's Day Spring Food Drive was such a success we have decided to again support Mother's with babies and small children. Our local food banks tell me that these items are very rarely donated and desperately needed.

This Food Drive will take place during our May 21st Chapter Meeting. Please donate the following suggested items:

- Diapers—all sizes
- Pullups—all sizes
- Baby wipes
- Baby food (jars)
- Baby oatmeal
- Infant formula
- Toddler treats (Graduates)
- Individual servings of apple sauce
- Individual servings of cereal

Consider putting some of these items in your car now so that you don't forget on May 21.

Thank you for helping make our Spring Food Drive a success.

Sally Anna Stapleton

Remember to bring your plastic bags to the Community Center for recycling.

President's Column by Jerry Niles

Thinking About AARP Blacksburg

Several board meetings ago, Leslie Pendleton, a new Board member, wanted to know what the Chapter Care Committee did. It was explained that the committee sent messages of encouragement and condolences to members who had experienced illness or loss. Leslie, a licensed counselor and chair of the chapter's Health and Wellness fair, returned to the next meeting with the beginning of a plan to reimagine the Care Committee and to think of care more broadly with a special emphasis on responsiveness to the specific needs of members with respect to living well and aging successfully. In my view, Leslie's reimagining of the responsibility of the care committee has brought the chapter a fresh perspective on how we might think about what the chapter does for its members and the community through the lens of caring. Leslie's expanded perspective of care includes the provision of what is necessary for the well-being of someone (a member of the chapter) or something (the chapter).

As I have commented in an earlier column, what makes the Blacksburg AARP Chapter special to me is that it is a caring community that helps me live well. In general, the chapter attempts to support members in a variety of ways such as monthly meetings, social events, and service opportunities. Members in turn customize their participation to match their unique needs. Over the years the chapter has developed a culture of activities and opportunities for its members to assist in pursuing their personal goal related to their successful aging.

Many of us view the chapter positively and have some confidence that we are on the right track. Attendance at meetings is on the rise, and



please turn to p. 3

Upcoming Events

April 24, Community Foundation, "Give Big NRV"

May 21, AARP meeting, Mother's Day food drive

Inside this issue

Revisiting the album cover: Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Band (p. 2)

Meet new board member Doug Feuerbach (p. 4)

Legislative report (p. 5)

Volunteer Recognition



June Schmidt has served for many years on the Finance and Audit committees of AARP Blacksburg. The officers and Board of Directors express their genuine gratitude for her service.

In 2000–2001, she served as president of the Blacksburg chapter. During her term, she started the Health and Wellness Fair that has become such a centerpiece of the work that this chapter does.

Thank you, June.

The Beatles' Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Band: Revisiting the album cover

by Sandra Griffith

A number of AARP members took the LLI class on the Beatles in the fall of 2018. Instructor Joe Scallorns presented a review of the album cover for Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Band. Members of our generation who were not in the class may also enjoy remembering this item of our history.

Did you know it's been over 50 years since the Beatles released their ground breaking album, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*? The iconic cover, referred to as "the Mona Lisa of album covers," and "a dazzling display of modern art that defines its era," was designed by husband and wife team Peter Blake and Jann Haworth. Not surprisingly, the album won the Grammy Award for Best Album Cover, Graphic Arts in 1967.

The album cover includes a star-studded crowd gathered around a grave. To accomplish the arduous task of bringing together all these people, the artists created life-sized, black-and-white photographs pasted onto hardboard and hand tinted. The group consisted of John, Paul, and George's cultural heroes (Ringo abstained but agreed with the others' choices), comprising famous figures from history and pop culture.

Some of the celebrities represented include Mae West, Lenny Bruce, Carl Jung, Edgar Allan Poe, Fred Astaire, Bob Dylan, Tony Curtis, William S. Burroughs, Marilyn Monroe, Lewis Carroll, Shirley Temple, Marlon Brando, Albert Einstein, and dozens of others. John wanted to include Hitler and Jesus, but they were ruled out because of the controversy their inclusion could cause. (Reportedly, the cut out figure of Hitler is indeed included on the cover but obscured by the Beatles themselves.) Another suggestion, Mahatma Gandhi, was omitted because record company executives were concerned that his presence on the cover could be considered sacrilegious in India and might jeopardize album sales there.

The Beatles appear twice on the cover. One version is a replica of the band courtesy of Madame Tussaud's, who loaned the four wax figures for the photo shoot. In their suits and mop-top haircuts, they look young, somber, and innocent. The real Beatles posed in front of over 50 characters, dressed in specially tailored day-glo military uniforms with long hair and mustaches. Their appearance reflected their move from pop music and mop-top hair to a higher artistic plateau and their increasingly psychedelic style. Their foray into the drug culture is evident with the grave in the foreground with THE BEATLES spelled out in flowers trimmed with marijuana plants.



Pull out your old copy of the album and see how many personalities you can identify! Or go to <https://www.thebeatles.com/album/sgt-peppers-lonely-hearts-club-band>.

Some of our chapter's own celebrities

photos by Peter Magolda



president's message, continued from p. 1

a steady stream of new members has joined over the past several years. However, to date, we have very little data from the members' perspectives to tell us how the chapter is doing relative to helping us, the members, pursue our goals and meet our wide range of needs as we try to age successfully. Given Leslie's challenge to the Board to think about care in the context of the chapter more broadly, it occurred to me that it may be time to pause and have a reflective conversation among ourselves about how the chapter is doing in meeting the needs and expectations of the membership. To that end, I have asked the Program Committee to allow us to use the April monthly meeting program time to take the opportunity to reflect on what the chapter is doing and how it is relevant or not to your goals for living well and aging successfully. We want to find out if we are the kind of caring community that we aspire to be. Thus, the program for April will be an organized discussion among members about what we do as a chapter.

My hope is that this informal conversational format, led by Leslie and me, will enable you to share your views on features of the chapter's portfolio of activities and events that are relevant and helpful to you. We are especially interested in hearing ideas that you have about your successful aging experiences and what the chapter does that is consistent with and supportive of your needs and goals. We also want to hear your thoughts about what things you would like to continue or discontinue, what kind of programs you would like to see in the future and how the Chapter can make your AARP experience even richer. We want you to share things the chapter should be doing that it has not thought of yet. We want to know what you think of the newsletter and how it may better serve you.

Following lunch, we will form small table discussion groups and begin our conversations about these issues. We will provide a discussion guide, and someone from the Board will be at each table to help provide facilitation. I am confident that the discussions will be informative and fun and lead to more good outcomes for the chapter. I also hope that these smaller group discussions will help us form new social connections with others in the chapter we have not had the opportunity to talk with at previous meetings. All ideas and comments are welcome, big ones, small ones, short term practical fixes and longer-term conceptual ventures. We are looking for a good mix of ideas and perspectives from long-time members as well as newer members. So, if you have two cents, please come to the April monthly meeting and throw it in the pot. We will collate as much of the data from the conversations as we can and provide a summary of major points in the May newsletter. Perhaps as an outcome of our conversations we can even come up with an answer we can use at the Steppin' Out booth this summer when people come up and comment, "Oh AARP, I belong to the National. I didn't know they had a local chapter. Why should I join that?"

Enjoying the spring daffodils? So did poet William Wordsworth in the early 19th Century. After the blooms pass, he continues to enjoy them in memory.

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

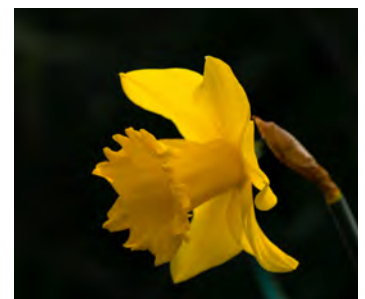
By William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.



Meet New Board Member: Doug Feuerbach

Doug was born in 1950 in Annapolis, MD. He always thanked his parents for making it easy for him to calculate his age. And yes, his father was career Navy and was stationed on Guam (with his mother), flying reconnaissance missions over enemy territory during WWII. His brother was born in 1954 on the same day. He always thanked his parents for making it easy for him to remember his brother's birthday. Doug grew up in Arlington, Virginia, beginning at age 4, except for two years in Brazil.

He attended the very patriotic sounding trio of primary and secondary schools: Jamestown Elementary, Williamsburg Jr. High, and Yorktown High School, where he lettered in Gymnastics. He helped Yorktown win the state meet that year competing in all-around and taking 4th place in the parallel bars.

In 1968, Doug left Arlington to attend Virginia Tech, get a quick 4-year degree in Chemistry, and leave. He has been in the New River Valley ever since. He looks back at his time in the chemistry department fondly, getting involved in undergraduate research and playing football on the low center part of the Davidson Hall roof (which is no longer there), and interning at Union Carbide in Charleston, WV, which whetted his appetite for an eventual career in manufacturing.

Before leaving Tech the first time, Doug worked for a couple of years in the Department of Horticulture, using his chemical background for a research project to extract and purify plant growth hormones from tomatoes grown in the Tech greenhouses. The lab he worked in had a walk-in freezer, and it was nice coming back from a summer lunchtime bike ride all hot and sweaty and walking into a room at -10 F for a quick cool down.

Doug's first job in industry was at the Radford Army Ammunition Plant as a Process Engineer working on various projects relating to wastewater treatment and monitoring. The highlight of his time at the Arsenal was observing up close a Korean War era Nike missile static fired, i.e., bolted down, to test its 25-year-old solid rocket motor. The energy from the rocket burn was the rough equivalent to what would be necessary to throw a pickup truck from Blacksburg to Roanoke. Doug thanked his co-workers for bolting down the missile so well.

