



BLACKSBURG NEWS

Volume 18, Issue 7

Chapter # 2613

September 2001

Have you paid your 2001 dues???

2001 BLACKSBURG AARP CHAPTER DUES \$6.00

Please renew your membership.

The \$6 membership dues is for an individual, not for a couple.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Darrell Clowes

September has made us relinquish our town to students and to football, but in return we get a taste of the vitality and excitement that life confers upon the young and can rejoice in our "remembrances of things past." It is a special time and we are lucky to enjoy it here in our special place nestled deep in the Blue Ridge. The nights are cooler, the gardens are heavy with their bounty, football is with us again, and the Executive Committee of our local AARP chapter has returned to life. Wow!!

We enter the final four months of 2001 with a satisfying series of accomplishments behind us - we worked with local social service agencies, Lowe's, and the state AARP to complete a home improvement project and to deliver a number of baskets containing home safety devices and information to benefit needy elderly in the community. We have been recognized at the state level for our accomplishments and perhaps more importantly have contributed positively to our own community as an organization and as individuals. Our membership continues to hover around the 200 figure -- a remarkable accomplishment for a community of this size. Our budget is reasonably balanced. We would welcome more robust income, but we have

kept our expenditures within good limits. Our planning for the rest of the year is under way. Programming for the balance of the year will focus increasingly on election issues; this will be seen in the monthly programs. At our local level we will soon be nominating and then electing directors and officers for the chapter. This is an important activity to ensure the continued life of the chapter and to introduce new members and new ideas into our activities. Please let me, June Schmidt, Dan Fleming or Bill Keeney know if you are interested in joining in the leadership of the organization.

The Board recommended a change in the dues structure to be made effective for the 2002 year. That change would bring us more into line with general AARP policy by providing a single membership fee -- currently six dollars a year -- but a special fee for couples of ten dollars. This recommendation will be brought to the membership at the September meeting for discussion and a vote. Also the Board identified one new initiative we plan to develop this year. In December we hope to sponsor/support an activity to recognize volunteer efforts within the New River Valley community. This again would involve a cooperative effort with local agencies. Financial support has been offered by the state AARP, Carilion, and Electa.

So, a new season is upon us with the sadness of seeing another summer season pass, the mourning of friends and family lost, but the anticipation of autumn with its special glories and the anticipation of sharing this coming time with our friends and family. I will miss our next meeting to attend a family reunion in Maine. While I rejoice in my own special blessings, I leave you in the capable hands of Ben Crawford and the members of the Board who provide the guidance for our chapter.

FUTURE MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMS

September 18 – Clyde Kessler,
poet and storyteller

October 16 -- "Issues facing Virginia in 2002"
The Honorable R. Creigh Deeds,
House of Delegates, District 18.
With the recent redistricting of the
General Assembly, Delegate Jim Shuler
who now represents Blacksburg will
move to District 7. Blacksburg becomes
part of a redrawn District 12 that
stretches north to Bath County where
Delegate Deeds resides.

November 20 – Dr. Linda Cheek,
"Holistic Medicine"

December 4 -- Christmas Luncheon at the
Red Lion Inn

CONGRESS FACES KEY HEALTH CARE ISSUES

Dan Fleming

Congress has before it several key health care issues that may be tackled before their October adjournment. The current slowing of federal tax revenues coupled with the large tax cuts scheduled for the years ahead cast a shadow over several of these proposals. One contentious issue that will not be affected by the budget is the resolution of the key differences between the House and Senate-passed version of the Patient's Bill of Rights. A joint House-Senate conference committee

must now reconcile the differences between the two versions.

A pledge made by both sides in the last Presidential election to provide Medicare prescription drug coverage is in much greater danger because of future budget restraints. Proposals are currently being worked on by leaders of both parties and specifics on these are expected to be forthcoming in the near future.

Another piece of legislation of special interest to older Americans is a bipartisan proposal designed to make long-term care and long-term care insurance more affordable. The House and Senate bills begin to help defray long-term care costs by providing a \$3,000 tax credit for long-term care recipients or their caregivers. The proposed tax credit – which begins at \$1,000 -- is to be phased in over four years.

Finally, proposals to reform Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security appear to become more difficult to achieve as future government revenue projections become murkier and less optimistic.

FIXING VIRGINIA'S TAX STRUCTURE: A CALL FOR REFORM

Dan Fleming

If you are interested in the financial problems facing Virginia state and local government, there is an excellent program coming soon sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County. The program, "Fixing Virginia's Tax Structure: A Call for Reform" will feature a presentation by Dr. Tom Morris, President of Emory and Henry College and Co-Chair of the Virginia Commission on State and Local Tax Structure. Respondents include State Senator John Edwards of Roanoke, Joyce Lewis, member, Blacksburg Town Council and Vice President of the Virginia Municipal League, and Mary Biggs, Chair, Montgomery County Board of Supervisors. The moderator will be Elizabeth Obenshain, editorial writer for The Roanoke Times. Time

will be allowed for questions from the audience.

The meeting will be held on **Wednesday, September 26, 7:00 p.m. at the Blacksburg Municipal Building.** One controversial feature of the Tax Commission report is the proposal to reduce or eliminate special income tax breaks for seniors. The proposed reforms also suggest ways to reduce the reliance by local governments on the property tax.

HEALTH CARE AND YOU

Medicare reform will be the topic of a forum on **September 12 from 11:30 to 1:30 p.m. in the Blacksburg Community Center.** Tom Hawley from the New River Agency on Aging will be the guest speaker. This forum is co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters and the Blacksburg Senior Center. Participants should bring a bag lunch. Beverages will be provided.

Future topic in this Health Care and You series include:

- October 23 -- Prescription drug coverage for seniors
 - November 28 -- Managed care and patients' rights
 - February 12 -- Long term care
- Health care for the uninsured will be scheduled at a later date.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

The Board of Directors, at its January 1998 meeting, adopted the following policy relative to Board and/or chapter meetings during inclement weather:

AARP Board and/or chapter meetings will be canceled if Montgomery County Schools are closed due to inclement weather on days AARP Board and/or chapter meetings are scheduled."

AARP WEBSITES

AARP has its own website, called AARP Webplace, which features information about the Organization's activities and issues of interest to older persons. To access information on a host of topics please visit the site at <http://www.aarp.org>. Some of the information featured includes membership benefits, legislative issues, and health and wellness concerns. The AARP website also features information on this year's election cycle, including materials on selected issues and a Candidate Database and Voter Registration Information.

FRAUD WEB SITES

As a result of the Consumer University held last spring we were provided with a web site that gives a listing of questionable web sites that have been investigated for fraud. Bill Kallio writes that there is a web site with a searchable database where this information can be found:

- start at www.dhhs.gov/oig
- click on Electronic Reading Room
- click on Office of Investigations
- click on OIG Exclusions
- click on Online Searchable Database

Check out this web site if you suspect a web site may be fraudulent.

FREE CLINIC OF NEW RIVER VALLEY

The Free Clinic of New River Valley needs and welcomes volunteers to join in meeting the needs of residents without health insurance in the New River Valley. A full range of volunteer opportunities is offered including office and clerical, marketing, and all health care professions. For more information, contact Amy Vaughan at 381-0820.

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