



AARP Chapters are separately incorporated affiliates of AARP



newsletter

January-February 2020

Jan. 21 Chapter Meeting

Downsizing and Decluttering: What Will We Do With Our Stuff? *Lesa Wynn*

“I love my stuff”—Comedian George Carlin did a hilarious routine about “people and their stuff.” It was not only funny but profound. People all need their stuff around them. They become emotionally attached to their stuff, whether they bought it or inherited it from a loved one. We keep mementos from our family and friends. We name it, we become attached to it. It’s our stuff!

When we think about the cost of our stuff, we think about dollars. But what about the emotional, physical, and relationship costs?

When we are ready to downsize or declutter, how will we decide what to keep and what to give up? Learn Lesa’s advice at the meeting.



Lesa Wynn is president of Project Move UP. She helps companies and individuals relocate, downsize and declutter, and get organized.

Feb. 18 Chapter Meeting

Adventures in Ancient Africa: On the Tail of the Origin of Dinosaurs *Sterling Nesbitt*

Hunting the earliest dinosaurs is a worldwide adventure given that 230 million years ago all of the continents were together. However, only a handful of fossil localities preserve the earliest dinosaurs. Eastern Africa is one of those special areas and not only are early dinosaurs preserved, but their closest relatives are also found there. Combining paleobiological information from early dinosaurs and their close relatives is giving us an unprecedented look into the origin of dinosaurs. Many surprising discoveries have been made in the last few years.



Sterling Nesbitt is an Assistant Professor in the Virginia Tech Department of Geosciences. His area of research is the evolution of vertebrate animals with a species focus on archosaurs (crocodiles, dinosaurs, and birds).

Upcoming Events

- Jan. 16, Registration for LLI classes opens
- Feb. 1, Tax-Aide program begins
- Feb. 28, Mar. 6, Aging in Place Workshop (p. 6); enroll by Feb. 10
- Mar. 3, Super Tuesday Primary

Upcoming Chapter Programs

- (Third Tuesday, 11:30 am)
- February 18: Sterling Nesbitt, Adventures in ancient Africa: On the tail of the origin of dinosaurs
- March 17: Janet Brennend and Casey Suthers, NRV Agency on Aging, Navigating Resources for Community-Based Home Health and Home Care Programs
- April 21: Curt Laub, Bugs and Us—Insects and Our Culture
- May 19: Dean Spader, Project Draw-down: 80 Viable Solutions to Climate Change
- June 16: Picnic, 5:00 pm

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February 18 Food Drive

Our first food drive for 2020 will be at our February 18 chapter meeting. We’ll be collecting for the Agency On Aging “Staples For Seniors.” This organization supplies weekend staples to homebound seniors so that they never go hungry. Please give all that you can.

Items Needed

- Peanut butter (creamy)
- Tuna (pull tab or foil packs)
- Fruit cups (low or no sugar)
- Individual cans of soup (low sodium, pull tabs)
- Saltine crackers
- Juice boxes
- Instant oatmeal (single serve packets)

Time to renew membership

Use the form on p. 8, or go online to <http://www.blacksburgaarp.org/join-us>

Membership is for the year 2020.

As we know, Virginia's 2019 elections for the General Assembly have important consequences for the legislature's 2020 session. Here we will review the election and its outcome, and will outline some of the major issues that will be at stake in the General Assembly session.



2019 Election Results and Voter Turnout

The 2019 election for the General Assembly was in some sense a capstone for the Democratic Party's resurgence that began in 2017. In the 2017 election for the House of Delegates, 12 Republicans lost, and the House became evenly split at 50-0. Control of the House was decided by a coin toss, and the Republican Party was still in charge. Four more Republicans were defeated in 2019, and one open seat became Democratic, giving them a 55-45 edge.

Senators serve four-year terms, and in the Senate, only one Republican incumbent was defeated in 2019. In addition, a seat vacated by a retiring Republican was won by a Democrat, leaving the Senate with a 21-19 split in favor of the Democrats.

A further examination of the election yields some interesting points. In the House, 26 Democrats were uncontested; however, only six Republicans were uncontested, and five of them were in Southwest Virginia. In the Senate, six Democrats were uncontested, but only one Republican. Democrats made significant gains in the Tidewater region, with a number of Republican legislators there defeated.

Most significantly, voter turnout set a new record. At first glance, the 43% turnout is not impressive, but it was higher than any past election. Virginia's typically low turnout for statewide elections is attributed to the fact that they are held in the off years from national elections. This policy was initiated in 1851, when there were sharp divisions between North and South over the issue of slavery. (An interesting sidelight is that since 1977, every Virginia governor has been elected by the opposite party of the sitting president except for Governor McAuliffe.)

Voters' Issues

According to polls, the major issues in the 2019 election were gun control (75%), education (70%), and health care (66%). Democrats were more likely to be in favor of taking action on these issues by the following margins: gun control, 47%-44%; education, 56%-34%; and health care, 60%-31%.

Election Fundraising

A major factor in elections, of course, is funding. Fundraising for Democrats jumped from \$13.7 million in 2015 to \$31.7 million in 2019. Republican fundraising in 2019 amounted to \$20.9 million, only two-thirds of the Democrats' total. Most remarkably, there were 61,342 small donations (under \$100) to Democrats, and only 7,709 to Republicans. Almost half of the Democrats' small contributions came from out of state—a strong testimony to the

power of online fundraising. In this category the Democrats raised \$1.7 million; the Republicans, \$440,000.

Donations from large organizations showed a distinctive pattern. For Democrats, top donors were organizations such as the League of Conservation Voters, Emily's list, Everytown for Gun Safety, Planned Parenthood, and Beyond Carbon Action Fund. On the Republican side, Dominion Energy was the top donor (it also contributed substantially to the Democrats). Others include the Virginia Association of Realtors, GOPAC (a Republican organization), the Beer Wholesalers Association, the Auto Dealers Association, and the Hospital and Healthcare Association.

General Assembly Agenda for 2020

Major issues for the new General Assembly include redistricting. The proposal is for district boundaries to be set by a non-partisan commission. Currently, districts are drawn every ten years by the political party that happens to be in power. This is likely to be a significant issue, as drawing districts in a way that satisfies all constituents is not possible. However, a number of other states have moved to nonpartisan commissions as a way to prevent gerrymandering.

On December 17, Governor Ralph Northam introduced his biennial budget—the only two-year budget he will introduce, so it gives a clear picture of his priorities. Increases in funding are largely focused on education and health care. He proposes to eliminate the freeze on tuition in higher education that was enacted last year and to allow the institutions to increase tuition rather than relying on state dollars. Special funding is provided for Virginia's two historically black colleges, Virginia State and Norfolk State. Funding for Virginia Tech's Innovation Campus in Alexandria is included in accordance with the Commonwealth's partnership created with Amazon last year. Other proposals include doubling the state tax on tobacco to help fund expansion of the Affordable Care Act, and bond-financed protections for the environment.

Other initiatives and issues that are likely to be considered are early childhood education, free community college, wage and labor issues, gun safety, and the ERA. With many new faces and new leadership in the General Assembly, it should prove to be an interesting legislative session.

Ralph Byers is Executive Director of Government Relations Emeritus at Virginia Tech.

*The source for data regarding the elections and financial contributions is the **Virginia Public Access Project** (VPAP.org). Any incorrect information is solely the responsibility of the writer.*

Live Well and Find Joy



Have you ever experienced saying something and immediately wondered, “Where did that come from?” It can be mystifying. You may react by thinking, “I didn’t plan to say that but having said it, I do really believe it.”

Perhaps in a heated discussion, you may say something totally unplanned, or something seemingly unlike your normal thoughts. Perhaps while daydreaming you totally surprise yourself with some thought. My guess is that it has happened to most people who have lived as long as we have.

It happened to me recently in a Lifelong Learning Class. I was ruminating out loud about something the instructor had shown in a visual slide. I was thinking, “I don’t believe that is true for me and my reasons for involvement.” I wanted to state how I actually feel about the issue. “For example,” I said without prior thought, “*I get a lot of joy from my involvement in the AARP Blacksburg Chapter.*”

I couldn’t get this thought out of my head for the remainder of the class, nor have I since been able to do so. “Is JOY really what I get from my involvement with people and activities of our chapter?” If I had carefully thought about this matter when I spoke, I suspect that I would have said something closer to “satisfaction” or “fulfillment,” but not “joy.” So, why had I said it at this moment before my classmates?

I tend to think of joy as some mystical feeling associated with Christmas. We sing about it and people wish it on

AARP Tax-Aide program begins Feb. 1

The 2020 tax-aide 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:

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

Training for counselors is mostly complete for 2020, but the program welcomes new Greeters (Client Facilitators). These volunteers welcome clients to check in. They inspect photo IDs and match information with an appointment list provided by the Christiansburg Rec Center. They assist with the work flow and help to match the complexity of that tax return and the experience of tax counselors. Greeters are asked to work at least one shift (4 hours) per week, starting February 1 and ending April 15.

their friends and loved ones during the holiday season. But is it a feeling associated with just normal interactions or engagement with people?

So, I did the pedestrian thing and looked up the word in the dictionary. Here is what I found: Joy is “the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires.” The word also means, according to the dictionary, “a feeling of great pleasure and happiness.” So, now I ask myself, “Is joy really the feeling I get from my involvement in AARP Blacksburg?”

Yes, it is.

In the last issue of the newsletter, Jerry Niles wrote about the value of social connections. I normally use the concept of engagement rather than social connections, but I think that Jerry and I mean more or less the same thing. He observed and I agree wholeheartedly that engagement happens regularly in our chapter.

Research tells us that there are numerous benefits from social engagement in a group like our chapter. Here are some of the most common findings:

- enhanced mental health
- sense of belonging
- better self-esteem
- increased cognitive functioning
- accountability
- purposeful living

Pretty potent results from simple acts of engagement with other people.

Now another outcome of engagement can be added to this list, at least for me: JOY! I wonder—rather I hope—that I am not alone in this epiphany.



Val Coluni and Steve Reisinger enjoy food and conversation at the holiday luncheon.

Charitable Contributions 2019



Above: Recipients of the 2019 AARP-Blacksburg Chapter Charitable Contributions received their checks at the holiday luncheon. The funds for these donations come from the proceeds of the biennial Health and Wellness Fair.



Left: Judith Jones participates in the wreath laying at the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery. AARP-Blacksburg helps to support this program.

photos by Terry Wildman

The Blacksburg Chapter of the AARP donated \$3,300 to local organizations that serve seniors. Recipients include these organizations:

- Community Foundation of the NRV—Town of Blacksburg Senior Center Endowment Fund
- Town of Blacksburg Community Center
- Christiansburg Community Center, Senior Programs
- Micah's Soup for Seniors, St. Michael Lutheran Church
- NRV Agency on Aging
- Montgomery County Christmas Store—Seniors, Senior Undergarments
- RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Programs)
- Community Foundation of the NRV—Aging in Place
- Warm Hearth Dementia Program
- Community Foundation of the NRV, Wreath Laying Program

Carolyn Rude Honored with Chapter Service and Community Spirit Awards

by Nancy Metz



At the annual Holiday Luncheon Celebration on December 10 at Warm Hearth, AARP chapter president Jerry Niles presented the 2019 Blacksburg Chapter Service Award and the Chapter Community Spirit Award to Carolyn

Rude. So “remarkable” and “substantial” were Carolyn’s contributions, he noted, that the awards committee had taken the unprecedented step of honoring one member with both recognitions.

The Chapter Service Award was conferred in appreciation for Carolyn’s editorial work with the newsletter, which has become under her leadership “technically and aesthetically superb.” Niles observed that “Carolyn has crafted the newsletter into a testament to the chapter’s achievements, a platform to share insights about the people who make the chapter work, and a forum to convey important information about her community.”

The Community Spirit award focused on Carolyn’s contributions to the League of Women Voters and the Lifelong Learning Institute. Her work for the League “has nurtured a productive partnership that has resulted in informative, thought-provoking public education on crucial issues of the day, such as voter suppression, gerrymandering, and the consequences of Supreme Court decisions on state-level voting laws.”

A charter member of the LLI program committee since its first meeting in 2015, Carolyn helped invent LLI and imagine its possibilities for the community. In addition to her invaluable editorial work on the catalog, she regularly recruits faculty to teach courses, enrolls in the courses herself, and volunteers to serve as the classroom assistant—all to ensure that the experience is rewarding for faculty and students.

In honoring Carolyn with these awards, Niles noted her tireless dedication to the civic organizations she serves. By sharing her time and talents so generously, she has made exemplary contributions, not only to AARP and its constituents, but to the common good.

AARP Blacksburg Chapter Highlights 2019

Recognition

Awarded a grant for \$925 by the AARP Office of Volunteer Engagement for increasing the visibility of the Blacksburg Chapter in the Community.

Member Services and Communication

Conducted 8 public meetings featuring a variety of programs plus June picnic (despite the rain showers and December Holiday luncheon

Published 7 chapter newsletters (thanks to Carolyn Rude and Sandra Griffith for editing and to Jeananne Dixon-Bame and Allan Bame 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 Lisa Moose)

Established a credit card payment system for payment of membership and other Chapter Events (thanks to Don Creamer and Lisa Moose)

Co-hosted (with LLI and the Virginia Tech Retirees Association) a fundraising event at Whitebarrel Winery

Co-hosted (with LLI) a friend-raising event, Bluegrass and Barbecue

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

Community Partnerships

Maintained and developed robust partnerships: AARP Virginia, VCOM, NRV Agency on Aging, Lifelong Learning Institute at VT, Center for Gerontology at VT, VT Retirees Association, Community Foundation of the NRV, Blacksburg TimeBank, Blacksburg Community Center, Christiansburg Recreation Center, Montgomery County Christmas Store, Micah's Soup for Seniors, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Virginia Tech Retirees Association, Warm Hearth Village

Community Support

Served 1,294 clients through the Tax-Aide program (thanks to Pat Ballard, Program Coordinator; Dianne Rencsok, Training Coordinator; and a dozen AARP volunteers)

Collected more than 500 lbs. of food for the Blacksburg/Christiansburg pantries. Continued a food drive for Mother's Day and a November pet food drive to help seniors be able to feed and keep their pets (thanks to Sally Anna Stapleton)

Contributed to charitable organizations that serve seniors in the NRV, including the Warm Hearth Foundation fundraiser—Cheeseburger in Parrot-dise, Blacksburg's Leading Lights, and GiveBig NRV.

Exhibited at Blacksburg's annual Steppin' Out festival and served as lead sponsor for the "Seniors' Tent"

Partnered with Adult Day Services Center at Virginia Tech and Warm Hearth to offer a program on Memory and Dementia Friendly Environments (thanks to Lisa Moose)

Education, Citizenship Support

Participated in train the trainer workshop (7 members) with the Aging in Place Task Force as a basis for collaboration with LLI at VT on presenting future workshops for Aging in Place

Participated in state AARP Virginia Advocacy, Legislative, and Volunteer meetings

Supported OneVirginia2021 (nonpartisan redistricting effort)

Tracked Virginia and national legislative initiatives related to AARP objectives; reported findings at chapter board meetings, and published in chapter newsletters and website (thanks to Val Coluni and Doug Feuerbach)

Met with Congressman Morgan Griffith on national Medicare and Medicaid prescription drug policy (2) and Delegate Chris Hurst (2)

2019 Committee Chairs

Awards—Tamara Hodsdon

Chaplain—Sandy Birch

Community Service—Sally Anna Stapleton

Financial Planning and Audit—June Schmidt, Doug Feuerbach

Health Fair—Leslie Pendleton

History—Sally Anna Stapleton

Hospitality—Thais Beams, Terry Wildman

Legislative—Val Coluni, Doug Feuerbach

LLI Partnership—Pat Hyer, Don Creamer

Membership—Jim Wightman, Coreen Mett, Todd Solberg

Newsletter—Carolyn Rude

Program—Don Creamer, Lisa Moose, Judith Jones

Website—Don Creamer, Lisa Moose



State AARP president Carol Downs joins three winners of the Andrus Award from Blacksburg at the holiday luncheon: Ben Crawford, Pat Hyer, and Don Creamer

Meet New Board Member Chuck Burress

Blacksburg is the place I have always called home—first as a student at Virginia Tech, and then from afar when my career took me elsewhere in the state. So, in 2018 I retired and returned after a 26-year absence.

