



Real Possibilities
in the New River Valley

Blacksburg Chapter

NEWS

October 2015

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www.blacksburgaarp.org

Serving the greater New River Valley, Virginia

October 20 Chapter Meeting

Conversation with Candidates

Virginians will go to the polls November 3 to select representatives for the General Assembly (Senate, House of Delegates) as well as for Constitutional Officers (Clerk of Courts, Commissioner of Revenue, Sheriff), Board of Supervisors, and School Board.

AARP has invited the candidates for the General Assembly to meet with us at our October meeting (Blacksburg Community Center, Patrick Henry Drive). Each candidate will offer a brief presentation (5–10 minutes), leaving opportunity for AARP members to ask questions and for conversation with the candidates.

We have invited these candidates:

Senate, 21st District:

- Dr. Nancy Dye (R)
- John Edwards (D), incumbent
- Donald Caldwell (I)

House, 12th District:

- Laurie Buchwald (D)
- Joseph Yost (R), incumbent

The October 20 program will follow our regular chapter format with a “bring your own” bag lunch at 11:30. Drinks and more are provided. The meeting begins at noon and all programs are open to the public.

For information on candidate forums for Montgomery County Constitutional Offices, Board of Supervisors, and School Board, as well as one for the General Assembly, please see p. 5. AARP is co-sponsoring the forum for the General Assembly.

President’s Message

About Living Well *Terry Wildman*

I want to begin with the argument that living—whether we think it’s going well or not—is essentially about learning. And, I’m not thinking about the kind of learning that is typically associated with formal schooling. As a society we deem schooling quite important, but for many reasons what we typically associate with *school learning* may not be all that interesting.

I’ll come back to this in a moment.

At least a year ago, or perhaps longer, the conversation in our chapter meetings, and especially among the twenty-some folks who are officers, board members and committee chairs, began to take a turn. I thought it was a fairly deliberate change in focus where we said, “let’s see if, as a Chapter, we can focus more on what we can do with life, giving less attention to those limiting factors, perceived dangers, and un-pleasantries sometimes associated with our age group.” Of course, living is a process and all stages do involve some realities we should deal with responsibly, including at the later stages. But even those things we may tend to put off, or not want to think about too much, can involve some interesting learning opportunities. That hearing test I just had, for example, led to some interesting new, and for me probably necessary, things to know about how hearing aid technology has progressed. I did have to remind myself that the first modification I did to my current motorcycle was to install louder pipes... hmmm. I admit, that inclination goes back many decades.

Upcoming Events

- Oct 10, Membership Expo, Blacksburg Public Library (see p. 5)
- Oct 13 AARP dinner group, Golden Corral (see p. 3)
- Oct 20 Shred-a-Thon, Christiansburg Rec Center (see p. 5)
- Nov 17 meeting: Activities & facilities for people 50+ in the NRV
- Dec 1: annual holiday lunch

Officer and Board Member Nominations Sought for 2016

The Nominating Committee seeks nominations for 2016 officers and three Board members. The officer positions are President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary, and each will serve for one year. The three Board members elected to begin their term in 2016 will serve for three years through 2018. Send your nominations to Don Creamer at dgc2@vt.edu.

Nominations for committee chairs also are welcomed. For information about committees on which members may serve see www.blacksburgaarp.org/pb/wp_3a036760/wp_3a036760.html.



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.

please turn to p. 3

Living Well@50+ Keynote Speaker Focuses on Mindfulness



Dr. Alan Forrest, Professor in the Department of Counselor Education at Radford, began the September 8 “Living Well@50+” conference with a presentation, “Living Well Through Mindfulness.”

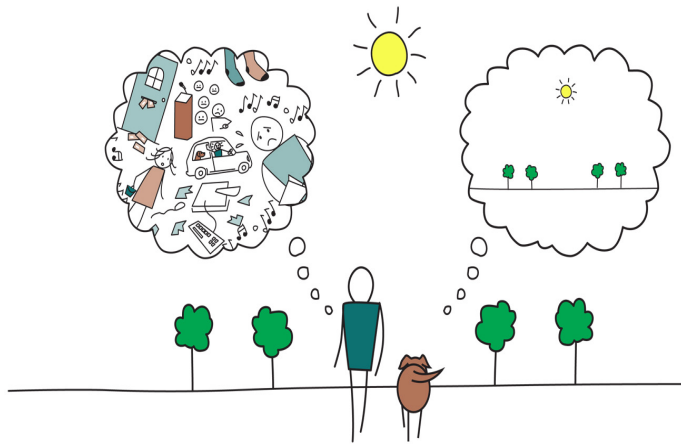
Mindfulness counters two habits of mind that can be counterproductive: thinking about the past and anticipating the future.

