

Blacksburg Chapter AARP #2613

Serving the Greater New River Valley, VA



AARP Chapters are separately incorporated affiliates of AARP

newsletter

September-October 2019



Sept. 17 Chapter Meeting

Let's Get Ready for the 2020

Census Daryl Warner, US Census Bureau

Census data shapes the services New River Valley residents rely on. From health to education to transportation to emergency services, planning and funding decisions for every sector of community life are impacted by data and trends generated by the Census Bureau. The presentation shares how the 2020 Census will invite everyone to participate and how we are collaborating with partners to ensure seniors can do so easily and safely.

Daryn J. Warner serves as a Partnership Specialist for the U.S. Census Bureau based in Roanoke. For the decennial census, he collaborates with local governments, community organiza-



tions, and neighborhood advocates to ensure everyone is counted in 2020. This continues his commitment to collaborative civic engagement. For the last 11 years, Daryn led innovative partnerships in education, health, and community economic development for the U.S. Peace Corps across Africa. For the decade before that, he led community engagement strategies for arts and service organizations, including at Mill Mountain Theatre. He is a graduate of Virginia Tech.

Oct. 15 Chapter Meeting

Medicare and Pharmaceutical

Pricing Senthil Marimuthu, Blacksburg and Christiansburg Pharmacies

Sen will give an overview of how drug pricing fits in with Medicare, what is covered and what is not. More importantly, why isn't it? Many of us get our drug costs covered by Medicare Advantage plans or other insurance, but does that fragmentation influence the ultimate cost of drugs? Are discount coupons a good idea? How can you get help in Virginia if you cannot afford your medications? Short of a major change in Medicare's ability to negotiate lower prices, what can you do to manage the cost of your medications? From large scale advances, to very individualized options, we will talk about what exists out there to help you.

Senthil Marimuthu is the owner of the Blacksburg and Christiansburg Pharmacies, one of few compounding pharmacies. Sen has brought a personalized, small town feel to a great local



business. While he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in India, he sat for his pharmacy board exams in the U.S. After a decade in retail pharmacy, he opened his own business in 2014. Sen is widely known as a knowledgeable resource, skilled businessman, and a friend to all.

Upcoming Chapter Events

Oct. 3, Fall Social, Whitebarrel Winery

Dec. 10, AARP Holiday Luncheon

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AARP/LLI/VTRA Social

October 3, 2019

5:30-8:30pm

Whitebarrel Winery

4025 Childress Road, Christiansburg

Tickets (\$25 each) are now available online:

<https://tinyurl.com/whitebarrel-social>

Your ticket will get you either

- A glass of wine, paired with a larger appetizer, or
- A tasting of 5 wines paired with 5 different 'tastes' of appetizers

Tickets are also available at the door.

September Food Drive

September is National Hunger Action Month. The AARP Virginia State is supporting food drives throughout the state. The Blacksburg Chapter is holding our September food drive at the local chapter meeting September 17. We are collecting for "Wolf Packs" weekend backpacks for Montgomery Central School.

Items Needed in Individual Serving Sizes

- 100% juice boxes 8 oz
- Shelf stable milk boxes 8 oz
- Small fruit Cups
- Chicken or vegetable soup 10.75 oz
- Fruit chews and/or cereal or granola bars
- Macaroni & cheese singles 2.05 oz
- Oatmeal (boxes with individual envelopes)
- Canned vegetables 8oz (pull tops)

- Tuna 5 oz (pull tops)
- Individual cracker packages
- Small Pork & Beans cans (pull tops)
- Ramen noodles
- Deodorant (male or female)
- Toothbrush/toothpaste

Thank you for providing items for this worthy cause.

We will collect pet food in November.



Opening of the Second Act

I have always considered September to be the second act of the AARP year. January through June, the first act, is filled with interesting programs, food drives, and service and social activities.

During July and August many of us are off on journeys to learn new things, enjoy ourselves, and connect with family living across the country and the world. AARP Blacksburg's second act, September through December, is filled with more opportunities to learn new things, reconnect with old friends, and enjoy social activities like the gathering at Whitebarrel winery October 3 and the Holiday Luncheon December 10. I hope that you will be able to engage in the chapter-sponsored activities during this fall's second act in the annual AARP Blacksburg play.

