



## February 20 Chapter Meeting

### Weather Preparedness and Weather Readiness *by Phil Hysell*

Phil Hysell, Warning Coordination Specialist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, will provide insight to how meteorologists at the National Weather Service in Blacksburg create and disseminate forecasts and warnings. He will also present information about how to be ready, responsive, and resilient to significant weather events that impact the New River Valley.



### 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.

### 2018 Dues are Due

If you haven't yet paid your dues for 2018, please use the form on the back of this newsletter. Check the date beneath your name on your mailing label to determine whether you are up to date. Thanks!

## President's Column *by Wendy Baldwin*

### Give up my car keys? Never...or at least not yet

Many seniors reach the point where they are not sure they should still be driving. This is possibly several years after their friends and family have come to that conclusion. Giving up driving can be a difficult step because it is so tied up to feelings of autonomy and control and convenience. But, even a minor traffic accident can deflate that good feeling pretty quickly. So, how to think about this? Here's one idea.



**The Finances.** The American Automobile Association estimates that it costs \$6,354 per year to own and operate a small sedan (depreciation, insurance, fuel, maintenance and repair), \$8,171 for a medium sedan ([newsroom.aaa.com/auto/your-driving-costs](http://newsroom.aaa.com/auto/your-driving-costs)). That amount would provide a substantial fund for alternative kinds of transportation that could support travel independence.

Let's think about ways to use that fund! First, let me applaud all those friends, neighbors and relatives who help out with driving and run errands and are so helpful. But, there are going to be times you just want to take control and go do errands, go the Moss Arts Center, catch a movie or go shopping. When that urge hits what are some of the ways to accomplish it?

**Taxi.** The first option to come to mind might be to call a taxi. A taxi lets you personalize the trip. You can have the driver wait while you finish your task, or have him/her come back to pick you up at a set time. Uber and Lyft services give you the flexibility of a taxi and a wider array of drivers. Most taxis have a meter that calculates the cost of the trip by time and distance and sometimes by waiting times. You pay for Uber and Lyft through a smartphone app so that you do not even need to have cash with you for the trip, tip included! You can go online before a trip to find out what the cost would be. Hooptie Ride has cars and colorful vans for local transportation. You can call them,

*please turn to page 3*

## Upcoming Events

February 6, registration begins for the AARP Safe Driving Course

April 12-13, AARP Safe Driving Course, Blacksburg Community Center (p. 3)

April 15, Arts Across Generations submissions due (p. 4)

*September 19*

### Health and Wellness Fair

The AARP Health and Wellness Fair is getting geared up for our next exciting event. The Fair is held every other year, so mark your calendar for September 19, 2018.

This year we will continue our relationship with VCOM and again hold the event at the Christiansburg Recreation Center. We are so pleased at the positive response we had from 2016 exhibitors, and we expect even more visitors than last time.

This is a great place to come get free screenings, flu shots, blood pressure and glucose tests, and learn about services that make life better for seniors. We plan to highlight transportation services, technology, and volunteerism. Other exhibitors will talk about tools and programs to make fitness easier, and hopefully we'll have those free massages again.

Mark your calendars and come join us 12-4 pm for the Health and Wellness Fair, September 19, 2019. If you know of a business/service/non-profit you would like for us to contact to be an exhibitor, send an email to [jenmik@gmail.com](mailto:jenmik@gmail.com).

## Meet New AARP Board Members: Isabel Berney and Hugh VanLandingham

In 1973, **Isabel Berney** followed a husband to Radford. Moving from the west—Utah, Washington, and Wyoming, she suffered some cultural shock, but found Radford was a nice place to raise two daughters. She lived there for 16 years before moving to Blacksburg. The climate with four definite seasons makes living here so appealing to her. After experiencing winters in Laramie, Wyoming, the three months of much milder winters here are enjoyable harbingers of beautiful springs, followed by a lovely summers and falls.



Isabel Berney

Another appeal of Blacksburg is that it is a liberal island in the conservative sea of southwest Virginia. Working for Pulaski County Schools for almost 30 years, she found it to be very different from liberal Seattle, where she felt very much at home. As a proud liberal (politically, socially, and religiously), she had to be careful in her work as an administrator in the school system. Knowing she would lose her effectiveness unless she was respectful of a very different way of viewing the world, she was glad to rest her soul among like minds on Sunday at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Blacksburg.

