



Serving the greater New River Valley, Virginia

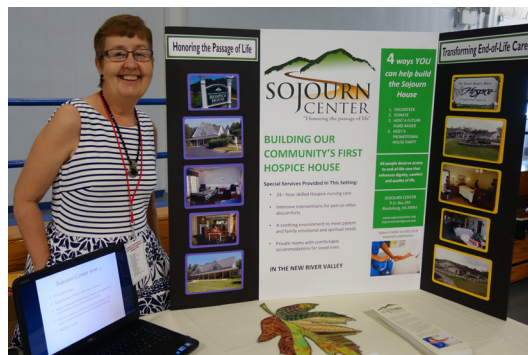
March 21 Chapter Meeting

Update on Blacksburg's Sojourn Center

Sojourn Center is a community-based nonprofit organization dedicated to state-of-the-art compassionate care for terminally ill people and their families in the New River Valley. Sojourn Center will build a hospice house in the New River Valley to serve hospice patients who temporarily need more intensive care, or who can no longer be cared for at home, as well as hospice patients who need short-term respite care so their family can take a break from care giving.

Sojourn Center's hospice house will provide a lovely, peaceful, and comfortable setting for both the patient and loved ones at the bedside. In addition, the house will become a training site for students of medicine and nursing to learn appropriate care for dying people in a setting where death is considered an expected and normal part of life—an event to be honored, without the stigma of a "failure" by modern medicine. Sojourn Center will improve the culture of end-of-life care in the New River Valley.

Dr. Tina Smusz, Hospice and Palliative Care physician and Vice President of the Sojourn Center Board, and Anne Campbell, President of the Sojourn Center Board, will speak to AARP about Sojourn Center's plans for the future.



Anne Judkins Campbell exhibits on Sojourn Center at the 2016 AARP Health Fair

President's Column by Terry Wildman

Truth, Harbingers, and Confusion

Truth

These days, who knows it?

Is it what I think, or feel, or decide to make into a case? Perhaps not your case, yet, but one giving me that silly smile of sudden knowing.

My case is this—
Spring arrived early 2017—
precisely on February 18,
just as daylight faded.
The announcement came
on a gentle breeze, carrying
the perfectly discernable
sleigh bell trilling song of
the Peepers.

Bring on the silly smile!
Happy time, a toast is in order!
Spring is here! So soon...
Forget Phil from Pennsylvania,
the real authorities have spoken.
These little frogs, hidden
in their low lying wet places,
under leaves and debris,
partially frozen, then released
in warm air. Searching for mates,
they must be unaware
their urgent message finds
other willing ears who now know
the truth

Harbingers

Of course, we know that Peepers are not the only harbingers of spring. We do tend to triangulate a bit with our data you know. There are the crocuses, pushing their purple buds into view, the irrepressible daffodils, greening stems everywhere, and the robins. You probably have your own particular signs, and not

Upcoming Events

- April 8: The Big Event (p. 4)
- April 17, 18: AARP Safe Driving Class, Christiansburg
- April 22: Outdoor Living Expo (p. 4)
- April 26: GiveBigNRV 2017 (p. 4)

Driver Safety Class

April 17, 18: 9:30 am–1 pm (both days), Christiansburg Recreation Center

\$12 AARP members, \$14 non-members

Eligibility: age 50+

Register in person at the Christiansburg Recreation Center; deadline April 10

The course teaches proven driving techniques to help keep you and your loved ones safe on the road. Completing the course may make you eligible for a discount on your auto insurance.



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.

Weather Policy

The Blacksburg chapter follows the weather policy of Montgomery County schools. If schools are closed, the chapter will not meet. If the school opening is delayed, the chapter will meet.

Meet New AARP Board Members

Welcome, Tamara and Peter!

Tamara Hodsden grew up in California but spent her career with General Motors in Michigan and Indiana, where she was an executive on the Corporate Labor Relations Staff and Human Resource Staff as well as Regional Personnel Director for several plant personnel activities in GM plants across the country. She was the first female executive to manage the Corporate Labor Relations Arbitration activity.