I spent 41 years as a newspaper publisher and editor with Landmark Media Enterprises, whose portfolio at one time included *The Weather Channel*, TV stations, and more than 50 newspapers. After graduation from Virginia Tech in 1977, I spent 13 years with *The Roanoke Times*, then moved within the Landmark parent company to Galax, VA, to work as regional general manager for its newspapers and plants in Galax, Bedford, and Independence.

I was born in State College, PA, where my father was on the ag engineering faculty at Penn State. My parents divorced when I was young and I was primarily raised by my mother in Giles County, VA. My father spent his later career on foreign aid irrigation projects in Asia and Africa, and this provided me travel opportunities that I didn't fully appreciate as a teenager. During my freshman year of high school, I lived with my father in Afghanistan (that was 1968, a decade prior to the Soviet invasion) and boarded at the American International School of Kabul.

I attended my first AARP meeting last summer at the invitation of Todd Solberg. I kept coming back because of the exceptional monthly programs and local AARP projects that I heard about. As a newcomer to AARP, I still have a lot of background to learn about goings-on with our local chapter.



My other interests include genealogy research, reading four newspaper subscriptions online, following the Hokies and St. Louis Cardinals, and especially travel. In May 2019 I took a Danube River cruise and visited Prague, Vienna, Nuremberg, and Budapest. Other recent trips included Germany and Austria in 2016, and Italy in 2015. I am booked for a river cruise in May 2020 on the Seine that will take me from Paris to Normandy before I add a five-day stopover in London.

During the 2019 baseball season I traveled to St. Louis, Seattle and Arizona to see the Cardinals play. And at one point I went 19 years without missing travel to a VT football bowl game—a string that included four trips each to the Sugar Bowl and Orange Bowl.

I am single and have two married adult children and three young grandchildren. Daughter Erin is a third-generation Hokie who lives in Charlottesville, where her husband is a medical resident in anesthesiology at UVA. (I am known to send Hokie t-shirts to the grandkids to wear and antagonize Charlottesville!) Son Matt is in Glen Allen, VA. My two children and my son's wife all have their doctorates in physical therapy. They are thankful for our Baby Boomer generation that sends them so many customers!

I am a Rotarian of some 25 years, having joined Blacksburg Rotary Club in the mid-1980s, served as president of Galax Rotary around 2000, and rejoined my old Blacksburg club when I returned last year. I also attend Blacksburg Sports Club, Lifelong Learning Institute, Blacksburg Christian Church, and many VT sporting events, and I walk about 2.5 miles most days on the Huckleberry Trail.

Aging in Place Workshop: Feb. 28 and Mar. 6 1:30–3:30 pm Corporate Research Center

Like the majority of older Americans, you may intend to live in your current home for as long as possible. Your decision to age in place may seem like an obvious and logical choice. Yet, aging in place is more than just planning to stay in your home. Your decision to age in place should be part of a process that includes personal reflection, conversations with people important to you, intentional planning, and action.

This two-part workshop will explore the five essential aspects of an effective plan to age in place: housing, health and wellness, finances, transportation, and social relationships. Through your responses to questions in the workbook and small group conversations, you will identify the areas where you need to seek more information; determine which legal, financial, or health issues you need to address; and outline conversations you need to initiate with family members or your support team/friends. Spouses/partners/adult children are encouraged to attend with you to facilitate the creation of a workable plan.

The materials used in this workshop were produced by the Aging in Place Leadership Team of the New River Valley. You can look at the workbook online at this URL: <https://tinyurl.com/aging-workbook>. Participants will receive a printed copy for use in the workshop.

10 slots are reserved for VTRA and AARP Blacksburg members.

To enroll: Send a note to Pat Hyer, hyerp@vt.edu, or call 540-951-4968. **Deadline: February 10.**

Cost: \$10 for workbook (payment instructions will be sent)



Aging in Place:
Your Home, Your Community, Your Choice

Caring and Wellness Corner *Leslie Pendleton* S.A.D. or Not? Self-Care for the Winter Months and Beyond

Seasonal Affective Depression (S.A.D.) is a type of recurrent depression that results from changes in the body's internal clock due to seasonal climate changes, for example, fewer daylight hours. Specifically, these seasonal climate changes can cause reductions in serotonin (mood) and imbalances in melatonin (sleep-wake cycle). As a result, most cases of S.A.D. occur in the late fall to early winter, but this feeling should not be confused with holiday blues. The months of January and February are the most difficult for S.A.D. sufferers. For seniors who are shut-in and isolated, S.A.D. can be especially debilitating.



According to *Psychology Today*, S.A.D. affects 10 million Americans, usually emerges in early adulthood (ages 18–30), and is more common in women than men.

Contributing factors other than seasonal climate changes include family history, Vitamin D insufficiency, and distance of living from the equator. The typical S.A.D. symptoms include feeling depressed or sad on most days; reduced energy levels; cravings for comfort foods high in carbohydrates, fat, or sugar; loss of interest in normal activities; and feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness, even suicidal thoughts. While S.A.D. is usually a mild or moderate form of depression, seasonal climate changes can bring about more severe depression in those who experience depression year round. Fortunately, most cases of S.A.D. go away in the spring and summer seasons.

My own bout with S.A.D. surfaced around age 24 and affected me for the seven winters that my former husband and I lived like pioneers in a mid-19th century (Civil War era) farmhouse in Giles County. The plumbing and heating systems were very rudimentary. To get water, we had to prime a pump in a springhouse near a creek to feed water to a cistern on a hill behind the house. The water then flowed by gravity to the house. Our only source of heat was a wood stove. So the winter seasons were especially difficult and made worse by the fact that his work required him to be out-of-town or on second shift so I spent most of the time alone. To make matters worse, during my first pregnancy, the underground pipes froze and we went without running water for over two months. Some of our AARP members may have similar elder stories. Needless to say, today most of us enjoy the heating and plumbing conveniences life offers, but I still empathize with those whose depression is made worse in the winter due to their living conditions.

Given the age of onset, S.A.D. sufferers can suffer for a very long time, especially without intervention. Typical

interventions for S.A.D. include light therapy, anti-depressant medication, Vitamin D supplements, and counseling. Self-care is also very important. If you don't personally experience S.A.D., what can you do to care for a friend or family member who does? These are some recommended habits and practices: journaling thoughts and feelings; practicing mindfulness; building relationships and social supports; utilizing community resources; getting adequate sleep and rest; planning regular physical activities; eating nutritious meals; engaging in art, music, and pet therapies; growing intellectually and spiritually through study; engaging in pleasurable and creative activities and projects; practicing positive self-talk; using humor to smile and laugh; and decluttering and organizing. We are very fortunate that LLI offers classes and special events in some of these topics.

Finally, approaching 2020 with reflection, purpose, and a personal vision can also help. Visioning is a business technique that can also be applied to our personal lives. I'm part of a women's art group that meets monthly; each January, we create vision boards for the year. Ask yourself these questions as you create your own personal vision for 2020: What do I enjoy? What do I want more of in my life? What do I want to learn? What energizes me? What relaxes me? What is most important in my life? Who are the most important people in my life? What's the one thing I want to accomplish this year? And, more importantly, how can I be a caring friend, relative, or colleague?



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: If the public schools are closed, AARP will not meet.

Chapter Officers 2020

President • Don Creamer, dgc2@vt.edu
Vice President • Leslie Pendleton, lkpendleton@gmail.com
Secretary • Pat Hyer, hyerp@vt.edu
Treasurer • Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu
Assistant Treasurer • Ruth Anne Niles, rniles2@icloud.com

Board of Directors

2020: Isabel Berney, Jeananne Dixon Bame, Hugh VanLandingham

2021: Doug Feuerbach, Judith Jones, Lisa Moose, Leslie Pendleton

2022: Linda Correll, Chuck Burress, Kai Duncan


Newsletter editors: Carolyn Rude, Sandra Griffith

AARP Website www.blacksburgaarp.org



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 Don Creamer, President
 P.O. Box 10082
 Blacksburg, VA 24062

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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.

Please make your check payable to "Blacksburg AARP Chapter #2613."
 Mail the check and this form to: .

AARP Blacksburg Chapter • P.O. Box 10082 • Blacksburg, VA 24062



newsletter

March-April 2020

Mar. 17 Chapter Meeting

Navigating Resources for Community-Based Home Health and Home Care Programs

Janet Brennend and Casey Suthers, NRV Agency on Aging

Our presenters will provide an overview of community-based care that includes companion services, homemaker services, home health care, respite, and aging and disability resources. The presentation will highlight consumer information and strategies for accessing quality services to enhance the health, safety, and well-being of older adults.

Janet Brennend is the Long Term Care Ombudsman/Elder Abuse Prevention Specialist, and **Casey Suthers** is the Aging & Disability Services Supervisor at the NRV Agency on Aging.



Apr. 21 Chapter Meeting

Bugs and Us—Insects and Our Culture

Curt Laub

Only a tiny percentage of the world's insects are pests. In this talk we will look at the positive influence of insects on literature, art, music, commerce, technology, and religion. We will see why the lowly dung beetle was revered as a god in ancient Egypt, how the British got their red coats so red, how the Beatles got their name, why a town in Alabama has a monument to an insect, and much more, including a preview of the the upcoming (this summer!) periodical cicada mass emergence in the New River Valley. With cameos by Shakespeare, Beyonce, Groucho Marx, Marge Simpson, and many more!

Curt Laub is a steel drum player and dahlia grower who just retired from the Virginia Tech Department of Entomology. His area of research was Intergrated Pest Management of insects attacking fruit and field crops.



Upcoming Events

- Mar. 14, 2 pm, "Iron Jawed Angels," free movie at the Lyric (p. 4)
- Mar. 27, Vietnam War Veterans Day Event (p. 4)
- Apr. 4, The Big Event (p. 4)
- Apr. 11, Mission Jazz (p. 4)
- See more events, including classic movies, on pages 4 and 5.

Upcoming Chapter Programs

(Third Tuesday, 11:30 am)

May 19: Dean Spader, Project Draw-down: 80 Viable Solutions to Climate Change

Mother's Day Food Drive

June 16: Picnic, 5:00 pm

Sept. 16, Health and Wellness Fair

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President's Message

Don Creamer

Engaging New Members: Can You Help?



I am often impressed by all that our chapter does. This year, for example, we are engaged in planning and conducting the biennial Health and Wellness Fair. This project requires the highest of leadership talents by many of our members. It means organizing and collaborating with several other organizations to make the effort fulfilling. Yet, each time we do it the project

seems bigger and better than before. This year we thank Leslie Pendleton and her colleagues for exhibiting all these talents.

The same can be said about other efforts of our chapter. Another good example is our association and collaboration with

LLI, but now I am wondering about how well we accomplish some of the small--but equally important--efforts that we do not do as well as we could. The best example of this is how we treat new members to our organization.

We see several new members join us each year. Last year, the number of new members was more than 20. So, how well do we embrace new members and make them feel a part of AARP Blacksburg chapter?

When I talk with prospective new members, I almost always say to them at some point in our conversation, "There is a place for you in our chapter. I hope that you will join us." I mean that sincerely, but I wonder if we really do create a meaningful place for everyone who joins us. In this same

continued on p. 3

From the Memorial Service, February 18, by Sandy Birch, Chaplain

Remembrance of friends who died in 2019

A year ago, on January 9, I lost my dear friend Crista, the first friend I made over 43 years when we moved to Blacksburg. We often enjoyed a cup of tea together over those 4 decades...and I'm guessing that all of us have shared a cup of tea or a mug of coffee with many good friends and family over the years. We have served, been served, comforted, been comforted, shared dreams and witnessed each other going through this human life...while sharing a simple cup of tea or coffee.

So today, in our annual memorial service for fifteen beloved friends and family who departed this life in 2019, we'll share a cup or mug...remembering joyful times, lives well lived, and memories not to be forgotten.

We begin with our dear friend and past AARP board member, **Peter Magolda**, who passed away suddenly on January 2. He was a professor emeritus at Miami University of Ohio, who, during his retirement, devoted significant time to his many passions and interests: music, bird watching, politics, travel, and photography. How we miss his lovely and flattering pictures of our AARP family. Peter was 62.

Christa Hinkelmann passed away on January 9. She was born in Germany and moved to Blacksburg over 52 years ago when her new husband Klaus joined the Statistics faculty at Virginia Tech. Christa was an active volunteer in the local community, including many years with the Humane Society and the Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program Thrift Shops, and a lover of dogs, flowers, birds, gardening, and photography. She was 79.

James Clouse died peacefully on February 10. He served in World War II in the Army Air Forces, earned his degrees at Purdue University, and came to Virginia Tech to head the Agricultural Education department in 1973. He retired in 1987 and began his second career as a craftsman and woodworker. James was loving, caring, compassionate, always optimistic, and lived his life fully, a Boilermaker and Hokie until the end. He was 96.

Darlene Allen passed away on February 15. She received her degrees from Michigan State University and taught in the public schools in Michigan, Illinois and, for most of her career, Montgomery County, Virginia. Darlene was active in many organizations including the Friends of the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library, the Democratic Party, and the League of Women Voters. Darlene was 82.

Gerald Gallimore died on March 5 in Dallas, TX. Jerry was a 1958 graduate of Blacksburg High School; he earned a B.S.

degree from Virginia Tech and a MS degree from Virginia State University. He lived over 40 years in Southeast Virginia where he retired from the Virginia Tech Agricultural Extension Service in 1991. Jerry was a lifelong member of the Lutheran Church and active at St. Michael Lutheran Church when he and his wife, Fran, returned to Blacksburg. He was 79.

Cornelia Copenhaver died peacefully on March 6 at Showalter Center, Warm Hearth Village. "Neil" attended George Washington University. After losing her first husband Elwin Brawner, a US Army Air Corps pilot, in a plane crash in 1945, she married H. Barns Copenhaver in 1956. They lived in Blacksburg, Boones Mill, and Salem before returning to Blacksburg and were married for over 57 years. Cornelia was 97.

Charles (Jack) Dudley died peacefully at home on March 25, after a long illness. After earning a Ph.D. in Sociology, Jack served on the faculty of the University of Georgia and from 1974 to 1990, at Virginia Tech, where he was a member of the Academy of Teaching Excellence. In 1990, Jack became the Director of the Virginia Tech Honors Program and over the next 20 years, under his leadership, the program gained and maintained a national reputation.

Among the joys Jack acquired from his Honors students was watching them build snowmen in his likeness...called SnowJacks. Jack was 78.

Margaret Dawson passed away on April 9 at the Kroontje Health Care Center, Warm Hearth Village. Margaret retired in 1985 from the Virginia Tech Administration Accounting Department after 43 years of service. She was a member of the Blacksburg Presbyterian Church for over 60 years,

volunteered for 15 years at the Blacksburg donor blood center, and was a big fan of Virginia Tech football and basketball, attending home games faithfully.

Gerald Darby died on April 20. Gerald was a veteran of the United States Navy Hospital Corps and the United States Army Field Artillery during World War II and the Korean War, respectively. He retired from the Soil Conservation Service in 1986 as National Agronomist and had served in Texas, Nicaragua, Kenya, Zambia, Malawi, Iran and several years in Washington DC. Gerald was 93.

Martha Phyllis Slayton passed away on April 24. With a B.S. in Home Economics from Virginia Tech, Phyllis worked as a Home Economics Extension Agent for Isle of Wight County where she dated her future husband, A.R., who was the County's Extension Agent. After their marriage in 1956, Phyllis devoted her remaining working years as a wonderful



wife, dedicated homemaker and devoted mother/grandmother/great-grandmother. Phyllis was a lifetime member and served as an officer of the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. She was 85.