Her job as director of technology for Pulaski County Schools was very fast-moving and challenging. She bought the first computer for the school system in 1975 and by the time she left, there were thousands of computers and a sophisticated network that reached even the most rural area of Snowville-Hiwassee.

An unusual factoid about her NRV history is that she was the first nude art model hired by Radford University for its art department. Until 1973 when she took the job, life drawing models were dressed in leotards.

As an active citizen, she served on the Radford School Board, Library Board, and Blue Ridge Public TV. In Blacksburg she continued her service on the Board of Zoning Appeals and the Housing and Community Development Board. She donates a lot of time to the Funeral Consumers Alliance and her congregation.

Isabel believes that groups can accomplish more than individuals and she appreciates AARP for its lobbying efforts supporting seniors. She would like to see Blacksburg's AARP continue its support for affordable housing and increased public transportation. On the national level she supports AARP's protection of Social Security and Medicare (wishing it were available for all).

After outliving two husbands, she enjoys life and the interesting activities that Blacksburg offers. She lives alone with her cat, Hansel, and is grateful for fairly good health, her three daughters, and six grandchildren.

**H**ugh VanLandingham has lived in Blacksburg since 1966. He was raised in Greensboro, North Carolina, and graduated from North Carolina State University. He worked for the Bell Telephone Labs in New Jersey after getting his PhD at Cornell University, where he met his wife, Patricia. Hugh taught Electrical Engineering at VT for 35 years.

Hobbies include reading. He is an eclectic reader who enjoys mysteries for fun but also history and science. He previously played tennis (now Pickle Ball), and he enjoys swimming and singing. He sang previously with the Virginia Gentlemen Barbershop Chorus and currently with the Warm Hearth Singers and the AdHocTet, a spin-off of the Master Chorus.

He and Pat moved to Warm Hearth in May, 2015 where they enjoy their neighbors and the many opportunities. In addition to serving with the Board of Directors for AARP, he is a member of the Blacksburg Host Lions Club.



Hugh VanLandingham

**Welcome, Isabel and Hugh! Thanks for your service to the AARP Blacksburg chapter.**

### Virginia Tech Lectures open to the Public

Friday, February 16 4:00–5:00 pm, The Lyric Theatre

#### “Natural History in the Age of Humans”

Dr. Kirk Johnson, National Museum of Natural History

Johnson is a paleontologist who has led expeditions that have resulted in the discovery of more than 1,400 fossil sites. His research focuses on fossil plants and the extinction of the dinosaurs. In 2010-11, he led the excavation of an ice age site near Snowmass Village, Colorado, that recovered more than 5,400 bones of mammoths, mastodons and other ice age animals.

Friday, February 22 5–6 pm Surge Building 118C, VT campus

#### “What You are Getting Wrong about Appalachia”

Dr. Elizabeth Catte

Catte, author of a new book with the title of the lecture, writes: I assume the amount of attention that's been put on Appalachia during the 2016 election and its aftermath has been frustrating, since much of it is in the form of diagnosing “what's wrong with Appalachia” when knowledge of the region's history is not as robust as it could be. Salon magazine advises, “Put down *Hillbilly Elegy* and read this book instead.”

## President's Column (continued)

talk to a real person, and get a quote. You may associate Hooptie with college students, but what better way for you—or a group of friends—to be taken to lunch or a party. [hooptieride.com/](http://hooptieride.com/)

**GoGoGrandparent.** No smartphone? A service called GoGoGrandparent lets you phone from any kind of phone and set up a ride like Uber or Lyft. The service does the smartphone-required steps; you just deal with a person on the phone. This costs a little more than doing it yourself, but the cost is modest and cuts out the need for a smartphone. [gogograndparent.com](http://gogograndparent.com)

The cost of a trip in the Blacksburg area can range from \$10 to \$25, so it is a good idea to compare different providers. That driving fund can take you a lot of places! If a neighbor can drive you one direction, maybe a paid service can drive you home, making the cost even more affordable.

**Blacksburg Transit (BT).** Taking the bus can be a great option. A bus is the cheapest alternative for a ride. The usual BT bus service costs only 25¢ for a senior (\$4 for a monthly pass). BT operates routes in Blacksburg and Christiansburg. Getting to the bus stop might be a challenge. I lived in New York City for five years and was endlessly impressed with how people with walkers and in wheelchairs used buses. Buses are equipped to “kneel” to make it easier to get on. There are lifts for wheelchairs and locks for them once the chairs are on the bus.

