



February 2013  
Vol. 30, No. 2

<http://civic.bev.net/aarp>

### February 19 Chapter Meeting

## Faith Community Nursing

Jan Notter, RN, CFNP, will lead a discussion on the Role of Faith Community Nursing around our theme of Health Care advocates for Seniors at the chapter meeting on Tuesday February 19. There will be a panel of others focusing on the topic as well. This relatively new area of health care advocacy will be explored. As usual, there will be ample time for questions and answers. This session follows the theme set by Tina King, Executive Director of the New River Valley Agency on Aging at our January meeting.

The meeting will begin at 11:30 a.m. with a "brown bag lunch" (beverages provided by the Chapter Hospitality Committee). The program will start at noon and end at 1 p.m. The meeting will be in the Blacksburg Community Center on Patrick Henry Drive in Blacksburg.

There will be a brief 5 minute "Table Top Talk" provided by Jenny Mills, Supervisor of Blacksburg Transit (BT) outlining services for seniors. Other BT staff will be on hand, and materials about BT will be available.

Come yourself, and why not invite a friend or two to join you!



Food Pantry  
Donations Needed

Don't forget to bring your food donation (a can or box of non-perishable food) to the AARP chapter meeting on February 19. *We will collect food at each month's meeting.*

**. . . February 14 is a pleasant and sentimental opportunity to lavish your partner with attention or move your relationship to the next level.**

**Pepper Schwartz**

## President's Column

Our chapter was well represented by Leslye Bloom, Val Coluni, Ben Crawford, Don Creamer, John Hillison, and Jim Wightman at AARP Virginia's Rally Day in Richmond on January 29. This event enabled Virginia chapter members to talk with Delegates and Senators about the key issues to help improve the lives of older Virginians.



The Program Committee, led by Carl McDaniels and Jewell Ritchey, is moving forward with some exciting programs... February features Faith Community Nursing with Jan Notter, continuing our "Advocacy" theme for 2013, and a 5 minute "Table Top" discussion with Blacksburg Transit.

In addition, Brian Jacks from the Virginia AARP office will attend both the February and March meetings and share some highlights with us.

In March, Rep. Yost has accepted our invitation to be our guest speaker – and special thanks to Val Coluni who has been instrumental in keeping us up-to-date on the political scene and in getting Rep. Yost to accept the invitation to meet with us.

In April, we are meeting at Warm Hearth at their newly opened Village Center that features fitness rooms, swimming pool and an art room. Leslye Bloom and I had a chance to tour the facility last month while still under construction, and we think you will be impressed.

Don Creamer has volunteered to chair a committee (John Hillison, Sally Anna Stapleton, Doris Abraham) to review and update our Standing Rules and Bylaws. Other opportunities

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exist for our members to serve. Call or write to me if you would like to be involved on our committees.

This month, Our Community Service Chairperson, Sally Anna Stapleton, is collecting cans of food for MCEAP (Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program). If you can, please bring a canned food donation to the meeting.

And lastly, please be safe on the roads this winter season – we have already seen a lot of cold, snowy, icy days, and with the hills around here, it makes it even more treacherous.

Tom Alston  
President, Blacksburg AARP

## **When you find yourself in the hospital, Are you admitted or only observed? It matters!**

Tina King, Executive Director  
New River Valley Agency on Aging

This month's article focuses on an issue that was extensively discussed at the January AARP meeting during the Agency on Aging presentation on health care advocacy for seniors. Deena Flinchum, a highly knowledgeable volunteer for the Agency's Virginia Health Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (VICAP) has provided additional information on issues that can arise from hospital stays.

We are beginning to see the rise of a problem that will likely vex seniors with Medicare on into the future. Mrs. Jones is having chest pains and is taken to the ER at her local hospital, where she undergoes the usual tests, which come back inconclusive. She has a history of cardiovascular problems as well as diabetes and lives alone. The staff transports her to a hospital room, where she spends the night and is released in the morning. While at the hospital, she has received all of the drugs that she would normally take. The question: Was she admitted or merely kept for observation?