From the arsenal, Doug went back to Virginia Tech for 5 years and became Assistant Director of what was then called the Office of Safety and Health Regulatory Programs, managing some of the university's environmental programs. This was his first significant exposure to the world of regulatory compliance, which was to carry him throughout the rest of

his career starting with his next move to Celanese in Giles County. He worked there for 20 years in various positions and eventually became the Environmental Team Leader over a small group of engineers managing the company's environmental compliance. Later, he was promoted to Group Environmental Coordinator providing technical regulatory leadership for the global Celanese Acetate sites. During his tenure at Celanese Doug volunteered to chair a committee that built and started up a \$1.2 million Employee Wellness Center, complete with a basketball court, workout equipment, and locker room facilities.



Doug Feuerbach chats with fellow board member, Lisa Moose

It was an very interesting project, and provided relief from the daily rigors of reading and complying with environmental regulations. What fun buying a basketball floor! He also became a corporate Environmental Lead auditor, and conducted over 20 audits in five countries over a 15-year period. Doug's final job was with the Dynax America Corporation in Roanoke, where he served as Assistant Environmental Manager and as a member of the plant man-

agement team. He continued his involvement with auditing while at Dynax, utilizing his training as a Lead Auditor for the ISO 14001 Environment Management System for which Dynax was certified.

Throughout his career Doug was active in the environmental community at the state and local levels, attending and presenting at various industrial and state environmental conferences. He was appointed to the Virginia State Advisory Board on Air Pollution by the Department of Environmental Quality and served as its Chairperson in 2007.

Doug was married for 47 years. He has two wonderful kids and five awesome grandkids. The oldest is graduating from Virginia Tech this year. Doug will miss the IT support and periodic requests to borrow a car. Doug enjoys the outdoor opportunities that surround the Blacksburg area near and far, going to music concerts, and cycling. He hopes to find fellow cyclists to ride with in the AARP.

In closing, he would like to mention his mom, who along with his father, was very inspirational throughout his life and who truly aged successfully. Having immigrated from Scotland at an early age and having been a young wife of a Navel officer, she never got to go to college until his father retired from the Navy. Then, pursuing her lifelong passion for knowledge, she entered George Mason University at the age of 59 and received a PhD in Clinical Psychology at age 70. She then became a practicing psychotherapist and later a faculty member at GMU where she worked until she was 89. Thanks, Mom.

Legislative Report *by Val Coluni*



1. Legislation: Interstate 81. A serious hazard on our roadway—I-81. Why? It has been overloaded for years; it is 50% over the traffic capacity for its design; its traffic load has more than doubled in the past 20 years; the Virginia portion sees 2,000 accidents a year. Our General Assembly recognizes that it is a serious problem and requires immediate attention. Several proposals were discussed in their recent sessions (tolls, gas tax, diesel tax, rail options), but not one of them was considered to be the best solution to correct the problem. As a result, there will be more delays in coming up with a solution now. Again a committee will be formed to focus on fixing the problem and most importantly to include the necessary *funding* proposals to provide specifics which may have been missing before! Their report is to be provided to the General Assembly by Dec. 15. The price tag to adequately fix the problem is estimated to be \$2 billion to \$8 billion. Please do not wait until December to talk to your representatives. NOW is the time to do it.

The funding problem for roadways exists elsewhere and some states are pursuing aggressive tax proposals to shore up their transportation budgets to fix roads, bridges, and related assets. At least 12 states are considering big increases in state gas taxes ranging from 4 cents per gallon to 45 cents per gallon (AL, KY, LA). In the past in Virginia funding limitation has been used to delay the solution to some future year. We are running out of time to ignore the problem. Accidents happen because of unsafe acts and unsafe conditions.

At its reconvened session on April 3 to consider the governor's amendments and vetoes, the General Assembly voted to

April 24, 2019



GiveBigNRV encourages charitable giving in the New River Valley to dozens of nonprofit organizations serving our region. The giving website allows donors to give easily and securely online to their favorite nonprofit organization or to any of the endowed funds of the Community Foundation of the NRV.

AARP Blacksburg sponsors GiveBigNRV.

To give on giving day, go to cfnrv.givebig.org.

approve increases in gas and diesel taxes and tractor-trailer registration fees to fund improvements to I-81.

2. Nursing Homes. Endangered and/or injured residents. The current Federal Administration has lowered the fines when it has to punish facilities which have been found to have endangered and/or injured residents. This action was in response to industry requests. We now as care givers for many in nursing homes either directly and/or indirectly must now monitor if these penalties/fines are set at a level to achieve our desired outcomes: quality care of the residents! Like any business there is good performance and marginal performance. Let's make sure that the reduced fines/penalties are not motivating lower performance. Constant and vigilant inspection is a must.

3. Legislation: Gerrymandering. The U.S. Supreme Court is now hearing an appeal by the Virginia House Republicans regarding our current voting districts. The case partially involves racial gerrymandering and a lower court opinion that found 11 Virginia House Districts to be unconstitutional when they were set up many years ago (this issue has been ruled by some lower courts in the past). Why this particular case is so important is if the ruling comes out against our House it could peril their 51-49 advantage in the House. The court opinion may not come out until this May or June.



Blacksburg Chapter #2613

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

Chapter Officers 2019

President • Jerry Niles, niles@vt.edu
Vice President • Don Creamer, dgc2@vt.edu
Secretary • Pat Hyer, hyerp@vt.edu
Treasurer • Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu
Assistant Treasurer • Ruth Anne Niles, rniles2@icloud.com

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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 \$___

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AARP Blacksburg Chapter • P.O. Box 10082 • Blacksburg, VA 24062



May 21 Chapter Meeting

Memory Masterclass

by Dr. Ila Schepisi, Director, Adult Day Services, Virginia Tech

Memory Masterclass is a program of Virginia Tech Adult Day Services. The program offers six-week courses on practical lifestyle strategies to support brain health. Students dive into topics of healthy diet, beneficial exercise, getting the brain engaged, managing stress, staying social, and using memory strategies. Research shows that it is never too late to invest in brain health, even if you are beginning to notice some changes.

Memory Masterclass is open to anyone over the age of 55 who is interested in taking charge of their brain health. Students have an opportunity to practically implement research-supported brain health strategies into everyday life and begin reaping the benefits of a brain healthy lifestyle.

In Brain Engage we explore strategies for living a cognitively engaging lifestyle. This six-week course will dive into the benefits of leisure activities, brain games, and mindfulness practices. Together we will try several new stimulating activities and develop a lifestyle that is brain engaging. This course is a launching pad to staying involved and keeping our brains fit.

Register Now call 540-231-3161 or email vtadulthoodservices@vt.edu

MEMORY

Masterclass

<p>Memory Masterclass When: Mon./Wed. 2-3:30pm May 20th-June 26th Where: Wallace Hall, Virginia Tech Cost: Free 6-week course on practical lifestyle strategies you can implement to support brain health.</p>	<p>Brain Engage When: Tues./Thurs. 2-3:30pm May 21st-June 27th Where: Wallace Hall, Virginia Tech Cost: Free 6-week course exploring strategies for living a cognitively engaging lifestyle.</p>
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Remember to bring your plastic bags to the Community Center for recycling.

President's Column by Jerry Niles

How is your attitude?

At our April chapter meeting, we asked those attending to rate how successfully they thought they were aging on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest score. Three people in the group chose 5 with the majority choosing 4, as they thought they were doing pretty well. (For those of you who weren't there, how would you rate yourself?) Members based their rating on such factors as participation in social networks, helping others, staying sharp by learning new things, staying fit and nourishing the spiritual side of their lives in a variety of ways. While generally happy about our status relative to these criteria, many of us believed we could do better in one or two areas.



Blacksburg Chapter AARP members, as a whole, reflect a positive attitude about successful aging and they work at it. They know that successful aging just doesn't happen and that it is not meant for spectators. One must be actively engaged. That engagement is typically founded on a positive attitude toward aging. Research supports the assertion that individuals with positive attitudes toward aging will age more successfully and tend to project longer, higher-quality lives for themselves. This might seem antithetical if you have had the opportunity to listen in on an informal group conversation of seniors. You wouldn't be surprised to hear descriptions of knee and hip replacements or treatments for other challenging maladies that aging places in our paths. However, if you listen long enough, the conversation will also include a description of exciting places a group member has visited, a heartwarming story or picture from a recent family visit, or something new they just learned. It is the latter experiences that contribute to creating a positive attitude toward successful aging.

Upcoming Events

June 18, picnic, p. 3

Inside this issue

Tax-Aide volunteers serve 1,294 clients in 2019, p. 2

Summer calendar, p. 4

Volunteers needed

Interested in legislative issues that affect seniors? Please consider writing some legislative updates for this newsletter (example p. 5). Contact Jerry Niles (niles@vt.edu) if you can contribute.

Mother's Day Food Drive May 21

Last year our Mother's Day Spring Food Drive was such a success we have decided to again support mothers with babies and small children. Our local food banks tell me that these items are very rarely donated and desperately needed.

This Food Drive will take place during our May 21st chapter meeting. Please donate the following suggested items:

- Diapers—all sizes
- Pullups—all sizes
- Baby wipes
- Baby food (jars)
- Baby oatmeal
- Infant formula
- Toddler treats (Graduates)
- Individual servings of apple sauce
- Individual servings of cereal

Consider putting some of these items in your car now so that you don't forget on May 21.

Thank you for helping make our Spring Food Drive a success.

Sally Anna Stapleton

Tax-Aide volunteers serve 1,294 clients in 2019

by Pat Ballard, Coordinator, AARP Blacksburg Tax-Aide Program

The local AARP Tax-aide program had another good year in helping our friends and neighbors get their taxes prepared. I will give you the statistical information first and then talk about one of our outstanding volunteers. I normally do not write about a particular counselor but thought Dianne Rencsok was deserving to be recognized.