Spending too much time in the past can lead to depression.

Living too far or too often in the future can result in anxiety.

We may miss the moments that matter because we are somewhere else in our minds. Dr. Forrest gave the example of reading to his young daughter but skipping words and pages because he was anxious to get on with the task of class preparation. He was missing the present moment because he was mentally engaging in a future activity.

Dr. Forrest claims that his dog is his best mindfulness mentor: she always enjoys the present, including the beauty of the sky and landscape, the scents and sounds of the environment, the companionship. A human’s mind, by contrast, is often cluttered with schedules and tasks, resentments, fears, and more.



Mind Full, or Mindful?

According to mindfulness expert Jon Kabat-Zinn, mindfulness is about being fully aware of whatever is happening in the present moment without the lens of judgment. Mindfulness helps people focus on one thing at a time in the present moment, thereby helping to control and soothe overwhelming emotions.

Mindfulness can

- improve attention and concentration
- expand self-awareness
- enhance positive emotions
- increase interpersonal skills and relationships
- enrich performance
- stimulate creativity
- reduce stress
- change and strengthen the structure of the brain

Mindfulness does not require any particular religious or cultural belief system. Every faith tradition and every culture have some contemplative practice.

Mindfulness is a practice

Decluttering the mind requires intentional focusing on the moment. The practice of mindfulness is just watching the mind and body without holding on or pushing away. Learning mindfulness focuses on awareness of breathing. Each breath is the birth, life, and death of the moment. The result can be something that feels spiritual. (The Latin verb *spiro* means “to breathe.” You can hear that root and the connections between breathing and spirituality in *inspire* and *respiration* as well as in *spiritual*.)

Mindfulness is something one has to work at every day. Dr. Forrest begins his day by walking his dog and then by a period of quiet, mindful awareness.

For people who wish to learn more, Dr. Forrest recommends the book *Mindfulness for Beginners: Reclaiming the Present Moment—and Your Life*, by Jon Kabat-Zinn.

Dr. Forrest also hosts a mindfulness-based practice group at Christiansburg Life and Balance, 125 Akers Farm Road, Suite D, on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month from 8:30 to 9:30 am.

The group practices mindfulness for 30 minutes with some guidance and then enjoys open discussion for 20–30 minutes. The intention is to create a mindfulness-based practice group as a community, supporting each other.

There is no fee charged for the service; a bowl is set out for collecting free-will fees.

Pre-registration is required. Call 540-381-6215 to reserve your space.

President's Message *(continued)*

So we're constantly learning, and it's pretty clear one secret to living well is to embrace learning, including on occasion some risk taking. AARP as an organization formalizes this in its Life Reimagined program and in its constant production of material that can be used to support a good and well-informed life. One way to think about learning then is to figure out how to best absorb as much as we can of the really good stuff that is available to us and bank it away for use when the opportunity arises. But, this does sound a lot like the more traditional goals of school-type learning which I now tend to argue is a pretty lousy way to go.

The shift in thinking that many now propose is to recognize the inherently social nature of learning. For many decades what we used to support formal learning was laboratory-type studies that for a long time focused almost exclusively on how people can process and remember what they hear, read, and experience more effectively. Mostly "in the head" kind of stuff. As an academic type psychologist, I was a big proponent of that kind of thinking.

Eventually though, research in the learning field finally got around to checking out what real people were doing out there in their daily lives. The results were pretty surprising. For one thing knowledge acquisition as an end to itself was almost non-existent. Instead the key thing was participation, and the contexts for participation were all manner of social practices that are an inherent part of our culture. Within this view being knowledgeable is essentially being competent within some practice, and with that competence a sense of identity develops. So, in my own case with some 80,000 miles on the road I am pretty comfortable referring to myself as a biker, with 30 years experience flying, a pilot, with 40 years teaching, a teacher, and with a lifetime growing things, a gardener. I am somewhat of a novice carpenter, definitely not an artist, musician, poet, mechanic, welder, yoga practitioner and many other things that would be attractive. I simply don't at this time have an entre to those other communities and hence the opportunity to become even a peripheral participant. However, it might be possible, and in some cases I might be satisfied with some legitimate access to a new community without necessarily having the goal of becoming really competent. At the very least I would have access to the social structure, the conversations, and some legitimate role for me might develop.

