



Serving the greater New River Valley, Virginia

January 17 Chapter Meeting

A Shared Vision for the NRV's Future: The NRV Livability Initiative

The NRV Livability Initiative was a 3-year planning process that engaged thousands of NRV residents and dozens of organizations and businesses in developing a shared vision for our region's future. Upon completion of the plan in 2014, the NRV Regional Commission and the Community Foundation of the New River Valley (CFNRV) created a partnership to help advance the goals of the plan and encourage collaboration in areas like aging in place, housing, health, economic development, and much more.

Dr. Jessica Wirgau, Executive Director of the CFNRV, will provide an overview of the Livability plan, highlight projects that

have emerged from the plan since 2014, and outline how the CFNRV is investing time and money into this important work.



AARP Positions on the Affordable Care Act and Healthcare Reform

The AARP Chief Executive Officer has sent an extensive position paper on health care, including Medicare, prescription drugs, private insurance, and Medicaid, to all members of Congress, AARP staff, and AARP volunteer leaders. You can read it here:

<http://www.blacksburgaarp.org/aarpacoposition2017.pdf>

President's Message *Terry Wildman*

Off and Running!

Well, Happy New Year! Since I'm writing this on the first day of 2017, I'm really pleased to get to share this greeting in a timely way and to wish for you a great start to the new year. On behalf of the Chapter leadership I also thank you for your continuing support of, and participation in, our Blacksburg AARP Chapter.

As you can see from this first newsletter of 2017, the Chapter is well organized to maintain itself, grow, and serve the communities we represent throughout the New River Valley. Our officers, board members, and committee chairs have pooled a range of diverse talents to make this one of Virginia's most active and successful chapters, and to also do this work in such a collaborative and congenial way.

Further, in recent years the Chapter has cultivated a range of key partnerships in our geographical area that expand our options and enable the Chapter to do things we simply could not do alone, such as the 2016 Health and Wellness Fair and the Dr. Bill Thomas presentation co-sponsored with the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech. We are also fortunate to have an extremely close working relationship with AARP Virginia in Richmond.

In addition to the education and service work our members carry out in our local communities, we have folks in our chapter who serve in liaison roles to track and help us stay connected with Federal and State legislation and policies that relate to AARP priorities at all levels. Clearly the years ahead will be ones to watch closely.

Now I want to say just a quick word about your role—those of you who are members but not currently serving in some official role with the Chapter. We

Upcoming Events

January 9: Registration for spring LLI courses opens

February 1: Tax-Aide program begins (p. 7)

Volunteer needed to prepare the monthly newsletter for mailing (affixing labels, taking to the post office). See more details on p. 7.

Dues are Due!

If you haven't yet paid your dues for 2017, please use the form on the back of this newsletter.

If you have paid, consider an additional contribution to the local chapter for its projects and expenses. Thanks!



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 a.m.

Weather Policy

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

How to Protect Yourself from Scams Online, on the Phone, or Anywhere

by Sandy Hagman

The Internet and its associated schemes present a danger to the unsuspecting and often trusting senior community. According to Accenture, baby boomers embrace new technologies 20 times faster than millennials, including social sites, podcasts, and blogs. With this exposure, seniors become more vulnerable to online predators. In addition, seniors compose about 15% of the population; however, 30% of all cases of fraud are committed against them.

To better protect yourself from fraud and identity theft, you should be very cautious in sharing the following information:

- Address, phone number, email address
- Age, Social Security or Medicare number
- Passwords, bank account numbers, insurance policy numbers

Phone Scams

Phone scams are numerous, including calls soliciting money for charities, offering free trips or other prizes, and making “no risk” offers. Some things to consider when you are contacted by phone:

- When contacted by an unknown person, end the call before listening to their sales talk and do not purchase anything from unsolicited callers.
- Do check out unfamiliar companies with your Better Business Bureau or the National Fraud center (www.fraud.org/). Pay for services only after they are delivered.
- Take your time making a decision. Legitimate companies won't pressure you to make a snap decision. If a caller tells you the payment is for taxes, he or she is violating federal law.
- Do not return one-ring phone calls. Often these calls masquerade as local calls but connect you to an international location where you are charged hefty connection fees.
- If you are a Facebook user, “like” your local law enforcement agencies. They often post information about fraud in your community.
- Enroll in the national do not call registry (<https://www.donotcall.gov/>).
- Disconnect from any call that makes you uncomfortable.

Email Scams

Bogus emails that send warnings about an account or ask you to update your personal settings are what are referred to as *phishing* scams. The sender is either trying to trick you into providing confidential information or to download malicious software that looks for personal data, including passwords, on

your computer. Use the following tips to avoid being trapped in a phishing scam or leaving personal information online.