First, the data

- 1,294 clients served
- 1,094 electronic filed tax returns
- 11 amended returns prepared
- 3 paper returns
- 210 questions and answer clients

Diversity of our clients

- 64 average age (range from age 17 to 96)
- 54% single
- 39% married filing jointly
- 5% head of household
- 2% married filing separately

The volunteers

Let's talk about the heart of the program, the people who volunteer. We had a total of 28 volunteers—23 counselors (3 new this year) and 5 client facilitators. Our basic positions with this program are counselors, local coordinator, site coordinator, instructor, training coordinator, technology coordinator and client facilitators.

For the past couple of years Dianne Rencsok has taken on the duties of Training Coordinator. We are required to provide training in preparation for the testing that is done to certify individuals at the appropriate level to prepare tax returns. All counselors must pass the test before they can prepare a return. The instruction and mentoring involve many, many hours of

preparation for training on Saturday mornings, beginning in the fall and continuing into January before tax season begins.

Dianne develops topics and get others to help with the instruction. She will have other counselors teach sessions and coordinates the topics with their strengths. Dianne also has Friday afternoon mentoring sessions where she is available to new counselors for tutoring and for returning counselors when help is needed on testing and workbook problems.

Dianne makes herself available to everyone and does so with a great enthusiasm and love for the Tax-Aide Program. When preparing tax returns, Dianne makes sure each client is comfortable with the process and what she will be doing for them. Volunteers like Dianne are rare and are so valuable to any all-volunteer service. We are truly fortunate to have Dianne be a member of AARP and so willing to work with this wonderful program.



Two facilitators greet clients.



Two counselors take a break.



Dianne Rencsok, Training Coordinator and Counselor, helps a client with his tax return.

president's message, continued from p. 1

Alan Castel, in his book, *Better with Age*, shares a survey that can help reveal your attitude toward aging. Several of the items are listed as follows as statements for you to react to. By rating each statement on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being "I don't agree at all" and 10 being "I strongly agree" you can get a sense of what your attitude is toward aging. A lower rating reflects a more positive attitude.

- The human body is like a car when it wears out.
- I expect as I get older, I will spend less time with family and friends.
- Being lonely is just something that happens when people get old.
- It is normal to be depressed when you get old.

My ratings were more toward the disagree side of the scale, 1s and 2s. However, if I had taken the same survey when I was in my 50s or early 60s I am certain I would have selected higher numbers, indicating a more negative attitude toward aging. The research is consistent in documenting younger people's negative attitudes toward aging as compared to seniors. Although, as I have experienced the unexpected joys of successful aging, I have found myself sharing the good news with younger friends and colleagues in their 50s and early 60s, who are still working diligently on their professions. I try to convey the expectations that reflect the rich life that is ahead for them. I am usually greeted with a look of uncertainty, that says, "Are you sure?" and "That sounds great, I think."

Perhaps the best way we find to communicate the joys of successful aging to our younger friends and family is through being a good model. The first time I remember thinking about someone as a model of successful aging was when I was 50. I was hiking Bald Mountain in the Adirondacks. I watched my brother-in-law navigate the path with little effort. Thinking that he was pretty old at 65, I thought, "wow, I hope I can do that when I am 65." (My wish now is I can do that hike when I am 80.) Since that time, I have observed countless individuals who I consider to be terrific models of successful aging. Our chapter is full of successful agers; thus, they are easy to find. Two of the three people who rated themselves the highest on the successful aging scale I mentioned in the opening of this column are over 80. Now that I know what I am looking for, I notice models of successful aging everywhere. We see remarkable stories on TV or read about them in books, and we see models in our everyday lives. Recently I saw someone I knew walking around the mall for exercise being escorted by his spouse. This person, well into his 90s, was a competitive runner for many years. I was impressed that he was making the effort to pursue his passion to keep moving, albeit slowly and assisted. At our last AARP Board meeting, I looked up to see a board member, Jim Montgomery, whose legs had been severely injured in an accident last year, walk into the room aided by his walker, a friend, and two new prosthetic devices. It was clear that there was no way that an unfortunate accident was going to derail Jim's successful aging process.

I have many more examples of good models of successful aging that I could share with you and I am sure that you have them too. These wonderful models of successful aging provide us with in-

spiration and defining guides that continue to help build a positive attitude about what successful aging can be. I invite you to participate in a homework assignment for May. Make a list of 5 of your favorite models of successful aging and think about why you selected each one. If possible, let them know that you see them as a model of successful aging for you and others and thank them. Finally, keep your eye out for new models of successful aging. I guarantee it will continue to enhance your positive attitude toward aging—and you have fun watching for examples.

AARP Picnic Tuesday, June 18 5–7:30 pm

sign up at tinyurl.com/aarp-picnic-2019

We will gather at the farm home of Terry Wildman and Sue Magliaro for a picnic and music provided by a local DJ. The chapter will provide chicken BBQ. Please bring an appetizer, side dish, or dessert to share. If you want a beverage other than lemonade or tea, please bring that, too.

Date / time Tuesday, June 18, 5:00–7:30 pm

Location 3335 Elk Creek Drive, Christiansburg; phone: 540.320.5599 or 540.382.5577

Food chicken and pork BBQ from Due South + a special food item provided by Terry and collaborators.. Lemonade, ice tea, and water will be provided. Bring an appetizer, side dish, or dessert to share + your beverage.

Sign up Go to tinyurl.com/aarp-picnic-2019 to tell us how many people will come, which food you will bring, and whether you need a ride.

Directions

From exit 114 on I-81 south, turn south on Route 8 toward Floyd.

Go 2.7 miles south on Rt. 8. Turn right on Childress Road (Rt. 693). Aly's restaurant is located on your left at the intersection.

Drive 3.3 miles on Childress Road.

Turn left onto Elk Creek Drive, the entrance to Childress Estates. Look for colorful balloons here. Follow Elk Creek Drive to the cul de sac, about a third of a mile. Turn right on the first driveway at the cul de sac (more balloons!) and at this point you will see the parking area.

From Radford, the best route is south on Tyler Road (passing the Radford hospital), which dead ends at Childress Road. Turn left on Childress Road, go uphill about a quarter mile and turn right onto Elk Creek

Summer Calendar 2019

Music

Summer Concerts on Henderson Lawn, Blacksburg

VT campus 6:00–7:30 pm Fridays, June 7–July 26, free

See the calendar of bands at www.performingarts.vt.edu/saf

Music on the Lawn, Christiansburg Library 7:00–8:30 pm

Saturdays June 15, July 27, August 17, Sept. 28 free

flyers available at the Christiansburg branch

Moss Arts Center, www.artscenter.vt.edu

“Moss Pit”: Johanna Vaughan and Lo Key, Friday, May 31, The Cube, 9 pm, \$5 cover

Robert Randolph and the Family Band, Friday, June 7, 8:30 pm \$25

Remembering Doc Watson, Sunday, June 9, 7:30 pm, \$15

related events June 8 and 9: artscenter.vt.edu/performances/remembering-doc.html

Chamber Music artscenter.vt.edu/performances/summer-2019-chamber1.html free

Thursday, June 20, 7:30 pm

Market Square Jam, Downtown Blacksburg

Wednesdays June through September 8–10 pm

Theatre

Studio Theatre, Squires Student Center, Virginia Tech, free, but please make reservations

www.performingarts.vt.edu/summer-arts-festival

Schoolhouse Rock Live!, June 15, 16, 17, 2019, 2:00 pm and 4:00 pm

Movies **The Lyric Theatre**, Blacksburg, thelyric.com

Summer Classic Matinee Series

Saturdays and Wednesdays 3:00 pm, free

June 8, 12 *Harold and Maude*

July 6, 10 *Night at the Opera*

August 10, 14 *Guys & Dolls*

Saturday, July 13 *Footloose* 35 anniversary screening, 7:00 pm regular admission charge; followed by a *Footloose* dance fest

Movies **Regal New River Valley**, 110 New River Road, Christiansburg www.fathomevents.com check times

Classic Movies \$12.50

May 19, 21, 22 *Steel Magnolias* 4 pm Sunday, 7 pm Tues, Wed

June 16, 18 *Field of Dreams* 1 pm Sunday, 2, 4 pm Tues

June 23, 25 *Forrest Gump* 3 pm Sunday, 7 pm Tues

July 14, 17 *Easy Rider* 4 pm Sunday, 4, 7 pm Wed

July 21, 24 *Glory* 1 pm Sunday, 4, 7 pm Wed

Aug 11, 14 *Hello, Dolly!* 1 pm Sunday, 12, 7 pm Wed

Sept 1, 4 *Lawrence of Arabia* 1 pm Sunday, 12, 6 pm Wed

Special Events: Blacksburg

www.performingarts.vt.edu/saf

Summer Solstice Festival Saturday, June 15 1–11 pm

Independence Day Celebration Monday, July 4 Parade 2–3 and fireworks 9:30

Art at the Market Saturday, July 20 9 am–2 pm

Steppin' Out Street Festival Friday and Saturday August 2 and 3, 10 am–10 pm

Senior Programs (trips, classes, events)

www.blacksburg.gov/recreation

Special Events: Christiansburg

va-christiansburg2.civicplus.com/index.aspx?NID=595

Independence Day Celebration, Monday, July 4

Montgomery Museum Heritage Day, Saturday, August 24

Senior Trips (Wohlfahrt Haus Theater, more)

va-christiansburg2.civicplus.com/index.aspx?NID=797

Kiwanis Wilderness Trail Festival, Saturday, September 21, 9 am–4 pm, Downtown Christiansburg. Crafters, live bands, food trucks, antique and classic cars, craft demonstrations, open jam, community stage, children's area

Farmer's Markets

Blacksburg, Corner of Roanoke Street and Draper Road, April–October, Wednesdays 12:00–6:00 pm; Saturdays, 8:00 am–2:00 pm