The answer: We have no way of knowing because her basic treatment would have been about the same. If she was formally admitted to the hospital and has a Plan F supplemental, she may owe nothing for her stay. Unfortunately, if she was merely kept for observation, she will receive a rather large bill for all of the self-

administered drugs that she took while there. In one particular local case, an overnight observation stay netted a bill of over \$1,100 for self-administered drugs, including \$7 for one pill that could be purchased at Wal-Mart for \$10 for a 90-day supply.

Suppose that Mrs. Jones was kept for observation overnight, admitted the next day and two days later entered a skilled nursing facility (SNF) for a week. A qualifying hospital stay that will allow Medicare to cover the first 20 days of SNF charges is three days with the discharge day not counted. Mrs. Jones's stay is not qualifying because she was outpatient the first day and only spent 2 days as inpatient. Medicare will not cover her stay, nor will her supplemental insurance, which can only help pay for Medicare approved services.

In spite of the fact that Mrs. Jones has Medicare A and B, a Plan F supplemental, and a good drug plan, she can leave the hospital and SNF with thousands of dollars in Medicare bills that she herself is responsible for.

Keeping patients for observation instead of admitting them to the hospital may be a perfectly sensible attempt by hospitals to control costs and avoid penalties; however, the end result is more health care costs shifted to unwitting seniors. In an admirable attempt to prevent unnecessary hospital readmissions, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) penalizes hospitals that exceed a certain level of readmissions. Close to 20% of Medicare beneficiaries are readmitted within a month after an initial hospital stay (see link below). There are a number of steps that hospitals can take to cut down on readmissions; but it is safe to say that these penalties might well figure in the decision as to whether Mrs. Jones is admitted or observed, and thus whether or not she receives a hefty bill later.

It may be impossible to protect yourself completely from bills resulting from being observed rather than admitted, but there are some common sense steps that you can take to mitigate the results of an observation stay.

- If you are in the hospital unexpectedly for more than a short time, ask your doctor or the staff what your status is – inpatient or outpatient. If you stay for several days, check daily to make sure that your status has not changed.

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- If you are in observation status, ask your own doctor if this status is justified and work with him to have the status adjusted by the hospital.
- If you are billed for self-administered drugs, contact your Medicare Part D drug plan to see if they might be covered at least in part by an out-of-network claim. Most hospital pharmacies do not participate with Part D plans and it is likely that all of the costs will not be covered. Part D plans will not usually cover off-formulary drugs and over-the-counter medications. Each Part D plan could have somewhat different rules so that you need to work with your specific plan.
- You should keep a list of your drugs with you so that the hospital can determine what you usually take if you end up in the hospital unexpectedly.
- You should keep your family and other caregivers apprised of this information along with your other directives in case you are unable to handle your business yourself.
- If you find yourself destined for a SNF without the required 3 inpatient days in the hospital, ask if you can receive the same treatment through Medicare's home health benefit.
- If you believe that your designation as outpatient was unjustified and you are being charged as a result, you can appeal the classification.

The dilemma of admitted versus observed is likely to plague seniors for some time into the future.

The New River Valley Agency on Aging VICAP staff and volunteers are available to answer questions on health insurance questions and concerns. To obtain assistance, call (540) 980-7720 or e-mail at: [vicap@nrva.org](mailto:vicap@nrva.org)

### **Time to renew your membership in the Blacksburg Chapter AARP?**

Your 2013 membership fees are now due. Our membership is a calendar year. ***If '2012' is on the address label and highlighted, you need to renew.*** Use the convenient form on the last page of this newsletter to renew your membership. Prompt payment of your 2013 dues will be appreciated.

