



BLACKSBURG NEWS

Volume 21, Issue 2

Chapter # 2613

February 2004

Membership Meeting -- February 17, 2004

"Importance of Preserving Open Space"

Elizabeth Obenshain, Executive Director

New River Land Trust

11:30 a.m. - Bag lunch and fellowship

Program from 12 noon to 1:00 p.m.

It is time to pay your 2004 dues.

BLACKSBURG AARP CHAPTER DUES

\$6.00 individual or \$10.00 for husband and wife

Please renew your membership by completing the membership form at the end of this newsletter and returning it along with your check.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Brian R. Allen

It will soon be spring! Hold that thought.

We will be having a memorial service at our next meeting, February 17, 2004 to remember our fellow members that passed away in the last year; Joan Walker, Wybe Kroontje, Al Payne, Edgar Moore and James McCann. If I have missed anyone please call me before the meeting at 552-4422. **Please plan to attend** and help us remember them. Our chaplain, Ken Dawson, will have a short service at the beginning of our meeting, to be followed by a presentation by Beth Obenshain on protecting the environment. Beth is the daughter of Sam Obenshain, whom most of you knew. She does a great job for the New River Land Trust, and has done presentations on public television in the

past. **Be sure to bring a friend** to the meeting and help us increase our membership. We are shooting for 300 this year. We already have 263, and only you can help us make this happen.

The 2004 proposed budget has a projected deficit! AARP's motto is "to serve, not to be served." In order to live by our motto the chapter needs additional funds.

Currently our dues just barely cover the cost of preparing and mailing our news letter, due to the fact that those costs have risen each year. Consequently, we have no other funds available to support worthy community activities. In previous years the chapter has raised additional funds to purchase items for the Senior Center and support special projects including Senior

Olympics, the Blacksburg food pantry, Christmas Store, Volunteer Action Center and Volunteer Action Recognition Celebration. On one occasion a community wide yard sale was conducted.

At the board meeting on February 5, 2004, the budget proposed by the financial planning committee included at least \$500.00 for special projects contributions, which will leave us with a deficit. The board is considering ways to meet this deficit. The easiest way to cover the deficit this year is to ask each member to contribute \$10.00 to be used for community service activities in 2004. Then, to ensure this doesn't happen in 2005, a fund raising committee will be selected to plan a fund raising activity to cover community service expenditures. This one time \$10.00 contribution is **not** mandatory, but would certainly help us continue to be involved in service to our community.

So, if it is possible for you to contribute \$10.00, please give it to either Jim Moore or me, or you can mail it to Ray Murley at 904 Horseshoe Ln., Blacksburg. Thank you so much.

I would also like to invite anyone who is interested to join a small group of volunteers calling themselves "Seniors in Action". This would be an able bodied group of members who would work in the community bringing less fortunate folks' houses up to code, making improvements to their properties by doing some carpentry, painting, yard work etc. We will need people at all skill levels, from those who can hold a paint brush or hammer to those with carpentry or other skills. Call me at 552-4422 if you are interested, or want to know more. Thanks. See you on Tuesday the 17th. All the best, *Brian*

VIRGINIA AARP SUPPORTS LEGISLATION BEFORE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Dan Fleming

Among the bills being backed by Virginia AARP is SB 128 which eliminates the unemployment insurance/Social Security offset. Virginia is one of 19 states that reduces unemployment insurance by the amount of Social Security retirement benefits a person receives. The offset was reduced from 100 percent to 50 percent in

2003 and SB 128 would provide full elimination of the offset and full payment of unemployment insurance for older workers receiving Social Security.

Also being supported is legislation that covers in-state telemarketers that are not covered in the national "Do Not Call" law passed last year.

Several tobacco tax bills to fund health and long-term care are being supported as well as driver's safety legislation that would require a vision test for all Virginians over 80. If one fails the eye test, he/she would not be denied a license entirely based on the test results.