Anne Grover passed away peacefully in her sleep on July 8. After moving to Blacksburg in 1957, Anne and husband Norm, raised four children and were very active in many organizations and causes, including NAACP, Band Boosters, Habitat for Humanity, Master Chorale, Beans and Rice and many more. They often reached out to newcomers or those in need, immigrant and grieving families. Anne loved to travel and did so widely. She was 90.

Carl McDaniels passed away in Bridgewater, VA on October 6. Carl served in the United States Navy prior to obtaining his Ph.D in Counselor Education from the University of Virginia. In 1969, Carl and his family moved to Blacksburg to help create the College of Education at Virginia Tech where he taught and served for 30 years. He was an active member of the Blacksburg community, serving as president of this AARP Chapter and received the statewide Andrus Award. Carl was a 40-year member of the Rotary Club and also served as president. He was a leader in the Blacksburg United Methodist Church. He was 89.

Amy Elson died on October 31. In addition to being a wife, mother and homemaker, Amy taught early elementary school children for over 36 years, with the last 27 in Blacksburg. Amy was a dedicated member of the Roanoke Valley Presbyterian Church, serving as an elder, choir member and organist for 38 years. She was a founding member of the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery Volunteers and a member of the Blue Ridge Model A club, touring in her father's restored Model A that she drove when she was in high school. She was 83.

Ellery Seitz died on November 10. He spent many years in Blacksburg as a physical therapist and father to daughters Joanna and Julie. Ellery was an avid bicyclist and rode in the Mountains of Misery events and often would ride up a mountain on his lunch hour. He was a natural athlete and played football and wrestled for Penn State. Ellery was 75.

Aubrey "A.R." Slayton passed away on December 12. He moved to Minnesota in August to live with his daughter and son-in-law following the death of his beloved wife of 62 years, Phyllis. Starting as a County Extension Agent, then moving to Virginia Tech as a faculty member, A.R. served for more than 30 years as a Full Professor in the Cooperative Extension Division, providing overall leadership for development and delivery of all programs. Following retirement in 1983, he volunteered at Lewis Gale Montgomery Hospital for more than 20 years and was recognized as Volunteer of the Year in 2009. A.R. was 92.

In honor of our fifteen friends, we are encouraged to share a cup of tea or coffee, to have a conversation, to listen to each other's stories like these brief memories of our friends today. We are invited to share our joy, a touch of happiness and maybe some healing when we gather together. To quote Ms. Anonymous, "Life is like a tea cup to be filled to the brim and enjoyed with friends." And the people say....Amen

president's message, continued from p. 1

spirit of concern, for the last two years Jerry Niles made a special effort to welcome new members, and no doubt his efforts paid off. Still, we probably do not reach all new members in a way that helps them find their place in our organization.

When we have tried to think of good ways to welcome new members, we have tended to think in organizational terms. How can we organize to get this done? That approach yields some short-term benefits but almost always fizzles eventually.

So, now I wonder if there are less structural ways to reach out to new members. What if volunteers from our general membership took up this challenge on their own initiative and agreed to some simple acts of kindness toward new members? Are there members who would like to arrange for a chat, perhaps have coffee or tea with one or more new members, and generally become acquainted with them?

Volunteers should act on their own according to their interests and talents, outside the authority of the Board of Directors. Should this effort take root and bloom, we could invite the volunteers to "report" to the general membership at our monthly member meeting or we could do nothing more than encourage individual action to welcome new members.

How about it? Who among you is willing to take up this highly individualized effort and welcome new members in your own way?

Here are some ways you can make this work:

1. When a new member is introduced at a meeting, make again to talk about the chapter and ways to be involved. In this case, you can ask for contact information directly.
2. Coreen Mett maintains our membership records and captures the date of first payment of dues. If you wish to contact persons from this list, I can see that you have access to a list of new members within certain time brackets. Contact me at dgc2@vt.edu.
3. If you recruit new members, you can offer to answer any questions they may have after attending a meeting or two. Further, you can pass off the new member to someone you know in the chapter to do the follow up.

Here is what I will do to make this plan work:

1. I will draft a letter that will be available at every member meeting that will be given to all new members and visitors. It will specify opportunities for involvement.
2. I will commit to augment any request from a member who wishes to be involved in the plan to encourage new members. I will provide whatever information you need to enable your participation in this plan.

So, I leave this as an open question: Are you willing to be a part of an individualized effort to welcome new members? If so, DO IT in your own way. That's it, the whole strategy revealed.

Community Events Spring 2020

Iron Jawed Angels, film about the struggle for women's right to vote

March 14, 2:00 pm Lyric Theatre, Free

A movie inspired by a pivotal chapter in American history, *Iron Jawed Angels* will show at the Lyric with a champagne celebration to follow. The story features Alice Paul (Hilary Swank), an American feminist who risked her life to fight for women's citizenship and the right to vote. She founded the separatist National Woman's Party and wrote the first equal rights amendment to be presented before Congress. Together with social reformer Lucy Burns (Frances O'Connor), Paul struggled against conservative forces in order to pass the 19th amendment to the Constitution of the United States.



Rotary Club Blood Screening

March 18, 6:30 am–10:00 am \$40

Canceled

The spring blood screening has been canceled because of concerns for public health related to COVID19.

Vietnam War Veterans Day Event

March 27, 2:00 pm–4:00 pm

Belmont Christian Church, 1500 Peppers Ferry Road

Join Delegate Nick Rush, Christiansburg High School Corps of Cadets, and Christiansburg High School Choral Department to observe National War Veterans Day with a Vietnam Veterans Are Stars tribute. For more information, call 540-382-5775 or email rsvp@montgomerycountyva.gov

Veterans Resource Fair

March 28, 8:00 am–12:00 pm

Christiansburg Recreational Center

Blacksburg American Legion Post 182, Christiansburg Recreation Center, and the Veterans Outreach Center, Roanoke, will host a Veterans Fair. The event aims to help veterans receive assistance in filing benefit claims, to inform them of services available for which they qualify, and to provide an opportunity to connect with various veterans' groups in the New River Valley. <https://americanlegionpost3roanokeva.org/new-events-87/2020/3/28/veterans-fair>

The "Big Event": Virginia Tech April 4

Saturday, April 4

Submit a job request here:

<https://registration.vtbigevent.org/jobrequest>

Job request closes March 18



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 1,200 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 "One Big Day. One Big Thanks."

Homeowners might like help with painting, garden preparation, moving outdoor furniture, and the like.

Mission Jazz, benefitting the Community Health Center of the NRV and Blacksburg Battles Cancer

April 11, doors open 5:30 pm

Blacksburg Country Club \$50/person

Carving station, crab cake station, and more

5:45, Jared Gibbs, Piano

7:00, Jazz Ensemble, VT School of Performing Arts

Tickets: 540-5552-9165 or membership@blacksburgcc.com



Alexander Black House Exhibit: Women Make their Mark on Blacksburg

Ongoing exhibits, January–May www.blacksburgmuseum.org/

March: Women's History Month

May 2: Celebration of 100 years of Women's Suffrage: Theatre Departments at Virginia Tech and Radford will present vignettes to commemorate this milestone. 10 am–2 pm

Classic Movies March–May

Regal Cinema, Christiansburg (110 New River Road)

<https://www.fathomevents.com/events/>

King Kong March 15 1 pm, 4 pm

Braveheart March 22 3 pm; March 23 7 pm

Apollo 13

April 5 1 pm, 5 pm April 6, April 8 7 pm

Gladiator

April 13, April 15 7 pm April 19 1 pm

A League of Their Own

April 26 1 pm, 4 pm April 27, 29 7 pm

Airplane! May 17 1 pm; May 20 7 pm

The Shining May 31 1 pm, 5 pm; June 3 7 pm

Blacksburg Interfaith Food Pantry Needs an Advisory Board Member—can you volunteer?

The board meets monthly but will skip a meeting if there is no pressing business. Board members are also expected to assist with food drives such as setting up at the grocery store (most of our food drives are at the Kroger on University), helping to transport collected food to the Pantry, or helping to closed down the drive at the end of the day. One to two food drives per year.

For more information, contact Sandy Hagman: sandy.hagman@comcast.net or 540-951-0270

Rent-a-Rower

Members of the Virginia Tech crew team can be hired for a rate of \$10/hour to help with yardwork, moving, painting, or other tasks. If you need work done, consider hiring the men and women of the Virginia Tech Crew Team! 100% of funds raised go toward equipment and improving the team.

To submit a request, go to <https://tinyurl.com/rent-a-rower-request>

Drone Delivery Takes Flight in Christiansburg

Sandra Griffith

Virginia's New River Valley is currently home to the first—and only—drone delivery service available to the general public in the United States. Wing, a subsidiary of Alphabet, launched the service in Christiansburg as a Google X initiative, initially setting out to explore how self-flying vehicles could safely and quickly deliver everything from medicine to food.

Wing partners with merchants such as Walgreens, FedEx, and Sugar Magnolia to provide consumers with what they may need or want delivered to their doorstep in minutes.

The company has conducted more than 80,000+ flights across three continents. Drone delivery helps reduce road congestion and it will require significantly less energy than the same delivery by car. Finally, it will create new economic opportunities for local businesses.

Jacob Dimmitt, Communications and Marketing Associate with Wings Company and Christopher Stewart, UAS Pilot with Virginia Tech's ICTAS-MAAP Initiative, were speakers at the January 21 Blacksburg AARP chapter meeting.

The speakers discussed the evolution of their company and explained how drone delivery works. They suggested that older adults in particular could benefit from drone delivery. Adults without easy access to transportation or where mobility is a challenge. Using the Wing app, they would be able to order necessary items, including food, medicine, and household items. The convenience of receiving delivery at their homes would be worthwhile for them.



Chris and Jacob at the January 21 AARP meeting

Photo: Connie Skaggs



Members gather for the January 21 meeting

Meet New Board Member Linda Correll

I am (mostly) retired from a career in scientific research and management at Virginia Tech and now work with a passion for the arts.

In 10th grade, I was going to be an art history teacher, then an architect. My love for horses and 4-H experiences led me to a degree in Animal Science with the goal of being an extension agent. The opening of the VT College of Veterinary Medicine in 1980 led me to a career in toxicology research for 22 years.

In 2003 the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute needed a Lab Manager. There, I worked with the senior administration to develop a comprehensive research facility. Ultimately, I became the Research Operations Manager along with Compliance Management. After retirement, I was recruited for a part-time position in the Good Laboratory Practices Program at the College of Veterinary Medicine as a Quality Assurance Officer and currently maintain that position.

In the past 10 years, I have had more time to focus on my art and have developed interests in photography and sculpture. My creations for the VT Simply Elemental Outdoor Sculpture show have titles such



Lions, Tigers and Dragons, Oh My!

as “Dancing in the 60’s” and “Bumblegourd.” As a member of the Backyard Stone Carvers, I coordinate their annual workshops and enjoy the challenge of carving stone. I work with the Virginia Tech Hahn gardens to coordinate their Art in the Garden programs. I enjoy Lifelong Learning classes and trying to master watercolor painting.

I have successfully shown in juried art shows in southwest Virginia and North Carolina and enjoy creating new art.

My artistic endeavors fulfill the need I have to create. I recognize that this is a driving component in most everything I do. My interest in photography has evolved into a passion to produce that one-of-a-kind capture. I enjoy seeking the abstract component in common subjects. My challenge is searching for the shot that captures a seemingly unimportant object and showing it in an abstract manner. I find it exciting to take what nature has created and to bring attention to some novel aspect that has not been considered. The details of a final creation or in nature that fleeting moment may be lost and only being present in that moment of time produces that artistic opportunity.

I live in Giles County with my husband. We share interests in horses, dogs, and cats, and we work together to harvest hay and take care of the animals. He supports me in my crazy art endeavors and typically has a hand in helping me with the sculptures or providing a critique of my art when asked. We actually met on Valentine’s Day and as they say, “the rest is history.” Our church home is Riverview Baptist Church in Ripplemead. We both love the quiet peaceful mountain valley where we live and play. We have two adult children and one grand dog!

Citizens Climate Lobby Offers a Bipartisan Climate Solution *submitted by Jennie Reilly*

Citizens Climate Lobby is a bipartisan volunteer organization with 568 chapters throughout the U.S. and the world, including 13 chapters in Virginia. Its mission is to empower citizens of all ages and all walks of life, including Republicans, Democrats, and Independents, to engage with their elected officials about climate issues. We are working on our plans for creating local support for H.R. 763, the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act, a bill that currently has 77 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives.

- Here’s an overview of the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act. It goes into status of the bill, high level description and benefits. There are text, video, and podcast options so you can choose what suits you best: <https://community.citizensclimate.org/resources/item/19/374>
- Our Core Values: <https://citizensclimatelobby.org/about-ccl/values/>

- 5 Levers: <https://citizensclimatelobby.org/about-ccl/levers-of-political-will/>

If you want to go beyond that, we have a set of Core Volunteer Training that outlines some of the more basic topics: <https://community.citizensclimate.org/topics/core-volunteer-training>

Here’s a link to our Google Calendar with all of our monthly meetings and events: https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=jvclsbt3lpp185vvmiqd8k6g0%40group.calendar.google.com&ctz=America%2FNew_York

Wouldn’t you love to be part of a nonpartisan organization that takes action on climate change? Please join us at our **next meeting**, Monday, March 16, 6:00-7:30 pm, Blacksburg Public Library, 200 Miller Street. Find out what we are doing and how you can participate.

Conversations about death and dying

Lately I have been thinking a great deal about death. Before I get to the real point of this article on a difficult subject, I want share my purpose. In other words, this is the reason for my thinking (vs. obsession) about death. In the past 10 months, I have mourned several deaths: my former husband (we were divorced) and father of my two adult children; a dear friend (I was present in the hospital when she passed); and my PhD advisor (fortunately I had visited him at his assisted living facility before he passed). Death is all around each of us, and, like taxes, it is an inevitable reality. Even though we may not speak about it, I imagine you think about it too.



So much about death is inexplicable, and the uncertainty can lead to a great deal of anxiety, especially as we age. In her work with terminally ill patients in the mid-20th century, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, a Swiss-American psychiatrist and pioneer of near-death studies, conducted interviews with terminally ill patients. In her 1969 renowned book titled *On Death and Dying: What the Dying Have to Teach Doctors, Nurses, Clergy, and Their Own Families*, Kübler-Ross described five stages in the process of dying—denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. She later applied the same five stages to the process of grieving.

In a 2018 *New York Review of Books* review of Kübler-Ross's book, the journalist Jessica Weisberg referred to Kübler-Ross as "death's best friend." The terminally ill patients Kübler-Ross interviewed talked about "the irksome parts of illness, the fear of endless blackness." Further, they expressed a desire "to be treated as individuals with complicated and layered feelings rather than as patients with a fixed set of medical needs." Even recently, when their father was dying, my son, daughter, their partners, and stepmother witnessed first-hand the frustrating lack of compassion, care, and empathy of some of his healthcare providers, including his primary oncologist.

Concerned about "the lack of compassion, empathy, and understanding" in the medical community, Dr. Kübler-Ross testified at a 1972 hearing on "Death and Dignity" before the Senate's Special Committee on Aging. She advocated for medical school training in caring for the dying and outpatient programs that allowed the terminally ill to spend their last days at home with loved ones. Two years later the first hospice program in Connecticut was founded.

According to historian Peter Stearns, by the mid-20th century, Americans were being encouraged by the medical community and some etiquette writers to "approach death and loss with stoicism, keeping their feelings to themselves and seeking out distractions." However, in the most recent

decade, some non-profit projects have been formed to break the taboo around conversations about death and dying.

Beginning in 2011 in the United Kingdom, Jon Underwood (now deceased) and his mother, Sue Barsky Reid, established "Death Cafés" (www.deathcafe.com) where group directed conversations about death and dying occur over tea and cake. In 2013, in the United States, Michael Hebb established the "Death Over Dinner" (www.deathoverdinner.org) project where people gather over dinner to talk about death and dying. As Hebb said, "How we want to die represents the most important and costly conversation America isn't having." Just like the conversations with networks of other people, two recently published books, *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End* (2014) by Atul Gawande and *A Beginner's Guide to the End* (2019) by B.J. Miller and Shoshana Berger, have also changed the conversation about aging and death.