## **Meet Bob Blancato – the new president of AARP Virginia**

By Ben Crawford

Robert B. (Bob) Blancato is the new president of AARP Virginia. Bob is the chief volunteer spokesman for the more than a million members in the state. He works in close collaboration with state director Bill Kallio to achieve AARP's vision, mission and strategic priorities.

Bob lives in Arlington, VA and served two terms (ending last year) on the Arlington Commission on Aging. He has earned a national reputation for his work with programs for seniors. He was Staff Director of the House Select Committee on Aging Subcommittee on Human Services from 1977-1988; the Executive Director of the 1995 White House Conference on Aging; was a member of the 2005 policy committee of the White House Conference on Aging; and is a member (chairman 2009-2011) of the Commonwealth Council on Aging---originally appointed by Governor Cain in 2008 and re appointed by Governor McDonnell in 2012 for another 4-year term. He also serves as Executive Director of the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Program and is national coordinator of the nonpartisan Elder Justice Coalition. Bob believes CHAPTERS are very important to the work of AARP.

Academically, Bob Blancato has a BA from Georgetown University, an MPA from American University; and has been adjunct faculty for several schools.

**To visit the AARP Virginia website, go to:**  
**<http://states.aarp.org/category/virginia/>**

### **AARP Blacksburg Chapter #2613**

Chapter meetings are the third Tuesday of each month at the Blacksburg Community Center, Patrick Henry Drive at 11:30 a.m. 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 a.m.

PO Box 10082  
Blacksburg, VA 24062  
**<http://civic.bev.net/aarp/>**

## Blacksburg AARP Chapter # 2613 Financial Statement for January 2013

**Balance at end of December 2012      \$4,678.02**

**Credits**

Membership Dues	\$ 705.00
50/50 Drawing	23.00
Coffee Money	7.00
Interest	.26
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 735.26</b>

**Debits**

Accounting correction	\$ 495.00
(VCOM check was \$2,681.50, not \$2,186.50 as reported)	
USPS Annual Permit	190.00
New Deposit Slips	31.42
Nancy Eis (Holiday table pieces)	50.15
Kopy Korner	143.85
Leslye Bloom (refreshments)	17.51
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 927.93</b>

**Balance end of January 2013      \$4,485.35**  
**Balance in reserve account      \$ 2,681.28**

## Blacksburg AARP Chapter # 2613 Membership Report February 2013\*

**Member Profile:**

Category	Individual Count	Household Count
AARP 2012 Members	65	42
AARP 2013 Members	196	116
LifeTime Members	39	23
Life Members	15	14
Comp Members	19	19
Honorary Members	3	2
<b>Total Membership</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>216</b>

Committee      Jim Wightman (chair), Sue Farrar,  
    Tom Alston

\*Report prepared January 30, 2013

## Blacksburg Chapter Members attend AARP Legislative Day

Approximately 140 AARP members converged in the Virginia General Assembly building January 29, 2013, to advocate for seniors in the Old Dominion. The focus of our visit was on Medicare and Medicaid.

The Blacksburg AARP Chapter sent six (6) members including our chapter legislative specialist, Val Coluni. The Blacksburg group (see

photo) met with seven senators and/or their legislative aides, also our Delegate Yost's aide. We were warmly received in every single office.



Left to right: Jim Wightman, Peggy Friedenberg (VA AARP legislative specialist), Leslye Bloom, Don Creamer, Sen. Barbara Favola, John Hillison, Bob Blancato (new VA AARP president), Ben Crawford.



Left to right: Jim Wightman, John Hillison, Peggy Friedenberg Sen. John Edwards, Leslye Bloom, Don Creamer, Ben Crawford.

## Meet our Blacksburg AARP Chapter Vice President-- Leslye Bloom.

Leslye holds a BS, MS and Ph.D. degrees from Penn State University in Art Education. She is a Certified Art Therapist who retired in 1990 from teaching and consulting in the area of Art Education and Art Therapy courses at Virginia Tech, UVA, The University of Evansville (IN) and Penn State. Since retiring she has concentrated on her own art activities.

