



[www.blacksburgaarp.org](http://www.blacksburgaarp.org)



## President's Message *by Leslie Pendleton*

As I reflect upon the summer months, I think about how enjoyable they have been and how fast they have slipped by. (This doesn't mean that I haven't thought about current world events – gun violence, war, natural disasters, increases in gas and food prices, January 6<sup>th</sup> insurrection hearings, the Amber Heard/Johnny Depp trial -- but I won't go there.) I hope your summer months have also been enjoyable, and I hope this first fall column finds you in good health. I'll share the AARP Blacksburg-related highlights of my summer. Despite the rain and wind, a small number of our members enjoyed our first AARP Blacksburg picnic (since COVID began) at the lovely home and gardens of Sue Magliaro and Terry Wildman (see page 6). A dedicated planning committee (Chuck Burress, Tammy Caldwell, Chuck Nelson, Fred Piercy, Jennie Reilly, Diane Sutphin) and I have been meeting all summer to plan the next AARP Blacksburg/VCOM Health & Wellness Fair on September 21<sup>st</sup> (see page 4). We hope to see you there!

Now on to the primary topic of his column. On June 28th, I was a presenter at an Aging in Place Facilitator Training sponsored by AARP Virginia, Carilion Clinic, the Community Foundation of the New River Valley, the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech, and the New River Valley Agency on Aging. The goal of the workshop for the participants was to "get the tools you need to facilitate an aging in place workshop in your community."

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines aging in place as "the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level." Really, who among us doesn't want to age successfully in place in the comfort and familiarity of our own homes? Indeed, according to AARP, nearly 90% of adults over 50 want to remain in their current homes as they grow older. On the other hand, nearly half of adults over 50 have given little to no thought to the steps needed to remain safely and comfortably at home in the latter years. Unfortunately, some of my own family members and friends have been in this situation. Health crises that required immediate attention and prevented staying in place over the long term were coupled with limited financial and other resources for dealing with those crises. (Continued on page 6)

*Below: Brian Jacks welcomes and introduces participants to the Aging in Place Train the Trainers Workshop*



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## Community Events

### Fall at Moss Art Center

- Sep 16:** Eileen Ivers and Universal Roots
  - Sep 27:** Redman, Mehldau, McBride, Blade, *A Mood Swing Reunion*
  - Oct 5:** Rhiannon Giddens with Francesco Turrisi
  - Oct 12-13:** Makuyeika Colectivo Teatral, *Andares*
  - Oct 23:** Acrobuffos, *Air Play*
  - Oct 28:** Farruquito, *Intimo*
- More information available at [artscenter.vt.edu](http://artscenter.vt.edu)

### Other

- Sep 11:** National Day of Service
- Sep 21:** Health and Wellness Fair, at the Christiansburg Rec Ctr
- Oct 21:** Mural reveal and reception, corner of College and Draper, reception following at the Lyric, 3-5 pm

## Fall LLI Registration and Free Lectures

by Pat Hyer

**Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech will offer online and in-person courses for fall 2022.**

LLI is offering 27 courses, five field trips, four webinars, and several special events this fall. Both online and in-person classes are available. There are webinars open to all and intimate small group discussions, hands-on learning to spark your creativity, opportunities to explore nature and local history, and so much more. This is a great way to meet new people, learn new things, and stay engaged with your community. Become a member to take advantage of all the offerings.

Here's what you need to know:

- The fall flyer was mailed to everyone on the mailing list the week of August 8. All of the fall details are available on the LLI website: [www.cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning](http://www.cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning).
- The Fall Preview is Thursday, September 1, 10:00-11:30 a.m. by Zoom. No need to register. Check the website for link.
- Registration begins on Wednesday, September 7, at 10:00 a.m.
- Classes start the week of September 19 and end before Thanksgiving.

**AARP Virginia and LLI at Virginia Tech partner to offer a free lecture series.**

AARP Virginia and the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech have created a partnership to offer four free lectures during the fall term. You do not need to be a member of LLI or AARP to register for these free events; they are open to the public. This partnership gives national visibility to the great programming available through LLI at Virginia Tech and provides engaging educational content to AARP members nationwide.