Reflecting on the Essence of the Chapter

During last April's monthly meeting, we asked members to reflect on the chapter's efforts to support members on their journey of successful aging and specify how the various activities of the chapter met (or did not meet) their needs. Members were unequivocal in underscoring the positive impact that the chapter has on their their successful aging plan. They pointed to the social connections they made with "great people" during the social time of the meetings, the opportunities to learn new things, and the chance to help others, especially seniors. Members also shared ideas for future programming. They like programming that informs them about new ideas, suggests ways of contributing positively to society, and focuses on subjects that connect to their lives, like how to get the best out of your memory or how to age in place effectively. I think you can see, as described elsewhere in this newsletter, that the program committee, led by Judith Jones and capably assisted by Lisa Moose and Wendy Baldwin listened to this feedback as they built the program for this fall and next spring. The Board has also responded to your suggestions.

Sharing New Ideas: Partnerships, Programs, Newsletter, and Website

As the discussion groups thought about new ideas the chapter might consider, members suggested closer cooperation with Warm Hearth Village. Conversations between chapter leaders and Tandra Dixon, Marketing and Development for Warm Hearth, were initiated and a way forward planned. One result was an event in late June. Because of highly positive reactions of chapter members to the program at the May meeting on the Adult Day Services Program at Virginia Tech, specifically the Memory Masters Class, Lisa Moose suggested that we work with WHV to offer an encore program on site. The result was a wonderfully productive collaboration between the chapter, Adult Day Services, and Warm Hearth. Eighty people participated in the program on Memory Masters and in addition had the opportunity to become a certified Dementia Friend as part of the WHV's efforts to become the first Dementia Friendly Senior Living Community in a new state of Virginia program. As an added bonus, Warm Hearth Village provided one of their delicious lunches for all the participants.

Feedback on the **newsletter** revealed that most participants read each edition of newsletter and appreciate the usefulness of descriptions of upcoming programs, information about and profiles of members, notice of community activities, descriptions and analysis of legislative news, and helpful information about senior life. The development and distribution of a quality newsletter is no small accomplishment. The chapter has been fortunate to have the services of editor Carolyn Rude, working with contributor Sandra Griffith, as well as with Coreen Mett, who produces the mailing labels, and Jeananne and Allen Bame, who prepare the newsletters for mailing according to Post Office specifications. Members and community members have contributed useful content.

To continue the newsletter, the Board has decided to alter the publishing schedule to make the process more manageable for those who produce it. Going forward you will receive the newsletter bimonthly. Your newsletter this month says September/October. The programs for those two months are both highlighted. You will also receive an email blast at the beginning of the second month reminding you of the upcoming program.

Members also affirmed that the **website** provides valuable current information. Don Creamer continues to serve above and beyond the normal call of duty in keeping the website current, informative, and user friendly. After the April meeting, he made some design changes to increase the site's usability. If you haven't looked at it lately, I recommend that you take a ten-minute tour. You will enjoy it. <http://blacksburgaarp.org>

Thinking about Membership Renewal

Our membership year is from January through December while our programs and activities begin in September. These two beginning periods confuse some people about when to renew. To address this problem the Board has approved a new policy that will allow anyone who joins August 1, or after, the current year be credited with membership through 2020. If you forget to renew after January of 2020, we will remind you. The chapter does not drop anyone from the rolls until they have not renewed for two consecutive years as we are interested in including, not excluding, people. I have recently tested the online membership renewal system by renewing our family's membership for 2020 through the website. Coreen Mett, our membership data guru, confirmed that I was successful and that I am now a member for 2020. Also, when I submitted my renewal, I was sure to add my spouse's name and email so the database keeps her membership information up-to-date. (My chapter renewal is the only thing on which I am now ahead of schedule in my life's path). The chapter website will conveniently assist you in your renewal and you will receive a receipt to help you remember to that you renewed. Of course, you can always use the form provided in the newsletter if you are more comfortable with that format.

As the second act of the AARP Blacksburg opens this September, I hope to see you at the monthly meeting on the 17th where, as one of our members said, "An AARP meeting is a place where everyone knows your name—especially if you are wearing a nametag."