In other action, the House Health, Welfare and Institutions Committee voted 21 to 1 to delay action on a bill that would allow the state to buy prescription drugs from Canada. This virtually kills the bill for the year and the reason given for the delay was concern over drug safety issues.

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG LAW UNDER FIRE AGAIN!

Dan Fleming

The recently passed, controversial Medicare Prescription Drug law is drawing new criticism when it was revealed that the projected long-range costs were underestimated by some \$140 billion over the next ten years only two months after passage.

Blacksburg Chapter Requests Changes in New Prescription Drug Law Our chapter is asking our members in Congress to support changes in the new prescription drug law. The first priority is to immediately repeal the prohibition of the federal government negotiating for prices with drug companies as is being done successfully by the Veterans Administration to help reduce drug costs. A second priority is to allow Medicare beneficiaries to purchase Medigap insurance to offset the costs of the "doughnut hole" in the new program. We would also like to see the "doughnut hole" closed or at least be offset by allowing beneficiaries to have an option involving higher co-pays and/or monthly premiums.

Members are urged to contact their members of Congress in support of these changes:

Senator John W. Warner, 225 Russell Senate Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20510;

Senator George Allen, 204 Russell Senate Office Bldg., Washington, DC, 20510;
Congressman Rick Boucher, 2187 Rayburn House Office Bldg., Washington, DC, 20515.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED WEBSITE

An excellent website to answer Medicare questions concerning the new prescription drug bill is medicarerights.org. This site offers help from the Medicare Rights Center, a non-partisan organization that helps consumers with Medicare questions and issues and provides a wealth of information about all facets of Medicare.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION CELEBRATION

APRIL 3, 2004

10:00 - 11:30 a. m. at the Blacksburg Community Center

The Volunteer Recognition Celebration, sponsored by our Blacksburg AARP Chapter, the Voluntary Action Center, the American Red Cross, the YMCA at Virginia Tech, and the Blacksburg Senior Center, will be held April 3, 2004 from 10:00-11:30 a.m. Joyce Martin and June Schmidt are serving on the event planning committee. They ask that you assist in two ways.

First: Joyce and June need volunteers from our AARP chapter to help with the event itself. Call Joyce at 552-0013 to let her know of your interest in serving.

Second: Nominations for outstanding volunteers from community organizations are needed. A letter inviting community organizations to nominate volunteers and a one-page nomination form can be obtained from June. Call her at 552-1590 or e-mail her at schmidtj@vt.edu. Nominations are due by March 5, 2004.

The planning committee has sent information about the event to organizations throughout the New River

Valley requesting them to nominate outstanding volunteers. A highlight of the event will be the awarding of the Jim and Lenna Moore Citizen and Community Service Award. Both Jim and Lenna were exemplary in their service to the community and to our AARP Chapter.

The Celebration features entertainment, awards recognitions, and light refreshments. There is no cost for nominating a volunteer or for attending the event. Joyce and June look forward to your volunteering to help as well as seeing you on April 3.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

If you have friends who should be members, please bring them to the monthly meeting and encourage them to join. ***Dues for 2004 are now being accepted.*** Please fill out the membership form in this newsletter and attach a check payable to Blacksburg AARP. ***You can pay your dues at the meeting or send them to Ray Murley.***

Ray Murley
904 Horseshoe Ln
Blacksburg, VA 24062-0652

You must be a member of National AARP before joining the local chapter. National dues should be paid directly to National – not through the Blacksburg Chapter.

If you have changed your address, be sure to notify Joyce Martin or Don Elson; also, if you have an e-mail address please give it to one of them.

Have I paid my dues? The Chapter's membership year is based on the calendar year. Check the mail label on your Newsletter. **If "2003" appears on the label, you have NOT paid for the current**

year. After you pay your 2004 dues, the label will read "2004." There has been a question as to the meaning of the "N" at the end of the year on some of your mail labels. "N" denotes that you are a new member.