Her husband, Davis (deceased in 2015), was a Hokie, so they visited the New River Valley every year and purchased land in Newport in the late 1980s. They developed their farm and home and retired to this area in 1999.

Davis and Tamara established Flotilla 83 of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary on Claytor Lake in 2003, helping to build it to its current 50+ members. The Coast Guard Auxiliary is a volunteer, civilian, non-military arm of the U.S. Coast Guard. It serves the public through boating safety classes, vessel safety exams, and safety patrols on the water. The boat patrols work in partnership with a radio operator on land to rescue boaters in trouble and to monitor events. Davis and Tamara taught and trained the initial and subsequent members on the water and in the classroom and patrolled on the weekends from May through October for 10 years. Tamara was the first female in this region to attain the level of Coxswain on the water and “Operational Auxiliarist” (AUXOP) in the classroom. (The AUXOP has sometimes been called the “PhD of the Auxiliary.” It requires seven courses from three categories: core courses, leadership courses, and electives.)



Tamara Hodsden on her Harley

Tamara likes to swim, bicycle, and ride her Harley, and she has begun playing duplicate bridge. She has also assumed a variety of volunteer

responsibilities. She coordinates the Great Decisions community discussion group on foreign policy for the Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI) and the League of Women Voters (LWV), co-chairs the volunteer committee and serves on the steering committee for LLI, is active in LWV, and volunteers at the Lyric Theatre.

With her considerable skills in organizing and working with people, generosity with her time, commitment to the groups with which she works, and good sense of humor, AARP is lucky that Tamara has agreed to serve on its board. Thanks, Tamara.

Peter Magolda and his spouse Marcia Baxter Magolda moved to the New River Valley in October 2015, after spending 30 years in Oxford, Ohio. Prior to their retirements, both Peter and Marcia were faculty members in Miami University’s College of Education. They taught in an academic program that prepares graduate students to work in higher education administration. Peter’s most recent research undertaking was an ethnographic study of campus custodians, which culminated in the publication of a book entitled: *The Lives of Campus Custodians: Insights into Corporatization and Civic Disengagement in the Academy*. In retirement, Peter remains intellectually curious (and concerned) about the changing nature of higher education.

Peter and Marcia have been frequent visitors to Southwest Virginia for the past two decades. Peter’s brother and his family are long time residents of Roanoke, and Marcia has collaborated with Virginia Tech colleagues since 1990. Being closer to family and friends coupled with a fascination with the beauty of the region made their decision to relocate an easy one.

Peter is an amateur photographer and has spent considerable time in retirement exploring and photographing the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Shenandoah Valley, and small rural Virginia towns. His passion for music has made him a “regular” at the Virginia Tech’s Moss Arts Center and a frequent visitor to Floyd. He is also an avid collector of music—especially vinyl records. A highlight of his retirement has been participating in Virginia Tech’s Lifelong Learning Institute—enrolling in a seminar about the South’s influence on music and another about Bob Dylan.

Peter learned about the Blacksburg AARP chapter from Don Creamer, who invited him to attend a meeting. The members’ commitment to community service, neighborhood partnerships, lifelong learning, and livability issues for seniors inspired Peter to join the organization. He looks forward to his continued involvement in AARP and opportunities to learn and serve.

Peter has photographed AARP activities since joining, including the Bill Thomas event, June picnic, holiday luncheon, and even board meetings. His photographs have enriched the pages of this newsletter and provide a visual history of the organization. See his AARP pictures here: <http://adlogam.smugmug.com/Organizations/AARP/n-49pk5B>. You can also see Peter’s photos at www.blacksburgaarp.org. (Choose “galleries.”)

You may discover a photo of yourself or a friend.

Thanks, Peter.



Peter Magolda

(President's Column *continued*)

just for spring's arrival. Harbingers, real and imagined, signal all kinds of things.