I had never thought of going on an African safari until my work took me to all corners of the continent. Tired of going just for work, I enlisted my husband to meet me in Kenya after I had been working. We decided on three camps within Kenya and chose to fly between them to make the most of our ten-day holiday. Since I was already in the country, I went with a driver to pick up my husband. As we left the Nairobi airport, a herd of zebras ran across the road in front of us! What a great welcome to the country! The Nairobi national park abuts the city without fences or walls, so occasionally you see wildlife where you least expect it.

The next day we headed out to the first camp, Amboseli. Loaded into a small plane, we could spot wildlife from the air. But when we got to the airstrip in the park, no jeep was waiting to take us to the camp. Hmmmm. Thinking about the wildlife we had seen, I didn't want to become part of a buffet for predators! But the pilot told us that the jeep had been held up by elephants on the road that cut through the marsh. Whew. The car arrived and off we went. When we got to the marsh, the elephants were still there, just off the road.

Over the years we had watched more than our share of nature videos, big cat diaries and so forth. In those cases, professional teams spend a year (or more) filming wildlife and then editing it down to amazing segments. Maybe we were spoiled by all that? No. Every day on safari, we saw something that was over the top, jaw dropping, and it started even before we actually started our safari.

First day out in an open jeep, I was dying to see lions, being a longtime big cat person. Finally, our driver said "well, there's your first lion." I squinted to see what I thought was a lion off in the distance until I realized the lion he was talking about was right next to the jeep! He was keeping watch, it seemed, while a female wrestled some cubs. The poor thing would pick up a cub by the scruff of its neck and carry it to a protected area, while the other cubs came out and frolicked. Pick up another one and the first one came back out! As a mother of twins, I had great empathy for her plight.

With a full day of seeing endless wildlife, we were ready for dinner and a rest. The dining area was across a pond from the rest of the park and slowly it filled up with the dark shapes of elephants across the pond. Perhaps the best sight was the sky. As we were miles and miles from any source of light, the sky dazzled us with a million stars and the milky way.

The giraffes seem like such quiet (true) and peaceable (not necessarily true) animals. Two males fight to establish dominance, not to injure or kill, by swinging the huge neck and hitting the other's neck. When their mission has been accomplished, they wander off (together) to find some tasty leaves to eat.

There may not be anything cuter than a baby elephant who is stomping around, flapping its ears, and bellowing. Elephants do not like lions, so they get agitated if they sense lions in the neighborhood. Lions would only go after baby elephants, so you can see the tensions that can arise.

Speaking of tensions, we drove into an area where our driver said a pride of lions had been spotted earlier. The whole pride of lions was

up in a stand of trees. One of the females thought a young male was getting too close to her cub so she let him know. That is a sound that raises the hair on the back of your neck! And, it makes you want to look up as you drive around. House cats get up in trees, so I guess it isn't so surprising that lions do, but I never thought I'd see a pride of lions up in the trees.

Leopards are beautiful but fairly rare and hard to spot. We were thrilled to see one sitting at the base of a tree with the body of a young hoofed creature. The sheer power of the leopard's jaw and body were on display as she hauled the carcass up the tree where she could feast now and save some for another day. Sort of the safari equivalent of a great carry-out box after a delicious meal!

Monkeys are not always the cute creatures they are presented to us. Having breakfast outside one day, a monkey just decided that our toast was his toast so he jumped down from a tree and took it! Another time one came into our tent and riffled through papers.

All of our time in the camps was spent driving around in 40-year-old Land Rovers, open to the world around us. You really felt you were part of the scenery, but the animals ignore you completely. Lions would be in the midst of eating a zebra, but they didn't care that we pulled up near to them. The guides were fabulous. Most were Masai tribesmen who had lived in the parks and whose knowledge of the land and the animals were encyclopedic. To their life experience, they added special training in animals (and I suspect car repair). And they were gentle souls—clearly an addition to the experience of being on safari.

Let's talk about tents. We stayed in tents, but don't get the idea we were roughing it. These tents had floors, king sized beds, and full bathrooms. Now, since you are in the park and open to animals, you cannot leave the tent at night unless to use a flashlight to signal for one of the guides to come get you. That was never an issue—after a full day on safari and an evening meal you just want to sleep!