Enjoy these lectures and so much more free virtual content available on the [AARP Virtual Community Center website](#). (Chapter members will get more details about how to sign up with AARP through email notification in the fall.)

## Community Responses to Refugees and Migrants: Learning from Sicily

**Friday, October 28, 1:30 – 3:00**

Rebecca Hester, co-founder of the Virginia Tech Center for Refugee, Migrant, and Displacement Studies, reflects on her research on refugee resettlement in Sicily and compares that with the refugee experience in Southwest Virginia.

## Celebrating Stephen Sondheim

**Friday, November 4, 1:30 – 3:00**

Dan Sherman shares his passion for musical theater and admiration for Sondheim's astonishing body of work as a composer and lyricist.

## Memory Wars

**Tuesday, November 15, 1:30 – 3:00**

In their new podcast, Mallory Noe-Payne from Radio IQ and Michael Paul Williams from the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* explore how Germany reckoned with the history of the Holocaust and what can be learned as America grapples with its own legacy of slavery and racism.

## Trees and Forests: Eating, Drinking, and Gossip

**Thursday, November 17, 1:30 – 3:00**

John Seiler, Alumni Distinguished Professor at Virginia Tech (also known as Dr. Dendro), shares an overview of Virginia's forest biodiversity and marvels at the ability of trees to communicate with each other.

## Food Drives

By Judith Jones, Community Service Committee

Blacksburg AARP members have always been generous with your contributions to our food drives—local food pantries, Vittles for Vets, Christmas Store, pet food, and more. While grateful, these organizations often need cash instead of actual food goods. They receive so many duplicate items and have to purchase their remaining needs. Also, nonprofits are able to buy more for the dollar than we can buy in our stores. So, beginning now, you may drop cash or checks into our FOOD DRIVE BUCKET at monthly AARP meetings or go online to <https://www.blacksburgaarp.org/> and donate securely there. The charities will be very grateful for your help.

## Topics and Speakers for Chapter Meetings

Submitted by Linda Correll

### Sept 20, 2022: Tackling the Big Contemporary Health Challenges through Scientific and Organizational Innovation

**Description:** Presentation on Virginia Tech Carilion and the growth and development of the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute. Dr. Friedlander has built the institute's research programs to over \$140 million in current grant value with more than 35 research teams and over 400 investigators and students since its founding in 2010.

**Speaker:** Dr. Michael Friedlander is the Virginia Tech vice president for health sciences and technology, the executive director of the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute, and senior dean for research at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine. He has served as principal investigator on multiple research grants on brain processes that mediate vision, developmental plasticity, and traumatic brain injury. His research has been



published in leading journals, and he has held endowed professor positions at the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine and at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. In addition to his university leadership positions, Dr. Friedlander

is the founding president of the Association of Medical School Neuroscience Department Chairs. He currently serves on multiple boards and has received a number of fellowships and awards. He has also held visiting professorships at Oxford University, the Australian National University, and the University of Paris.

### October 18, 2022: Overview of Veterans' Benefits

**Description:** Presentation on the Virginia Department of Veterans Services and how it helps military veterans and their families successfully seek benefits from the Veterans Administration (VA).

**Speaker:** Dr. Matthew Wright is a veterans services representative for the Virginia Department of Veterans Services and has worked for veterans



since 2020. He assists and advocates for veterans and their families seeking benefits from the VA. Dr. Wright is from Pulaski County and served in the U.S. Army for 20 years. He was a schoolteacher for 10 years before returning to the New River Valley.