It is completely understandable if you perceive conversations with others about death and dying around tea and cake or dinner to be morbid, but those conversations can be humane and cathartic and help us better articulate what we want. Talking about what we want, both in life and as we approach end of life, helps us to lean into any fears we may have, get rid of inhibitions, and build deeper connections with friends, family, loved ones, and even healthcare providers.



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: If the public schools are closed, AARP will not meet.

Chapter Officers 2020

President • Don Creamer, dgc2@vt.edu
Vice President • Leslie Pendleton, lkpendleton@gmail.com
Secretary • Pat Hyer, hyerp@vt.edu
Treasurer • Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu
Assistant Treasurer • Ruth Anne Niles, rniles2@icloud.com

Board of Directors

2020: Isabel Berney, Jeananne Dixon Bame, Hugh VanLandingham

2021: Doug Feuerbach, Judith Jones, Lisa Moose, Leslie Pendleton


2022: Linda Correll, Chuck Burress, Kai Duncan
Newsletter editors: Carolyn Rude, Sandra Griffith

AARP Website www.blacksburgaarp.org



Blacksburg Chapter #2613
 Don Creamer, President
 P.O. Box 10082
 Blacksburg, VA 24062

**Nonprofit
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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.

Please make your check payable to "Blacksburg AARP Chapter #2613."
 Mail the check and this form to: .

AARP Blacksburg Chapter • P.O. Box 10082 • Blacksburg, VA 24062



AARP Chapters are separately incorporated affiliates of AARP



newsletter

May-June 2020

President's Message

Don Creamer



The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted our lives. And the disruption may last for a very long time.

So, how do we deal with it? This is both a very personal

question and a compelling issue for our AARP Blacksburg chapter.

Think of the ways that our chapter has benefitted our lives. Each of us likely can make a sizable list of these benefits, but we would likely agree that the chapter has provided social connections for members. We come together, tell stories, learn, laugh, sympathize. These are routine outcomes for most group gatherings and vital to successful aging. Someday we may be able to restore social connections through gatherings, but for now we practice social distancing and masking.

New ways of operating

The meaning of this for a while is that your chapter must find new ways of operating to ensure the ongoing vitality of our group and to cope sensibly with the pandemic threat. Be safe is the mantra of the day and it compels us follow the medical guidelines to protect ourselves and our loved ones.

It is logical to assume that we may need new ways of providing leadership during this unsettling period in our lives. Your Board of Directors is actively rethinking our practices while it meets virtually using the video conferencing tool Zoom. The April Board meeting was conducted in this manner and it is likely that we will continue this practice at least for the next two months.

Everything's Changed!

Is there a lesson in the use of video conferencing for other chapter practices? Your leaders will consider all possibilities as we move forward. But this relatively new practice exposes other issues in our normal ways of doing business. Are we all fully capable of engaging one another in the virtual world? Are our computers up to date? Are our skills up to date?

Setting up a Zoom account

Zoom (or other video conferencing options) may offer opportunities for staying in touch with others. Anyone can set up a free account with Zoom. You need a computer (or a tablet or a smart phone). From your browser, you would go to <https://zoom.us> and follow the instructions. If you have trouble setting up an account or using the software, a Board member can help you. Zoom has been criticized for its poor security, but they are prioritizing enhancing security, and improvements already are evident. Don't be afraid to use it. Virginia Tech and other universities, as well as public schools, are using it to deliver online classes. Many families are using Zoom to stay in touch as it offers easier ways to connect with multiple participants than the more familiar FaceTime and Skype.

Virginia Tech retirees may set up free accounts using the university license. These accounts enable meetings that are longer than the 40-minute limit of free accounts. Go here to start: <https://virginiatech.zoom.us>. You will need your PID and password.

Monthly meetings

While we hope that we can resume public meetings by fall, they are cancelled through June. If it still is unsafe to resume these meetings by September, we will use the video conferencing software Zoom

Upcoming Events

- Food Drive: ongoing (p. 4)
- June 24: Give Local NRV (p. 6)

Postponed

- June 16: AARP picnic; look for forthcoming details on an August 4 event
- Sept. 16, Health and Wellness Fair

Upcoming Chapter Programs

(Third Tuesday, 11:30 am)

- Sept. 15: Dean Spader, Project Drawdown: 80 Viable Solutions to Climate Change (tentative)
- Oct. 20: Lesa Wynn, Downsizing and Decluttering: What to do with our stuff
- Nov. 17: Dr. Alec Smith, Brain Stimulation Research—neuroeconomics and decision-making that touches on implications for seniors

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for our meetings. We can deliver programs live via Zoom, allowing members to ask questions of the presenters; we can also record our programs and make them available as a video on our website. Stay tuned while we carefully consider these options.

The website and email notices

Is there more that we can do with our existing website? I maintain this site and strive to keep it up to date. It

continued p. 3

Genetic Testing: Should You Participate?

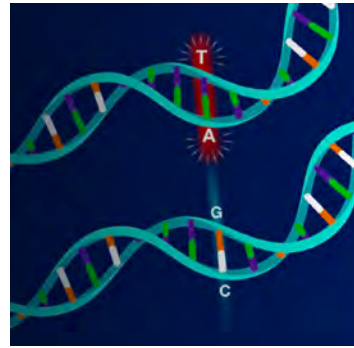
by Doris Zallen

The 21st century has ushered in a new era in modern medicine: genomic medicine. With powerful new tools of analysis, genomic medicine makes available all kinds of genetic tests that can peer directly into our genetic material, our DNA, and reveal detailed information about the genes that we possess. Advantages abound. But there may also be serious disadvantages.

Genetic tests can certainly aid in health care. In children, many disorders can be identified early and treatments started promptly to minimize harm. In adults, genetic tests can recognize small variations that affect our health right now or raise our risk for future illnesses such as cancer, heart disease, and Alzheimer's disease. Unraveling the information contained in our DNA allows doctors to prescribe treatments that are tailored to our individual body chemistry. Test information permits early diagnosis of disorders when treatments can be more successful, and even opens the door to taking steps that can prevent disorders from arising. Genomic medicine makes it possible to alert others in the family—those with whom we share our genes—of their health risks.

However, genomic medicine also brings potential problems. Obtaining test information can be extremely troubling if it indicates a higher risk for a future illness for which there are no treatments or means of prevention available. Genetic knowledge can leave people under a dark cloud of anxiety and fear about the future. Even the act of sharing one's genetic makeup with family members can prove to be difficult and has, in some cases, caused crushing guilt, heightened tensions among family members, and marginalized those found to have the worrisome genetic signatures.

Looming over the practice of genomic medicine is the possibility that insurance companies, employers, or government agencies could use one's private genetic information to deny services or opportunities. The cruel policies of the eugenics movement during the 20th century in the US is frightening evidence that genetic information can be misused. Anecdotal reports of present-day misuses continue



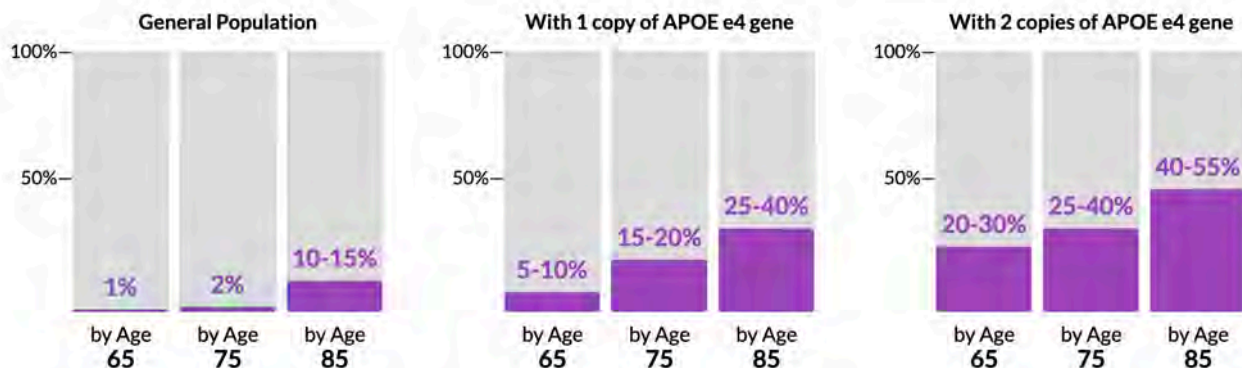
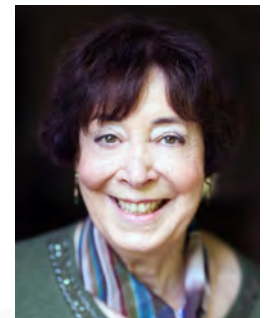
A variation in our genetic code can change how a gene functions and have an effect on our health. Here, a T-A rung in the DNA ladder has been replaced by a G-C rung. Genetic tests reveal such variations.

(from: www.genome.gov)

to fuel those concerns. Though there is now a federal law (the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act or GINA) to protect people from health-insurance and employment discrimination, GINA does *not* cover life, disability, or long-term care insurance.

So, be careful as you consider genetic testing. Before providing that blood or saliva sample, think about what tests and what kinds of information would be useful to you or your family—and what would not. It's popular now to seek genetic testing outside of the medical community through widely advertised, online testing companies that offer all types of tests directly to consumers. Recent reports of serious inaccuracies in the test results provided by these companies raise questions about the quality of the information provided. If you do decide to proceed with testing, it is best to do so with the assistance of savvy physicians or genetic professionals such as genetic counselors. They will make sure the testing is done through approved laboratories. They will be able to help you decipher the meaning of the results. And, if needed, they can identify the next steps you might take to promote your health and well-being.

Doris T. Zallen is professor of science and technology studies emerita at Virginia Tech and the author of *To Test or Not to Test: A Guide to Genetic Screening and Risk* (Rutgers University Press).



The APOE gene has three forms. One of them, the e4 variation, is associated with a higher risk for developing Alzheimer's disease. The likelihood of developing Alzheimer's is shown in purple (dark shading). The likelihood of not developing it is shown in grey. (from: genetestornot.org—an online genetic-testing decision aid developed by Zallen et al.)

President's message, continued

could be modified for other purposes, however, if members would use new functions.

You will be receiving even more frequent notices from your chapter leaders in your email using MailChimp. The effectiveness of email communication depends upon its users. Please regularly check your email. If you are not receiving messages via Mailchimp from your chapter, contact me at dgc2@vt.edu and ask to be included.

The virtual world: Books, movies, lectures, webinars

The virtual world is open to all of us. You can borrow books from the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library without ever entering the building. All of their virtual services can be reviewed at <https://www.mfrl.org/online.php?cat=dl>. You can read books and magazines using RBDigital, use OverDrive to listen to audiobooks, or download books, movies, music, TV shows, comics, and children's audiobooks using hoopla.

You can use Zoom to access virtual lectures and webinars of interest to seniors. For example, the travel organization Road Scholar is offering live virtual lectures. Recent titles include "A Snapshot of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem" and "Winston Churchill." Go to <https://www.roadscholar.org/> and click on the "virtual lectures" menu button to see what is scheduled and what is in the library.

Maintaining connections

Throughout this crazy time of social distancing, our chapter must maintain our strong relationships with other organizations. This is especially true of the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech (LLI). Classes in the fall will be offered by Zoom (see the article on this page). You may find some advantages to taking classes online--no driving or parking hassles, a "front row" seat for slides and videos, ability to adjust sound levels.

We know that social connections are essential to successful aging. Perhaps we could consider redefining "social" connections. Connections normally means benefitting from the physical presence of others. We can see them, hear them, and feel their essence. However, we can be "present" for others by other means. Phone calls, letters, text messages, email correspondence are examples of alternative forms of presence. They might even be made substantive by agreeing to accomplish certain tasks together and then discussing them. Read the same book and then gather to discuss it. Share ideas for activity such as taking a hike alone while looking for a specific flower agreed upon. Schedule a virtual cocktail party and share stories.

This time of crisis requires changes in behavior of all of us. Embracing these changes enthusiastically will serve you well even after we return to "normal." You can be confident that the officers and Board members take our responsibilities to the AARP mission and to you very seriously and will do all we can to offer you outstanding programming and opportunities for socialization.

Lifelong Learning Goes Online for Fall 2020

by Pat Hyer, LLI Program Chair

In-person classes, lectures, and events are one of the things we love the most about the LLI experience. It is not just the members who enjoy these interactions – the volunteer instructors look forward to engaging with LLI students as well. But the news suggests that our collective vulnerability makes in-person gatherings a risk for all of us. Rather than cancel LLI during these uncertain times, we will move our learning experiences to an online (Zoom) environment for Fall 2020.

We are lucky to have several months to make the transition work as smoothly as possible for instructors and members. Here are a few steps we are taking:

- Based on conversations with our fall instructors, we expect that we will have about 20 courses and 10 or so free virtual lectures/events, including the Sampler class, TED Talks, literature classes, art (new and continuing), and several favorite instructors doing their usual magic, but this time online. Full details will be available mid-August. Classes start the week of September 21.
- More than a dozen LLI volunteers have agreed to learn more about Zoom and to assist instructors and members.
- Zoom class assistants and instructors will work during the summer to get up to speed and redesign classes for online presentation. Zoom allows discussions and interactions among the students and with the instructor. We have already learned that these experiences are different from in-person classes but still very rewarding.
- We are offering two sections of a 4-week pilot class right now. We have observers in both sections and will collect participant feedback to inform our training for members and instructors.
- We expect to provide support to members who may need assistance in adjusting to online learning. We will provide instructions and an optional practice session before the course begins. This support will be ongoing throughout the fall term. Feel free to contact Heidi Dickens (LLI program support specialist) 540-231-4364, heidil@vt.edu with your questions or concerns.

We hope this alternative format will engage LLI members during a time when we cannot gather safely. Just think, you can attend class in your pajama bottoms or sweats! (But you might want to comb your hair first before you get online.)



Mobility Coordination Helps the New River Valley with Transportation Options

by Chris Blankenship

The New River Valley Agency on Aging offers a Mobility Coordination Program to assist residents of the New River Valley (NRV) with transportation and information. The Mobility Coordination Program promotes and leverages community resources to help stay connected within the community.

The program serves adults with disabilities, older adults, auto-less homes and economically challenged individuals without transportation coverage or options. For individuals who meet program guidelines, transportation to non-emergency medical treatments is secured and the cost covered if needed. The program also provides transportation to food resources within more rural communities.

The Mobility Coordinator advocates, encourages, and trains individuals of all ages and income levels on how to access and utilize existing public and private transportation services. Individuals are helped to understand how to travel within the New River Valley using the Public Transit Systems in Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Radford, and Pulaski and the Smart Way Bus. Some residents may not realize that there are intersecting stops at certain times of day and on certain days of the week making it possible to travel within the NRV using the different NRV Public Transit systems.

The Smart Way Bus, a commuter bus, transports riders from the NRV to the Roanoke Valley several times a day, and the Virginia Breeze can take riders from the NRV to the

Dulles Airport in Washington, DC. Occasionally, Mobility Coordination assists economically challenged families with providing wheelchair transportation to special family events (funeral, death bed visitation, wedding, family event) that is impactful in the client's social isolation.



The Mobility Coordination Program and the Med-Ride Program, another program of NRV Agency on Aging, provides a volunteer driver opportunity to assist clients of the New River Valley Agency on Aging in maintaining their medical appointments. Recently our volunteers have been instrumental in providing transportation for clients to and from their cancer treatments and recurring medical appointments.

Volunteers are asked and scheduled in advance on the days and times they are available. Sometimes, volunteers split a day; one will provide a way to the treatment and another volunteer will pick up the client and take them home. This helps the volunteer, who may have other activities within their day to still provide help to someone in need.

If you are interested in learning more about how the Mobility Coordination program can assist you or if you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact the Mobility Coordination Program at 540-994-2632 or 540-980-7720.