When our plane landed at Little Governor's camp and we drove over in time for lunch, we were a little surprised to be asked to leave our table and move up onto a pavilion. Why? "Elephant come." One very large elephant came and wandered through the tables, ignored the salad bar, and moved on without so much a tipping over a chair!

Being a big cat person, I was thrilled to see lions and cheetahs. One afternoon we saw a few other cars were gathered together. That can only mean one thing: game had been spotted.

It was midday and quite hot and the cheetahs had found they could sit in the shade of the cars. You can't get closer than that to the wonders of Africa.

Samburu is known for having a different breed of giraffe and of zebra. Well, how different can they be? Different enough that it is immediately apparent and making the camp a great experience. Each camp also offered up an array of birds that made me understand why people might sign up for a "birding safari" where the whole experience is centered on spotting birds.

If you love animals and have ever vaguely considered going on a safari, do it!



Aging Happily *by Vicky Dierckx*

Vicky Dierckx is a native of Belgium. She holds a PhD in Psychological Science. In fall 2019, she will teach a 6-week class for LLI on learning to be happy.

A recent poll among the AARP Blacksburg Chapter members showed that the group feels they are aging pretty successfully. It is a good bet that those chapter members also would testify to leading a happy and fulfilling life.

At first glance, happiness seems to be a personal thing. Some people are born a little gloomier than others, for example, and not every activity makes everybody equally happy. Yet, the scientific study of happiness has revealed that there are some principles that seem to apply broadly to all age groups, including seniors.

First, happiness is not as personal as one would expect. Research has found that other people matter a great deal for one's happiness. People are the happiest when they are spending time and interacting with others, even when these others are strangers. Happy people also have bigger and tighter social networks, offering them more social support when things get tough. An 81-year-old Harvard study, in which men were followed from age 19 to 90, revealed that the happiest among the oldest were the ones that were more socially connected. This finding has been confirmed for women as well.

Sadly, a recent (2018) AARP survey has shown that not everybody is doing as well as the AARP Blacksburg chapter members. Overall, 35% of Americans aged 45 or older feels lonely. This translates to 47.8 million people! Some of them never call or meet up with friends or never talk to their neighbors. Most of this group (up to 64%) indicates that they are indeed feeling lonely. Being lonely not only affects one's happiness and

mental health, but also one's physical health. An overview of 148 scientific studies found that people with rich social relationships are less likely to die from diseases compared to people with poor social relationships. Being lonely is about as bad for one's health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day and worse than physical inactivity. So, pick up that phone and call that friend, socialize with your neighbors, talk to that stranger in the store, and keep on participating in AARP meetings and events!

Another commonality among happy people is that they are always willing to help others. One form of helping that is strongly related to happiness is volunteering. Research has shown that people who volunteer at least once a week are happier than those who do not volunteer. The more hours one volunteers per week, the happier one becomes. At least, up to the point where helping others becomes an obligation. This happiness effect is the strongest for people aged 40 and older. Indeed, volunteering offers plenty of opportunities for social contact, stimulates the brain, and provides people with a sense of purpose that structures their days and weeks. All these things are especially important after retirement. Luckily, Blacksburg offers plenty of opportunities to volunteer!

There is much more you can do to increase your own happiness and the happiness of the people living around you. You can start by practicing gratitude, learning how to explain events in an optimistic manner, and formulating meaningful goals. Happiness also is enhanced by using your strengths in new ways, learning how to be more mindful, spending more time in nature, exercising more, and working on a better sleep routine. Investing in your happiness is not hard and the benefits of the efforts will be ample. There are plenty of interesting readings on happiness available in the Blacksburg library and on the Greater Good website of Berkeley University (<https://greatergood.berkeley.com>).

Being Happy at the June AARP Picnic *photos by Lisa Speas*



RSVP of Montgomery County and Radford

RSVP is one of the community organizations that the Blacksburg chapter of AARP supports with its annual gifts.

Life isn't over when you retire...

Join RSVP Today



What is RSVP?

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program of Montgomery County and Radford (RSVP) invites adults aged 55 and over to use their skills and life experiences to answer the call of their neighbors in need.