### Blacksburg Chapter #2613

#### Chapter Officers 2022

President – Leslie Pendleton, [lkpendleton@gmail.com](mailto:lkpendleton@gmail.com)

Vice President – Chuck Burress, [cgburress@comcast.net](mailto:cgburress@comcast.net)

Secretary – Terry Wildman, [wiley@vt.edu](mailto:wiley@vt.edu)

Treasurer – Pat Ballard, [pballard@vt.edu](mailto:pballard@vt.edu)

Assistant Treasurer – Ruth Ann Niles, [rniles2@icloud.com](mailto:rniles2@icloud.com)

#### Board of Directors (term ending date)

2022: Chuck Burress, Linda Correll, Kai Duncan

2023: Todd Solberg

2024: John Burton, Beth Grabau, Sue Hossack, Judith Jones, Fred Piercy, Nola Elliott


**Newsletter Editors:** Beth Grabau and Susan Terwilliger


**AARP Chapter Website:** [blacksburgaarp.org](http://blacksburgaarp.org)

*You are cordially invited!!*

**Mural Reveal & Reception**  
Downtown Blacksburg  
Friday, October 21, 2022  
3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Mural Reveal (3:00 p.m.)  
❖ Corner of 153 College Avenue & Draper Road (right side of Gillie's)  
**Reception** (immediately following)  
❖ The Lyric Theatre  
❖ Meet the artist, Nikki Pynn  
❖ Light appetizers and champagne will be served.

   
Grants to make communities livable for people of all ages  
[aarp.org/CommunityChallenge](http://aarp.org/CommunityChallenge)

   
A collaborative BRAA/AARP Blacksburg project funded by a 2022 AARP Community Challenge Grant in coordination with The Lester Group and the Town of Blacksburg

## Health and Wellness Fair

*Submitted by Chuck Burress and Fred Piercy*

A free local Health and Wellness Fair in Christiansburg on September 21 will provide information on ways to stay healthy, feel healthy, and age well. The fair is noon to 4 p.m. at Christiansburg Recreation Center, 1600 N. Franklin St. The public event is co-sponsored by AARP Blacksburg, the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM), and the recreation center.

Close to 100 exhibitors will offer a variety of health information and screenings. A major attraction will be VCOM faculty and students offering free medical services and screenings. The public can meet and interact with them one on one. VCOM will provide information on fall prevention, cancer screenings, osteoporosis, body mass index, immunizations, osteopathic manipulative therapy, health nutrition, and diet.

Flu shots and other immunizations will be available. Pharmacists will be on hand to discuss such topics as drug interactions. Physical and occupational therapists and chiropractors can advise on chronic conditions. Participatory presentations will include Qi Gong, Tai Chi, mindfulness exercises, laughter yoga, and chair yoga. Also featured are massage therapy, in-home health services, home improvement ideas for aging in place, and free light and healthy snacks.

Being engaged in your community can help keep you young, or at least feeling young. Participants will be able to explore opportunities for staying engaged through volunteering and participating in arts events, hiking, travel, exercise, and activities of public libraries.

While many people are attracted to health fairs for explicit health services they can receive, the message at this one will be clear, says Leslie Pendleton, president of AARP Blacksburg: "Successful aging is not just about medical conditions and their management, but about living a full and engaged life and how our community helps make that possible." Wellness includes not only physical wellness but also intellectual, emotional, financial, social, environmental, occupational, and spiritual wellness.

Parking is abundant at the Christiansburg Recreation Center, and the venue is accessible to the disabled.

For details, contact Leslie Pendleton (540) 230-8139 or [lkpendleton@gmail.com](mailto:lkpendleton@gmail.com); or Tammy Caldwell (540) 382-2349 or [tcaldwell@christiansburg.org](mailto:tcaldwell@christiansburg.org).

## 2022 AARP Community Challenge Grants

*by Ginny Ayers, Gerri Young, and Leslie Pendleton*

AARP's Community Challenge grant program helps build momentum in awarded communities to improve livability for residents of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. Two local organizations, **Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley** and the **Blacksburg Regional Art Association**, successfully competed for 2022 grants. More than 3,200 applications were received, of which 260 were funded across all 50 states in the U.S. Virginia was successful in garnering a total of five grants. For more information on nationwide grants see: <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge/info-2022/2022-grantees.html>

**Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley** (LVNRV) submitted a successful Community Challenge grant to develop a Mobile Literacy Lab to be deployed throughout the New River Valley in the upcoming year. Based on the success of their Bridge to Digital Learning initiative – providing adults with access to technology, internet, and digital resources – LVNRV identified a greater need throughout the community, especially with older adults, to deliver training and support to help reach digital literacy goals. Executive Director Ginny Ayers noted that the Mobile Literacy Lab will offer a variety of convenient, accessible, and community-based digital instruction options, including two 10-week classes this fall focused on students 50 and older. The lab includes laptops, Chromebooks, internet hotspot access, printer/scanner, and training curriculum for accessing email, internet browsing, job searching, and communicating with loved ones. The first digital literacy courses are being held at Meadowbrook Public Library in Shawsville beginning in early September; contact LVNRV at 540-382-7262 or [info@lvnr.org](mailto:info@lvnr.org) for more information.