Christiansburg, Hickok Street, May–October, Thursdays 3:00–7:00 pm

New River Valley Garden Tour 2019

Saturday, July 6, 9 am–5 pm

See seven wonderful summer gardens. Tickets available beginning June 1 at public libraries

mfrlfriends.org/gardentour.html

HD Broadcasts: Ballet, Theater, Opera

Regal New River Valley, 110 New River Road, Christiansburg

Bolshoi Ballet: May 19 *Carmen Suite/Perushka* 12:55 pm \$18

NT Live: June 3 *The Audience* (Helen Mirren) 7 pm \$18

July 8 *Hamlet* (Benedict Cumberbatch) 7 pm \$18

Opera: June 4 *Pavarotti* screening 7 pm, \$12.50

June 19 *Roméo et Juliette* (encore)

Legislative Report by Val Coluni



1. Legislation, I-81: Success! Funding for repairs, improvements, safety redesign, and adjustments for future budgets to handle the needs of our highways and transportation assets. These bills and reforms are *major* accomplishments due to the effective bipartisanship by the governor and the state legislators and their staffs. We should enthusiastically applaud their efforts. Here are a few of the provisions: An I-81 committee is established to monitor the conditions of these assets; a 2.1% gas tax will be levied on certain regional high volume sections of I-81 (all of this tax will be deposited in a new I-81 improvement fund); effective July 1, 2021, an additional 2.3% tax on diesel fuels. In some cases, some of these fees would not apply to farm vehicles. In my report last month, I listed

three states who were considering gas tax increases from 4 cents per gallon to 45 cents per gallon—here are a few more states who are also considering such tax increases: Arizona, Hawaii, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, Ohio, Vermont. If you need more information on these subjects, request VA House Bill #2718 and/or VA Senate Bill #1716 from your state official.

2. Legislation, Lowering the high costs of drug prices. A high degree of effort continues but some historical practices and some legislators are making the job much more difficult. For example a practice of “spread pricing” where benefit managers can charge one amount to health plans and then turn around and charge a higher price to others to increase profits; also some legislators are advising some not to share critical information with those conducting studies about business practices in their company. Some Federal bills on reduced prices has been approved at the sub-committee level with full review at the federal level scheduled for May 2019.

3. Scams, Hoaxes, Disinformation. To write this column, I always use multiple sources to cross check my reported information. One subject that upsets me greatly is the continued abuse of seniors. The methods seem to increase from year to year. Kiplinger Magazine recently published (April 2019, p. 9) a list of Red Flags of Fraud, which included some frauds I have not considered: withdrawals and/or closing accounts without regard to penalties and frequently appearing at the bank with new/unknown friends. Frequently question what you encounter!!

Volunteers Needed

Steppin' Out AARP booth April 2, 3

AARP will host a booth at the Steppin' Out festival in Blacksburg. If you could help with a 2-hour shift, please contact Sally Anna Stapleton, sanna418@gmail.com.

At the booth, volunteers will share information about AARP but also about issues we support, such as nonpartisan redistricting.

LLI plans a rich selection of courses and events for fall 2019

The program committee for the Lifelong Learning Institute is completing plans for the fall offerings of courses and events. Catalogs will be distributed in August.

Opportunities abound. Some familiar and popular courses will return—“Getting your ducks in a row,” memoir writing, watercolor painting, and wine appreciation.

But also look for courses on the Jamestown Colony as America's “big bang” experience; the U.S. and the Arab World; Columbine—background, the incident, media response, reactions and recovery; *The Great Gatsby* in print and film; music theory; Appalachian music; the literature of food; justice—what is the right thing to do?

For skills development, you might get certified in CPR, try a course on learning to be happy, get some tips in talking across political divides, or practice conversational Italian.

In the spring, LLI enrolled 500+ students, who typically raved about the quality of instruction. The fall promises to offer the same rich variety of experiences for eager lifelong learners.



Blacksburg Chapter #2613

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

Chapter Officers 2019

President • Jerry Niles, niles@vt.edu
Vice President • Don Creamer, dgc2@vt.edu
Secretary • Pat Hyer, hyerp@vt.edu
Treasurer • Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu
Assistant Treasurer • Ruth Anne Niles, rniles2@icloud.com

Board of Directors

- 2019—Tamara Hodsdon, Jim Montgomery, Wanda Smith
- 2020—Isabel Berney, Jeananne Dixon Bame, Hugh VanLandingham
- 2021—Doug Feuerbach, Judith Jones, Lisa Moose, Leslie Pendleton


Newsletter editors: Carolyn Rude, Sandra Griffith

AARP Website www.blacksburgaarp.org



Blacksburg Chapter #2613
 Jerry Niles, President
 P.O. Box 10082
 Blacksburg, VA 24062

**Nonprofit
 Organization
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Blacksburg, VA
 Permit No. 32**

Blacksburg Chapter  Member Application for 2019

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: .

AARP Blacksburg Chapter • P.O. Box 10082 • Blacksburg, VA 24062

Blacksburg Chapter AARP #2613

Serving the Greater New River Valley, VA



AARP Chapters are separately incorporated affiliates of AARP

newsletter

September-October 2019



Sept. 17 Chapter Meeting

Let's Get Ready for the 2020

Census Daryl Warner, US Census Bureau

Census data shapes the services New River Valley residents rely on. From health to education to transportation to emergency services, planning and funding decisions for every sector of community life are impacted by data and trends generated by the Census Bureau. The presentation shares how the 2020 Census will invite everyone to participate and how we are collaborating with partners to ensure seniors can do so easily and safely.

Daryn J. Warner serves as a Partnership Specialist for the U.S. Census Bureau based in Roanoke. For the decennial census, he collaborates with local governments, community organiza-



tions, and neighborhood advocates to ensure everyone is counted in 2020. This continues his commitment to collaborative civic engagement. For the last 11 years, Daryn led innovative partnerships in education, health, and community economic development for the U.S. Peace Corps across Africa. For the decade before that, he led community engagement strategies for arts and service organizations, including at Mill Mountain Theatre. He is a graduate of Virginia Tech.

Oct. 15 Chapter Meeting

Medicare and Pharmaceutical

Pricing Senthil Marimuthu, Blacksburg and Christiansburg Pharmacies

Sen will give an overview of how drug pricing fits in with Medicare, what is covered and what is not. More importantly, why isn't it? Many of us get our drug costs covered by Medicare Advantage plans or other insurance, but does that fragmentation influence the ultimate cost of drugs? Are discount coupons a good idea? How can you get help in Virginia if you cannot afford your medications? Short of a major change in Medicare's ability to negotiate lower prices, what can you do to manage the cost of your medications? From large scale advances, to very individualized options, we will talk about what exists out there to help you.

Senthil Marimuthu is the owner of the Blacksburg and Christiansburg Pharmacies, one of few compounding pharmacies. Sen has brought a personalized, small town feel to a great local



business. While he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in India, he sat for his pharmacy board exams in the U.S. After a decade in retail pharmacy, he opened his own business in 2014. Sen is widely known as a knowledgeable resource, skilled businessman, and a friend to all.

Upcoming Chapter Events

Oct. 3, Fall Social, Whitebarrel Winery

Dec. 10, AARP Holiday Luncheon

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AARP/LLI/VTRA Social

October 3, 2019

5:30-8:30pm

Whitebarrel Winery

4025 Childress Road, Christiansburg

Tickets (\$25 each) are now available online:

<https://tinyurl.com/whitebarrel-social>

Your ticket will get you either

- A glass of wine, paired with a larger appetizer, or
- A tasting of 5 wines paired with 5 different 'tastes' of appetizers

Tickets are also available at the door.

September Food Drive

September is National Hunger Action Month. The AARP Virginia State is supporting food drives throughout the state. The Blacksburg Chapter is holding our September food drive at the local chapter meeting September 17. We are collecting for "Wolf Packs" weekend backpacks for Montgomery Central School.

Items Needed in Individual Serving Sizes

- 100% juice boxes 8 oz
- Shelf stable milk boxes 8 oz
- Small fruit Cups
- Chicken or vegetable soup 10.75 oz
- Fruit chews and/or cereal or granola bars
- Macaroni & cheese singles 2.05 oz
- Oatmeal (boxes with individual envelopes)
- Canned vegetables 8oz (pull tops)

- Tuna 5 oz (pull tops)
- Individual cracker packages
- Small Pork & Beans cans (pull tops)
- Ramen noodles
- Deodorant (male or female)
- Toothbrush/toothpaste

Thank you for providing items for this worthy cause.

We will collect pet food in November.



Opening of the Second Act

I have always considered September to be the second act of the AARP year. January through June, the first act, is filled with interesting programs, food drives, and service and social activities.

During July and August many of us are off on journeys to learn new things, enjoy ourselves, and connect with family living across the country and the world. AARP Blacksburg's second act, September through December, is filled with more opportunities to learn new things, reconnect with old friends, and enjoy social activities like the gathering at Whitebarrel winery October 3 and the Holiday Luncheon December 10. I hope that you will be able to engage in the chapter-sponsored activities during this fall's second act in the annual AARP Blacksburg play.

Reflecting on the Essence of the Chapter

During last April's monthly meeting, we asked members to reflect on the chapter's efforts to support members on their journey of successful aging and specify how the various activities of the chapter met (or did not meet) their needs. Members were unequivocal in underscoring the positive impact that the chapter has on their their successful aging plan. They pointed to the social connections they made with "great people" during the social time of the meetings, the opportunities to learn new things, and the chance to help others, especially seniors. Members also shared ideas for future programming. They like programming that informs them about new ideas, suggests ways of contributing positively to society, and focuses on subjects that connect to their lives, like how to get the best out of your memory or how to age in place effectively. I think you can see, as described elsewhere in this newsletter, that the program committee, led by Judith Jones and capably assisted by Lisa Moose and Wendy Baldwin listened to this feedback as they built the program for this fall and next spring. The Board has also responded to your suggestions.