RSVP volunteers serve part-time, helping through a variety of local non-profit organizations, agencies, and institutions that are designated as volunteer work stations.

RSVP is funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Montgomery County Government.

RSVP Quick Facts

Among their many accomplishments, RSVP volunteers:

- Saved NRV Residents \$425,841 through Medicare counseling to seniors.
- Collated bulk mailings for 6 local non-profit agencies.
- Assisted local clothing and food banks to raise \$255,997 in additional resources to sustain their missions.
- Provided coupons, care packages and greeting cards for veterans and military families. \$695,942 in coupons were mailed to the Overseas Coupon Program.
- Provided visitation, entertainment, classes, and parties for residents of nine nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and veteran care centers.
- Through fundraising efforts, the Advisory Council awarded two \$1,000 scholarships to area high school seniors preparing to pursue studies in the areas of human services or medical services.

Annual Statistics

- Volunteers: 282
- Organizations Served: 64
- Hours Served: 56,319

For more information, contact RSVP Coordinator Mandy Hayes at hayesaw@montgomerycountyva.gov or 540-382-5775

Thank you to everyone who participated in and volunteered to cover the AARP table for the **Steppin' Out Festival**. Serving as the cooling center for the festival was a great success, and we signed up a few new members.

LLI Charter Trips for 2020

LLI charters are a great way to see special sites, to learn something new, and to travel with others from the NRV. Two charters for 2020 still have space. Both are small group trips.

Out and About in Chicago: Art, Architecture, History and More

June 14–19, 2020, Program No. 21908, (\$1479/person for double)

- *Registration end date for charter enrollments:* 11/1/2019

Chicago is a vibrant city packed with enough art, history, culture and stories to capture the mind of any visitor. Learn about the life and work of the iconic architect Frank Lloyd Wright, through an expert-led exploration of his Prairie-style home and studio in the charming and historic Oak Park, Illinois. See how the story of Chicago's evolution is told in its preserved architecture and pay visits to museums and cultural institutions. This is a Road Scholar "Signature City" "Flex" trip that allows you free time in the afternoon to explore aspects of the city that speak to you.



The Best of the Rockies By Rail: Western Canada's Splendor

August 9–20, 2020, Program No. 3748; **Enroll by Oct 31 and take \$300 off the price (\$6299/person for double)**

- *Registration end date for charter enrollments:* 12/31/2019

Experience the wonder of the rugged, beautiful Canadian Rockies in Alberta and British Columbia. Journey through green valleys, past sapphire rivers and wide, jade lakes as you head into the heart of the mountains. Visit the soaring resort town of Banff, where you can explore the hot springs that have made this place famous. See Lake Louise's famed emerald waters, born of the glaciers that overlook it. Complete your adventure with three nights in the cosmopolitan coastal city of Vancouver.

To register for either trip, please go to www.roadsscholar.org and search for the program number. Explore the detailed itineraries on the website and review the activity level to be sure you can manage planned activities. Under "Dates & Prices" (in the blue bar), select the date of our charter, which will be marked "Private Group." Click "Enter Code" and type in the program number; click on red "Go" button. Or register by phone: call Road Scholar at 1-800-322-5315; give the program number and date, and tell the representative that you are a member of the LLI at VT. At least one member of the traveling party must be an LLI member. Questions to Pat Hyer, hyerp@vt.edu or 540-951-4968.

HD Broadcasts: Opera, Ballet, Classic

Movies

The Regal Cinema in Christiansburg (110 New River Road) shows HD broadcasts of Metropolitan Opera, Bolshoi Ballet, and classic movies. See <https://www.fathomevents.com/events/> for information and tickets.

Metropolitan Opera Saturdays, Wednesdays (\$22 senior)

Opera synopses and cast listings are available for each performance at metopera.org/season/in-cinemas/ Scroll down, hover over the opera title, then click on “synopsis & cast sheets” in the upper right.