- Avoid clicking on email, text message, or pop-up window links from unverifiable sources.
- Do not enter personal information on an unsecured website. When using any online payment services such as your bank, check that the web address begins with <https://>. The “s” at the end of “https” stands for “secure.”
- Type website URLs directly into the address bar; do not follow links.
- When using a public computer at a library or a hotel business center, avoid entering any personal information. Always logout of any website where you entered a password and close the browser.

Use Strong Passwords

One of the best precautions against identity theft to use strong unique passwords of at least 12–14 characters on every online account and your computer and devices such as your smartphone and tablets. If you find that passwords are hard to remember, there are several excellent password management apps that you can purchase which makes using unique passwords easier.

Stay safe online and on the phone by being careful what you share. Be skeptical about any request for information. Verify the validity of an email, letter, or phone call. Safeguard your personal information and monitor your accounts for any suspicious activity.



Sandy Hagman has been a technical writer and trainer for over 25 years. She has served as an in-house trainer for AmLaw 100 law firms and worked for outside vendors who provide training, software, and support to the legal community. As part of her work, she has developed online training on security basics for seniors.

AARP resources on cyber security

At <http://www.aarp.org/home-family/personal-technology/>, you can find useful information on protecting your digital information. Here are some of the articles you can find there. Scroll down the page to find the articles.

- Create Hack-Proof Passwords to Avoid Cyberattacks
- Cyberproof your Phone
- Protecting Your Online Data After You're Gone
- How to Beat the Tech Support Scam

President's Message, continued

love seeing you at the public meetings, but anything beyond that is also welcome and invited, such as bringing visitors to meetings, helping us identify new potential members, suggesting programs you would like see us include, and getting actively involved in one or more of our committees. Let us know how we can get you more involved!

To close, this will be my second year serving in the role of Chapter president, having served first in 2015. I will do my best once again to facilitate the efforts of all the folks who work on behalf of the Chapter. And I am happy to report that for 2018 and beyond we have some exceptional folks ready to take on this role.

I hope to see you all at our monthly meetings, and when our June picnic rolls around again, my wife Sue and I would love to host everyone at our place as we did last year.



Terry Wildman and Sue Magliari at the June 2016 chapter picnic

Blacksburg Chapter wins State AARP Education Award

At its awards banquet in Richmond on December 1, AARP Virginia presented the Blacksburg Chapter with its Education Award. The purpose of the Chapter Awards is to recognize the education, advocacy, and service work of chapters that contribute to achieving AARP's mission by highlighting outcomes and impact on their communities regardless of Chapter size or demographic. These awards give Chapters the opportunity to showcase their work for countless hours of service devoted to enhancing the experience of aging and AARP's mission.

The award recognized multiple education initiatives by the Blacksburg Chapter, including the community-wide conference, *LivingWell@50+*, in September 2015; the Bill Thomas lecture on Elderhood in April 2016; monthly meetings; newsletter, website, and Facebook; and many examples of community engagement.

See photos on p. 5

Don Creamer Wins Andrus Award

AARP's commitment to volunteer service can be traced to its founder, Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, whose motto "to serve, not to be served" has shaped our community service efforts at the national, state, and local levels. Each year, AARP honors the legacy of Dr. Andrus with the AARP Virginia Andrus Award for Community Service.

The annual Andrus Award for Community Service is AARP's most prestigious and visible volunteer award. It recognizes individuals who are sharing their experience, talent, and skills to enrich their communities in ways that are consistent with AARP's mission, vision, and commitment to volunteer service, and that inspire others to volunteer. Only one Virginia volunteer can receive the Award.

As president of the Blacksburg Chapter of the AARP twice (2012, 2016) and as a board member of the chapter for more than a decade, Don G. Creamer has been a visionary leader who has helped to transform the opportunities for people who are 50+ in the New River Valley. He is a member of the program committee of the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech (LLI), launched in 2015. He started and co-chaired the committee that planned and implemented a conference, "Living Well @ 50+," a day-long event of seminars, displays, and presentations for more than 200 people that launched the LLI. He also was the lead organizer for the spring 2016 presentation by Dr. Bill Thomas, "Disrupting Aging," which also attracted more than 200 participants.

These events have changed the conversation about aging in the New River Valley and given people many opportunities to learn, teach, socialize, and develop new skills. Don is currently exploring ways to contribute AARP volunteer effort to a "Time Bank" initiative for donating and receiving needed services in this region. He puts good ideas into action.