Sharing New Ideas: Partnerships, Programs, Newsletter, and Website

As the discussion groups thought about new ideas the chapter might consider, members suggested closer cooperation with Warm Hearth Village. Conversations between chapter leaders and Tandra Dixon, Marketing and Development for Warm Hearth, were initiated and a way forward planned. One result was an event in late June. Because of highly positive reactions of chapter members to the program at the May meeting on the Adult Day Services Program at Virginia Tech, specifically the Memory Masters Class, Lisa Moose suggested that we work with WHV to offer an encore program on site. The result was a wonderfully productive collaboration between the chapter, Adult Day Services, and Warm Hearth. Eighty people participated in the program on Memory Masters and in addition had the opportunity to become a certified Dementia Friend as part of the WHV's efforts to become the first Dementia Friendly Senior Living Community in a new state of Virginia program. As an added bonus, Warm Hearth Village provided one of their delicious lunches for all the participants.

Feedback on the **newsletter** revealed that most participants read each edition of newsletter and appreciate the usefulness of descriptions of upcoming programs, information about and profiles of members, notice of community activities, descriptions and analysis of legislative news, and helpful information about senior life. The development and distribution of a quality newsletter is no small accomplishment. The chapter has been fortunate to have the services of editor Carolyn Rude, working with contributor Sandra Griffith, as well as with Coreen Mett, who produces the mailing labels, and Jeananne and Allen Bame, who prepare the newsletters for mailing according to Post Office specifications. Members and community members have contributed useful content.

To continue the newsletter, the Board has decided to alter the publishing schedule to make the process more manageable for those who produce it. Going forward you will receive the newsletter bimonthly. Your newsletter this month says September/October. The programs for those two months are both highlighted. You will also receive an email blast at the beginning of the second month reminding you of the upcoming program.

Members also affirmed that the **website** provides valuable current information. Don Creamer continues to serve above and beyond the normal call of duty in keeping the website current, informative, and user friendly. After the April meeting, he made some design changes to increase the site's usability. If you haven't looked at it lately, I recommend that you take a ten-minute tour. You will enjoy it. <http://blacksburgaarp.org>

Thinking about Membership Renewal

Our membership year is from January through December while our programs and activities begin in September. These two beginning periods confuse some people about when to renew. To address this problem the Board has approved a new policy that will allow anyone who joins August 1, or after, the current year be credited with membership through 2020. If you forget to renew after January of 2020, we will remind you. The chapter does not drop anyone from the rolls until they have not renewed for two consecutive years as we are interested in including, not excluding, people. I have recently tested the online membership renewal system by renewing our family's membership for 2020 through the website. Coreen Mett, our membership data guru, confirmed that I was successful and that I am now a member for 2020. Also, when I submitted my renewal, I was sure to add my spouse's name and email so the database keeps her membership information up-to-date. (My chapter renewal is the only thing on which I am now ahead of schedule in my life's path). The chapter website will conveniently assist you in your renewal and you will receive a receipt to help you remember to that you renewed. Of course, you can always use the form provided in the newsletter if you are more comfortable with that format.

As the second act of the AARP Blacksburg opens this September, I hope to see you at the monthly meeting on the 17th where, as one of our members said, "An AARP meeting is a place where everyone knows your name—especially if you are wearing a nametag."

I had never thought of going on an African safari until my work took me to all corners of the continent. Tired of going just for work, I enlisted my husband to meet me in Kenya after I had been working. We decided on three camps within Kenya and chose to fly between them to make the most of our ten-day holiday. Since I was already in the country, I went with a driver to pick up my husband. As we left the Nairobi airport, a herd of zebras ran across the road in front of us! What a great welcome to the country! The Nairobi national park abuts the city without fences or walls, so occasionally you see wildlife where you least expect it.

The next day we headed out to the first camp, Amboseli. Loaded into a small plane, we could spot wildlife from the air. But when we got to the airstrip in the park, no jeep was waiting to take us to the camp. Hm. Thinking about the wildlife we had seen, I didn't want to become part of a buffet for predators! But the pilot told us that the jeep had been held up by elephants on the road that cut through the marsh. Whew. The car arrived and off we went. When we got to the marsh, the elephants were still there, just off the road.

Over the years we had watched more than our share of nature videos, big cat diaries and so forth. In those cases, professional teams spend a year (or more) filming wildlife and then editing it down to amazing segments. Maybe we were spoiled by all that? No. Every day on safari, we saw something that was over the top, jaw dropping, and it started even before we actually started our safari.

First day out in an open jeep, I was dying to see lions, being a longtime big cat person. Finally, our driver said "well, there's your first lion." I squinted to see what I thought was a lion off in the distance until I realized the lion he was talking about was right next to the jeep! He was keeping watch, it seemed, while a female wrestled some cubs. The poor thing would pick up a cub by the scruff of its neck and carry it to a protected area, while the other cubs came out and frolicked. Pick up another one and the first one came back out! As a mother of twins, I had great empathy for her plight.

With a full day of seeing endless wildlife, we were ready for dinner and a rest. The dining area was across a pond from the rest of the park and slowly it filled up with the dark shapes of elephants across the pond. Perhaps the best sight was the sky. As we were miles and miles from any source of light, the sky dazzled us with a million stars and the milky way.

The giraffes seem like such quiet (true) and peaceable (not necessarily true) animals. Two males fight to establish dominance, not to injure or kill, by swinging the huge neck and hitting the other's neck. When their mission has been accomplished, they wander off (together) to find some tasty leaves to eat.

There may not be anything cuter than a baby elephant who is stomping around, flapping its ears, and bellowing. Elephants do not like lions, so they get agitated if they sense lions in the neighborhood. Lions would only go after baby elephants, so you can see the tensions that can arise.

Speaking of tensions, we drove into an area where our driver said a pride of lions had been spotted earlier. The whole pride of lions was

up in a stand of trees. One of the females thought a young male was getting too close to her cub so she let him know. That is a sound that raises the hair on the back of your neck! And, it makes you want to look up as you drive around. House cats get up in trees, so I guess it isn't so surprising that lions do, but I never thought I'd see a pride of lions up in the trees.

Leopards are beautiful but fairly rare and hard to spot. We were thrilled to see one sitting at the base of a tree with the body of a young hoofed creature. The sheer power of the leopard's jaw and body were on display as she hauled the carcass up the tree where she could feast now and save some for another day. Sort of the safari equivalent of a great carry-out box after a delicious meal!

Monkeys are not always the cute creatures they are presented to us. Having breakfast outside one day, a monkey just decided that our toast was his toast so he jumped down from a tree and took it! Another time one came into our tent and riffled through papers.

All of our time in the camps was spent driving around in 40-year-old Land Rovers, open to the world around us. You really felt you were part of the scenery, but the animals ignore you completely. Lions would be in the midst of eating a zebra, but they didn't care that we pulled up near to them. The guides were fabulous. Most were Masai tribesmen who had lived in the parks and whose knowledge of the land and the animals were encyclopedic. To their life experience, they added special training in animals (and I suspect car repair). And they were gentle souls—clearly an addition to the experience of being on safari.

Let's talk about tents. We stayed in tents, but don't get the idea we were roughing it. These tents had floors, king sized beds, and full bathrooms. Now, since you are in the park and open to animals, you cannot leave the tent at night unless to use a flashlight to signal for one of the guides to come get you. That was never an issue—after a full day on safari and an evening meal you just want to sleep!

When our plane landed at Little Governor's camp and we drove over in time for lunch, we were a little surprised to be asked to leave our table and move up onto a pavilion. Why? "Elephant come." One very large elephant came and wandered through the tables, ignored the salad bar, and moved on without so much a tipping over a chair!

Being a big cat person, I was thrilled to see lions and cheetahs. One afternoon we saw a few other cars were gathered together. That can only mean one thing: game had been spotted.

It was midday and quite hot and the cheetahs had found they could sit in the shade of the cars. You can't get closer than that to the wonders of Africa.

Samburu is known for having a different breed of giraffe and of zebra. Well, how different can they be? Different enough that it is immediately apparent and making the camp a great experience. Each camp also offered up an array of birds that made me understand why people might sign up for a "birding safari" where the whole experience is centered on spotting birds.

If you love animals and have ever vaguely considered going on a safari, do it!



Aging Happily *by Vicky Dierckx*

Vicky Dierckx is a native of Belgium. She holds a PhD in Psychological Science. In fall 2019, she will teach a 6-week class for LLI on learning to be happy.

A recent poll among the AARP Blacksburg Chapter members showed that the group feels they are aging pretty successfully. It is a good bet that those chapter members also would testify to leading a happy and fulfilling life.

At first glance, happiness seems to be a personal thing. Some people are born a little gloomier than others, for example, and not every activity makes everybody equally happy. Yet, the scientific study of happiness has revealed that there are some principles that seem to apply broadly to all age groups, including seniors.

First, happiness is not as personal as one would expect. Research has found that other people matter a great deal for one's happiness. People are the happiest when they are spending time and interacting with others, even when these others are strangers. Happy people also have bigger and tighter social networks, offering them more social support when things get tough. An 81-year-old Harvard study, in which men were followed from age 19 to 90, revealed that the happiest among the oldest were the ones that were more socially connected. This finding has been confirmed for women as well.