In collaboration with the **Blacksburg Regional Art Association** (BRAA), AARP Blacksburg President Leslie Pendleton submitted a Community Challenge grant for a mural to be placed on the brick wall at the corner of College Avenue and Draper Road, a high visibility downtown area near the Virginia Tech campus and the Farmers Market. BRAA Public Art Chair Linda Correll is spearheading the project. Local artist and BRAA member Nikki Pynn has designed a mural that emphasizes local wildlife, native plants, and the Strouble's Creek that runs under the town. The mural will coincide with future Draper Road streetscape plans and hopefully inspire an eventual art alley nearby. The team sincerely appreciates the support of The Lester Group (building owner), Renee Gillie, the Town of Blacksburg, and Brian Jacks, associate director, AARP Virginia.

## Trail Notes: Gateway Trail

by Susan Terwilliger, Beth Grabau, and Pat Hipkins

The Gateway Trail is aptly named: it is a gateway to the Pandapas Pond trail system. It also connects to the Huckleberry Trail northern extension that runs through Heritage Park. This out-and-back trail is 1.7 miles each way (3.4 miles round trip), ending at the forest service road that leads to a network of other trails in the Pandapas Pond region. It is open to hikers, trail runners, and mountain bikers, so you may encounter some cyclists on your hike. It is



rated as moderately difficult because of some steep and rocky switchbacks, but also includes flat or gently sloping terrain. The trail is very well marked with yellow diamonds frequently placed throughout. A large parking lot is located off

Meadowbrook Road close to the trailhead, a short drive from downtown Blacksburg. A kiosk near the start posts a trail map, mileage, and current trail conditions. This uncrowded, lovely trail gives you a feel of the woods without a long drive. More information can be found at the Hiking Project at <https://www.hikingproject.com/trail/7039970/gateway-trail>

## Board Recognizes the Outstanding Service of Jim Wightman to the Chapter

Submitted by Jerry Niles

For more years than anyone in our chapter can remember, Jim Wightman has been managing the name badge process for each of our chapter monthly meetings until Covid forced us to go to Zoom meetings. Jim developed a unique system over the years that served the chapter well. He made sure that each member had their badge for the meeting, each new member had a badge, and visitors were pinned with an identifying badge. Over the years, Jim's good work has been central to building a strong sense of community for the chapter. His carefully constructed system enabled us to learn the names of new members and helped those new members make the social connections that form one of the foundational blocks of a healthy and vibrant chapter. As important as the name badge system is, it was Jim's inimitable smile and warm welcome to each member as they entered the room and received their badge that left the most lasting impression on chapter members. Over the years, Jim's greetings, along with the presentation of the name badge, made each meeting a bit more special for members and served as the gateway for another hour and a half of social connectedness, intellectual stimulation, and service. At its June meeting, the Board took time to reflect on Jim's vital service to the chapter and expressed the chapter's deep appreciation for his contributions. As Jim passes the "name-badge torch" on, we hope that we can use what he has modelled for us for so many years and keep the chapter tradition he built alive and well.

## Literacy Volunteer Tutor Training

Are you interested in helping another adult to improve their skills in reading, writing, basic math, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), or basic computer skills, or to prepare for exams such as the GED or U.S. Citizenship Exam? We need your help! You can make an impact by helping adults in the community improve their literacy skills. Volunteer tutors with LVNRV provide one-to-one or small group tutoring in public locations throughout the NRV, in-person or virtually. Visit our website at [lvnr.org](http://lvnr.org) for more information or to join our September or October tutor training class.

