



January 16 Chapter Meeting

Roadway Lighting and Driver Safety

by Dr. Ronald Gibbons

Roadway lighting has long been used as a tool for provide a safe driving environment at night. But how effective is it? How effective is it for an older driver? Research at the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute has provide some insight into this question and is shaping the lighting design approaches for the future. Dr. Ronald Gibbons, Director of the Center for Infrastructure Based Safety Systems at The Virginia Tech



Dr. Ronald Gibbons

Transportation Institute, will provide insight into the current trends in roadway lighting, the visibility needs for drivers, the changes in vision as the eye ages, and how our roadway lighting can be changed in the future to meet these needs.



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.

Dues are Due!

If you haven't yet paid your dues for 2017, please use the form on the back of this newsletter. If you have paid, consider an additional contribution to the local chapter for its projects and expenses.

President's Column *by Wendy Baldwin*

Three things that draw me to AARP

I am so pleased to have this opportunity to contribute to AARP-Blacksburg. Let me share with you AARP activities that draw me to it.



Focus on Policy Issues

First, AARP does not shy away from big issues that affect seniors. AARP takes on issues that require a voice in the policy sphere, a voice that individuals may find hard to project. What issues? Protecting Social Security, Medicare, other health care, and nonpartisan legislative districts for political empowerment. Tax reform isn't an "aging" issue, but in the 2017 tax overhaul, AARP advocated hard to preserve the deduction for medical expenses and the extra standard deduction for those age 65 and older. AARP provides a broad view and a voice at the table when policies regarding age discrimination and medical research are debated. I want AARP to continue to analyze complex issues, provide balanced overviews of the options, highlight how these options might affect seniors, and show us how we can express our individual voices.

Provide Resources for Aging People

Second, AARP recognizes that with aging come some new needs. Let's call these the adjustments to aging. The natural process of aging can cause any of us to need help getting around in our houses, driving—or not, hearing, seeing, remembering. With creative planning, many needs of natural aging can be met. AARP has great resources to help us think about what might make life easier. See <https://www.aarp.org/home-garden/housing/info-03-2010/i38-strategies.html> for one.

The concept of aging in place is that "place" can adjust to "aging," and we can continue to enjoy the lifestyle that we are accustomed to. For some it means retrofitting a house to

please turn to page 2

Upcoming Events

January 8: Registration for spring LLI courses opens

February 1: Tax-Aide program begins (p. 2)

AARP-Virginia Gives LLI its "Community Partner of the Year" Award

AARP's "Community Partner of the Year" Award recognizes an organization that has made outstanding contributions to the work of AARP Virginia by collaborating with AARP volunteers and staff to enhance the quality of life for members of the community. At the All-Volunteer Assembly in Richmond, Brian Jacks, Associate Director of AARP-VA, presented the award to the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech. Jerry and Ruth Anne Niles accepted the award on behalf of LLI.

LLI offers classes and special events for the people 55 and older in the New River Valley. AARP volunteers were instrumental in launching LLI in the fall of 2015. Together, the organizations enrich the quality of life for seniors.

Don Creamer prepared the nomination materials.



Jerry and Ruth Anne Niles accept the "Community Partner" award for LLI from Brian Jacks, Associate Director of AARP-VA

(President's Column (continued))

accommodate new needs, such as lower kitchen counters and wider door frames for people in wheelchairs. For others it means moving to an apartment that is on one level and wheelchair accessible. For many it means staying in the community, near family and friends, who can be key to happy aging.

There can be a tension between staying in the community and needing transportation vs. being within walking distance of restaurants and shops. But creative use of services can ease such tensions. Can I tell you how much I love Amazon and all its related providers? The modern equivalent of the Sears catalog is online shopping and a FedEx or UPS truck. (Did I just hear trombones in the background?) These tools make shopping feasible at any age. Click on what you want, and a couple of days later it appears at your doorstep. Has any modern invention been better aimed at making life easier for seniors who don't want to carry loads of kitty litter from a grocery store? Are you having trouble shopping for the grandchildren? If there is a wish list, you can do one-click shopping, and zoom! The gift is sent to them. Anyone with the energy to prowl stores, shop, pack, and mail may have at it, but shopping and delivery services provide other options.