Sadly, a recent (2018) AARP survey has shown that not everybody is doing as well as the AARP Blacksburg chapter members. Overall, 35% of Americans aged 45 or older feels lonely. This translates to 47.8 million people! Some of them never call or meet up with friends or never talk to their neighbors. Most of this group (up to 64%) indicates that they are indeed feeling lonely. Being lonely not only affects one's happiness and

mental health, but also one's physical health. An overview of 148 scientific studies found that people with rich social relationships are less likely to die from diseases compared to people with poor social relationships. Being lonely is about as bad for one's health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day and worse than physical inactivity. So, pick up that phone and call that friend, socialize with your neighbors, talk to that stranger in the store, and keep on participating in AARP meetings and events!

Another commonality among happy people is that they are always willing to help others. One form of helping that is strongly related to happiness is volunteering. Research has shown that people who volunteer at least once a week are happier than those who do not volunteer. The more hours one volunteers per week, the happier one becomes. At least, up to the point where helping others becomes an obligation. This happiness effect is the strongest for people aged 40 and older. Indeed, volunteering offers plenty of opportunities for social contact, stimulates the brain, and provides people with a sense of purpose that structures their days and weeks. All these things are especially important after retirement. Luckily, Blacksburg offers plenty of opportunities to volunteer!

There is much more you can do to increase your own happiness and the happiness of the people living around you. You can start by practicing gratitude, learning how to explain events in an optimistic manner, and formulating meaningful goals. Happiness also is enhanced by using your strengths in new ways, learning how to be more mindful, spending more time in nature, exercising more, and working on a better sleep routine. Investing in your happiness is not hard and the benefits of the efforts will be ample. There are plenty of interesting readings on happiness available in the Blacksburg library and on the Greater Good website of Berkeley University (<https://greatergood.berkeley.com>).

Being Happy at the June AARP Picnic *photos by Lisa Speas*



RSVP of Montgomery County and Radford

RSVP is one of the community organizations that the Blacksburg chapter of AARP supports with its annual gifts.

Life isn't over when you retire...

Join RSVP Today



What is RSVP?

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program of Montgomery County and Radford (RSVP) invites adults aged 55 and over to use their skills and life experiences to answer the call of their neighbors in need.

RSVP volunteers serve part-time, helping through a variety of local non-profit organizations, agencies, and institutions that are designated as volunteer work stations.

RSVP is funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Montgomery County Government.

RSVP Quick Facts

Among their many accomplishments, RSVP volunteers:

- Saved NRV Residents \$425,841 through Medicare counseling to seniors.
- Collated bulk mailings for 6 local non-profit agencies.
- Assisted local clothing and food banks to raise \$255,997 in additional resources to sustain their missions.
- Provided coupons, care packages and greeting cards for veterans and military families. \$695,942 in coupons were mailed to the Overseas Coupon Program.
- Provided visitation, entertainment, classes, and parties for residents of nine nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and veteran care centers.
- Through fundraising efforts, the Advisory Council awarded two \$1,000 scholarships to area high school seniors preparing to pursue studies in the areas of human services or medical services.

Annual Statistics

- Volunteers: 282
- Organizations Served: 64
- Hours Served: 56,319

For more information, contact RSVP Coordinator Mandy Hayes at hayesaw@montgomerycountyva.gov or 540-382-5775

Thank you to everyone who participated in and volunteered to cover the AARP table for the **Steppin' Out Festival**. Serving as the cooling center for the festival was a great success, and we signed up a few new members.

LLI Charter Trips for 2020

LLI charters are a great way to see special sites, to learn something new, and to travel with others from the NRV. Two charters for 2020 still have space. Both are small group trips.

Out and About in Chicago: Art, Architecture, History and More

June 14–19, 2020, Program No. 21908, (\$1479/person for double)

- *Registration end date for charter enrollments:* 11/1/2019

Chicago is a vibrant city packed with enough art, history, culture and stories to capture the mind of any visitor. Learn about the life and work of the iconic architect Frank Lloyd Wright, through an expert-led exploration of his Prairie-style home and studio in the charming and historic Oak Park, Illinois. See how the story of Chicago's evolution is told in its preserved architecture and pay visits to museums and cultural institutions. This is a Road Scholar "Signature City" "Flex" trip that allows you free time in the afternoon to explore aspects of the city that speak to you.



The Best of the Rockies By Rail: Western Canada's Splendor

August 9–20, 2020, Program No. 3748; **Enroll by Oct 31 and take \$300 off the price (\$6299/person for double)**

- *Registration end date for charter enrollments:* 12/31/2019

Experience the wonder of the rugged, beautiful Canadian Rockies in Alberta and British Columbia. Journey through green valleys, past sapphire rivers and wide, jade lakes as you head into the heart of the mountains. Visit the soaring resort town of Banff, where you can explore the hot springs that have made this place famous. See Lake Louise's famed emerald waters, born of the glaciers that overlook it. Complete your adventure with three nights in the cosmopolitan coastal city of Vancouver.

To register for either trip, please go to www.roadscholar.org and search for the program number. Explore the detailed itineraries on the website and review the activity level to be sure you can manage planned activities. Under "Dates & Prices" (in the blue bar), select the date of our charter, which will be marked "Private Group." Click "Enter Code" and type in the program number; click on red "Go" button. Or register by phone: call Road Scholar at 1-800-322-5315; give the program number and date, and tell the representative that you are a member of the LLI at VT. At least one member of the traveling party must be an LLI member. Questions to Pat Hyer, hyerp@vt.edu or 540-951-4968.

HD Broadcasts: Opera, Ballet, Classic Movies

The Regal Cinema in Christiansburg (110 New River Road) shows HD broadcasts of Metropolitan Opera, Bolshoi Ballet, and classic movies. See <https://www.fathomevents.com/events/> for information and tickets.

Metropolitan Opera Saturdays, Wednesdays (\$22 senior)

Opera synopses and cast listings are available for each performance at metopera.org/season/in-cinemas/ Scroll down, hover over the opera title, then click on “synopsis & cast sheets” in the upper right.

2019 Encore performance 6:30 pm the following Wednesday except as noted

Oct 12 *Turandot* 12:55 pm 3 hr 25 min

Oct 26 *Manon* 12:55 pm 4 hr 15 min

Nov 9 *Madama Butterfly* 12:55 pm. 3 hr 35 min
Encores Nov 13 (1 pm, 6:30 pm) and Nov 16 (12:55 pm)

Nov 23 *Akhmaten* 12:55 pm. 4 hr
Encore Dec 4

Dec 7 *The Magic Flute* 12:55 pm 2 hr; no encore

Dec 15 *Wozzeck* 12:55 pm 2 hr

2020 Encore performance 6:30 pm the following Wednesday except as noted

Feb 1 *Porgy and Bess* 12:55 pm 3 hr 40 min
Encores Feb 5 (1 pm, 6:30 pm) and Feb 8 (12:55 pm)

Feb 29 *Agrippina* 12:55 pm 4 hr 10 min

Mar 14 *Der Fliegende Hollander* 12:55 pm. 2 hr 55 min

Apr 11 *Tosca* 12:55 pm. 3 hr 20 min
Encores Apr 15 (1 pm, 6:30 pm) and Apr 18 (12:55 pm)

May 9 *Maria Stuarda* 12:55 pm

Bolshoi Ballet Sundays (\$15 senior) 12:55 pm

Oct 27 *Raymonda*

Nov 17 *Le Corsaire*

Dec 15 *The Nutcracker*

Jan 26 *Giselle*

Feb 23 *Swan Lake*

Mar 29 *Romeo and Juliet*

Apr 19 *Jewels*

Classic Movies

Star Trek 40th anniversary

Sept 15 1 pm, 4 pm; Sept 18, 4 pm, 7 pm

The Shawshank Redemption 25th anniversary

Sept 22, 4 pm; Sept 24, 7 pm; Sept 25, 7 pm

Alien 40th anniversary

Oct 13, 1 pm; Oct 15, 7 pm; Oct 16, 7 pm

Godfather Part II 45th anniversary

Nov 10. 3 pm; Nov 12, 7 pm, Nov 13, 7 pm

When Harry Met Sally 50th anniversary

Dec 1, 4 pm; Dec 3, 7 pm

Meet Me in St. Louis 75th anniversary

Dec 8. 1 pm; Dec 11, 4 pm, 7 pm

Chapter Award Nominations Requested

Due October 15

The AARP Blacksburg Chapter presents two local awards each year at the Holiday Luncheon in December. The awards committee requests nominations for these awards from members. Nominations should reflect contributions and achievements in the past year (2018–19).

Chapter Service Award

Member who is giving and making an impact on our local AARP Chapter

- Recent past recipients: Jennie Reilly, Val Coluni and Terry Wildman, Jerry Niles, Don Creamer and Pat Hyer, John and Sharen Hillison

Community Spirit Award

Member who is impacting the community with constituents who are the focus of AARP efforts.

- Recent past recipients: Coreen Mett, Molly McClintock, Sally Anna Stapleton, Pat Ballard, Jim Wightman

Please send your nominations, including the name, which award, and the basis of the recommendation for the nomination, to Tamara Hodsden (thodsden@gmail.com).

Panel explores the “cost” of voting in

Virginia **October 2**, 7:30 pm, Blacksburg Municipal Building

When the Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* limited the reach of the Voting Rights Act in 2013, some states enacted a number of voting requirements that increased the difficulty of voting. A 2018 study ranked the states for the difficulty of voting. **Virginia the second hardest state in which to vote; only in Mississippi is it harder.**

A panel of three Virginia Tech faculty members will explore what makes it hard to vote in Virginia and the consequences for voter participation and representation.

Panelists include Charles Walcott, Professor Emeritus of Political Science, Karen Hult, Professor of Political Science, and Wornie Reed, chair of the Race and Social Policy Center. Beth Obenshain, League of Women Voters, will moderate.

The panel is free and open to the public. Co-sponsors: League of Women Voters, LLI, and the M-R-F branch of NAACP.