But first, let me tidy up my case just a bit. In our garden log, with recorded entries almost every day—especially during the growing season—we don't miss much. With regard to the Peepers, here are some recorded data on first appearances:

- 2017 – February 18
- 2016 – March 8
- 2015 – March 13
- 2014 – March 28



Just a quick note about data

collection. Near days end

we spend some quality time

around our property with the labs, ending up on the patio to discuss the day while the pups consume dog treats probably costing more than the wine we're sipping. This is where garden log entries are made, and on that magic day when the Peepers make their announcement—always a great surprise—we are perfectly poised to record it.

Now you may have noticed the trend line in our Peeper data on Spring's arrival. Honestly, until writing this and looking back through the garden log I did not see this, but maybe now you can guess where my thoughts are going. Perhaps the Peepers are joining a long list of other signals (harbingers) telling us something important. How about weather extremes, fires and droughts, plant and animal migration changes, coupled with disappearing ice where stability should be the norm?

Or if weather or climate related harbingers don't get your attention, how about signals in the past that we now know portended unfortunate wars, economic meltdowns, challenges to democracy, civil unrest and even worse? Harbingers are important, and essentially defined as a foreshadowing of events, good or bad, that will happen soon—a relative term to be sure. If you like warm weather and everything that goes with it, then all the various harbingers of spring are usually very welcomed. But what if these signals are somewhat out of whack, as in appearing when they perhaps shouldn't or in such force as to be troubling? Do I now need to rethink my excitement about the Peepers early arrival?

Confusion

The event that we may later refer to as a *harbinger* is usually not much contested. This is because the event was directly experienced and plain to see. *I really did hear the peepers on February 18!* The problem lies in the space between the signs we see of a warmer earth and the possible later realization that what was predicted did actually happen, such as mass human displacement from coastal areas. Connecting the two with a causal link, such as human production of greenhouse gasses, is often problematic, and even in the case of almost certain scientific evidence the most logical "fix" may be inconvenient for some. This is where confusion comes to play, as in the attempts of some to actually

create uncertainty about how things are connected. In the most bizarre of cases, some may even argue that the event (harbinger) that just happened really didn't happen at all. For example, if there was an actual attempt to diminish the free press in a democracy, a troubling harbinger for sure as we've seen in the past, the obvious first move might be to otherwise explain the event—to not only create as much confusion as possible, but to claim the troubling event as, well, fake reporting or something like that.

In the world of AARP concerns there is nothing fake about the various signals (harbingers) that something is coming down the road with regard to Medicare, and that *something* may be damaging health-wise and economically for existing and future seniors. Because this is a very complicated matter, apparently deceptively so for some of our leaders, proposed changes can easily lead to confusion, and confusion—like a smoke screen—is sometimes helpful in getting things accomplished even in the face of mass opposition. Thankfully, AARP is providing tools to help us sort through this confusion, as in articles supplied in the recent *AARP Bulletin*.

So, how did we get here from a little poem about frogs? Well, the truth they told me about an early spring in 2017 may, in the bigger scheme of things, be telling me about a scarier truth that some may not want me to know and appreciate. And if that is the case I may need to be tracking more than just what frogs are telling me, and why.

Renew Membership

If you enjoy receiving this newsletter and other communications from the Blacksburg AARP chapter and appreciate the chapter's programs and activities, please pay your local dues by the end of March. The mailing list thereafter will include only paid members. Use the form on the last page. If you are unsure whether you wrote that check for \$15, check the line below your name on your mailing label. If you see "2017," you are all paid up. Thanks!

Appalachia CARES Project Center for Gerontology

Are you Caring for a Family Member with Alzheimer's Disease or Dementia?

Virginia Tech's Center for Gerontology needs your help to understand why family caregivers do or do not use community services when caring for relatives with Alzheimer's disease or dementia.

How can you help?

If you are:

- Caring for a family member with Alzheimer's disease or dementia
- Living in the New River Valley area

We invite you to participate in **one 45-minute telephone interview and seven 10-minute telephone interviews.**

- You will receive a Walmart Gift card for **up to \$50** for your participation.
- Please **contact us at 540-231-9250** for more information.