What does AARP have to do with this? AARP publicizes programs to help keep us safe while shopping online. They advertise reputable vendors, including those offering discounts to members. AARP provides advice on ways to make computer use easier and to avoid fraud. Overall, AARP helps seniors feel comfortable taking advantage of new tools that can help them age in place.

Celebration of Retirement

The third aspect of AARP that draws me to it is its celebration of retirement as a stage when you get to do more of the things you love and take up new interests. When I retired I realized that my time was really my own, and I could spend it any way I wanted to. Hang out with grandchildren? Why yes, that would be great. Read more? Wow, I can finally read those books I bought when I was working and didn't have time to read. Take up something totally new? Bring on a steel drum. Now, if you asked me before I retired to list the 200 things I thought I might do in retirement, playing in a steel drum orchestra was not on the list. But, the first time I heard the PanJammers play, I knew I loved the music. And the performers all seemed to be having a great time. So, now I play with them. I look forward to our gigs, playing for street fairs, church picnics, and business events.

Research suggests that learning something new is good for your brain health. When I was working and raising a family, I had little time for community activities. Now I do. There is both fun and a sense of purpose in giving back to the community. The communities of the New River Valley are super places to do service with so many ways to engage. RSVP can help locate volunteer activities, and The Time Bank offers a great way to use your skills to help someone else as well as to get services you need.

The New River Valley offers many ways to enjoy oneself, continue lifelong interests, or develop new ones. Programs at the

Moss Art Center and the Lyric Theatre, street fairs, and art walks invite residents to experience new things. The Lifelong Learning Institute provides classes and events for learning more about our world, our history, and our opportunities to grow. Retirement is a time to celebrate the skills we have and the new ones we acquire now that our time is our own to spend as we wish.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to lead AARP Blacksburg for the coming year. In my time on the Board, I have come to appreciate the great talent and resources of our organization. The people are terrific, both hard working and creative. I could not ask for better. But, this is not just any organization. For me, AARP has three critical areas that are essential to the well-being of our community. I will continue to: (1) focus on policy issues and helping the membership know how to engage (whether they agree with the AARP position or not); (2) provide resources to help all of us deal with the inevitable challenges of aging; and (3) celebrate the ability of retirees to keep doing the amazing things they always did and take on new ones to make retirement years even better.

The AARP Tax-Aide program

The 2018 tax-aid program begins February 1 and ends April 15. The location is the Christiansburg Recreation Center (Senior Activity Room). If you need help with your taxes, please call to schedule an appointment: 382-2349.

Counselors will be available for preparing taxes according to this schedule:

1:00 – 4:00 pm, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday

9:00 am – noon, Saturday

If you are interested in volunteering with this program, please contact Pat Ballard: pballard@vt.edu • 382-1189

AARP Charitable Gifts 2017



At the holiday luncheon, our chapter presented donations to New River Valley organizations that serve seniors. Representing the groups are

back row L-R Jeannie Ayers, Agency on Aging; Pastor John Wertz, Soup for Seniors (St. Michael Lutheran Church); Jack Leahy, Blacksburg Community Center Senior Programs; Jessica Wirgau, Community Foundation of the NRV, Blacksburg Senior Center Endowment Fund

front row L-R Ellen Stewart, TimeBank; Jade Fillingner, Community Living Center at the VA Medical Center; Coreen Mett, Christiansburg Rec Center Senior Programs and the Christmas Store Senior Department

Holiday Party 2018



Julia Lewis and Pat Carnrite



Don Creamer and Hugh VanLandingham



Doug Sewall and Sharen Hillison



Sandy and Jeff Birch



Pat Ballard and Coreen Mett



Jim Wightman



Elizabeth Reisinger, Elaine and Virgil Cook

PHOTOS BY PETER MAGOLDA

<https://adlogam.smugmug.com/Organizations/AARP/n-49pk5B/>



Jerry Niles (R) presents the Chapter Spirit Award to Val Coluni for his exceptional service in preparing the monthly legislative reports.