2019 Encore performance 6:30 pm the following Wednesday except as noted

Oct 12 *Turandot* 12:55 pm 3 hr 25 min

Oct 26 *Manon* 12:55 pm 4 hr 15 min

Nov 9 *Madama Butterfly* 12:55 pm. 3 hr 35 min

Encores Nov 13 (1 pm, 6:30 pm) and Nov 16 (12:55 pm)

Nov 23 *Akhmaten* 12:55 pm. 4 hr

Encore Dec 4

Dec 7 *The Magic Flute* 12:55 pm 2 hr; no encore

Dec 15 *Wozzeck* 12:55 pm 2 hr

2020 Encore performance 6:30 pm the following Wednesday except as noted

Feb 1 *Porgy and Bess* 12:55 pm 3 hr 40 min

Encores Feb 5 (1 pm, 6:30 pm) and Feb 8 (12:55 pm)

Feb 29 *Agrippina* 12:55 pm 4 hr 10 min

Mar 14 *Der Fliegende Hollander* 12:55 pm. 2 hr 55 min

Apr 11 *Tosca* 12:55 pm. 3 hr 20 min

Encores Apr 15 (1 pm, 6:30 pm) and Apr 18 (12:55 pm)

May 9 *Maria Stuarda* 12:55 pm

Bolshoi Ballet Sundays (\$15 senior) 12:55 pm

Oct 27 *Raymonda*

Nov 17 *Le Corsaire*

Dec 15 *The Nutcracker*

Jan 26 *Giselle*

Feb 23 *Swan Lake*

Mar 29 *Romeo and Juliet*

Apr 19 *Jewels*

Classic Movies

Star Trek 40th anniversary

Sept 15 1 pm, 4 pm; Sept 18, 4 pm, 7 pm

The Shawshank Redemption 25th anniversary

Sept 22, 4 pm; Sept 24, 7 pm; Sept 25, 7 pm

Alien 40th anniversary

Oct 13, 1 pm; Oct 15, 7 pm; Oct 16, 7 pm

Godfather Part II 45th anniversary

Nov 10. 3 pm; Nov 12, 7 pm, Nov 13, 7 pm

When Harry Met Sally 50th anniversary

Dec 1, 4 pm; Dec 3, 7 pm

Meet Me in St. Louis 75th anniversary

Dec 8. 1 pm; Dec 11, 4 pm, 7 pm

Chapter Award Nominations Requested

Due October 15

The AARP Blacksburg Chapter presents two local awards each year at the Holiday Luncheon in December. The awards committee requests nominations for these awards from members. Nominations should reflect contributions and achievements in the past year (2018–19).

Chapter Service Award

Member who is giving and making an impact on our local AARP Chapter

- Recent past recipients: Jennie Reilly, Val Coluni and Terry Wildman, Jerry Niles, Don Creamer and Pat Hyer, John and Sharen Hillison

Community Spirit Award

Member who is impacting the community with constituents who are the focus of AARP efforts.

- Recent past recipients: Coreen Mett, Molly McClintock, Sally Anna Stapleton, Pat Ballard, Jim Wightman

Please send your nominations, including the name, which award, and the basis of the recommendation for the nomination, to Tamara Hodsden (thodsden@gmail.com).

Panel explores the “cost” of voting in

Virginia **October 2**, 7:30 pm, Blacksburg Municipal Building

When the Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* limited the reach of the Voting Rights Act in 2013, some states enacted a number of voting requirements that increased the difficulty of voting. A 2018 study ranked the states for the difficulty of voting. **Virginia the second hardest state in which to vote; only in Mississippi is it harder.**

A panel of three Virginia Tech faculty members will explore what makes it hard to vote in Virginia and the consequences for voter participation and representation.

Panelists include Charles Walcott, Professor Emeritus of Political Science, Karen Hult, Professor of Political Science, and Wornie Reed, chair of the Race and Social Policy Center. Beth Obenshain, League of Women Voters, will moderate.

The panel is free and open to the public. Co-sponsors: League of Women Voters, LLI, and the M-R-F branch of NAACP.