Don G. Creamer developed his leadership skills by serving for 45 years in six colleges/universities as a Director, Dean, and Professor. He served as President of the American College Personnel Association-International, the primary professional association for student affairs practitioners and educators. He also served as President of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, which developed the standards by which institutional practice and graduate education in student affairs would be evaluated. In 2005, Creamer retired from Virginia Tech as professor emeritus of higher education.

He has been an active member of the AARP Blacksburg Chapter since his retirement from Virginia Tech. As a chapter member and officer, he has moved the chapter forward to increase the chapter's level of community service and has increased the visibility of AARP in Southwest Virginia and beyond.

He has envisioned an activist and well-linked organization that has real impact on the community and the lives of seniors. And he has led us in managing our work and communication with technology and tools, including the development of a comprehensive website and experimentation with social media.

Scenes from the December Luncheon

Photos by Peter Magolda

Jerry Niles received the chapter Service Award for his work in founding the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech. In presenting the award, Pat Hyer, a co-recipient of last year's award, noted, "I am convinced that Jerry was tapped by Virginia Tech to launch the Lifelong Learning Institute because he has two precious talents—he listens well (especially when his hearing aid batteries are fresh) and he gets things done by engaging others. He was the right person for this job and the early success of LLI is a testament to his efforts. The fact that he is willing to pass out parking passes in the parking lot, fiddle endlessly with projectors and computers, and visit every single class to make sure everything is going well is simply a reflection of who he is and how much he cares that the experience is as good as it can be for everyone."

Jerry is also a volunteer with CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of the New River Valley.



Todd Solberg



Sandy Birch, Chaplain, offers one of her graceful meditations as the luncheon begins.



Sally Anna Stapleton, Community Service chair, received the chapter's Spirit Award. In presenting the award, Pat Ballard, recipient of last year's award, said, "No one exemplifies the spirit of volunteering more than she does. You may see her collecting food in front of Kroger, manning booths at events, working with RSVP and serving on boards."



Mirt Corte



Violet Drake, Caring Committee Chair, and Margaret Kates



Wendy Baldwin, Jennie Reilly, and Angela Little receive special recognition for organizing the expanded and highly successful Health and Wellness Fair of 2016.



Thais Beams, luncheon coordinator, visits with Shirley Strother.



Jim Dau (r), AARP Virginia State Director, congratulates Don Creamer on his Andrus Award in Richmond, December 2016.



L-R: Don Creamer, Terry Wildman, Wendy Baldwin, Carol Crawford, and Ben Crawford attended the awards banquet in Richmond at which Don (Andrus Award) and the chapter (Education Award) were honored with awards (see awards descriptions on p. 3).



At the December 14 luncheon, the Blacksburg AARP chapter presented checks to eight NRV agencies that serve seniors. The chapter gets this money from meeting raffles, member donations, and proceeds from the Health Fair. Receiving the awards on behalf of their organizations, L-R:

Joy Herbert, Blacksburg Community Center; Tammy Caldwell, Christiansburg Community Center—Wellness Fair; Pastor John Wertz, Soup for Seniors (St. Michael Lutheran Church); Jessica Wirgau, Community Foundation of the NRV—Aging in Place and Blacksburg Senior Center Endowment Fund; Chris Blankenship, NRV Agency on Aging—Medical Transport; Mandy Hayes, RSVP—Supplies for Seniors; Pam Teaster, VT Center for Gerontology.

Chapter Activities and Leadership 2016, 2017

Chapter Achievements 2016

by Don Creamer, 2016 president

Awards

Don Creamer won the coveted **Andrus Award**—one given in Virginia each year

Won 2016 State AARP **Chapter Education Award**

Initiatives and Projects

Co-hosted **Dr. Bill Thomas presentation** with the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech, April 23, attended by 250+; conducted a round-table discussion with local organization leaders.

2016 **Health and Wellness Fair**: recruited and formed a new committee, 130 exhibitors, 450+ attended (thanks to Wendy Baldwin, Jennie Reilly, and Angela Little)

Tax-Aide program: served 400+ clients (thanks to Pat Ballard)
Collected 2,460 lbs. of food for Blacksburg and Christiansburg food pantries at the September 13 **annual food drive** (thanks to Sally Anna Stapleton)

Tracked **Virginia and National Legislative initiatives** of interest to AARP objectives (thanks to Val Coluni and Alison Galway)

Co-hosted **social/fundraising event** at White Barrel Winery

Organizational Activities

15 active chapter **committees**

Conducted 8 **public meetings** featuring a variety of programs plus June picnic, celebrating the chapter's 40th anniversary, and December Holiday Luncheon