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS 2017

Recognition

Lifelong Learning Institute at VT wins the new AARP Virginia Chapter Partnership Award; Jerry and Ruth Ann Niles accepted the award at the Annual All-Volunteer Banquet in Richmond

Member Services and Communication

Conducted 8 public meetings featuring a variety of programs plus June picnic and December Holiday Luncheon

Published 9 chapter newsletters (thanks to Carolyn Rude for editing and Judith Jones for preparing the newsletter for mailing)

Maintained 13 active committees, reporting at monthly board meetings

Maintained a chapter website with up-to-date information about the chapter and chapter activities (thanks to Don Creamer and Peter Magolda)

Created and published a new chapter brochure (thanks to Don Creamer and Peter Magolda)

Co-hosted with the Lifelong Learning Institute a social/fundraising event at Whitebarrel Winery yielding \$700 for the chapter budget

Provided hospitality at each public event (thanks to Thais Beams)

Community Partnerships and Support

Maintained and developed robust partnerships:

AARP Virginia, VCOM, NRV Agency on Aging, Lifelong Learning Institute at VT, Center for Gerontology at VT, Warm Hearth Village Retirement Community, Community Foundation of the NRV, Blacksburg Time-Bank, Downtown Blacksburg Inc., VT Retirees Association, YMCA at VT

Partnered with the Lifelong Learning Institute to present a workshop on Aging in Place and an orientation to the TimeBank initiative

Initiated planning for the 2018 Health and Wellness Fair (thanks to Jennie Reilly, Wendy Baldwin, and others)

Participated in state AARP Advocacy, Legislative, and Volunteer meetings

Supported OneVirginia 2021 (nonpartisan redistricting effort)

Tracked Virginia and National Legislative initiatives of interest to AARP objectives; reported findings at chapter board meetings and published in chapter newsletters and website (thanks to Val Coluni)

Met with Congressman Morgan Griffin, Delegate Joseph Yost, and staff members of Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine

Served 1,175 clients through the Tax-Aide program (thanks to Pat Ballard, Dianne Rencsok, and volunteers)

Collected 700+ pounds of food for the Blacksburg and Christiansburg pantries at the October 1 annual food drive (thanks to Sally Anna Stapleton)

Exhibited at Blacksburg's annual Steppin' Out festival

Exhibited at an event for nonprofits at the Moss Arts Center

Supported the Warm Hearth Foundation fundraiser—Cheeseburger in Parrot-dise

Contributed support to *Leading Lights*

Contributed \$2,600 to charitable organizations that serve seniors in the NRV

LEADERSHIP 2017, 2018

Officers

| | 2017 | 2018 |
|---------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| President | Terry Wildman | Wendy Baldwin |
| Vice President | Wendy Baldwin | Jerry Niles |
| Secretary | Pat Hyer | Pat Hyer |
| Treasurer | Pat Ballard | Pat Ballard |
| Assistant Treasurer | | Ruth Anne Niles |

Board Members

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Class of 2017 | Pat Hyer, Jerry Niles, Shirley Peterson |
| Class of 2018 | Wendy Baldwin, Ryan Martin, Lisa Moose |
| Class of 2019 | Tamara Hodsden, Peter Magolda, Jim Montgomery, Wanda Smith |
| Class of 2020 | Isabel Berney, Hugh VanLandingham |

2017 Committee Chairs

Awards—Tamara Hodsden
Chaplain—Sandy Birch
Community Service—Sally Anna Stapleton
Financial Planning and Audit—June Schmidt
Health Fair—Jennie Reilly, Wendy Baldwin
History—Sally Anna Stapleton
Hospitality—Thais Beams
Legislative—Val Coluni
LLI Partnership—Pat Hyer, Don Creamer
Membership—Ryan Martin, Tom Alston, Jim Wightman
Newsletter—Carolyn Rude
Program—Don Creamer and Lisa Moose
Website—Don Creamer, Peter Magolda

2017 Liaisons

AARP of Virginia—Ben Crawford
AARP Tax Preparation—Pat Ballard
Virginia Tech Retirees Association—Cecil McBride
Town of Blacksburg/Community Center—Joy Herbert
Community Foundation of the NRV—Pat Hyer
TimeBank—Lisa Moose