**BT Access** is an on-demand service to serve those with physical limitations. Reservations need to be made a day in advance and require that you fill in a form (available online) to establish your disability. Then the service is door to door, from your home to the theater or to a doctor's appointment or wherever you want to go. Once you are certified regarding disability, this is an amazingly flexible and inexpensive option. See [www.btransit.org](http://www.btransit.org) for information on bus schedules and BT Access. Call 540-961-1803 or email [btaccess@blacksburg.gov](mailto:btaccess@blacksburg.gov) for a ride from BT Access. 25¢ for seniors, same fare as for the regularly scheduled busses.

**Radford Transit** operates busses in Radford. Its Route 40 NRV Connector travels to Christiansburg and Blacksburg. [www.radfordtransit.com/](http://www.radfordtransit.com/)

**Time Bank.** The Time Bank is a membership program that allows people to donate their time and skills into the “bank” and then withdraw services that others have contributed. Offering to drive people is one of the contributions and hence a resource for the community. But what would you contribute to the Time Bank? People have more skills than they sometimes realize; for example, sewing or home repair. <https://nrv.timebanks.org/>

**Kroger “Click List.”** The benefit of having a way to maintain transportation options has to be linked with things you can do with that independence. At Kroger you can order your groceries online and then pick them up with virtually no waiting. “Click list” incurs a modest charge and does require that you have a computer, laptop, or tablet, but is a great way to get groceries without the effort of walking through the store and loading them into the car.

I hope that our members are attentive to their driving whether it is minding a decrease in ability to drive at night, or just figuring it is time to move on to a car-free life. The Safe Driving course is a way to build your skills, test your abilities, and save money on car insurance. But, the time will come when driving yourself is not a good option. Being car-free does not mean that you cannot go places when you want to. Other options are quite affordable. Not to mention that they give you—and friends and family—a measure of confidence that you are not putting yourself or anyone else in danger.

AARP offers a free online seminar called We Need to Talk that will help you determine how to assess your loved ones' driving skills and provide tools to help you have this important conversation. <https://www.aarp.org/auto/driver-safety/we-need-to-talk/?intcmp=AE-ATO-ADS-ROW2-SPOT4>

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*Monday and Tuesday, April 12–13, 9 am–1 pm*

## Safe Driving Course to be Offered in Blacksburg

by Gene Cielinski, instructor [genec1215@gmail.com](mailto:genec1215@gmail.com)

**T**he AARP Safe Driving Course will be offered at the Blacksburg Community Center on Monday and Tuesday, April 12–13, from 9 am to 1 pm. Registration begins February 6. Call Joy Herbert at 540-443-1142 to enroll.

The eight-hour course is divided in two days, Monday and Tuesday 9:00 am to 1:00 pm (students attend both days). The fee is \$15.00 for AARP members and \$20.00 for nonmembers. By completing the safe driving class, you can receive up to a 10% discount on your auto insurance. All students who complete the course receive a certificate, which they present to their insurer.

Students will use the “Smart Driver Guidebook” for the two days of class and then be able to take it home. The book features the latest driver safety and transportation innovations bundled with fresh information based on new research and expert recommendations. It is very colorful and informative.

The course is intended for seniors, and focuses on issues specific to aging drivers, including age-related physical changes, how medication can affect driving, and changes in roads and cars. We discuss practices to make us safer drivers. I talk a lot about being a “defensive driver” and emphasize that driving is a “full time job.” The class will cover driving strategies to practice for safe driving and how to react safely in dangerous driving situations. We review warning signs of unsafe driving and when it is “time to hang up your keys”—and discuss how to tell family members it is their time! There are videos to watch and class quizzes.

I include items that are not in the book, such as the Interstate system, why odd number roads are North and South, exit numbers, and advice about how to merge onto an Interstate. You will learn about the three-second rule at a traffic-controlled intersection and why three right turns may be safer than one left turn.

If you cannot take the course in person, you can take it online at <https://www.aarpdriversafety.org/>

## ARTS ACROSS GENERATIONS

**A**rts Across Generations is a new art contest sponsored by Blacksburg AARP. The program's aim is to solicit, jury, display, and celebrate artworks created by multi-generational artists (e.g., a high school student and a grandparent). The program will take place June 1, 2018 in conjunction with Blacksburg's Art Walk. The top three entries will earn cash prizes, starting with \$150 for first place.