Food Drive in Pandemic Times

by Sally Anna Stapleton, Chapter Caring Committee

One of the greatest problems in today's chaotic time is supplying food to the people who need it. Food insecurity has reached a whole new level. The food pantries are looking to the public for help. They need financial contributions to help stock pantries so they can continue to supply food to the people in need. Any contribution you can make can help, no matter how little or large. Send your contributions to any food pantry you like. Please help! We are all in this together. Thank you for helping.

Interfaith Food Pantry

706 Harding Ave
Blacksburg, VA 24060
Attn: Vern Simpson

MCEAP Food Pantry

New River Community Action
110 Roanoke St
Christiansburg, VA 24073

United Way NRV Food Pantry

111 W Main Street
Christiansburg, VA 24073

Agency On Aging

Staples For Seniors
Fido's Pantry (pets)
Attn: Shannon Hammons
6226 University Park Dr #3100
Fairlawn, VA 24141

Feeding America

Salem Distribution Ctr
1025 Electric Rd
Salem, VA 24153

Vittles for Vets

7757 Walker Farms Drive
Radford, VA 24141



Participants in the Aging in Place Workshop conducted by Leslie Pendleton and Jerry Niles, with help from other AARP volunteers for LLI/AARP and members of the VT Retirees group, Feb 28 and Mar 6.

Veteran Connection

by Leslie Pendleton, Chapter Vice President

At one of our monthly meetings, members of the Board voted to reach out, connect with, and care for Veterans in the NRV beyond the efforts of Board members Ben Crawford and Judith Jones, who both volunteer with the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery in nearby Dublin. Exactly how to do that was unclear at the time. Fast forward a bit, and the annual Chapter Awareness Grant program provided an opportunity to articulate and structure an outreach project aligned with Chapter President Don Creamer's Proposed 2020 Goals.

With the input of both Don and Jerry Niles, I submitted a grant proposal in late March for a Veterans-focused, multi-event project to be held in fall 2020 and to coincide with our biennial AARP Health and Wellness Fair in September, the Veterans Resource Fair rescheduled from March 28 to November 7, and the Veterans Day holiday on November 11. The proposal has several emphases:

- Social connection and support for Veterans 50+ through our Chapter
- Partnerships with Veterans-affiliated organizations in the NRV
- A model for reaching out to other underrepresented senior populations

Then COVID-19 and Governor Northam's stay-at-home order happened! Our health fair was postponed to September 2021, and the status of events scheduled for the fall remains unclear.

On the bright side, on April 28, a group of us benefitted immensely from a Zoom chat with Genea Luck, AARP Virginia Associate State Director, and Dr. Jim Dubinsky, Co-Director of Veterans in Society at Virginia Tech. First, in light of the uncertainties associated with COVID-19, we were reminded that we need to rethink all in-person Chapter events. AARP state and national are now pivoting all in-person events to virtual events. Second, we were encouraged to rethink the proposal using technological innovation and creativity. Among the many ideas discussed were Chapter meeting presentations via Zoom; photographs that mirror Veterans in their uniforms with their current senior photos; human interest stories; video montages; virtual screenings of movies; virtual concerts; community dialogue/conversation; and unique community outreach programs, for example, letter-writing to Veterans in nursing homes. Third, we learned about additional financial opportunities at the state and national levels. Finally, we learned that we have more work to do!

Whether you are a Veteran or not, we welcome your ideas and suggestions for Veteran-focused events as well as topics for virtual presentations during these challenging times. Contact me by phone at (540) 230-8139 or by email at lkpendleton@gmail.com with your input.

Potential Impacts of the Coronavirus on the November 2020 Elections

by Doug Feuerbach, Chair, Chapter Legislative Committee

At this point it is still too early to make accurate predictions as to how the coronavirus (CV) crisis will affect the 2020 elections. There is general consensus, however, that the health care crisis and ensuing economic crisis will be a major factor in the outcome of the elections – perhaps the only factor. This is a brief summary of the impacts of the CV, focusing on the general issues we see today and does not get into any detail in identifying how those issues may direct the elections one way or another. There are three main categories of impact: voting, the track the virus takes, and economics.

1. **Voting:** 34 states including Virginia have legislative, election, and/or executive actions under way to address the way the CV outbreak will affect the elections. They cover bills relating to delaying elections, absentee and voting by mail, and public health. In Virginia, the state Department of Elections has clarified that concerns over the CV will allow individuals to vote by absentee ballot. An executive action allows delays in state primaries and postponement of other state elections. The federal stimulus package includes funding to increase voting by mail. How this all plays out will be state by state specific, but it is likely to impact the electoral map depending on demographics and the political landscape within each state. There are also policy options such as those available through management declarations through emergency legislation. It might be possible to delay the general election, but the dates for the new Congress and Presidential inauguration are Constitutional mandates that can't be changed through normal legislative processes.
2. **The course of the CV between now and November:** The health of America state by state come November will be a huge influence on the election outcome, and where we are at that time is dependent on what we do to stop the CV from continuing to wreak havoc on public health and the country's well being. And importantly, who gets the credit or blame, or who is perceived to get the credit or blame. If the CV impacts continue with little or no change or worsen, it will favor the Democratic challengers to the incumbent Republicans. If on the other hand the rate of infections is decreasing and the economy opens back up, it will favor the incumbent party.
3. **Economy:** On perhaps equal footing with the health crisis is the economic crisis. The economic impact of the CV on the nation is certainly severe. Many are currently putting the economy in front of health issues. The job loss figures, and the financial health of the nation and of individuals will greatly affect how people vote.

The Coronavirus crisis is making the 2020 elections very unpredictable. Look for a total focus between now and November to be on the health of Americans and on the economic turnaround.

Community Foundation Sponsors

Give Local NRV June 24

The Community Foundation of the New River Valley sponsors a day of giving to benefit nonprofits in the New River Valley. This year's event takes place June 24, for 24 hours from midnight to midnight. Donations made June 1 or later count to the day's total.

Donors may go to the website at givelocalnr.org and select from more than 100 organizations that are registered with Give Local NRV. The Community Foundation offers prizes and grants for such achievements as most money raised and most new donors, thus increasing the amounts that organizations may raise.

Nonprofits have substantial needs this year because so many more people need services and because the usual donors may themselves be limited in the current economy.

Please give generously on June 24.



Habitat for Humanity Seeks Volunteers, Has Houses Available

For information, please contact Shelley at 540.381.1144 or email info@habitatnr.org.

The Miracle

Fenton Johnson

Though I was dwelling in a prison house,
My soul was wandering by the carefree stream
Through fields of green with gold eyed daisies strewn,
And daffodils and sunflower cavaliers.
And near me played a little browneyed child,
A winsome creature God alone conceived,
“Oh, little friend,” I begged. “Give me a flower
That I might bear it to my lonely cell.”
He plucked a dandelion, an ugly bloom,
But tenderly he placed it in my hand,
And in his eyes I saw the sign of love.
‘Twas then the dandelion became a rose.

This poem is in the public domain. It originally appeared in *Songs of the Soil* (Trachtenberg Co., 1916).

Fenton Johnson was born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1888. He was a forerunner of the Harlem Renaissance writers and self-published three poetry collections: *A Little Dreaming*, 1913; *Visions of the Dusk*, 1915; and *Songs of the Soil*, 1916. He died in 1958.

Caring and Wellness Corner *Leslie Pendleton*

Care in the Face of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

Think back to the world events we've experienced in our lifetimes. The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, likely the most disruptive, has resulted in significant loss of life and a global shutdown with profound financial, political, and cultural impact. Never has large-scale and grass roots caregiving been so critical to our holistic well-being.



As seniors, we may have personally experienced serious illnesses; we've certainly experienced the deaths of loved ones, but we haven't experienced anything like this Coronavirus pandemic. As of May 6, US statistics show 1,171,510 cases and 68,279 deaths (cdc.gov). Healthcare professionals and first responders continue to put their own health at risk to care for those who are ill and dying.

Beyond the work of our healthcare professionals, others—teachers, ministers, therapists, financial planners, grocery store and retail workers, cooks, delivery drivers, school bus drivers, pilots, to name a few—work hard every day to care for us behind the scenes, meeting our essential and spiritual needs, dealing with our financial and mental health crises, and helping us meet our educational and learning goals. Thankfully, through the generosity of philanthropists, the creativity of technology innovators, and the scientific knowledge of medical researchers, acts of caring work toward long-term solutions to the pandemic.

When I taught Engineering Professionalism at Virginia Tech, I often played Futurist Bill Joy's Ted Talk Video “What I'm Worried About, What I'm Excited About” for my classes. Joy talked about his concern of a future pandemic. I'm embarrassed to admit that I knew very little about the history of pandemics, but I've recently taken the time to research them. The statistics are staggering! Yet, despite the medical and other technologies that exist today, we are still in a very vulnerable position. And we aren't used to having our freedoms curbed by stay-at-home orders that require social and physical distancing. We are in limbo! There's much uncertainty of our freedom, safety, and security in the near future. Mass unemployment and financial losses have been crippling. In a recent conversation with my son, CEO of Olio Financial Planning, I said, “I wish there was more I could do. Do you ever think about that?” He responded, “Mom, I think we are doing a lot. We're helping people manage their money. People are freaking out.” Open mouth insert foot!

Like many of you, I started the stay-at-home order by watching the news and keeping an eye on social media. A constant flow of negative information can soon increase symptoms of anxiety and even depression. I soon learned

continued p. 7

to avoid information overload, relying upon sources like the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Perhaps more than ever before, I soon felt gratitude for living in a green and mountainous rural area that has been mostly protected from the Coronavirus, at least up to this point. That's not to say that some of us haven't been or won't be greatly affected in some way. Given the extent of this public health crisis, most of us will know of someone who has been hospitalized in critical condition or passed away, maybe even someone close to us. We will no doubt know someone who has lost a job and/or a business and suffered financial losses. We'll experience or encounter family and friends with increased anxiety and depression. Some of us will be unable to bury our deceased family and friends in a way that brings closure. Self-care and connection are two ways of caring for our own well-being.

The Importance of Self-Care. The National Alliance on Mental Illness reported new challenges associated with the Coronavirus: Uncertainty, fear, high anxiety, high stress, disruption, and uncharted waters. While a recent headline in *USA Today* stated, "You don't have to optimize your coronavirus quarantine," a regular routine that fosters work, productivity, good nutrition, and exercise remains important. The basics of health and wellness are practices we can easily continue. I've taken the time to prepare daily healthy meals, even if I do need to put a halt to those Breyer's Mint Chocolate Chip ice cream cones! While I personally haven't exercised using Beachbody videos, I have enjoyed cycling on my stationary recumbent bicycle, chair yoga on Instagram, and at least 30-minute daily walks. Of course, getting outside has the additional benefit of exposure to sunlight, at least on the days we haven't had April showers. It certainly helps reduce cabin fever.

Enjoyable leisure time and productive activities are both important. Decluttering, cleaning, organizing, completing long-delayed projects, taking walks, cooking, reading, working puzzles, playing board games, and gardening are a few suggestions. I've enjoyed peaceful car rides through Ellett Valley, Catawba, and Newport. The white, purple, yellow, and lime green colors of springtime make for such a beautiful time of the year! And we've all heard about the short- and long-term health benefits of laughter for stress reduction. For a good laugh, watch "The Wonky Donkey Grandma" and the "Cockatoo Loves Elvis" videos on YouTube. Anybody up for a Laughter Yoga session? Watch "Laughter Yoga Liliana DeLeo," also on YouTube.

The Importance of Connection. Every single one of us has had our lives upended to some degree or another. We can all relate. And we all have people and events we miss. Extroverts living alone, people stuck 24/7 with partners and spouses in the same space, and parents with children may be struggling to some degree. While many seniors are used to staying home or living in an assisted living facility or nursing home, they are not used to being disconnected from family. Connection is more vital to our health and

happiness than we might care to admit. After her own bout with Coronavirus, CNN Anchor Brooke Baldwin wrote, "How fighting Coronavirus taught me about the gift of connection."

Pre-Coronavirus, many of us were already starved of real social contact and meaningful relationships. Remember the people you've missed seeing or wish you could catch up with, but haven't because of real- or perceived-time constraints? The virus is the best excuse ever to reconnect, build, and even repair relationships. Who can you call to check in with by asking "How are you today?" Have you heard of the #onecalladay campaign on Instagram? Is there one person you can call and talk to each day? Ask yourself: Who's in your "Corona Crew"? But seek support wisely; in other words, avoid seeking support from those we are as anxious or even more anxious than you.

Whether in huge or small ways, we are all doing something to care for ourselves and others during this pandemic. We've had to surrender to the idea of slowing down by giving up some of our freedom to come and go as we please to protect ourselves and others. The spiritualist Eckhart Tolle perhaps said it best, "The peace that comes with surrendered action turns to a sense of aliveness when you actually enjoy what you are doing." There is currently no expectation on when this will end or when our lives will revert back to some sense of normalcy. Because there's so much uncertainty (perhaps even over the next year), it's impossible to set meaningful goals, make vacation plans, etc. The only thing we can reasonably think about is what is important moment-to-moment, today, tomorrow, or this week. And we must have hope. To care well for ourselves and others, do we really have any other alternative?



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 2020

President • Don Creamer, dgc2@vt.edu

Vice President • Leslie Pendleton, lkpendleton@gmail.com

Secretary • Pat Hyer, hyerp@vt.edu

Treasurer • Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu

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

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2020: Isabel Berney, Jeananne Dixon Bame, Hugh VanLandingham

2021: Doug Feuerbach, Judith Jones, Lisa Moose, Leslie Pendleton

2022: Linda Correll, Chuck Burress, Kai Duncan


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Blacksburg Chapter  Member Application for 2020

Name: _____

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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: .

AARP Blacksburg Chapter • P.O. Box 10082 • Blacksburg, VA 24062



AARP Chapters are separately incorporated affiliates of AARP

Blacksburg Chapter AARP #2613

Serving the Greater New River Valley, VA

www.blacksburgaarp.org



newsletter

September-October 2020

Look for a Zoom link sent through email a day before the meeting. The meeting will open at 11:45 for greetings and conversation. The program will begin at noon.

Sept. 15 Chapter Meeting

Project Drawdown: 80 Viable Solutions to Climate Change

Dean Spader and Pete Greider

Dean Spader will present a summary of the Drawdown Project in which an international coalition of researchers, professionals, and scientists offer 80 realistic and bold solutions to climate change. If deployed collectively on a global scale over the next thirty years, they represent a credible path forward, not just to slow the earth's warming but to reach drawdown, that point in time when greenhouse gases in the atmosphere peak and begin to decline.

Pete Greider, a volunteer with the New River Valley chapter of Citizens' Climate Lobby, will introduce the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (H.R. 763), a bipartisan bill currently in the House of Representatives that has 80 co-sponsors. HR 763 will put a steadily rising tax on carbon emissions and return all of the funds to the people in equal shares. Mr. Greider will explain how the bill will create strong incentives for the development and adoption of the 80 solutions in the Drawdown Project.

Dean suggests some preparation to help you get the most from this presentation:

- A TED Talk by Chad Frischmann, "100 Solutions to Reverse Global Warming."
- The book by Paul Hawken (ed.), *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming* (2017).

Dean offers to facilitate a book discussion for community organizations.

Oct. 20 Chapter Meeting

Downsizing & Decluttering: What Will We Do With Our Stuff?

Lesa Wynn

"I love my stuff"—Comedian George Carlin did a hilarious routine about "people and their stuff." It was not only funny but profound. People all need their stuff around them. They become emotionally attached to their stuff, whether they bought it or inherited it from a loved one. We keep mementos from our family and friends. We name it, we become attached to it. It's our stuff!

When we think about the cost of our stuff, we think about dollars. But what about the emotional, physical, and relationship costs?

When we are ready to downsize or declutter, how will we decide what to keep and what to give up? Learn Lesa's advice at the meeting.



Lesa Wynn is president of Project Move UP. She helps companies and individuals relocate, downsize and declutter, and get organized.