Real Possibilities with 

CHAPTER AWARDS

At the Holiday Luncheon, the Blacksburg AARP chapter presented awards reflecting outstanding contributions to our chapter and the community::

Chapter Service Awards: **Val Coluni**, for carefully watching legislation that affects seniors and reporting it each month; and **Terry Wildman**, for serving as chapter president for two terms and for representing the chapter in many community activities

Chapter Spirit Award: **Molly McClintock**, for her work with the Blacksburg Refugee Partnership and for serving on the LLI Program Committee

Congratulations to all, and thank you for your contributions that enrich the lives of individuals and the community.

Learn to Play Bridge

Bridge classes for beginners and those who have not played in a while will begin Wednesday, January 17, at the Blacksburg Community Center. The classes will meet once a week for 90 minutes (9:30–11:15 am). The classes will last for 14 weeks. An additional 10 workshops will either be conducted concurrently with the classes or after the 14 sessions. Everything is presented in duplicate bridge format.

After the lessons end, the participants may move into the novice game held at the Blacksburg Recreation Center every Friday morning sponsored by the American Contract Bridge Association.

No experience or partner needed.

The first two classes are suitable for players new to the game. Subsequent classes will be appropriate for all players, especially those who have not played in a while.

Your first two classes are free; the cost is \$5 per class thereafter. All proceeds go to the P.E.O. scholarship fund for women's education.

Call Susan at 540-998-9751 to register.



Study seeks participants interested in fitness trackers

Have you considered using a fitness tracker? If so, you might be interested in being a participant in our study on the use of fitness trackers.

Drs. France Belanger and Tabitha James are looking for people who are willing to use one of our fitness trackers and the related app on a smartphone for two to three months, and to share their usage, perceptions and feelings about this usage.

Eligible participants must be at least 18 years of age, agree to wear our fitness tracker and use the associated app on their smartphone (iPhone or Android), and answer questions before, during, and after the use of the fitness trackers. The research involves an initial meeting with the researchers, a mid-study online survey, and a final meeting. Meetings are held at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg.

The study is strictly confidential and approved the VT Institutional Review Board (17-221).

Participants receive:

- \$15 for the initial session
- \$5 for the mid-study survey
- \$20 for the final session
- Those completing all study requirements are entered into a drawing for one of four fitness trackers (one in 10 chances approximately).

If you are interested, please contact us at belanger@vt.edu.

Legislative Report by Val Coluni

1. Personal Finances: A significant federal regulation has partially changed: no longer can you join with others in a lawsuit (a class action) against your financial providers to resolve your differences. The history of this change is that a federal agency (Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, CFPB) recently passed a regulation to ensure that Americans were treated fairly by banks, credit card firms, and other providers of financial services when trying to resolve financial disputes. One of the key provisions was that "...consumers could join together with others in a lawsuit (class action) to resolve their differences." This regulation was to become effective in the future.

Recently elected/appointed federal officials just repealed this part of the regulation and substituted this language: "...any disputes with banks, lenders and other financial entities must be settled by arbitration without resort to class action lawsuits..." Their rationale was that arbitration is generally faster and less expensive to all parties, and the financial payback to consumers is more favorable. There are a few recent surveys with limited data to support this.

The previous director of the CFPB stated, "...you have signed away consumers' rights to their day in court..." The Center for Responsible Lending said that the repeal removes an indispensable check on corporate misconduct.

This new provision places an important responsibility on you. In your financial dealings with those who have arbitration policies, make sure those policies do not put you in a weak position. It might be desirable to have someone with legal training review such policies. Be vigilant!

2. The Safety Net (Social Security and Medicare). Will the political landscape in the future affect the safety/vulnerability of these traditional safety net programs? A number of political writers are concerned that recent actions taken by the current federal government will increase our debt level to such unmanageable levels that some current safety net programs (Social Security/Medicare) may have to be modified to keep our finances in balance. This could be a very contentious action, and citizens of all political parties should engage in these discussions if these actions become a reality.

Chapter Officers 2018

President • Wendy Baldwin, wendybburg@gmail.com

Vice President • Jerry Niles, niles@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



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