Those of you who are 90 years old and older do not pay dues. Your label should read "Life Member." The current membership list has the following members that are 90 years of age or older:

Fay Hoy	Esther McKenna
Alice Johnson	Beverly Printz
Nelle Trent	

If you know of corrections to this list, please tell Ray, Joyce, or Don so that our membership records are correct.

AARP MEMBERSHIP LIST UPDATES

If there are corrections to the 2003 Membership List (included in the May Newsletter on green paper), please notify Joyce Martin or Don Elson.

Robert and Doris Abraham's e-mail:
rabra@usit.net

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."

DID DRUG COMPANIES GET THE DOUGHNUT AND GRANNY GETS THE HOLE?

Dan Fleming

On January 20, Bill Kallio, State Director of Virginia AARP spoke to nearly 90 Blacksburg AARP members and guests about the new Medicare Prescription Drug Act including why AARP decided to endorse the bill. Kallio said, "AARP, when endorsing the bill, never said they liked everything in it." He defended AARP backing as being the best that could be achieved politically and to do nothing



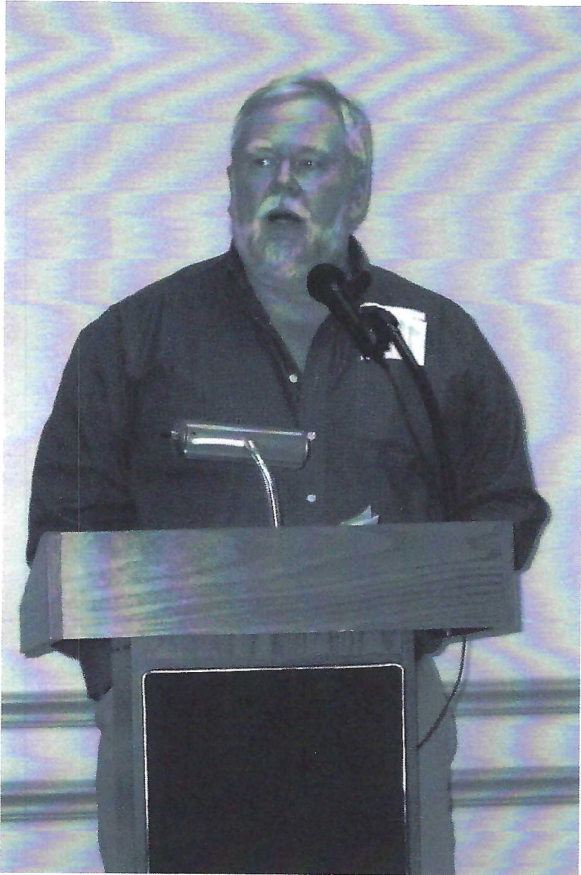
Bill Kallio, State Director of Virginia AARP addressed a series of questions concerning the new prescription drug law at a special meeting sponsored by the Blacksburg AARP on January 20.

would hurt many low-income seniors saying, "Low-income people have the best benefit. It's a good deal for those folks."

The meeting, moderated by Carl McDaniels, had Kallio respond to 20 questions provided by the chapter's legislative committee including queries about why drug costs were not being negotiated by the government instead of private companies and the so-called "doughnut hole" in drug coverage.

Kallio said that he believed allowing the government to negotiate for prescription drug prices would be "the first thing that will likely be changed." He also said AARP opposed the "doughnut hole" in the plan, which pays drug costs up to \$2,250 and over \$5,100, but leaves patients to pay the amount in between.

He also agreed that the amount of paperwork involved in the new plan is a "throw-your-hands-up-in-the-air kind of issue." Responding to a question about how seniors were to figure out the very complicated features of the new program, Kallio said, "What a terrible thing to do to people, but that's what we've got" even though AARP would have preferred a straightforward benefit. When asked why AARP endorsed a plan with so many serious flaws, Kallio responded, "Should AARP have held out? Did they make a mistake? Everyone's entitled to their opinion and only time will tell who was right."