Living well in my view is about the opportunities available to participate in communities of practice that may be of interest, to learn how the more experienced practitioners talk, how they like to dress, what tools they use, and to become in some sense like them. To move in and out of dif-

ferent communities is pretty interesting. I don't fly anymore so all my flying stuff is stored away, but you really should see my closet full of Harley Davidson stuff. Different stuff, different language, different connections, but all in the service of what I would call living well.

So, as life goes on, I kind of wonder what's next. Maybe this last thought is where we all should be.

Join AARP Virginia for a Dinner Group in Christiansburg October 13, 4-7 pm

AARP has reserved the private room at Golden Corral for members and their guests to enjoy dinner with a \$0.50 discount on their All-You-Care-to-Eat dinner buffet.

Learn how AARP is making a difference locally! A 15-minute presentation will highlight one of AARP's many opportunities. No products or services will be sold at this event.

Come as you are and leave as you wish anytime between 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm on the evening of Tuesday, October 13, 2015.

Golden Corral
2580 North Franklin St.
Christiansburg, VA 24073

Please let us know you plan to attend by calling 1-877-926-8300 or online at October 13 Dinner Group (aarp.cvent.com/Christiansburg101315VA).



The local chair of the Dinner Group is Leslye Bloom.

Help Recruit New Members

The lifeblood of any organization is its membership and new members provide energy for continued progress. The Board of Directors of AARP Blacksburg chapter requests your help in sustaining the capacity for vigorous activity of the chapter by reaching out to friends and acquaintances to inform them of opportunities for involvement and service in chapter membership.

Applications for membership are available in each monthly newsletter or at www.blacksburgaarp.org/pb/wp_ba3e9c1b/wp_ba3e9c1b.html

How about inviting someone to join you at the October 20 meeting to learn more about candidates for the General Assembly?

How about inviting someone to join you at the AARP Dinner Group in Christiansburg October 13?

“Living Well@50+” Conference Attracts 200+

More than 200 people participated in the Living Well@50+ conference September 8 at the Inn at Virginia Tech. Participants heard two keynote speakers, attended two workshops from 14 offerings, visited exhibitors at the opportunity fair, and enjoyed lunch.

Scene from the Opportunity Fair



AARP Food Drive Supports Local Food Banks

On Sunday, September 13, AARP volunteers with helpers from Chi Delta Alpha Sorority collected hundreds of pounds of food for food banks in Blacksburg and Christiansburg. Shoppers at Kroger on South Main Street in Blacksburg donated the food.

Volunteers who collected food include Sally Anna Stapleton, the coordinator; Tom and Paula Alston, Thais Beams, June

Cox, Don Creamer, Alison Galway, Pat Hyer, Shirley Peterson, Sandy Johnson, Jerry and Ruth Ann Niles, Robin Nguyen, Don and Carolyn Rude, and Donna Thompson.



Sally Anna Stapleton, Don Rude, and Robin Nguyen collect food at the Food Drive

Thank you if you helped with the drive or if you donated while you shopped.

Space Remains in Some LLI Fall Courses

See details at www.cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning/courses.html

As of September 12, space remains in 11 of the 13 Lifelong Learning Institute courses and in some special events scheduled for the fall term. (The courses in Genealogy and Watercolors are full. The tours of the Smart Road and VT-Carillion Research Center are full.) You may still sign up for these courses and special events until they begin the week of October 5.

LLI members may attend special events for free. Course fees are \$25–\$30. Please join (\$20) and register for events and courses at www.cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning/courses.html

Special Events

Monday, October 12, 3:00–4:30 pm, Alumni Assembly Hall
Translational Medical Research Breakthroughs at the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute

Friday, November 13, 10:00 am–12:00 pm, Moss Center
Experiencing a Tornado and Living to Tell About It

Courses

MONDAY

The Civil Rights Struggle in Virginia Peter Wallenstein, instructor. 9:00–10:30

Reflections on the Union, Confederacy, and the Civil War Jack Davis, instructor. 11:00–12:30

Gardening 101 Stephanie Huckestein, instructor. 3:00–4:30

TUESDAY

VT CLASS Sampler at Warm Hearth 9:00–12:00

The Rise and Fall of Arab Nationalism William Ochsenwald, instructor. 1:00–2:30

WEDNESDAY

Basic Printmaking Rebecca Ghezzi, instructor. 9:00–10:30

The Role of Inspiration in the Creative Process NRV artists. 11:00–12:30

The Problem of Marriage in Two English Novels Michael Squires, instructor. 1:00–2:30

Memoir Writing: Turning Your Experience into Art Richard Gilbert, instructor. 3:00–4:30

THURSDAY

Understanding Science in the News: Technological Innovations Science and engineering faculty, Virginia Tech. 9:00–10:30

Political/Editorial Cartoons as Political Discourse. Edd Sewell, instructor. 1:00–2:30

Candidate Forums: Elections 2015

The League of Women Voters will sponsor candidate forums in October to help voters make their choices for the November 3 election.