- The Drawdown website at www.drawdown.org

Questions for thought before the September 15 meeting

- The researchers suggest there will be an "overwhelming net savings" if these solutions are implemented during the 2020–2050 period. What are the projected net savings? (Hint: Think trillions of dollars!)

Upcoming Events

- Food drive (ongoing) (p. 6)
- Sept. 18–Oct. 31, Early voting (p. 3)
- Sept. 18, Car parade, assisted living facilities (p. 6)
- Sept. 25, Chapter awards nominations due (p. 6)
- Oct. 8, "Elections in the Trump Era," Rachel Bitecofer (p. 5)

Upcoming Chapter Programs

- (Third Tuesday, noon, via Zoom)
- November, Theme of veterans
- December, Celebration of members and the chapter

In this issue

- Woman Suffrage, 100th anniversary—2
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- Options for early voting—3
- Constitutional amendment—3
- Leadership: review of Doris Kearns Goodwin—4
- New book by Ben Crawford—5
- Rachel Bitecofer presentation—5
- Food drive—6
- Chapter awards, leadership nominations—6
- Car parade, assisted living—6
- Caring & Wellness Corner:—7
- Veterans Corner—7

- What is the Number One pollutant that will lead to the most CO2-EQ reductions (Hint: It's in your home.) This the solution that "completely surprised" the researchers.
- Which solution offers the 26th ranked reduction of CO2-EQ, but is ranked first in net savings of nearly \$10 trillion? (Hint: You or your neighbor may have one.)

Woman Suffrage Movement Began as a Quest for Women's Rights *by Carolyn Rude*

On August 26, 1920, the United States added the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, giving women the right to vote. The amendment had been ratified by the 36th state, Tennessee, just eight days earlier, on a single vote by the youngest Tennessee legislator, Harry Burn, who changed his mind and his vote after receiving a letter from his mother urging him to “vote for suffrage” and “Don’t forget to be a good boy.”

The suffrage movement began not as a movement about suffrage (voting) but about women’s rights. In 1848, women could not own property, keep their wages if they worked (the wages belonged to their husbands or fathers), have custody of her children in case of divorce, attend college, serve on juries, or speak in public. They needed male escorts when they traveled. They could be beaten by their husband and father so long as the whip were no thicker than a thumb (thus “the rule of thumb”).

At the 1848 Convention on Women’s Rights at Seneca Falls, New York, the organizers offered a “Declaration of Sentiments,” based on the U.S. Declaration of Independence: “All men and women are created equal.” They also offered 11 resolutions. Ten of these were not controversial and passed unanimously, but the 11th, giving women “the elective franchise,” almost did not pass until Frederick Douglass, the abolitionist former slave, addressed the convention and argued that without the vote, women would not be able to change the laws that treated them as second class.

Relationship of suffrage and abolition movements

Many early suffragists were also abolitionists, and the two movements to secure rights and freedoms worked together. That alliance fractured in 1869 when the 15th Amendment gave Black men (but not women of any race) the right to vote. Some suffragists thought their Black partners should hold out for an amendment that included women. After that, the suffrage movement was fraught with racism, including among the top leaders. Some Black women continued to work in the mainstream suffrage movement. Others pursued their own initiatives. For example, Ida B. Wells became a journalist and investigated lynchings by interviewing eye witnesses, learning that the charges were often false. She was run out of Memphis because her reporting threatened the established order. In Illinois she helped to pass a suffrage bill that gave women the right to vote in local and national elections and registered voters. She also helped to form the NAACP.

Black women were focused on issues of social justice, such as schools and health care, with suffrage as a means to these ends. The two groups often worked together through the Women’s Club movement, both secular and through churches.

The suffragists pursued their goals by conventional methods of change for more than four

decades—conventions, speeches, newspaper articles, petitions, and lobbying. There were a few acts of civil disobedience, as when Susan B. Anthony and others cast votes for President in 1872. She refused to pay her fine of \$25. (In August 2020, Donald Trump pardoned Anthony.) Some suffragists pursued rights at the state level, and nine western states did grant women the right to vote by 1912. At the federal level, the amendment was first introduced in Congress in 1878 and rejected yearly thereafter.

Turning point

The turning point came in the 20th century, under the leadership of Alice Paul and other activists. In 1913, Alice and others organized a massive parade for suffrage in Washington DC on the day before Woodrow Wilson’s inauguration. Spectators assaulted the marchers as the police stood idly by.

Women provided support for the war effort during World War I, but the war did not deter the activist suffragists from continuing to make their cause visible. They challenged Woodrow Wilson for fighting for Democracy abroad while denying half the citizens of the U.S. the right to vote. The “Silent Sentinels” stood in front of the White House each day, saying nothing but holding banners and signs, such as the one that read “Mr. President, how long must women wait for liberty?” Their presence embarrassed to the White House. About 1,000 women were arrested for obstructing the sidewalk and sent to prisons or workhouses. They were treated abusively and went on hunger strikes, then painfully force fed. Public sentiment turned in their favor in part because they had contributed so much to the war effort. President Wilson eventually supported the amendment.

Suffrage in Virginia

Virginia did not ratify the 19th Amendment until 1952. (Women could vote because of the federal law.) Like other Southern states, Virginia resisted enfranchisement for fear of the consequence of Black women voting. In 1916, the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia distributed a pamphlet, “Equal Suffrage and the Negro Vote,” arguing that “the enfranchisement of Virginia women would increase white supremacy” and assured readers that literacy tests and poll taxes would prove effective in disenfranchising African Americans.

The aftermath

Some African American women voted in 1920, but voter suppression kept them from voting in great numbers until the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and Voting Rights Act in 1965. Native Americans were enfranchised in 1924, Chinese Americans in 1943, and Japanese Americans in 1952.

The 19th Amendment reads: “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.” This language is echoed in the Equal Rights Amendment, first proposed by Alice Paul in 1923: “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.” Virginia ratified the ERA in January 2020, but the U.S. Archivist has declined to certify this amendment.

President's Message

Don Creamer



Voting Matters

AARP is working to encourage all 50+ U.S. citizens to vote in the coming election. It is a worthy goal and it is achievable. Those of us in this demographic have a lot at stake in this election, including preserving social security and Medicare. There is every reason to vote whether in-person or by mail-in ballots. The future of our democracy depends our participation and the outcome of this election WILL affect us, every one of us.

AARP's voter engagement initiative is driven by this slogan: "Be the Difference. Vote." What a positive incentive! What if your vote were guaranteed to determine the outcome of an election? Is there any reason that you would not vote knowing this? I remember hearing my father say that he would vote in all elections "The good Lord willing and the creeks don't rise." He meant that he would be there. Period! I am thankful to have inherited the same determination, and I hope that you have also.

Many have written that democratic governments belong to the people, governing processes belong to the people, and elections belong to the people. There is no democracy without the engagement of citizens. Engagement is thus both a right and a responsibility of citizens in establishing, developing, and sustain democracy. Voting is one of the forms of engagement that sustains our democracy and is perhaps our most accessible tool for preserving democracy.

Likewise, our chapter is built on these same principles. Your Board of Directors exercises its authority because you authorized our actions by your votes to install us in the roles we occupy. To guarantee that this authority is exercised in your interests you must be engaged in our governing processes. Your votes count and your opinions shape the actions taken as a Board.

Whether shaping our country or our chapter,

"Be the difference. Vote!"

Constitutional Amendment #1: Fair Maps

In addition to voting for President/Vice President, Senator, and Congressional representative, you will vote on November 3 on two proposed amendments to the Virginia Constitution.

The first amendment aims to end gerrymandering by transferring the power to draw legislative maps from legislators to a bipartisan commission of citizens and legislators.

Currently, the party in power can draw maps to increase the odds of their re-election. That process is gerrymandering—legislators picking voters instead of voters picking legislators.



Options for Early Voting

To avoid crowds on Election Day, November 3, you have two options:

1. **Mail-in ballot.** Request one
 - by writing to the Montgomery County Registrar (755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg 24073) or by email (govote121@montgomerycountyva.gov)
 - by applying online at vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation

To be sure your mail-in ballot is counted, mail early (at least 10 days before November 3) and sign the envelope exactly as you are registered to vote.

The General Assembly has approved **dropboxes** for mail-in ballots. They may be safer than the postal service. They will likely be placed at Registrar's offices and satellite voting sites (see item 2).

2. **Vote early in person at the Registrar's office or satellite voting site.** Montgomery County has approved two sites, one in the multipurpose room of the government building, 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg, one at the children's museum (Wonder Universe) at the Uptown Christiansburg Mall. Connie Viar, the Registrar, notes that both places are large enough for multiple distanced voting stations. The election officers will be wearing protective equipment.

In **Radford**, go to 619 2nd Street.

In **Floyd**, go to 100 East Main Street, Room 302. For drive-up and walk-up curbside voting, look for the tent.

Hours: 8:30 am–4:30 pm M–F plus Saturdays October 24 and 31, same hours. Last day: October 31.

If you are comfortable with limited excursions from your home, perhaps to go to the grocery store, **early voting has advantages over the mail-in or dropbox options.** Ballots are scanned at the time of voting. When the counting begins November 3 at 7 pm, the results will be quicker because of less processing time. You will also not have to worry that your ballot arrives on time and is counted.

If you have already applied for an absentee ballot and wish to vote early in person, take your absentee ballot with you and turn it in.

Virginia Redistricting Commission Amendment

Creates a redistricting commission to draw congressional and state legislative districts.

A "yes" vote supports transferring the power to draw the state's congressional and legislative districts from the state legislature to a redistricting commission composed of state legislators and citizens.

A "no" vote opposes transferring the power, thus keeping the state legislature's party in power responsible for redistricting.

AARP-VA supports the amendment.

Leadership in Turbulent Times

Doris Kearns Goodwin

Historian Doris Kearns Goodwin gave a talk at the Moss Center on March 3 on presidential leadership. In the talk, based on her 2018 book, *Leadership in Turbulent Times*, she analyzed the characteristics of leadership that Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, and Lyndon B. Johnson exhibited during times of crisis in this country—the Civil War for Lincoln, the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution for Teddy Roosevelt, the Depression and World War II for Franklin Roosevelt, and the Civil Rights movement for Lyndon Johnson. Goodwin observes that there is “no master key for leadership,” but by examining the presidents at work in the context of the challenges they faced, she identifies strengths, habits, and behaviors the presidents cultivated to become authentic.

Here are 10 lessons Goodwin gleaned from studying the minds and habits of each of the four presidents. Her book includes detailed examples of these qualities, often humorous, showing the humanity of the presidents.

1. Leaders grow, through adversity, humility and empathy

Lincoln’s father thought he was lazy because he wanted to read books instead of doing physical work. As a politician, he lost more races than he won.

Roosevelt had so much self-confidence, but when he realized he lacked allies and couldn’t get legislation through Congress, he “moderated his language and became a bipartisan leader.” FDR learned humility when he fell victim to polio, which paralyzed the lower half of his body.

2. Leaders have the self-confidence to surround themselves with strong-minded people

LBJ, never one to mince words, said it was “better to have your enemies inside the tent pissing out than outside the tent, pissing in.” Eleanor Roosevelt frequently held views that differed from her husband’s; even so, she was “a welcome thorn” in FDR’s side and so helped advance equality for women.

3. Leaders can inspire and motivate others, creating a culture of respect

Lincoln was generous in crediting others with success. FDR inspired and encouraged his staff, “He didn’t solve their problems,” but cheered up the team so they could continue to forge ahead.

4. Leaders take responsibility and shoulder the blame for their decisions, especially when things go wrong

After listening to his advisors argue about whether and when to emancipate the slaves, Lincoln finally announced: “My mind is made up. There will be no more debate..”. Because he had listened deeply enough, no advisor publicly disagreed once the decision was made.

5. Leaders can transcend past slights and resentments

As a young lawyer, Lincoln was thrilled to work with the famous Edwin Stanton on an important case. Before the case was tried, however, the brief was transferred away from Lincoln without his knowledge. He continued to trail after Stanton, even stopping him on a street corner to discuss the case. Stanton turned to an associate and remarked: “We have to lose this long-armed ape because he will lose the case.” Later, when President Lincoln needed a Secretary of War, advisors encouraged Lincoln to hire Stanton. He did. In the end, Stanton said he’d come to love Lincoln more than anyone in his own family.

6. Leaders are approachable and accessible and establish direct connections with the people around them

Before the Civil Service was established, Lincoln held daily meetings where anyone could ask him for a job. On the day when he was slated to sign the Emancipation Proclamation, he had shaken the hands of more than 1,000 people—so many that his own arm was shaking and unable to sign the document. (He waited until his signature would look strong and bold for all future generations.)

Teddy Roosevelt spent more time on the road than any other president. LBJ invited every Congressman and his wife to dine at the White House in groups of about 30. He then “never stopped calling them,” to coax support for his plans.

7. Leaders communicate simply and directly through stories—and through the media of their time

Lincoln could entertain an audience with a story—with enough detail and richness that everyone would remember. (People remember stories more than they remember facts or figures, he said.) Although Lincoln was a master of debate and speaking extemporaneously, he knew his words mattered and spoke from prepared scripts after he was elected.

Teddy Roosevelt had the knack of coining soundbites and slogans, such as a “square deal for the rich and the poor.” FDR “had the ideal voice for the radio age,” and people listened. Writer Saul Bellow once observed that he could stroll down a street in Chicago during one of the weekly broadcasts and not miss a word as FDR’s words poured out of every window.

8. Leaders find ways to control negative and unproductive emotions

Lincoln would vent rage in a letter—that he would neither sign nor send. Roosevelt went through four or five drafts of his weekly fireside chats to wash all the bile away.

9. Leaders take the time to think, relax, and replenish their energy

Lincoln went to the theater 100 times during the Civil War. Teddy Roosevelt exercised two hours a day, including taking vigorous hikes through the then wilds of Rock Creek Park. And FDR hosted a cocktail party every night, which forbade discussion of the war.

10. Leaders transform an ambition for self into ambition for a greater good for all

All the presidents channeled their personal ambition into something bigger. Although LBJ's advisors whispered that his Great Society campaigns would destroy him, he ignored them with a terse: "What the hell is the Presidency for?" People around the world knew of Lincoln not as a great general but for "his moral fiber and integrity."

The role of historians is to remind us of how we navigated the past. But even though she has spent her life studying the presidents, Goodwin emphasized that it's a country's citizens who matter deeply—and its teachers who will mold the sentiment of each new generation.

"Every important change has begun with citizens," Goodwin advised. She cited Lincoln, who praised the soldiers, not himself, for emancipation: "With public sentiment, nothing can fail. Without it, nothing can succeed."

Ben Crawford publishes book on volunteer development and leadership

Our own Ben Crawford, former Blacksburg chapter president and winner of the statewide Andrus Award, has published a book on volunteer development and leadership. He has great credentials, having spent a career in volunteer service and leadership with the Boy Scouts, Ruritan, and AARP, among others.

Volunteer Development and Leadership (August 2020) is an instructive and entertaining book of value for anyone interested in improving their leadership and organization effectiveness. Case studies and examples, along with basic information mixed with humor, are based on the author's personal experience. The 23 chapters go from A to Z with "how to" information and feature chapters about BSA, 4-H, AARP, Ruritan, that aid in understanding these organizations. The last two chapters offer some food for thought about politics, the future and life after the pandemic. Within the AARP chapter is a section about our Blacksburg chapter. There are 240 pages with 26 color photos of many people you know, possibly some of you.

Reviewer comments: This book is well worth a read for anyone who volunteers or has an interest in volunteer organizations. It is especially helpful if involved or interested in a community service organization, Scouting, 4-H or AARP.