Candidate Forums

October 8, Forum on Disability Issues

Del. Nick Rush, Del. Chris Hurst, Sen. John Edwards, Flo Ketterer, Rhonda Seltz, and Darlene Lewis

7–9 pm, Montgomery Co. Government Building, 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg. Sponsor: ARC

October 17, Candidates for County Offices

Board of Supervisors, School Board, Constitutional Officers

7 pm, Montgomery Co. Government Building, 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg. Sponsor: League of Women Voters

Chapter Members Meet with Representative Griffith

On August 30, four members of our chapter visited with Representative Morgan Griffith in his Christiansburg office: Jerry Niles, Nola Elliott, Doug Feuerbach, and Ben Crawford. Also present were Griffith's new District Director, John ? of the Abingdon office, and two AARP members from the Roanoke Valley: Lorraine Williams, state legislative volunteer, and Joyce Williams, state volunteer videographer/photographer.

The purposes of our meeting were three-fold: to thank him for the work he is doing to lower the price of drugs, present an AARP petition to Congress requesting actions that will lower the price of drugs and stop greed in drug pricing, and to protect/strengthen our Social Security. The petition was signed by 2,545 of his constituents in the 9th Congressional District. We thanked him for his vote on Robocalls. He emphasized that Robocalls are a nonpartisan issue—everyone hates robocalls. We also thanked him for his vote on Multiemployer Pensions.

Drug prices. Griffith generally favors Medicare negotiation of drug prices, but he is unsure about a cap on out-of-pocket drug costs. He suggested that AARP back a limited pilot program for a few common drugs and see how it will work. He thinks the main problem with lowering drug prices are Pharmacy Benefits Managers. He looks upon these as scams. He is planning on calling PBMs to testify before Energy and Commerce Committee.

Civility in politics. Griffith was generous with his time taking about an hour with us to hear our concerns and reply to our suggestions/questions on issues identified by AARP. He brought up a need for more civility in Congress between major political parties. He thinks that the vast majority of persons in *both* parties are dedicated and honest in their beliefs and want to make our nation better. We need to return to the ability to disagree without animosity. He complimented AARP and our chapter on our civility and said he was working this concept into his speeches.



Nola Elliott, Doug Feuerbach, Lorraine Williams, Morgan Griffith, Jerry Niles, Ben Crawford

Ben Crawford meets with Senator Mark Warner, discussing capitalism

I had the opportunity to have a brief personal session with U. S. Senator Mark Warner when he was in Blacksburg. Before he was our Governor and our Senator, Warner became a millionaire the old-fashioned way. he worked for it. Warner had just finished talking to a group about the need to make some adjustments in

our nation's system of capitalism. This is important to him and he is emphasizing it in his senate work and in talks throughout the Commonwealth. It is important to me personally because of my background in teaching business economics and my service with the U. S. Small Business Administration.

Warner and I agreed on the paramount importance capitalism has in our society, both past and future. We also agree some tweaks are needed to level the playing field; for example, to make changes in rules and regulations to make businesses more competitive and fair to all. Doing so will result in the best possible products or services to consumers at the best prices. Capitalism is vitally important to our economy. And the world as well. I hope our Senator will have success in this important arena.

Ben Crawford meets with Delegate Chris Hurst, discussing gerrymandering

I had two brief sessions with Delegate Chis Hurst concerning the need to pass the proposed constitutional amendment on gerrymandering. This passed the last session of the Virginia General Assembly but needs to pass again with the exact same wording before it can go the people for a vote. Some elected representatives in both parties of the General Assembly may try to oppose this amendment by offering wording changes.

According to OneVirginia2021, although current wording of the proposed constitutional amendment may not be the best possible, it will do the job we want. It is satisfactory. Our legislators know that any attempted changes now will kill the whole thing. We need to insure this passes again and goes to the people for a vote.



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AARP Website www.blacksburgaarp.org



Blacksburg Chapter #2613
 Jerry Niles, President
 P.O. Box 10082
 Blacksburg, VA 24062

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 Permit No. 32**

Blacksburg Chapter  Member Application for 2020

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: .

AARP Blacksburg Chapter • P.O. Box 10082 • Blacksburg, VA 24062



AARP Chapters are separately incorporated affiliates of AARP



newsletter

November-December 2019

Nov. 19 Chapter Meeting Mental Health Challenges Facing Today's Collegiate Student-Athlete *Gary Bennett*

Athletes are often viewed as being invulnerable to mental health challenges. However, research funded by the NCAA has revealed that collegiate student-athletes experience symptoms of depression, anxiety, and substance abuse at rates very comparable to those of non-athletes.

In 2000, the Virginia Tech Athletics Department became one of only a few Division I programs to fund a position for a mental health professional. Since that time, the position has grown from a half-time person to three clinicians.

This program will explore the evolution of the VT program and will also examine the types of mental health issues commonly addressed in the VT Sport Psychology department.

Gary Bennett, PhD, is a licensed clinical and sport psychologist affiliated with the Virginia Tech Athletics Department.



President's Column *by Jerry Niles* Creating the Connections

At our last Chapter meeting, on October 15, approximately 45 people attended. As I got ready to begin the formal part of our meeting, I was struck by the warm buzz that filled the room. As members finished up their brown bag lunches and Carol Lee donuts and chatted with others, catching up on personal news from an old friend or engaging in the back and forth that comes with initiating a connection with a new member, I delayed opening the meeting for several minutes. I hesitated to interrupt this compelling social connection. I did eventually open the meeting because we had a wonderful program ahead of us including a talk and conversation offered by a local pharmacist, who did a splendid job of guiding us through the maze of prescription drug policy. As I think about what happened in that meeting, and other chapter meetings, I concluded that the signs of social connections that were overflowing in the room on that day were in fact a very powerful medications in their own right.



I have had similar experiences in chapter social events and in board meetings as I have listened to the group buzz rising from the social exchanges that occur so naturally. I think about how fortunate I am to have the opportunity to be a part of those activities.

continued on p. 3

Upcoming Events

- Nov. 19, Food Drive at the chapter meeting (pet food)
- Dec. 10, AARP Holiday Luncheon (p. 5)
- Dec. 11, LLI preview of spring classes and events (p. 4)
- Jan. 16, Registration for LLI classes opens

Upcoming Chapter Programs

- (Third Tuesday, 11:30 am)
- January 21: Making your home more accessible to facilitate daily living and remaining in your home longer
- February 18: Sterling Nesbitt, Adventures in ancient Africa: On the tail of the origin of dinosaurs
- March 17: Janet Brennend and Casey Suthers, NRV Agency on Aging, Navigating Resources for Community-Based Home Health and Home Care Programs
- April 21: Curt Laub, Bugs and Us—Insects and Our Culture
- May 19: Dean Spader, Project Draw-down: 80 Viable Solutions to Climate Change

In this issue

- Volunteer Spotlight: Val Coluni (p. 2)
- Warm Hearth Village Plans New Apartments, Encourages Community Engagement (p. 3)
- Legislative Report (p. 4)
- "The Peace of Wild Things," Wendell Berry, p. 4)
- LLI Spring Preview (p. 4)
- Holiday Luncheon reservations, membership renewal (p. 5)

Time to renew membership

Use the form on p. 5, or go online to <http://www.blacksburgaarp.org/join-us>

Membership is for the year 2020.

November Food Drive

For the November Food Drive, we will collect pet food for homebound seniors. This program is being sponsored by the Agency On Aging.

Shannon Hammons, Marketing Rep for the Agency On Aging, is hoping to attend our November 19 meeting to kick off this drive. If you are unable to attend but would

like to participate, please contact Sally Anna Stapleton, Chairperson, Community Service Committee (sanna418@gmail.com)

Items Needed

- Bags of dry dog or cat food
- Bags or boxes of cat litter
- Most seniors have small dogs so buy accordingly.

Volunteer Spotlight: Val Coluni

Val Coluni had long been an inactive member of the national AARP, without a chapter affiliation, when a personal predicament launched him into advocacy and a major role with the state and local chapter.

In 2008, he was laid off from a part-time job and applied for unemployment insurance in Virginia only to learn that the Virginia Employment Commission would reduce unemployment benefits of individuals who received Social Security. State regulations specified that Social Security benefits offset state unemployment benefits.

Val found the rules unfair and probably illegal because the state was pre-empting federal benefits. In a telephone call, he engaged in a heated dispute with the state senator who had proposed the legislation. Val learned that the senator had wanted this legislation because he was a business owner whose expenses went up when his former employees applied for unemployment benefits. The senator's solution was to penalize individuals who drew Social Security and were eligible for unemployment.

Val's advocacy attracted the attention of David DeBiasi, director of one of the AARP advocacy units in Richmond. AARP intervention led to the elimination of the regulation about unemployment benefits, a decision that affected not just Val but many AARP members. DeBiasi noted that Val is passionate and articulate and invited him to join the state AARP Advocacy Committee.

On the state committee, Val attended several strategy meetings each year and traveled to Richmond to lobby, in small teams with other AARP advocates, for legislation that aligns with state AARP legislative priorities. He also attended hearings, called on local organizations and legislators, and made some presentations.

At least since 2015, he has written a "legislative report" for the AARP Blacksburg newsletter (in conjunction with Alison Galway until late 2016). His topics have reflected AARP legislative priorities concerning seniors. One of his favorite topics is fraud and scams that affect seniors. He has warned us about tax fraud, elderly

financial exploitation, and bogus calls that ask for private information. He has also informed readers about legislation affecting health care, family caregivers, and respite care. His columns have frequently addressed Social Security and ethics. He has updated us on redistricting and other issues that determine how much power voters have in elections. He attends chapter board meetings and presents his report for discussion there. He thinks AARP was influential in Virginia's decision to expand Medicaid, among other priorities.