Happenings in the New River Valley

April 8

Request a job at this website: <https://registration.vtbigevent.org/jobrequest>



The Big Event at Virginia Tech is a student-run community service effort. Every spring, thousands of students, faculty, and staff come together to complete nearly one thousand community service projects throughout Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and the New River Valley.

Projects are completed regardless of need or socioeconomic status; instead, it is The Big Event's goal to simply say, "Thank you." Seeded in our university's motto of *Ut Prosim* (That I may serve) students and community members come together for a truly unparalleled experience. The Big Event: "One Big Day. One Big Thanks."

Sample projects include painting, mulching, raking leaves, and trimming bushes. The recipient must supply paint and painting supplies. No power tools are allowed. Projects must be in the New River Valley. The volunteers will supply up to four hours of labor.

GiveBigNRV is an initiative of the Community Foundation of the New River Valley. On Give Big day, April 26, 2017, it hopes to raise \$250,000 for local charities. But you don't have to wait until April 26. You can support your favorite charity now and help that charity win an additional grant from the Community Foundation by pre-scheduling your gift. Simply find the charity you want to support, click *donate*, fill in your payment information, and enter 4.26.17 as the "Charge Date" at the bottom of the page. This ensures that your gift will count toward the April 26 giving day total for that organization.



You can browse participating NRV nonprofits by going to this site: <https://cfnrv.givebig.org/c/NRV/p/organizations>. Click on the link associated with the organization to which you want to donate. There you will find details on the services provided and on administration of the program.

AARP is a sponsor of GiveBigNRV and has supported several of the participating organizations with its annual charitable donations.

GiveBigNRV offers an opportunity for you to make the community a better place by giving to nonprofit organizations of your choice.

April 22

Bisset Park, Radford

10 am–4 pm

Information: <http://nrvlivability.org/1699>



The Virginia's Outdoor Lovers Expo is the only one of its kind in Southwest Virginia and raises awareness of the diverse outdoor recreation opportunities that are abundant across the region. Local businesses, clubs, outdoor organizations, and others will be on hand to share information about these wonderful outdoor opportunities. This event serves as a platform for businesses, organizations, and communities to connect, network and build relationships that will increase economic development in Southwest Virginia. This event is made possible by the Friends of Southwest Virginia organization and is an Appalachian Spring community and economic development initiative.

This is the first time the event is held in the New River Valley. Each of the two previous expos had over 1,000 visitors and nearly 100 vendors. The Expo is FREE with live music, craft beer and wine, raffle tickets, giveaways, and more. The event will be held April 22, 2017 in Radford's Bisset Park on the bank of the New River from 10 am–4 pm.

More information: <http://nrvlivability.org/1699>

Volunteers needed

Busy August 4 or 5?

Steppin' Out will again bring a record crowd to downtown Blacksburg. Food, Music, Crafts, and lots of people! AARP will have a booth—a great opportunity for us to share important information about Social Security, Medicare, Livability, Aging in Place, Safe Driving, and other AARP issues. We need people who can be at the booth in two-hour blocks of time between 10 am and 8 pm on the days of the Fair. There will be AARP giveaways and maybe even a raffle. It is a great way to see old friends and attract new AARP-Blacksburg members.

There will be an informational meeting ahead of time so you know just what to do and say to make this a fun and important event for our chapter. Remember, Steppin' Out brings the largest crowds to Blacksburg (short of football games) and it is a fun time for everyone. If you can give us two hours, just email Wendy Baldwin wendybburg@gmail.com.



AARP at Steppin' Out 2016

Legislative Report *by Val Coluni*

1. House Bill 1677. “...all legislation to be considered by the committee of purview and to receive a recorded vote...” Once again a way to achieve transparency in government has been “side-tracked” by the General Assembly as it never passed the procedures of our Legislature! Several community organizations will continue to work on this most important effort until our Assembly recognizes all this is attempting to do is to make sure we comply with effective democracy.