Paul Lancaster, member Town of Blacksburg Planning Commission, spoke at the January meeting on the future of the Blacksburg area.

FUTURE MEETINGS

February 17 – “Importance of Preserving Open Space” by Elizabeth Obenshain.

The membership meetings are held at the Blacksburg Community Center on the third Tuesday of each month except December, July and August. Be sure to make a special effort to attend and remember to bring a friend and your lunch. **We begin eating our bag lunches at 11:30 a.m.**

(coffee and tea available) with the program following at noon.

March 16 – “Our Relationship to Our Local Community Foundation” by Andy Morikawa and a representative from Warm Hearth.

Tax Counseling for the Elderly.

Frank Lau

Again, this February, the AARP Tax-Aide program will be preparing tax returns under the name of Tax Counseling for the Elderly. As in years past, there will be a group of preparers who have passed the IRS test, at the Blacksburg Recreation Center. The service is as always, free of charge for the preparation of Federal and State tax returns.

As always, we ask those with rental properties, or who are in business for themselves, to consult a paid preparer, for they are not within our certification. Those with amended returns, or back taxes, estate, trusts, or partnerships should also seek paid help.

This AARP service will start the second week of February. So as you receive your 2003 tax documents, keep them together, along with medical, and charitable receipts, keep them ready for us. We also offer help for those wishing to work on their own. Contact the Center (961-1134) after the first of February, to get an appointment.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MONTHLY MEETING

February 5, 2004

Doris Abraham, Acting Secretary

The following members were present: Brian Allen, Jim Moore, Joyce Martin, June Schmidt, Donald Elson, Clara Jane Billig, Carl McDaniels, Shirley Strother, Dale Oliver, Bob Blanton, and Doris Abraham.

The board meeting regularly scheduled for Tuesday, February 3, 2004, and postponed due to inclement weather, was called to order at 9:35 a. m. on Thursday, February 5 by Brian Allen, President. The agenda was amended by an addition presented by Don Elson and it was moved by Carl McDaniels and seconded by Bob Blanton that the agenda be accepted as amended.

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as they appeared in the newsletter--moved by Jim Moore and seconded by Dale Oliver.

Morton Nadler, chapter member and guest at the meeting, presented a very brief overview of the U.S.A. Patriot Act and emphasized the points that are of particular interest to seniors. He told of the action being taken by several Virginia localities and gave copies of these resolutions. He indicated his willingness to present a thirty-minute program to the general membership meeting. It was moved by Jim Moore and seconded by Joyce Martin that this information be turned over to Legislative Chairman, Dan Fleming and his committee for further consideration.

Jim Moore reported that \$470.00 in dues was collected in January bringing the balance to \$2290.58 in the treasury. With the motion of Joyce Martin and a second by Dale Oliver, the treasurer's report was accepted as presented.

Joyce Martin reported that there are 153 paid up members. She suggested that all attendees be encouraged to pay their dues and to bring prospective members. Carl McDaniels suggested the idea of expanding the chapter base geographically (beyond Blacksburg), and was asked by President Allen to explore that possibility. Bob Blanton and Doris Abraham volunteered to serve with Carl on that committee.

In the absence of the Legislative Chairman, Carl McDaniels reported that we have heard from several people across the county and state who are supporting our Chapter's resolution to AARP President James G. Parkel re: the Medicare Prescription Drug Law. Further information on this subject will appear in the next newsletter.

Hospitality Chair, Clara Jane Billig, announced that the picnic shelter at Nellies Cave Park has been reserved for the June meeting. It was moved and approved that the annual chapter picnic be held on that date. She announced that new name tags have been purchased.

Bob Blanton, Awards Chairman, had the corrected plaque for June Schmidt, but since she had left the meeting, the plaque will be presented to her at the next regular meeting.