- humorous stories helped me remember some important basic points; easy to read but some serious stuff made interesting with humor
- offered me ideas to improve my management and leadership abilities

Rachel Bitecofer, "Elections in the Trump Era"

Thursday, October 8, 7:00 pm, Zoom
register at bit.ly/LWVMCFallForum

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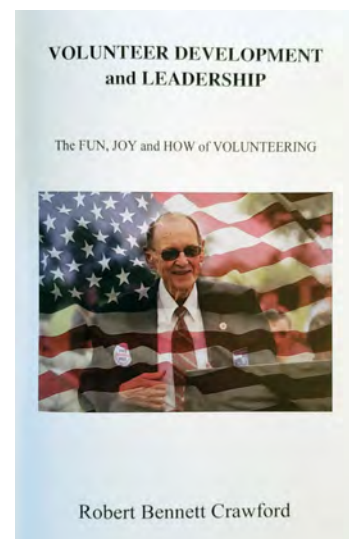
American elections have become increasingly nationalized and highly predictable, with partisanship serving as an identity-based, dominant vote determinant for all but a small portion of Americans.

Rachel Bitecofer is a senior fellow at the Niskanen Center in Washington DC with a specialization in elections. She conducts survey research and elections analysis. Her innovative election forecasting model predicted the 2018 midterms five months before Election Day.

Her research has been featured in media outlets such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *NPR*, and she is a contracted commentator on CBC Radio. She is author of *The Unprecedented 2016 Presidential Election* (Palgrave MacMillan).

- shows how to run and chair meetings; how to use bylaws to your advantage
- should be required for training of AARP, 4-H, Scout & other volunteers across the country
- has excellent examples and brief case studies with interesting history; a remarkable bylaws story with an important lesson about how Interstate 77 came about
- excellent & important chapter about minutes and parliamentary procedure! Ever been in a meeting and want to make a motion? Page 29 shows you how
- examples of turning around dying organizations with the "why" and the "how"
- I liked all 240 or so pages. Of particular interest was the current status and future of scouting (pages 145-170), and the AARP feature (pages 183-196).

The book costs \$24.95, but Ben offers a discount to friends and AARP members so you can get the book for \$20. To order, write to Ben at ben.crawford@vt.edu



Food Drive in Pandemic Times

by Sally Anna Stapleton, Chapter Caring Committee

Food Banks in the NRV have seen an increase in family and individual needs. With the Coronavirus pandemic having forced people out of work, many families are food-insecure for the first time and have turned to the food banks and meal programs in order to meet basic nutritional needs. This influx has placed a tremendous strain on food assistance resources in the area.

Please consider making a donation to a local food bank. Every little bit helps. Thank you for your generosity.

Agency On Aging

Staples For Seniors
Fido's Pantry (pets)
Attn: Shannon Hammons
6226 University Park Dr #3100
Fairlawn, VA 24141

Interfaith Food Pantry

706 Harding Ave
Blacksburg, VA 24060

United Way NRV Food Pantry

111 W Main Street
Christiansburg, VA 24073

MCEAP Food Pantry

New River Community Action
110 Roanoke St
Christiansburg, VA 24073

Feeding America

Salem Distribution Ctr
1025 Electric Rd
Salem, VA 24153

Radford-Fairlawn Daily Bread

501 Second St
Radford, VA 24141

Vittles for Vets

7757 Walker Farms Drive
Radford, VA 24141

September is Hunger Action Month for AARP

Join a car parade visiting assisted living facilities Friday, September 18, 2 pm

Calling all AARP artists, or those who just want to have fun while helping our senior citizens. September 13–18 is Assisted Living Awareness week. English Meadows Assisted Living Center (3400 S. Point Dr. Blacksburg) is hosting a parade for their residents on Friday, September 18 at 2:00 pm. Volunteers decorate their car, line up at 1:30 PM at the driveway, circle the building twice, and leave. Residents will be brought outside to enjoy the “parade.” No registration, no getting out of your car—easy, peasy.

We're in contact with both Showalter Assisted Living Center and Heritage Hall to see if we can coordinate bringing the parade to them the same day, hopefully visiting all three buildings in a two-hour time span. Jennie Reilly will be the point person to coordinate the times/logistics. If you want to join the parades, please contact her at jenmik@vt.edu or 540-230-5565.

Chapter Award Nominations Requested

Due September 25 Submit to cgburruss@comcast.net

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 (2019–20).

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, Carolyn Rude

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, Carolyn Rude

Please send your nominations, including the name, which award, and the basis of the recommendation for the nomination, to Chuck Burruss (cgburruss@comcast.net).

Chapter Leadership Nominations Requested

Submit to niles@vt.edu

Would you like to enjoy your membership in AARP even more than you do by attending AARP meetings and events? Consider offering to serve on the Board of Directors or as an officer.

All the advice about aging well includes the recommendation to stay engaged and to interact with others. You can make a difference to AARP and its members with this service. A great way to get to know good people is to do jobs together.

The board meets on the first Tuesday of most months at 10 am, usually for an hour and a half. Board members may take on specific tasks, such as organizing award nominations or identifying programs.

If you would like to talk with Jerry Niles, chair of the nominating committee, about what this service might entail, please contact him at niles@vt.edu.

If you can't serve right now but have an idea of a person who would be good in one of these roles, please let Jerry know.

Thanks!

Self Care: Part II

In a spring submission in this “care corner,” I addressed the need for self-care during the coronavirus pandemic. At the time I wondered how members of our chapter were getting along with the physical and social distancing requirements and expectations associated with the pandemic. After six months, an upsurge in cases in the NRV, and various upsetting current events, I am now wondering how are you REALLY getting along? I hope and pray that you haven’t lost a loved one to the virus. I don’t know about you, but some days my brain feels like it’s on constant overload, whirring like the late spring sounds of the cicadas in the woods behind my house.



Our brain’s limbic system reacts to stress through a fight, flight, and/or freeze response. There have been times over the last six months that my brain has responded by just shutting down, as evidenced by the questions and comments I have received from others, “When are you going to do this? Why haven’t you done that? Is this something you plan to do or not?” The best word I can think of to describe the way I have been thinking and feeling is “fragmented.” There is so much in life that steals our attention. The impact of the pandemic is complicated by current events such as police brutality, civil unrest, and violent deaths; political party platforms, campaigns and conventions; and now the tragic aftermath of Hurricane Laura.

Many of us look forward to summer and the respite it provides. To name a few, these are some of the activities we enjoy most during the summer: Growing flowers and vegetables; taking vacations to sunny, mountainous, and overseas locales; spending time with grandchildren (or, in my case, granddogs); watching summer sports like baseball, tennis, or golf; cooking out with family and friends; getting out in nature; attending music and other festivals; and swimming. My gardens are full of weeds. Yes, I’ve taken a few camping trips and a beach vacation, but I spent a good deal of my time each trip catching up on therapy notes. I have missed going to watch the Pulaski Yankees play baseball. An attempt to have a belated birthday celebration for a friend, and with mutual friends, failed due to concerns, even paranoia, about the virus. Thank goodness for nature and all the calm and nourishment of spirituality it has provided!

So, back to self-care. How do we successfully care for ourselves and those we care about in this world we currently live in? How do we find peace of mind in a world that offers little peace? Neuroanatomist and author Jill Bolte Taylor said, “To experience peace does not mean that your life is always blissful. It means that

you are capable of tapping into a blissful state of mind amidst the normal chaos of a hectic life.” If you are able, take a nature walk. Watch a virtual church service. Read a book that allows you to escape. Keep a daily gratitude journal. Talk with friends or family members who care to listen and understand. Do something that provides a service to others in need. Keep the faith that things will get better. Finally, be on the lookout for a communication from your Care Committee about some virtual events we plan to offer in the near future.

Veteran Connection *Leslie Pendleton*

Calling all Veterans! We want to honor and feature your service to our country in a future newsletter or on our AARP Blacksburg website. This is what we need from you. Email your responses to the following questions and attach a photo in your uniform.

- What motivated you to join the military? Is there a family history of military service?
- What branch of the military were you in? Why did you choose that branch over others?
- Where did you do basic training? What other trainings did you have?
- What jobs did you have while you were in the service? How long were you in the service?
- In retrospect, what did you gain from your military service?

We’d love to hear from you! Email Leslie Pendleton at lkpendleton@gmail.com. If you prefer to participate in an interview, I welcome that opportunity!



Blacksburg Chapter #2613

Chapter meetings are the third Tuesday of each month via Zoom at noon. Members will receive the link by email a day before the meeting. Board meetings are the first Tuesday of each month at 10 am.

Chapter Officers 2020

President • Don Creamer, dgc2@vt.edu
Vice President • Leslie Pendleton, lkpendleton@gmail.com
Secretary • Lisa Moose, lisa.m.moose@outlook.com
Treasurer • Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu
Assistant Treasurer • Ruth Anne Niles, rniles2@icloud.com

Board of Directors

2020: Isabel Berney, Jeananne Dixon Bame, Hugh VanLandingham

2021: Doug Feuerbach, Judith Jones, Lisa Moose, Leslie Pendleton

2022: Linda Correll, Chuck Burress, Kai Duncan
Newsletter editor: Carolyn Rude

AARP Website www.blacksburgaarp.org



Blacksburg Chapter #2613
Don Creamer, President
P.O. Box 10082
Blacksburg, VA 24062

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**Blacksburg Chapter
Member Application for 2021**

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: .

AARP Blacksburg Chapter • P.O. Box 10082 • Blacksburg, VA 24062



AARP Chapters are separately incorporated affiliates of AARP

Blacksburg Chapter AARP

Serving the Greater New River Valley, VA

www.blacksburgaarp.org

newsletter

November–December 2020



Look for a Zoom link sent through email a day before the meeting. The meeting will open at 11:45 for greetings and conversation. The program will begin at noon.

Upcoming Events

Dec. 12, Wreath laying, Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery, 1 pm (p. 4)

Jan. 20, LLI Preview of spring 2021 classes and events (Zoom)

Jan. 25, LLI online registration begins, 10 am

Nov. 17 Chapter Meeting

A Salute to Veterans and Military Families *Mike D'Ostilio*

Mike D'Ostilio retired from the U.S. Army in 1995 and from the federal government in 2015 where he served as the Chief of Investigations, Assistance, and Hot Line Branch for the Army Inspector General Agency.



He began working with AARP as a legislative volunteer in 2016. Mike has participated both at the state and federal level talking with legislative officials on healthcare and caregiving initiatives affecting seniors. He is also a member of the AARP Virginia Speakers Bureau. In 2017 Mike received the AARP Virginia Rookie of the Year Award.

Mike also is a volunteer with the National Park Service and works at the Fredericksburg Battlefield and Chatham Manor. Mike and his wife Marietta are Senior Visitor volunteers. This program provides isolated senior citizens with weekly home based visits promoting companionship and socialization.

Topics for his presentation include

- AARP's history of supporting veterans and their families
- Family caregiving resources
- Financial security planning
- Fraud scams targeting veterans
- Available resources for veterans and military families

Dec. 15 Chapter Celebration

Join AARP for our traditional holiday celebration featuring awards, music, a speaker, and highlights of our year.



Agenda

- **Music** by Becky Coffey, harpist, who will play holiday music for a sing-along
- Address by **Joyce Williams**, President, AARP Virginia
- Announcement of the recipients of the **Chapter Service Award** and the **Community Spirit Award**
- Announcement of three **statewide AARP awards**
- **Charitable Giving Donations** to eleven NRV organizations
- **Installation of new officers and board members**
- **Recognition of First Responders**
- **Highlights of our chapter year**

Look for a Zoom link a day or so before.

Upcoming Chapter Programs

(Third Tuesday, noon, via Zoom)

January 19, Wide Open Blacksburg: Providing fast gigabit fiber to homes and businesses, Dr. Andrew Cohill and Lynn Huber

February 16, Research on falling and other human factors associated with aging, Dr. Michael Madigan

March 16, Transcranial brain stimulation and implications for seniors, Dr. Alec Smith

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This issue of the newsletter celebrates veterans and their service to our country in the month of Veterans Day.

Time to renew membership

Use the form on p. 8, or go online to blacksburgaarp.org/online-payments

Membership is for the year 2021.

Hunting Civil War Relics at Nimblewill Creek James Dickey 1923–1997

As he moves the mine detector
A few inches over the ground,
Making it vitally float
Among the ferns and weeds,
I come into this war
Slowly, with my one brother,
Watching his face grow deep
Between the earphones,
For I can tell
If we enter the buried battle
Of Nimblewill
Only by his expression.

Softly he wanders, parting
The grass with a dreaming hand.
No dead cry yet takes root
In his clapped ears
Or can be seen in his smile.
But underfoot I feel
The dead regroup,
The burst metals all in place,
The battle lines be drawn
Anew to include us
In Nimblewill,
And I carry the shovel and pick

More as if they were
Bright weapons that I bore.
A bird's cry breaks
In two, and into three parts.
We cross the creek; the cry
Shifts into another,
Nearer, bird, and is
Like the shout of a shadow—
Lived-with, appallingly close—
Or the soul, pronouncing
“Nimblewill”:
Three tones; your being changes.

We climb the bank;
A faint light glows
On my brother's mouth.
I listen, as two birds fight
For a single voice, but he
Must be hearing the grave,
In pieces, all singing
To his clamped head,
For he smiles as if
He rose from the dead within
Green Nimblewill
And stood in his grandson's shape.

No shot from the buried war
Shall kill me now,
For the dead have waited here
A hundred years to create
Only the look on the face
Of my one brother,
Who stands among them, offering
A metal dish
Afloat in the trembling weeds,
With a long-buried light on his lips
At Nimblewill
And the dead outsinging two birds.

I choke the handle
Of the pick, and fall to my knees
To dig wherever he points,
To bring up mess tin or bullet,
To go underground
Still singing, myself,
Without a sound,
Like a man who renounces war,
Or one who shall lift up the past,
Not breathing “Father,”
At Nimblewill,
But saying, “Fathers! Fathers!”

From *The Whole Motion: Collected Poems 1945–1992* (Wesleyan University Press) by James Dickey
Copyright © 1992 by James Dickey. Used with permission of Wesleyan University Press

The Burdens Veterans Carry: Unearthing Stories Jim Dubinsky

James Dickey's “Hunting Civil War Relics at Nimblewill Creek” graces this volume of AARP's newsletter. Originally published in *The Sewanee Review* in 1961 and later included in *Drowning with Others* in 1962, the poem describes what appears to be an autobiographical story of Dickey and his brother, Tom, searching for metal relics from the Civil War by using a mine-detector in a battlefield near Nimblewill Creek.¹

The poem opens with the persona accompanying his brother in search of “burst metals.” He waits to recognize the sound of the “dead cry[ing]” by watching his brother's face. The poet does not need a mine detector; he has his own, earned during his years at war. While his brother is “parting / The grass with a dreaming hand,” the poet is feeling “The dead regroup” and the “battle lines” redrawn “to include” him.

¹ Several sources indicate the actual battlefield was Nickajack, but Dickey changed the name for artistic purposes. Both are in Georgia, but Nimblewill was not the site of any battles in the Civil War. Tom actually collected one of the largest caches of Civil War artillery shells and ammunition.

When most people hear the name James Dickey (1923–1997), if they know his work, they think of *Deliverance*, his 1970 novel made into a major motion picture, starring Burt Reynolds, Jon Voight, and Ned Beatty, and featuring a song called “Dueling Banjos.” The movie, focusing on primal fears related to man and nature, earned three Oscar nominations and made Reynolds a star.

Before the fame from *Deliverance*, Dickey had won acclaim as a poet. And before becoming a poet, Dickey has served in two wars. At the age of 19, in 1942, just after one semester at Clemson, he joined the Army Air Corps and served as a radar operator in a night fighter squadron until the end of WWII. He also served in the U. S. Air Force during the Korean War.

This poem is a fascinating study of two brothers representing two segments of our population: those who have served in combat and those who have not. It offers readers insight into the impact of artillery shells and musket balls on humans during wars and the lingering effects of experiencing conflict on those who have fought in them.

Unlike his brother, the civilian whose focus is on artifacts of battle, the poet, as a veteran, focuses on the voices of those who died in battle. He not only feels this battlefield; he also is acutely aware of the “Bright weapons [he] bore” and their costs, which are “Like the shout of a shadow--/Lived with, appallingly close.” Successful hunting results in both men hearing “three tones.” The brother hears sounds in earphones; the poet hears a bird’s cry, which “breaks / In two, and into three parts.” These sounds, real or imagined, lead to “being changes.”