2. Tenure/Budgets/Legislators. Like Virginia, a number of states (Wisconsin being one) have severe budget problems. All expenses/subjects are on the table for review including the practice of granting tenure to professors. Steep tuition increases along with student debt is making this quite an emotional subject. Some decision makers have brought significant proposals up for discussion: eliminate tenure, reduce the number of tenured professors, offer buyouts to tenured professors, do not offer tenure to new hires, etc. Our academic communities should play an important and active role with our legislators to participate in such discussions and decisions to insure outcomes which minimize severe consequences on our educational institutions. Such decisions could affect the awarding of grants and research, faculty recruitment, and the university’s mission. (According to the American Association of University Professors, nearly 70% of faculty nationwide are not tenured or tenure-track, and more than 50% are part-time.)

3. The General Assembly Leadership—House. Maybe, maybe, maybe a new era awaits us with House Speaker Bill Howell announcing his retirement. Too many times in the past we have had the lack of cooperation and effective give and take between the House and the Senate to solve our most pressing State problems. The vindictiveness of the past behaviors of *both* parties can only interfere with putting-in-place effective legislation to solve these major issues. We know this can be done and we hope the ASSEMBLY will make it happen. Please do so!!

4. Airbnb (the practice of renting a room/house in a private residence in a residential neighborhood). Blacksburg Town Council has approved a number of regulations and requirements to protect the integrity of our neighborhoods, one which is registering such accommodations with the Town with a penalty of \$1,000 for failure to do so.

The AARP Tax-Aide program

The 2017 tax-aid program continues through April 15 at the Christiansburg Recreation Center (Senior Activity Room). If you need help with your taxes, please call to schedule an appointment: 382-2349.

Counselors are available for preparing taxes at these times:

1:00 – 4:00 pm, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
9:00 am – noon, Saturday



L-R: Ben Crawford, Bob Blancato, Nola Elliott, Congressman Morgan Griffith, Peter Goldin, Ryan Martin.

Blacksburg AARP Chapter members had a private meeting with our 9th district congressman, Morgan Griffith, in February. The meeting, scheduled for 30 minutes, lasted nearly an hour. The purpose was primarily to advocate for and explain AARP’s position on the continuation of Medicare. National AARP Board member Bob Blancato and Associate State AARP VA Director Peter Goldin participated along with chapter members. Ben reports the meeting was open, substantive, and productive.

Tax Relief for Seniors—and some others

You may be eligible for partial to full exemption of real estate tax and manufactured homes tax. If you own your home, live in it, and have household income that does not exceed \$51,000 a year (excluding \$10,000 of a relative who lives in the home) and financial net worth, excluding the home and one acre of land, that does not exceed \$150,000, you may be eligible for significant savings in taxes. The full explanation and forms are found at www.montgomerycountyva.gov/content/15987/16005/16508/default.aspx.

This exemption is also available to those who are disabled or disabled veterans or surviving spouses of disabled vets. While many of the requirements are the same for all categories, there are some differences for veterans.

If you qualify, you could save 40%–100% in real estate taxes. If you have filed for this exemption in the past, you must file a renewal each year before March 1. But, if this is the first time you have filed for this tax relief, you can do it any time during the year. So, if you think you might qualify—or know someone who would qualify—please check out the link and maybe save some money!

Chapter Officers 2017

President • Terry Wildman, wiley@vt.edu
Vice President • Wendy Baldwin, wendybburg@gmail.com
Secretary • Pat Hyer, hyper@vt.edu
Treasurer • Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu

Board of Directors


- 2017—Pat Hyer, Jerry Niles, Shirley Peterson
- 2018—Wendy Baldwin, Ryan Martin, Ray Van Dyke
- 2019—Tamara Hodsdon, Peter Magolda, Jim Montgomery, Wanda Smith

Website: www.blacksburgaarp.org Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AARPBlacksburg/>



Blacksburg Chapter #2613
 Terry Wildman, President
 P.O. Box 10082
 Blacksburg, VA 24062

**Nonprofit
 Organization
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Blacksburg Chapter  Member Application for 2017

Name: _____

Spouse/Partner: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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

New ___ Renewal ___ 90+ years old (free) ___

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 the check and this form to: .

Ryan Martin • P.O. Box 10082 • Blacksburg, VA 24062