Her works are featured in three art texts, and housed in corporate and private collections across the US, Jamaica, and Great Britain. She has

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chaired, curated and judged numerous art shows in Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Much of her teaching career was spent exploring and popularizing digital media. Now, dissatisfied with mere technical solutions, she prefers to work through and beyond the computer, using it as any other art tool, both as a means of personal expression and to capture 'the wonder, beauty and humor of our world. I like to put at least one impossible thing in every work.'

Leslye is active in the Blacksburg Art scene. She has been an active member of AARP Blacksburg serving currently as hospitality chair. Earlier she co-chaired, with John Hillison the AARP regional effort called "You Deserved a Say" regarding members and non members views about the future of Social Security & Medicare.

Leslye lives in Blacksburg with her long-haired dachshund, Elmo. Visit her website at: [leslyebloom.com](http://leslyebloom.com) to see some of her art.

### **AARP Chapter 2613 Board Minutes February 5, 2013**

**Call to Order**—President Tom Alston called the meeting to order at 10:03.

Officers Present: President Tom Alston, Vice President Leslye Bloom, Treasurer Brian Allen, Secretary Virgil Cook

Board Members: Don Creamer, John Hillison, Jim Montgomery, June Schmidt, Sally Anna Stapleton

Non-Board-Members, Committee Chairs and Appointees: Doris Abraham, Larry Alexander, Val Coluni, R. B. "Ben" Crawford, Margaret Kates, Carl McDaniels, Jewell Ritchey, Edd Sewell, Juanita Wightman, Jim Wightman, Terry Wildman

**Approval of Minutes for January 3**—Jim Wightman moved that the minutes be approved. The motion passed.

**Announcement**—President Alston informed the board of the training at the New River Agency on Aging for volunteers who are interested in teaching seniors about Medicare fraud. The contact person is Nancy Siburt, and the date is March 5.

**Treasurer's Report**—Brian Allen. A short summary of the report follows:

Balance at end of December: \$4,678.02

Credits: \$735.26

Debits: \$927.93

Balance end of January 2013: \$4,485.35

We received Thank-you notes from several recipients of the chapter's donations to various charities. A motion to receive the report passed.

**Finance Committee**—John Hillison. John reported on the budget. The budget projects 150 dues-paying members. The picnic auction raised \$454. The 50/50 drawing is usually about \$150. The 2013 half of the profit from the Health Fair is \$2,300. John Hillison moved to adopt the proposed budget. The motion passed. Doris Abraham suggested that we try to publicize our donations to other community organizations more aggressively. Such publicity may help us to recruit new members.

**Census and Activities Report**.—Tom Alston. Tom said that he used the previous report as a template for the 2012 report to the state office. Lesley Bloom moved approval of the census and activities report. The motion passed.

**Standing Rules**—Tom Alston. The dues amount needs to be changed to reflect current dues. We need to change the statement in the constitution on meeting places to indicate that we sometimes meet at other venues. Don Creamer suggested that a committee be formed to revise the constitution. The committee will consist of Don Creamer, Sally Anna Stapleton, John Hillison, and Doris Abraham. Don Creamer will Chair the committee.

**Audit Report**—June Schmidt. The financial records maintained by the Treasurer of the Blacksburg Chapter AARP were reviewed by members of the Chapter's Financial Planning and Audit Committee. The deposits were verified with bank statements. The disbursements were verified with receipts, reimbursement vouchers, and bills received.

Based on the review, we believe the financial records have been properly maintained. Due to an incorrect amount reported on the Treasurer's ledger and the financial statement provided at the December meeting, a revised report needs to be filed. This correction is for the amount paid to the V-COM Gerontology Scholarship fund.