Dickey struggled with alcohol abuse all of his life; perhaps the changes he underwent during the war left him often on his knees, “still singing, [himself] / Without a sound.” When he served, few recognized or addressed the lingering mental and emotional scars of war. He dealt with those shadows all of his life. Now, at least, we are more aware.

As we approach Veterans Day, Dickey’s “Hunting Civil War Relics at Nimblewill Creek” seems an appropriate reflection on life and death, on our country’s past and the wars fought, and on the cost not only of many lives lost but also of the price paid by those who survived. The poem is also a reminder of just how easy it is to focus on the artifacts of war rather than on those who fought them, or, even if we do recognize the burdens, we are not equipped fully to recognize them for the burden they carry on our behalf.



Jim Dubinsky is an Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Writing at Virginia Tech (VT). He served 28 years in the U. S. Army. He has taught at USMA in the Department of English, the U.S. Army Field Artillery School, and the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. He is a founding director of the VT

Veterans in Society (ViS) initiative, sits on the Veterans Studies Association board, and was the first director of VT-Engage, VT’s center for student engagement.

Vittles for Vets

All of the regional food banks desperately need donations (see a list with addresses in the September issue, available online at blacksburgaarp.org). But in this month and in honor of veterans, consider donating to Vittles for Vets:

7757 Walker Farms Drive
Radford, VA 24141

President’s Message *Don Creamer*

Memo to the U.S. Army

Thanks for a Life-Changing Experience



I seldom think about my time in the Army, but when I do it is with pride that I “did my bit,” as the British were fond of saying about those who served in WWI. I am proud to be a veteran, in my case, of the Korean War. I entered the Army as the Korean War was moving toward the armistice that still describes the nature of the conflict today.

Serving in the Army did several things for me. It gave me financial independence from my parents who barely had financial independence of their own. It gave me confidence that I was able to carry out adult duties and responsibilities as well as the next person. It gave me opportunities for leadership and knowledge of accountability for one’s actions. It gave me a world view that I might never have realized without the “army experience.” It taught me how to be a team member, shouldering my share of effort in the accomplishments of the group. It gave me first-hand knowledge of another culture—in this case, the German culture—where I spend two years living and working. It taught me respect for leadership of others and talents beyond my current grasp.

I was never in harm’s way during my service in the Army; rather, I had the opportunity to engage in serious intellectual activities as a member of the Army Security Agency. I lived on an Army base in Herzogenaurach, Germany, where the entire base was devoted to intercepting Morse code messages from countries all over Europe, the Balkans, Russia, and Northern Africa. Some of our members operated machines that copied the designated messages, but I served with a unit that manually intercepted these messages and copied them on paper using a manual typewriter. All of these activities were conducted on a 24/7 basis. We never shut down. Eventually, I became a Trick Chief, meaning that I supervised one of the Tricks or units that operated on a rotating basis from days, evenings, and midnight shifts.

Army life never was all work. We had ample time off from pounding on a typewriter to enjoy ourselves. We traveled throughout Europe. We gained a sense of multiple cultures. We became experts on respective beers from each European country visited. We met interesting people and learned that the universe does not just revolve around the U.S. but embraces the globe made up of unimaginably diverse peoples.

On page 4 of this newsletter there is a photo of me when I entered the army. This photo shows a young man eager to experience life but almost completely naïve about the life to follow. What did follow was rewarding professionally and personally, and today I am happy to remember my debt to the Army.

A veteran remembers *Don Creamer*

I joined the Army about six months after graduating from high school. I enrolled in college that September but soon discovered that I did not have enough money to make it on my own financial status. I had decided that I could not ask my parents for another dollar, especially since they did not have an extra dollar, and saw an opportunity to become financially independent by joining the Army. I even talked a friend to join with me who was in similar financial circumstances. There was no family history of military service prior to my joining. Interestingly, my son eventually joined the Air Force for almost identical reasons and at the same time of life that I joined the Army.



I chose to join the Army frankly because it was the only branch of military service that I knew much about at the time. I now have great respect for all military branches, but I expect that if I were making the decision to join now, I likely would make the same choice.

My basic training was conducted at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas. Toward the end of that training, I was assigned to the Army Security Agency and sent first to Fort Devens in Devens, Massachusetts, then a short time later to what is now Fort Gordon in Augusta, Georgia, where we learned to send and receive Morse code. At the time, Fort Gordon was the headquarters for the Army Signal Corps and now is the Army Cyber Corps.

My permanent assignment was in Herzogenauach, Germany, where our units intercepted Morse code signals from Europe, the Balkans region, Russia, and Northern Africa. These messages were captured and sent immediately to the National Security Agency near Washington DC for de-coding and analysis. I served in this assignment for about two years, and my total service was three years. I enjoyed my time in Germany and while on leave was able to travel to many countries in Europe and Scandinavia.

I could write a book on what I gained from my service in the Army. I entered as a teen-age boy and quickly became a man. I had no idea who I really was until I joined the Army. I gained knowledge of self that I suspect I might never have acquired had I not dumped everything and taken up the adventure of self-discovery in military service. I gained confidence, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and temperament to lead in whatever endeavor I faced. I gained a world-view that changed my entire outlook on life. All of these accomplishments continue to influence me today. I shall forever be grateful for the lessons learned in the Army.

SW Virginia Veterans Cemetery

Wreath Laying Ceremony Dec. 12

The Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Veterans Cemetery of Southwest Virginia is scheduled for Saturday, December 12, 2020 at 1 pm (with gathering of volunteers beginning at 12:30). Volunteers expect to lay 1,500 live wreaths at the graves. Masks and social distancing will be required.

The cemetery is located in Dublin Park. Directions are available at the website: www.swvavcv.org

The Ceremony includes a motorcycle drive-by, the UAW Veterans Freedom Truck, presentation of the colors, a military band, the Honor Guard, and distinguished guest speakers. Family members are invited to lay wreaths first followed by all others who wish to participate.

Ceremony volunteers advise everyone to check the website at www.swvavcv.org in case inclement weather or new coronavirus restrictions limit the ceremony. However, wreaths will be laid on the grave sites regardless of conditions.

Blacksburg AARP supports this wreath laying program as part of its annual charitable contributions. The volunteers appreciate the support, especially this year when they were unable to hold any of their yearly fundraisers.

The photograph below, by Judith Jones, is from the Wreath Laying Ceremony in 2019.



Meet Board Member Kai Duncan

Kai Duncan joined the AARP Board for a three-year term in the class of 2022. At the editor's request, he prepared this profile. You will see that he brings a lot of leadership experience to AARP. Thank you for your leadership in AARP and the community, Kai.

I am a retired educator with a BA in Music and an MS in Sports Management/Athletic Administration from Virginia Tech. I was born and raised in Christiansburg.

My first teaching job was in Craig County, Virginia. I was the high school band and choir director. I taught general music K through 8th grades at two elementary schools. I had two beginning bands and one intermediate band. I also coached the Junior Varsity Girls Basketball Team.

I spent one year as a nursing assistant at Heritage Hall Nursing Home in between my teaching jobs. Of all of the jobs that I have had, I probably learned more about myself and about life there.

My next teaching job was at Auburn High and Middle School. I was the High School and Middle School Band Director for 23 years. While there I coached the Junior Varsity Girls Basketball Team, the Girls Tennis Team, and later the Varsity Girls Basketball Team. I also was the Athletic Director for a few years and had the opportunity during that time to serve on the Virginia High School League Executive Committee.

My next position was the Montgomery County Fine Arts Supervisor. I spent 8 years working with an outstanding group of art and music teachers. I retired from Montgomery County Public Schools in 2013.

Other things about me:

- I am a member of the Blacksburg Community Band and have been a part of the group since its beginning. I play mostly brass instruments, currently the euphonium.



- I have helped manage Homeowners Associations since 1991. I am currently the treasurer for my current neighborhood.
- My parents are 92 and 93 and still living at their home. I try to keep them off the road as much as I can (yes they still drive!).
- I love to push mow my yard (it takes me at least 3 hours) but it may be time for a riding mower.
 - I finished the Master Naturalist program a few years ago and am still trying to find my niche there.
 - I am a Docent at the Montgomery Museum in Christiansburg (formally called the Lewis Miller Museum) and also organize the docent schedule each month.
 - I am the current president of the Montgomery County Retired Educators Association and find the group absolutely delightful!! We are trying to figure out how to stay active yet safe.
- I am a member of our local Dialogue on Race. Good work is being done to have important conversations to guide us in what should be next.
- I am a member of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee for the Women's Basketball Coaches Association. I have helped present LGBTQ Diversity Trainings throughout the state and in West Virginia.
- I love supporting live music in our area and find it more and more important to my wellbeing.
- I love being a part of the Lifelong Learning Institute and hope I never stop learning new things.
- I absolutely love to walk and bike outdoors. I love to plant things and watch them grow.
- I also love to watch the space station every night that it comes over and find the night sky intoxicating. We live in an amazing Universe!



Follow-up from the October Meeting

Downsizing and Decluttering: Places to Donate

At our October meeting, Lesa Wynn, President of Project Move UP, shared information about regional places to donate goods as you work on downsizing and decluttering. Lesa strongly encourages AARP members to donate not only to provide goods where they can be useful but also to keep items that may otherwise be repurposed out of the landfill.

Project Move UP assists individuals with personal transitioning of spaces—whether for a move, renovation, or to streamline space to live more efficiently. See their website for more information on their services: www.projectmoveup.com

This not a complete list of local donation centers, merely the ones where Lesa donates on a regular basis. She includes a list of items that are currently wanted or needed. Because these centers may have reduced hours during the pandemic, you might call before you take items.

The organizations welcome money donations as well as goods.

The YMCA Thrift Shop 1000 North Main Street, Blacksburg, 552-2633

- Appliances
- Furniture (it all gets sanitized)
- TVs, they can sell the newer flat screens, and they have initiated a partnership with a recycling center locally to recycle the older projector screens and tube TVs
- Mattresses and boxed springs

Habitat for Humanity ReStore 1675 North Franklin, Christiansburg, 381-1155

- Sofas
- Desks, large and small
- Entertainment centers
- Windows and screens
- Armoires
- Mattresses, boxed springs
- Dining room furniture
- China
- Ottomans
- Crystal
- Carpets
- Tools

Women's Resource Center 1217 Grove Ave, Radford, 639-9592; donations may be dropped off at the door 9–5 M–F

They desperately need the following nonperishable items and supplies

- Mac and cheese dinners
- Jell-O fruit cups, or dry packaged snack stuffs
- Pasta meals
- Clorox wipes
- Hand Sanitizer
- Soap
- Shampoo
- Conditioner

These all need to be new and unopened.

The Humane Society Second Time Around 107 Ellett Rd, Blacksburg (closed until further notice)

- furniture, knick-knacks, household goods, books, and collectables; see details at www.hsmcshelter.com/second-time-around-store

Blacksburg Interfaith Food Pantry

706 Harding Ave, Blacksburg, 951-8134; M, T 4–6 pm; W, Th 10–11:30 am

- all non-perishable food items

MCEAP Thrift Store 308 W Main St #2948, Christiansburg, 260-3173

- food, supplies, clothing, household items
- See a list at mceap.com/donate/

Goodwill Industries 255 Peppers Ferry Rd NE, Christiansburg, 381-1544 www.goodwillvalleys.com/donate/donate-goods/

- Clothing
- Accessories
- Shoes
- Toys
- Books
- Linens
- Cookware, Dishware
- Furniture
- Computers—any brand, any condition
- Small appliances
- Electronics
- Sports Equipment
- Collectibles

Floyd Friends of Asylum Seekers

PO Box 628 Floyd, VA floydfriendsofasyllumseekers.org

To coordinate dropoff or pickup of donated goods, call Tara at 540-230-7459.

A new group in the NRV has formed to help asylum seekers. Thanks to Jennie Reilly for alerting us to the group and its mission and needs.

The Floyd Friends of Asylum Seekers community supports Floyd's legal resident asylum-seekers through donations that cover medical visits, legal advice, rent and transportation costs. The community also volunteers transportation services and donations in kind in response to specific needs of the asylum seekers. Currently, this group supports 31 asylum seekers who are residents of Floyd, VA.

See their Christmas wish list at tinyurl.com/floyd-asylum

You could also purchase a gift card for Friends of Asylum Seekers at Once Upon a Child (onceuponachildchristiansburg.com) or Plato's Closet (www.platoscloset.com/location/christiansburg-va/).

New Virginia Regulations on Nursing Home Visitation

With the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic last March, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a federal moratorium on nursing home visits. The visitation restriction was put into place to limit Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) exposure and spread. Since that time, CMS has recognized that physical separation of nursing home residents from family and other loved ones has taken a toll on residents and has led to declines in their physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being. Recognizing that physical, emotional, and spiritual support from family and friends can provide significant benefit to nursing home residents, on September 17, CMS issued new guidance and recommendations on visitation. In this guidance, CMS states that “if a facility has had no COVID-19 cases in the last 14 days and its county positivity rate is low or medium, a nursing home *must* facilitate in-person visitation consistent with the regulations” and that “failure to facilitate visitation, without adequate reason related to clinical necessity or resident safety, would constitute a potential violation. and the facility would be subject to citation and enforcement actions.”

Subsequently, the Virginia General Assembly passed two identical bills adopting and giving greater definition to the new CMS visitation guidance. These bills were approved and signed into law by the Governor on October 21, 2020. The law states that the regulations “shall require each nursing home and certified nursing facility to establish a protocol to allow each patient to receive visits, consistent with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and as directed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.” The new regulations go on to say that a nursing home must publish on its website, or communicate to its residents in writing, its plan for providing visits.

The CMS guidance is substantial and covers outdoor and indoor visitation as well as special allowances for Compassionate Care situations. It is the biggest change to date in the guidance for nursing home visitation, with the feds telling nursing homes to open up for more visits.



Positive Response to LLI Zoom Classes

Early results from fall LLI class evaluations show that most participants are happy with the Zoom format for classes and special events. Participants indicate that Zoom was easy to use and that they plan to sign up for future courses offered by Zoom.

Look for a preview of spring classes and events on January 20. Online registration begins January 25.

Coronavirus and Polio *Ben Crawford*

The coronavirus pandemic has brought back memories to me from about 1940, when polio raged and frightened parents. I entered first grade in Welch, WV, not far from Wytheville. Wytheville was in the national news because it had the highest polio rate per capita in the nation. Wytheville, on a major north-south route, would not let vehicles stop—it forced all non-residents to drive through.

To isolate me, my parents moved me to live on a relative’s farm in Virginia, near Blacksburg, and I went to school at Luster’s Gate in Montgomery County. When a child contracted polio, his or her clothes, toys, and other contents in the room were burned. I remember talk about burning homes where polio was found. I don’t know if that actually occurred but do know it was talked about.



Blacksburg Chapter #2613

Chapter meetings are the third Tuesday of each month via Zoom at noon. Members will receive the link by email a day before the meeting. Board meetings are the first Tuesday of each month at 10 am.

Chapter Officers 2020

President • Don Creamer, dgc2@vt.edu
Vice President • Leslie Pendleton, lpendleton@gmail.com
Secretary • Lisa Moose, lisa.m.moose@outlook.com
Treasurer • Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu
Assistant Treasurer • Ruth Anne Niles, rniles2@icloud.com

Board of Directors

2020: Isabel Berney, Jeananne Dixon Bame, Hugh VanLandingham
2021: Doug Feuerbach, Judith Jones, Lisa Moose, Leslie Pendleton
2022: Linda Correll, Chuck Burress, Kai Duncan
Newsletter editor: Carolyn Rude

AARP Website www.blacksburgaarp.org



Blacksburg Chapter #2613
 Don Creamer, President
 P.O. Box 10082
 Blacksburg, VA 24062

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**Blacksburg Chapter
 Member Application for 2021**

mail this form or join/renew online at blacksburgaarp.org/online-payments

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: .

AARP Blacksburg Chapter • P.O. Box 10082 • Blacksburg, VA 24062