**COMPUTER SKILLS CLASS FOR BEGINNERS**  
TUESDAYS 5:30-7 pm  
September 6 - October 25, 2022  
WEDNESDAYS 10-11:30 am  
September 7 - October 18  
Meadowbrook Public Library

Provided by  
Literacy Volunteers of  
the New River Valley

Sponsored by  
**AARP**

Seating limited.  
Register at the library  
or call (540) 268-1964

**LVNRV**  
Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley

Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library  
One stop, unlimited possibilities

## Raindrops were falling on our heads but the annual picnic went on

*Submitted by Jerry Niles and Don Creamer*

The annual chapter picnic emerged from its several-year COVID hiatus on June 17. Fifty members registered for the celebration at the home of Susan Magliaro and Terry Wildman. Scheduled to begin at 5pm, the festivities were kicked off with the traditional wave of thunderstorms beginning about 4:30 and continuing for about an hour. This year's storms were accompanied by some substantial winds to add to the excitement. The timely storms managed to reduce attendance by about half (25), but those who managed to make it were greeted with sunshine about 5:30. The large tent stood firm during the storm and allowed the attendees to take advantage of the calm after the storm and the great conversation among members and guests who were ready for some social connectedness despite the challenges offered by the weather.

The group also appreciated the warm and supportive remarks made by Brian Jacks, associate director of the AARP Virginia, and a great friend to the Blacksburg Chapter.

The intrepid chapter members who withstood the elements were rewarded with the outstanding catering provided by Top of the Stairs in Blacksburg, which included TOTS special homemade chips, a delicious selection of pulled pork, chicken, and brisket, with all the usual tasty sides and an assortment of "to die for brownies" from Our Daily Bread. The food drew rave reviews from the attendees as evidenced by the parting comments and the numerous "doggie bags" that were carried away as a result of the ample portions of food left over.



## President's Message Continued from page 1



Fortunately, many of you have already taken advantage of aging in place resources, including those offered here in the New River Valley. Some years ago, the New River Valley Aging in Place Leadership Team, comprised of local gerontologists, leaders of nonprofit organizations and local government, aging advocates, and

community members, was formed to create an Aging in Place Workbook (now in its 3<sup>rd</sup> edition), topic-area videos, and a Facilitation Guide (updated in 2022) for aging in place planning and facilitation of workshops. All these resources can be found on the New River Valley Agency on Aging website: <https://www.nrvaoo.org/aging-in-place/>.

The workbook covers five primary sections (Housing, Health & Wellness, Transportation, Personal Finance, and Connection & Growth) with key points, self-assessment questions, and worksheets for a Plan A and a Plan B. A final section includes personal plan development checklists, a checklist of important documents, budget planning worksheets, and seasonal home maintenance checklists. Who among us doesn't need help navigating Medicare? Are you concerned about whether your financial resources will be sufficient in the event of a health crisis? Do you need help with the documents associated with end-of-life planning? Do you worry about getting around when you can no longer safely drive? Do you think about how you'll maintain social connectedness and avoid loneliness in your latter years? This information and more are covered in the workbook. As noted by the participants who attended the June 28<sup>th</sup> workshop, there's no one plan that fits all of us. That's why a personal plan for aging in place is so important. We simply shouldn't either leave things to luck or rely upon others to take care of us in our final years.

If you don't have your own copy of the workbook, I encourage you to obtain one, watch the videos, and work your way through the entire workbook. Attending a local aging in place workshop organized by the Lifelong Learning Institute, a healthcare provider, or nonprofit organization is a great way to jumpstart your planning. Stay tuned for future aging in place workshops offered through local assisted living facilities, churches, senior centers, recreation centers, and other community organizations.

Finally, AARP also has aging in place resources available online. Family caregiving resources at <https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/> provide valuable assistance across a wide range of topics. You can download a free HomeFit Guide at this website: <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/housing/info-2020/homefit-guide.html>.