The Committee recommends that ledger and bank statements continue to be reconciled monthly. Further, the Committee recommends that the form provided on the back of each

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monthly bank statement continue to be used for this purpose.--John Hillison, Member; Jerry Lawton, Member; Dale Oliver, Member; June Schmidt, Chair

Don Creamer moved that the report be accepted. The motion passed.

Jim Montgomery recommended that we commend the audit committee.

### **Committee Reports**

**Membership**—Tom Alston. We need 34 more paying-dues members to meet our goal of 150. Jim Wightman suggested that we send postcards to those who have not paid with both a reminder and information on where to send checks.

**Programs**--Carl McDaniels. Feb 19—The Parrish Nurse as A Health Care Advocate—Jan Notter + Others

April 16—Warm Hearth Village Center—Staff Presentations about new facility & special physical fitness features + Advocate for Long Term Care—Lunch at 11:30

**Legislation**—Val Coluni. Over 100 AARP members met with legislators including members from our chapter: Jim Wightman, Leslye Bloom, Don Creamer, John Hillison, and Ben Crawford. The national AARP office is using the Virginia effort as a model for other AARP branches throughout the country.

Highlights of the status of key legislation follow: The expansion of Medicaid may pass. Legislation on predatory-lending restrictions lacks sufficient support. Legislation on electric-utility rate making is stalled. The bill on protecting vulnerable adults/punitive damages is stalled. The bill on redistricting house and senate boundaries will probably not go forward. The governor does not support the bill. The transportation bill is very unsatisfactory. AARP argues that Eliminating the gas tax and raising the sales tax has the highest impact on seniors. Virginia has one of the lowest gas taxes in the U.S.

Val stated his feeling that the chapter should reimburse members who incurred expenses for traveling to Richmond for Rally Day. Budget constraints preclude full reimbursement, however.

**Community Service**—Sally Anna Stapleton. Several large bags of food were collected at the last chapter meeting. This month's collection will go to the Montgomery County Emergency Assistance food bank in Christiansburg.

**Public Relations**—Terry Wildman. The paper now requires that articles on upcoming meetings be in by the first of the month. He has material for a couple of general articles on AARP.

**Health**—Larry Alexander. The March issue of the Home Sweet Home Newsletter will focus on how to find things around the home. Monthly health tip: When doctors don't listen, (1) Bring questions and relevant documents that you need. (2) Bring someone with you. (3) Be friendly with the doctor. (4). Be assertive.

**Health Fair**—John Hillison. The contribution from Best Buy has not been received. If it does come, it will go to VCOM.

**Newsletter**—Edd Sewell. Tom asked about putting the constitution and standing rules. On the Web site. To post them, Edd will need digital copies of the documents.

**History**—Doris Abraham. Doris asked for contributions of material that will contribute to our history. Don Creamer is updating the chapter history. Doris plans to collect the notes for the annual memorial service. These notes can be helpful in recalling old members.

**Awards**—Juanita Wightman. We already have one possible nominee.

**Caring**—Margaret Kates. Margaret asked for information on people who need to receive get-well and sympathy cards.

**Liaison**—Ben Crawford. On Rally Day, we visited 10 legislators, including John Edwards. Today is the deadline for each chamber to complete its legislation. The budget deadline is a bit later. On April 3, the General Assembly will convene to act on bills either vetoed or altered by the governor. We had a good visit with John Edwards.

Brian Jacks, the state office's associate director, has moved to Vinton and will be attending some of our chapter meetings. The new state president is Robert Blancato, who lives in Northern Virginia.

**Driver's Ed**—Sally Anna Stapleton. We sponsored a successful course in January. It was held at the RSVP office in Christiansburg.

**Announcements**—Tom Alston. Michael Easterling, a student at the Jefferson College of Health Sciences will have a table at the next meeting. He will have material on the importance of having your medical records in one location.

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Thus, if you must call 911, you can go to one place to get your medical records. This material grew out of a senior, community project.

On February 21 there will be a free seminar in the Montgomery County government building on the

Affordable Care act. It's primarily for employers, but anyone should be able to attend.