The theme for this inaugural program is "The Joy of Life." Each collaborative project should reflect what "The joy of life" means to them. The project can be a single product co-created by multi-generational artists or multiple creations that share a common theme. Artists will have maximum degrees of freedom to create works that reflect their values and align with the theme. Many things can express the joy of life—such as abstracts, animals, people, and landscapes. Contest organizers anticipate sketches, watercolors, oils, collages—any format that could be hung on a wall.

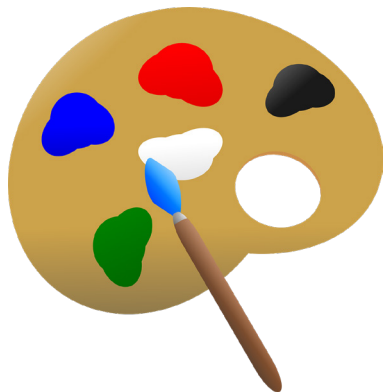
This initiative enacts two core values of the AARP-Blacksburg chapter: to view retirement as a time to continue to embrace current passions and learn new ones as well as to provide opportunities for community members across generations to interact in meaningful ways. AARP recognizes that retirement offers time to do more of the things one loves or to take up new activities. Art classes—drawing, watercolor, oil painting—in the Lifelong Learning Institute fill up quickly.

The call for art submission targets two audiences: [1] student artists enrolled in local schools and [2] artists affiliated with organizations/programs that serve older adults (e.g., Lifelong Learning Institute, Warm Hearth). However, any intergenerational pair can submit. At least one artist must be a resident of the New River Valley.

Submissions are due April 15. Please contact Peter Magolda ([magoldpm@me.com](mailto:magoldpm@me.com)) for a submission form and instructions about where to submit your entries.

In addition to their display at the June 1 Art Walk, all artworks will be showcased at various community venues (e.g., Lyric Theatre, restaurants, art galleries, shops). Original artwork will be returned to artists in July 2018.

Please direct comments, questions, feedback to Peter Magolda ([magoldpm@me.com](mailto:magoldpm@me.com)) or Wendy Baldwin ([wendybburg@gmail.com](mailto:wendybburg@gmail.com)).



## Technology Tips

### Computer help at the Blacksburg Community Center

Computer Science Community Service from Virginia Tech will once again provide free help with your computer, smart-phone, and tablet. Join them on Fridays from 2:30–4:30 pm at the Blacksburg Community Center Computer Lab, 725 Patrick Henry Dr. No appointment is necessary.

For more information, contact Joy Herbert at [540-443-1142](tel:540-443-1142) or [jherbert@blacksburg.gov](mailto:jherbert@blacksburg.gov).

### Blocking Robo Calls

If you still have a landline, you might be tempted to give it up if only to avoid annoying robo calls.

Good news: if your landline service is with Comcast or another Internet-based provider, such as Vonage, you can install Nomorobo, a free service that screens calls from a huge database. If Nomorobo detects a robo call, your phone will ring once. The phone ID will say "incoming call." If you wait to pick up the phone until a second ring, you will answer few or no robo calls.

To set up Nomorobo, go to <https://www.nomorobo.com> and click "get started now." You will enter the name of your landline carrier and an email address. If your carrier supports Nomorobo, you will get a link in your email to complete the signup process.

Nomorobo does not work on landline service from Verizon and AT&T. If you have those services and are getting unwanted calls from the same number, you can block up to 25 calls by going to the website of the carrier. You can also purchase a blocker such as Digitone Call Blocker Plus (\$110). The cost might be worth it if someone in the home has impaired judgment and can easily be a victim of scams. See brief reviews of blockers at <https://www.consumerreports.org/cro/magazine/2015/07/robocall-blocker-review/index.htm>

Several robo call blockers are available for mobile phones through the Apple store or Google Play, including Nomorobo.

Real Possibilities  
with **AARP**

## Legislative Report *by Val Coluni*

**1. Our new governor.** Governor Northam is urging his executive staff and all members of the General Assembly to enter into a relationship of aggressive bipartisanship. His belief is all progress is driven by a respectful give and take throughout the decision-making process. This same point of view has been expressed by some new and previous members of the General Assembly. Major obstacles they face are a number of conditions beyond their control: budget sequestration at the federal level still affects our fortunes; we are closely affected by the “up and downs” of the US budget, which can create boom and bust conditions; and our own economic growth has trailed the nation for a number of years. In today’s political and economic environment, it is more crucial than ever that our bipartisanship efforts at the state level work effectively and with great passion!