## Inflation and the Risk of Going Broke Safely

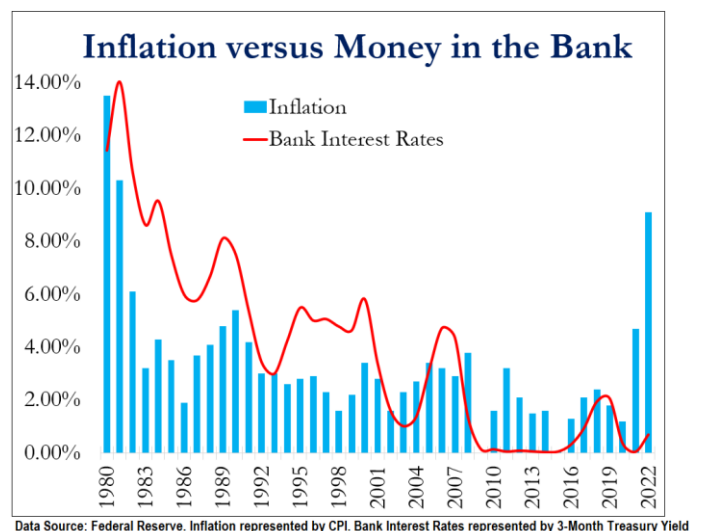
by Chris French

In the medical world, high blood pressure is sometimes referred to as the silent killer, as patients may feel no symptoms over a long period of time, yet deep inside, long-term damage is being done to their cardiovascular system. In the financial world, the silent killer is inflation.

While inflation can be defined several ways, it most commonly represents the gradual increase over time in prices for goods and services. Today, inflation is visible in all parts of the economy, but tends to get the most headline coverage as it relates to gasoline prices at the pump or groceries in the store. What makes inflation so harmful to a retiree is that for someone on a fixed income, an increase in prices typically means a decrease in spending power: the same \$50 you spent at the gas station or grocery store last year doesn't get you the same amount of gas or food that it previously did. We refer to this as a loss of purchasing power.

For today's retirees, the problem is compounded by low interest rates offered by conservative investments, including savings accounts, CDs, and some types of bonds. For most of the past 50 years, interest rates in a savings account or CD would exceed the rate of inflation, allowing savers to maintain and grow their purchasing power without investing in the stock market. In the 1980s, the last time when inflation was as high as today, CDs or savings accounts would pay 6-10% interest rates, providing some level of protection. Since the financial crisis of 2008, this is no longer the case, with savings and CDs routinely paying less than 3%, and significantly below the rate of inflation, which, as of July 2022, was 9.1%, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

This leads to the reason why inflation is the silent killer: a conservative investor can be lulled into a sense of safety by keeping large portions of their wealth in the bank, away from the volatility of stocks and bonds. In reality, while they may be



minimizing their market risk by keeping their money out of the stock market and in the bank, they are maximizing their risk to inflation and exposing themselves to slow and steady loss in purchasing power over time. A savvy investor seeking to minimize their total risk will recognize that the proper asset allocation will include investing a portion of their resources into assets that will exceed the rate of inflation over the long term, including diversified investments into stocks, bonds, and mutual funds. By being willing to accept a bit more market risk and volatility, you can reduce your chances of having inflation erode away your purchasing power throughout retirement and avoid going broke safely.

*Chris French is a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) and senior advisor at Plott & French Financial Advisors. He has been in financial services for 18 years and provides comprehensive wealth management solutions and retirement planning to high net worth and high-income families throughout the New River Valley and beyond. Securities and investment advisory services offered through Geneos Wealth Management, Inc. Member FINRA/SIPC*

### Coming up in the next newsletter....

In recognition of Veterans' Day, the November/December AARP newsletter will highlight three of our members' military service: John Burton, Ben Crawford, and Fred Piercy. Stay tuned!



Blacksburg Chapter #2613  
Leslie Pendleton, President  
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Blacksburg VA 24062

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**Blacksburg Chapter Member Application for 2022** (or join online: [blacksburgaarp.org](http://blacksburgaarp.org))

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Partner: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

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

New \_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_ Life Member (90+) (free) \_\_\_ Lifetime member \_\_\_

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 check and this form to: P.O. Box 10082 Blacksburg, VA 24063