**Adjournment**—The meeting was adjourned at 11:51.

Respectfully Submitted:  
Virgil A. Cook, Secretary

## 2013 Officers & Board Members

### Officers

President	Tom Alston	tpalston@gmail.com
Vice President	Leslye Bloom	leslye@leslyebloom.com
Secretary	Virgil Cook	vcook@vt.edu
Treasurer	Brian Allen	brian.allen@prodigy.net

### Board of Directors

*Class of 2013* -- Tom Alston, tpalston@gmail.com; Jim Montgomery, jhmontgome@verizon.net; Juanita Wightman, Wightman@vt.edu

*Class of 2014* – Leslye Bloom, leslye@leslyebloom.com; John Hillison, johnhillison@comcast.net; Mary Ann Hinshelwood, mah@mahhinshelwood.com

*Class of 2015* – Don Creamer, dgc2@vt.edu; Nola Elliott, ne\_elliott@peoplepc.com; Terry Wildman, wiley@vt.edu

## 2012 Committee Chairs and Members

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Chair/Members</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Caring	Margaret Kates	552-4107
Chapter Awards	Juanita Wightman	552-2007 wightman@vt.edu
	Jim Montgomery	552-6735 jrmonte@verizon.net
Community Service	Sally Anna Stapleton	250-3908 sanna418@gmail.com
Driving Safety Courses	Curt Finch	552-8179 crfinch@vt.edu
	Cecil McBride	
Financial Planning and Audit	June Schmidt	552-1590 schmidtj@vt.edu
	John Hillison	552-8941 johnhillison@comcast.net
	Dale Oliver	jdoliver@vt.edu
Health	Larry Alexander	951-8172 aalexand@radford.edu
History	Doris Abraham	382-3392 dsta118e@verizon.net
Hospitality	Leslye Bloom	951-2025 leslye@leslyebloom.com
	Sue Farrar	381-1830 suefarrar@verizon.net
Legislative	Val Coluni	961-5014 vcoluni@aol.com
	Ben Crawford	961-5733 ben.crawford@vt.edu
Membership	Tom Alston	757-651-3065 tpalston@gmail.com
	Jim Wightman	552-2007 wightman@vt.edu
Newsletter Editor	Edd Sewell	951-1746 eddsewell@gmail.com
Program	Carl McDaniels	552-5818 cmcd@vt.edu
	Jewell Ritchey	sjr@vt.edu
Public Relations	Terry Wildman	wiley@vt.edu
AARP Virginia Liason	Ben Crawford	961-5733 ben.crawford.vt.edu
VTRA Liason	Margaret Kates	552-4107
Chaplin	Sandy Birch	951-3455 birch@vt.edu



### February Fun Facts and Trivia

- The Supreme Court of the U.S. met for the first time on February 1, 1790.
- February is the most misspelled of all the months.
- The Boy Scouts of America incorporated in February in 1910.
- Princess Elizabeth became Queen Elizabeth on February 6, 1952.
- Groundhog Day, celebrated on February 2, came about because of a German superstition. They thought if a hibernating animal cast a shadow on February 2nd that winter would last for another six weeks. If the animal did not see its shadow, spring would come early.

**Tom Alston, President  
AARP Chapter #2613  
P.O. Box 10082  
Blacksburg, VA 24062**

**Nonprofit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Blacksburg, VA  
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## **AARP Chapter #2613 Member Application for 2013**

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

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Prefer to receive newsletters: (check one)

Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Annual (Calendar Year) Dues: \$15.00

(includes spouse)\*

New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

90+ years old (no dues) \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks to AARP Blacksburg Chapter #2613

And mail to

P.O.Box 10082,  
Blacksburg, VA 24062

**\*Local Chapter membership requires membership in National AARP. For more information, call 1-888-287-2277 or mail national dues to AARP, 601 E Street, NW, Washington DC 20049.**