Candidate Forums

October 8, Forum on Disability Issues

Del. Nick Rush, Del. Chris Hurst, Sen. John Edwards, Flo Ketterer, Rhonda Seltz, and Darlene Lewis

7–9 pm, Montgomery Co. Government Building, 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg. Sponsor: ARC

October 17, Candidates for County Offices

Board of Supervisors, School Board, Constitutional Officers

7 pm, Montgomery Co. Government Building, 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg. Sponsor: League of Women Voters

Chapter Members Meet with Representative Griffith

On August 30, four members of our chapter visited with Representative Morgan Griffith in his Christiansburg office: Jerry Niles, Nola Elliott, Doug Feuerbach, and Ben Crawford. Also present were Griffith's new District Director, John ? of the Abingdon office, and two AARP members from the Roanoke Valley: Lorraine Williams, state legislative volunteer, and Joyce Williams, state volunteer videographer/photographer.

The purposes of our meeting were three-fold: to thank him for the work he is doing to lower the price of drugs, present an AARP petition to Congress requesting actions that will lower the price of drugs and stop greed in drug pricing, and to protect/strengthen our Social Security. The petition was signed by 2,545 of his constituents in the 9th Congressional District. We thanked him for his vote on Robocalls. He emphasized that Robocalls are a nonpartisan issue—everyone hates robocalls. We also thanked him for his vote on Multiemployer Pensions.

Drug prices. Griffith generally favors Medicare negotiation of drug prices, but he is unsure about a cap on out-of-pocket drug costs. He suggested that AARP back a limited pilot program for a few common drugs and see how it will work. He thinks the main problem with lowering drug prices are Pharmacy Benefits Managers. He looks upon these as scams. He is planning on calling PBMs to testify before Energy and Commerce Committee.

Civility in politics. Griffith was generous with his time taking about an hour with us to hear our concerns and reply to our suggestions/questions on issues identified by AARP. He brought up a need for more civility in Congress between major political parties. He thinks that the vast majority of persons in *both* parties are dedicated and honest in their beliefs and want to make our nation better. We need to return to the ability to disagree without animosity. He complimented AARP and our chapter on our civility and said he was working this concept into his speeches.



Nola Elliott, Doug Feuerbach, Lorraine Williams, Morgan Griffith, Jerry Niles, Ben Crawford

Ben Crawford meets with Senator Mark Warner, discussing capitalism

I had the opportunity to have a brief personal session with U. S. Senator Mark Warner when he was in Blacksburg. Before he was our Governor and our Senator, Warner became a millionaire the old-fashioned way. he worked for it. Warner had just finished talking to a group about the need to make some adjustments in

our nation's system of capitalism. This is important to him and he is emphasizing it in his senate work and in talks throughout the Commonwealth. It is important to me personally because of my background in teaching business economics and my service with the U. S. Small Business Administration.

Warner and I agreed on the paramount importance capitalism has in our society, both past and future. We also agree some tweaks are needed to level the playing field; for example, to make changes in rules and regulations to make businesses more competitive and fair to all. Doing so will result in the best possible products or services to consumers at the best prices. Capitalism is vitally important to our economy. And the world as well. I hope our Senator will have success in this important arena.

Ben Crawford meets with Delegate Chris Hurst, discussing gerrymandering

I had two brief sessions with Delegate Chis Hurst concerning the need to pass the proposed constitutional amendment on gerrymandering. This passed the last session of the Virginia General Assembly but needs to pass again with the exact same wording before it can go the people for a vote. Some elected representatives in both parties of the General Assembly may try to oppose this amendment by offering wording changes.

According to OneVirginia2021, although current wording of the proposed constitutional amendment may not be the best possible, it will do the job we want. It is satisfactory. Our legislators know that any attempted changes now will kill the whole thing. We need to insure this passes again and goes to the people for a vote.



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.

Chapter Officers 2019

President • Jerry Niles, niles@vt.edu
Vice President • Don Creamer, dgc2@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

- 2019—Tamara Hodsdon, Jim Montgomery, Wanda Smith
- 2020—Isabel Berney, Jeananne Dixon Bame, Hugh VanLandingham
- 2021—Doug Feuerbach, Judith Jones, Lisa Moose, Leslie Pendleton


Newsletter editors: Carolyn Rude, Sandra Griffith

AARP Website www.blacksburgaarp.org



Blacksburg Chapter #2613
 Jerry Niles, President
 P.O. Box 10082
 Blacksburg, VA 24062

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

Blacksburg Chapter  Member Application for 2020

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.

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