**2. Our legislative journey in 2018.** Will our previous and new representatives have a more cooperative or a continued controversial relationship than those bodies have had in the past? Remember that the State House lost at least 15 seats in the past election. Will this generate good will and/or more hostility? To date over 4000 bills have been submitted for actions some of which have been rejected in the past. (Medicaid expansion, gun control, excuse free absentee voting, restoring the authority of the state agency to review and adjust electricity rates, etc). We already had a shoot-out over Medicaid expansion, which required some apologies and regrets. And some of the other proposals are as emotional and partisan. The only way this legislative session can be effective is if the parties are really serious about making bipartisanship work.

### 3. Legislative updates

*A. Transparency in Government.* A victory for the people of Virginia and for responsible government! After many years of unsuccessful requests our state General Assembly has finally adopted a rule that requires a recorded vote on all measures acted upon by the members.

*B. Gerrymandering.* Two U.S. District Federal Courts have now ruled in two different states (North Carolina and Pennsylvania) that the state’s district map is illegal and must be redone. Both states are appealing their decisions. In addition, the U.S. Supreme Court has two cases scheduled for hearings to evaluate the district maps for their respective states. While other lawsuits have challenged racial gerrymandering, Gill v. Whitford specifically challenges partisan gerrymandering in Wisconsin. Many have waited for years to see our federal courts address these most serious issues.

*C. Health Insurance (Affordable Care Act).* Through regulatory and legislative actions, the current administration has made some significant changes to parts of the law, the most recent being allowing groups to offer plans that do not comply with all the ACA requirements.

## Upcoming Chapter Programs

**March 20: The Role of the FBI in Cyber Threats.** An active FBI agent will inform us what the FBI will and will not do in investigating cyber related crimes. The presentation will include advice to individuals about how protect themselves from cyber threats.

**April 17: What’s Happening at AARP?** AARP Virginia State Director, Jim Dau, will address AARP Blacksburg members and guests. Jim will describe AARP national and state goals and objectives to enable the chapter leadership to maximize its effectiveness by working as a partner with overlapping interests.

**May 15: Combining Socialization and Fitness Technologies to Increase Exercise and Improve Well-Being** France Belanger, the R. B. Pamplin Professor and the Tom & Daisy Byrd Senior Faculty Fellow in the department of Accounting & Information Systems, and James Tabitha, Associate Professor in the department of Business Information Technology of the Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech will share their recent research findings regarding fitness technologies effects on exercise and well-being.

**June 19: Picnic** at the farm of Terry Wildman and Sue Magliaro

**September 19: Health and Wellness Fair**, 12–4 pm,  
Christiansburg Recreation Center

## AARP Chapter Officer Summit

**M**arch 1, the Blacksburg AARP president and vice president will be in Bedford to spend the day with officers of ten other chapters and Brian Jacks, AARP Virginia representative for SW Virginia. This is a new program where our representatives will learn about current VA and national AARP priorities and the opportunities they present for local chapters. The new AARP speakers’ bureau will be available for chapter meetings. The summit serves a leadership development goal, and the chapters will all be available to share best practices. Finally, the group will share ideas about building and engaging chapter membership. This will be an opportunity to learn from each other and come home with more “tricks of the trade.” Blacksburg AARP has much to share and much to learn.

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## Chapter Officers 2018

President • Wendy Baldwin, wendybburg@gmail.com

Vice President • Jerry Niles, nils@vt.edu

Secretary • Pat Hyer, hyerp@vt.edu

Treasurer • Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu

Assistant Treasurer • Ruth Anne Niles, rniles2@icloud.com

## Board of Directors

• 2018—Wendy Baldwin, Ryan Martin, Lisa Moose

• 2019—Tamara Hodsdon, Peter Magolda, Jim Montgomery,  
Wanda Smith


• 2020—Isabel Berney, Hal VanLandingham

**Website:** [www.blacksburgaarp.org](http://www.blacksburgaarp.org)    **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/AARPBlacksburg/>



Blacksburg Chapter #2613  
 Wendy Baldwin, President  
 P.O. Box 10082  
 Blacksburg, VA 24062

**Nonprofit  
 Organization  
 U.S. Postage  
 PAID  
 Blacksburg, VA  
 Permit No. 32**

**Blacksburg Chapter  Member Application for 2018**

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