The proposed budget for 2004, prepared by the financial planning committee, and presented by Dale Oliver, indicated that the chapter income is insufficient to meet our current expenditures. A discussion followed on ways of increasing income and what items in the present budget might be cut back or reduced. Dale Oliver moved and Jim Moore seconded a motion to table the acceptance of the budget until the March meeting.

It was announced that a letter has been sent to Bill Kallio thanking him for his presentation at the January meeting.

Bob Blanton asked for volunteers to serve on the Chapter Recognition Awards Committee and will ask the membership at the regular meeting. Dale Oliver volunteered and it was suggested that Charlotte Beamer also would be willing to serve.

The next board meeting is scheduled for March 2. The meeting was adjourned at 10:50.

Respectfully submitted,
Doris Abraham, acting secretary.

ANNOUNCEMENTS for Blacksburg Community Center

Fun and Fit Activities

When: Every Friday morning from 8 to 9 a.m. and again 10:15 to noon.

Where: Gym at the Community Center

Activities:	Shuffleboard	Indoor Bocce
	Basketball free throws	Frisbee throwing
	Practice golf putting	Ping Pong – Table tennis
	Billiards	

No cost --- No registration` Come for fun, recreation, and fellowship.

Fit over Fifty Aerobics

9:10 – 10:10 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at the Community Center
A fee and registration required.

For information call or email:

Joy Herbert, Senior Programs Supervisor
Town of Blacksburg
Department of Parks & Recreation
725 Patrick Henry Drive
Blacksburg, VA 24060
540/961-1134, Jherbert@blacksburg.gov

BLACKSBURG AARP CHAPTER #2613
MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL OR NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

Membership in the Blacksburg AARP Chapter requires membership in National AARP. If you are already a member of the Blacksburg Chapter, please pass this form on to a friend that should be a member.

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ - _____ - _____ E-Mail: _____

Membership: _____ Renewal
 _____ New Member(s)
 _____ Single membership dues **\$6.00**
 _____ Joint Husband and Wife dues **\$10.00**

Complete, attach check made out to Blacksburg AARP, and bring to the next Membership Meeting or mail to:

Ray Murley
904 Horseshoe Ln.
Blacksburg, VA 24060

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ANNOUNCEMENTS for Montgomery County Department of Parks and Recreation

Check out the many activities and tours available for residents of Montgomery County. Examples include:

Senior Stretch	Digital camera intro class
Growing a backyard bird sanctuary	Intro Holistic healing
Southern Spring Show	The Church's Song
<u>And many more.</u>	

For information call:

Montgomery County Parks and Recreation
County Government Center
755 Roanoke St, Suite 1E
Christiansburg, VA 24073
(540) 382-6975

Brian R. Allen, President
AARP Chapter #2613
P. O. Box 10652
Blacksburg, VA 24060

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Officers

President	Brian Allen
1 st Vice-Pres.	Joyce Martin
2 nd Vice-Pres.	Jim Owen
Secretary	(open)
Treasurer	Ray Murley
Assoc. Treasurer	Jim Moore
Past President	Ben Crawford

Board of Directors

Class of 2004

Dan Fleming
Paul Smeal
Shirley Strother

Class of 2005

Carl McDaniels
June Schmidt
Joyce Martin

Class of 2006

Doris Abraham
(open)

Nominating Committee

Class of 2004

Ben Crawford
Harriet Cooper

Class of 2005

Dan Fleming
June Schmidt
Cerie Coil

Newsletter Editor

Donald Elson

Committee Chairs

Caring
Chaplain
Chapter Awards
Community Service
Financial Planning
Health Care
Hospitality

Legislative
Membership
Newsletter
Nominating
Program
Public Relations
Telephone
Ways & Means

Lula Roberts
Ken Dawson
Bob Blanton
Louis Barnett
Dale Oliver
Darrel Clowes
Clara Jane Billig and
Cerie Coil
Dan Fleming
Joyce Martin
Donald Elson
(open)
Ben Crawford
June Schmidt
Charlotte Beamer
Jim Moore

Virginia Tech Retires Association

Dan Fleming