To prepare for his legislative updates, Val consulted *Bloomberg Businessweek*, *Kiplinger*, *Time* and *Money* magazines, *The Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Roanoke Times* editorial page. In selecting topics, he avoided topics that were covered well locally, such as guns and pipelines. He followed the guidelines offered by the state advocacy committee: is it Real? Meaningful? Relevant? Important? Sustainable?

Val credits his work with AARP as developing his humanity. He was glad to intervene, for example, to help a woman who could not afford her prescriptions. With the help of AARP and a pharmacist, she was able to get them.

Val received the Blacksburg Chapter Service Award in 2018 for his service in advocacy and informing local members of relevant issues.

Val and his wife of 58 years, Ginny, moved to Blacksburg from Sarasota, Florida, in 2000, advised by Virginians they met in Maine that the town would be a good place to live. They have two daughters and five grandchildren. A son died tragically at age 48. Ginny was a nursery school teacher and active in Master Gardeners. Val's career was in human resources. He led employee workshops to improve organizational effectiveness, developed hire selection procedures, and designed election campaigns for National Labor Relations Board federal elections, among other initiatives.

Thank you, Val, for your service to AARP and for your impact in making lives better for seniors.



photos by Peter Magolda



President's message, *continued*

Research supports the notion that nurturing casual relationships (connections) that are made possible by being part of a group like an AARP Chapter, a church, or a civic group of some type has demonstrable positive benefits for one's wellbeing.

When we are young, social connection is inherent in the way our lives are structured in the institutions of the family, school, and work. As we age and leave work, we may move to a new location, our families begin to spread out, and the way and with whom we engage may change. While our core friendships and family relationships remain central, we shouldn't overlook the power of the casual connections to the people we see in other contexts like the walking trail, in the grocery store, the doctor's office, or a Lifelong Learning class. Those relationships provide a different but important sustenance to our sense of being part of a community, having some value and meaning beyond ourselves alone. In addition, these kinds of ad hoc connections can evolve into something more substantial.

When I was much younger, I watched an aging family member become socially isolated. I felt puzzled sad and helpless about it because I wasn't sure what I was seeing. If I had better understood the nature and power of social connectedness, I may have been more helpful. In another more recent instance, I was reminded of the challenges that others face when age-related illness strikes and interferes with the ability to interact with others by moving easily around the community. The person shared that he was able to practice behaviors that helped him, like eating well, exercising daily, staying as mentally sharp as possible, and following medical treatments. However, he reported that finding adequate social engagement was the biggest challenge for him. These two experiences serve as a powerful reminder to me about how important it is to be a part of social networks not only for myself but for others.

Social connectedness is inherently reciprocal. If you have a positive social interaction with another person, it not only benefits you, but it most likely affects them positively as well. In the end these kinds of relationships help contribute to the meaningfulness of one's life. As we age, social connectedness helps us stay grounded in the thought that we really do matter.

May I suggest that you take some time to audit your social connectedness. Try looking at it from two perspectives. First, think about yourself as a receiver. How are you connected, and how do the connections affect your life? Are you satisfied with your status? Do you need to do anything to make it richer for yourself? Second, think about yourself as a "giver" of social connectedness and how it may affect the lives of others. Do you do enough to nurture relationships that are important to you? Might you contribute to others on a daily basis? Do you have a wide range of social connections? Do you value casual encounters?

We are encouraged to watch our weight, monitor our blood pressure, keep track of how much and keep track of a variety of other indices. Now you can add monitoring your social connectedness to your list.

Warm Hearth Plans New Apartments, Encourages Community Engagement

While retirement communities have long been viewed as the place to live when you get older and need help, times are changing, and the benefits to seniors of retirement communities are changing as well. They are designed to provide physical activity, learning opportunities, and social engagement. Warm Hearth Village is a nonprofit senior living community offering a full continuum of living options. A new option is Walnut Pointe, independent living, maintenance-free apartments scheduled for construction in 2020. We are currently leasing these apartments to the public with no waiting list. The wait for independent living options at the Village typically exceeds 12 months; this is an excellent opportunity to bypass the waiting list and join in the active lifestyle at Warm Hearth Village.



"We encourage those visiting our community to plan a move while they are active and able to take full advantage of the amenities available," says Ellen Rorrer, Marketing Consultant. These amenities engage residents and keep them active, thus increasing their overall physical and mental well-being and ultimately, their longevity. The fitness center offers a variety of classes, one-on-one training, and specialty training to help combat illness and chronic disease as well as increase mobility, flexibility, and balance. "At Warm Hearth Village, the fitness center is bustling with people in the pool, using the cardio equipment, and participating in classes that range from our Rock Steady Boxing class for Parkinson's sufferers to yoga and meditation," shares Kenny Harrah, Fitness Director. Our mild climate makes year-round access to outdoor recreation possible. A prospective resident from Michigan looked in awe at our beautiful changing fall leaves against the blue sky and said skies there are so grey in the fall that he and his wife basically hibernate in the cooler months. That's not the case in Blacksburg where residents use walking paths most of the year that connect neighbors to each other and to nature.

The Village Center at Warm Hearth Village is open to the community. Anyone 55 and older can join the fitness center and take advantage of the array of offerings and the expertise of trained staff. Out-patient rehabilitative therapies are available to community members recovering from illness or injury. They may use the therapy team and the warm, saltwater pool. The community room is filled regularly with educational, musical, and community events. It hosts classes in the VT Lifelong Learning Institute, Mountain Jam, The Lions Club, and many more. Tall Oaks Hall is available to the community, and catering services are provided onsite. The Huckleberry Café serves breakfast and lunch and provides a healthy, lighter fare with indoor and outdoor seating. Community members are welcome to eat here.

We invite you to come take a look, whether planning a move here or just looking for a way to stay active and engaged. You're sure to see someone you know and find something you enjoy.

Call Ellen Rorrer at 540-443-3465 or visit retire.org to learn more.

Legislative Update by Doug Feuerbach

Prescription Drug Pricing

According to an October 23 article in the Washington Post, the drama in Washington to pass legislation to lower the high cost of prescription drugs continues with the White House and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi still working behind the scenes to reach bipartisan agreement. There is consensus, though, that any deal would almost certainly fail to make it through Congress. The impeachment proceedings are also not helping to smooth out interactions between President Trump and Pelosi. Meanwhile, Pelosi continues to advance her own bill in the House.



Interestingly, there is consensus between political parties that both the cost of prescription drugs and the rate of increase is too high. The disagreement is in the details of how to fix it. Polling data shows that Americans of both affiliations are very concerned about the cost of prescription drugs and that they want their elected officials to do something about it. This is what seems to be keeping the negotiations alive. Both sides want to sway voters heading into the 2020 election.

In 2019, there was only one bill introduced in the Virginia General Assembly (by Senator John Edwards) to stop prescription drug gouging. The bill made it out of committee unanimously but failed to pass.

LLI Spring Preview Wednesday, December 11

German Club Manor, 3:00–5:00 pm

The Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech will present a preview of spring 2020 classes and events on Wednesday, December 11, from 3 to 5 pm at the German Club Manor on Southgate Drive.

You will hear about 30 classes planned for spring on a range of topics including history, science, literature, technology, and personal growth. You will also hear about 25 events, ranging from an introduction to hobby drones to a trip to Richmond to the American Civil War Museum and White House of the Confederacy. You will also hear more about charter travel options to Chicago and the Canadian Rockies. You will meet selected instructors, who will preview their classes.

This preview offers a great opportunity to enjoy some refreshments, chat with other learners, and plan your spring LLI classes.

Have you thought about ways to increase your social connectedness, as Jerry Niles advises in his president's column? You can begin at the preview and continue by enrolling in spring LLI classes and events.

The Peace of Wild Things

by Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's
lives may be,

I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the
great heron feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with
forethought of grief.

I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time

I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

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Weather policy: If the public schools are closed, AARP will not meet.

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Vice President • Don Creamer, dgc2@vt.edu
Secretary • Pat Hyer, hyerp@vt.edu
Treasurer • Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu
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Newsletter editors: Carolyn Rude, Sandra Griffith

AARP Website www.blacksburgaarp.org

AARP Holiday Luncheon

Tuesday, Dec. 10, 11:30 am



Menu

Plated garden house salad
 Chicken breast in sun-dried tomato cream sauce
 Roasted vegetable lasagna
 Savory mashed sweet potatoes
 Roasted root veggies
 Rolls and butter
 Fruit pies sliced
 Coffee, iced tea, and water

Location

Warm Hearth
 The Village Center
 2387 Warm Hearth Drive
 Blacksburg, VA 24060

Date: Tuesday, December 10, 2019

Time: 11:30 am–1:30 pm

Program

Announcement and Introduction of
 AARP Community Award Recipients

Price: \$20 per person

Guests welcome!

Reservation deadline: December 2, 4 pm

Luncheon Reservation, Membership Dues

You can write one check

Total the Luncheon, 2020 dues, and optional donation and make your check out to **Blacksburg AARP Chapter # 2613**.

Send with these forms to

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

Holiday Luncheon Reservation Form

Reservation deadline: December 2, 2019, 4 pm

Name _____ \$20.00

Spouse/Partner/Guest _____ \$20.00

Guest _____ \$20.00

Luncheon Total _____

Reservations cannot be accepted after December 2, 2019, 4 pm.
 For more information, contact Terry Wildman, wiley@vt.edu

Membership Dues \$15/household

Name _____

Spouse/Partner _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone: _____ Email _____

Email Spouse/Partner _____

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 low. However, donations to the chapter are not tax deductible.

Luncheon Total _____

Dues _____ 15 _____


Donation _____

Total _____



Blacksburg Chapter #2613
 Jerry Niles, President
 P.O. Box 10082
 Blacksburg, VA 24062

**Nonprofit
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Blacksburg Chapter  Member Application for 2020

Name: _____

Spouse/Partner: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

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