October 7 (Wed), 7 pm, County Government Center:
Constitutional Officers (Clerk of Courts, Commissioner of Revenue, Sheriff)

October 15 (Thurs), 7 pm, County Government Center:
General Assembly
Senate, 19th District (Michael Hamlar, D; David Suetterlein (R); Steven Nelson (I)
Senate, 21st District (Dr. Nancy Dye, R; John Edwards, D, incumbent; Donald Caldwell, I

House, 12th District (Laurie Buchwald, D; Joseph Yost, R, incumbent

AARP is co-sponsoring this forum along with the local branch of NAACP, the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy, and the *News Messenger*.

October 22 (Thurs), 7 pm, Blacksburg Town Hall:
Board of Supervisors

October 29 (Thurs), 7 pm, Blacksburg Town Hall:
School Board

The County Government Center is at 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg. Blacksburg Town Hall is at 300 S. Main Street. For names of all the candidates, see the League of Women Voters website at www.lwvmcva.org/CandidateForums.

Free Shred-A-Thon October 20

A free Shred-A-Thon is scheduled on Tuesday, October 20 from 3:30 to 6:30 pm in the parking lot of the Christiansburg Recreation Center.

Help prevent identity theft—shred unwanted documents. Protect your important information and clean out the clutter. Papers to be shredded must be in a plastic tote or box; no plastic bags, please. Three-box limit. For more information contact Tammy Caldwell at 382-2349, ext. 2003 or tcaldwell@christiansburg.org.

Blacksburg Public Library Hosts Membership Expo

On October 10, 2–4 pm, representatives from 17 local clubs and organizations, including AARP, will be available in the Community Room of the Blacksburg Public Library with information on their organizations. Community members interested in becoming involved can explore their options as they visit with club members.

Legislative Report *by Val Coluni and Alison Galway*

Priorities of the State Advocacy Team

The State Advocacy Team will communicate final legislative priorities in December 2015, but some possibilities have been identified:

Tax programs. Emphasis on those programs which preserve and/or enhance to help seniors stay in their homes.

Redistricting. Our State Delegates and Senators have already had a preliminary meeting on this subject in a special session but unfortunately the session did not result in any significant progress. Some support an independent commission while others continue to hold the belief that the framers of the constitution reserved the right to the state legislatures. This will be a very difficult path to a satisfactory resolution.

Elderly Abuse. Closing some of the loopholes that lenders are using to “skirt” the law and increasing the civil/criminal penalties for violations.

Major wins for all of us in 2015

A. A passed law (SB750) **requires hospitals to provide oral and written notice to any patient classified as “observation” rather than admitted.** This law will help eliminate the problems for patients who may need rehabilitation in another facility. (Observation status may eliminate some aspects of your insurance coverage for future care.)

B. A passed law (HB346) greatly **expanded the scope and practice of Nurse Practitioners.** This will help in underserved areas.

C. Redistricting—a major win for change. The U.S. Court ruled in a recent state lawsuit that **an Independent Redistricting Commission was constitutional.** Some of our Virginia State representatives have argued against this position.

It was indeed a pretty good legislative year for us. Thanks for your support.

Chapter Officers 2015

President • Terry Wildman, wiley@vt.edu
Vice President • Don Creamer, dgc2@vt.edu
Secretary • Sally Anna Stapleton, sanna418@gmail.com
Treasurer • Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu

Board of Directors

2015—Don Creamer, Terry Wildman, Nola Elliott
2016—Tom Alston, Tina King, Sally Anna Stapleton
2017—Pat Hyer, Jerry Niles, Shirley Peterson

Visit Your AARP Chapter Website at www.blacksburgaarp.org



Blacksburg Chapter #2613
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Blacksburg, VA 24062

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 **Member Application for 2015**

Name: _____

Spouse/Partner: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Today's Date: _____

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

New Renewal 90+ years old (free)

*Please make your check payable to "Blacksburg AARP Chapter #2613"
and mail check and this form to:*

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