Provided **hospitality** at public events (thanks to Thais Beams)

Published 9 Chapter **newsletters** (thanks to Carolyn Rude)

Maintained **website** with up-to-date information about the Chapter and Chapter activities (thanks to Don Creamer)

Initiated the use of **MailChimp** for email communications

Initiated a chapter **Facebook** account

Continued **Senior Chronicles** (see www.blacksburgaarp.org)

Community Engagement

Continued and developed robust **partnerships**: AARP Virginia, VCOM, NRV Agency on Aging, Lifelong Learning Institute at VT, Warm Hearth Village Retirement Community, Center for Gerontology at VT, VT Retirees Association, YMCA at Virginia Tech, Community Foundation of the NRV, Blacksburg TimeBank, Downtown Blacksburg Inc.

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

Participated in **Supplies for Seniors Walk-A-Thon** and in **Summer Solstice 5K race**

Served as **sponsor for Warm Hearth Foundation fundraiser**—Cheeseburger in Parrot-dise event

Exhibited at **Hokie Wellness Health & Benefits Fair** and at Blacksburg **Steppin' Out** festival

Chapter Officers 2017

President • Terry Wildman, wiley@vt.edu

Vice President • Wendy Baldwin, wendybburg@gmail.com

Secretary • Pat Hyer, hyerp@vt.edu

Treasurer • Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu

Board of Directors

• 2017—Pat Hyer, Jerry Niles, Shirley Peterson

• 2018—Wendy Baldwin, Ryan Martin, Ray Van Dyke

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

2017 Committee Chairs

AARP of Virginia Liaison—Ben Crawford

AARP Tax Preparation—Pat Ballard

Virginia Tech Retirees Liaison—June Schmidt

Town of Blacksburg/Community Center Liaison—Joy Herbert

Awards—Shirley Peterson

Caring—Violet Drake

Chaplain—Sandy Birch

Community Service—Sally Anna Stapleton

Financial Planning and Audit—June Schmidt

Health Fair—Jennie Reilly, Angela Little, Wendy Baldwin

History—Sally Anna Stapleton

Hospitality—Thais Beams

Legislative—Ryan Martin

LLI Partnership: Pat Hyer, Don Creamer

Membership—Ryan Martin, Tom Alston, Jim Wightman

Newsletter—Carolyn Rude

Program—Terry Wildman

TimeBank Liaison—Val Coluni

Website—Don Creamer

Membership Report 2016

Category	Individuals	Households
AARP 2016 Members	111	69
AARP 2017 Members	110	67
LifeTime Members	34	22
Life Members	17	15
Comp Members	22	22
Honorary Members	2	1
Total Membership	296	196

2017 members are 2016 members who have renewed.

Life members are 90 or older.



1. Town of Blacksburg Council and Airbnb. Our Council is now dealing with an organization (AIRBNB) in an emerging industry. They rent out rooms/lodging to guests with people who are registered with them (home owners/property owners) on a short-term basis. They collect a fee for connecting customers with the providers.

Customers do not pay a room tax fee for this service like those who stay at traditional hotels in our community. Airbnb also does not pay room/lodging taxes for their paid referrals. In a couple of recent cases residential neighborhoods have become almost like tourist zones.

Our Council has developed a number of rules/regulations to minimize any adverse consequences to our neighborhoods. They will be voting on these proposals soon. Other Virginia communities are also discussing similar actions to protect their communities. Some feel that our state legislators should be dealing with this situation so there is uniformity across the state. Please communicate your thoughts to our representatives both in the town and at the state.

2. Tax scammers. It's tax time again and our Internal Revenue Scammers ("IRS") are with us again. So far over \$300 million has been turned over to them. If you receive a contact from anyone claiming to be from the IRS, contact the IRS directly at 800-829-1040, or contact your local police department. The IRS Agency does not initiate phone calls demanding immediate payment of back taxes.

3. Age discrimination? Is it a "Senior Myth?" Would you believe the 55 and over age population in the U.S. is actually the only age group with a rising labor force participation? Also, 60% of workers 65 and older have full time positions! Is this a good example of "LIFE REIMAGINED?"

Volunteers Needed: Prepare the Newsletter for Mailing

Could you spare a few hours during the first week of each month (except for July, August, and December) to prepare printed newsletters for mailing?

The task requires picking up the newsletters at KopyKorner in Christiansburg, affixing mailing labels and tabs, completing an online postal service form, and taking the newsletters to the Blacksburg post office.

This would be a great job for a couple of people to do together. You can affix labels and tabs at home.

If you'd like to know more, please contact Angela Little, anglitt33@gmail.com.

The AARP Tax-Aide program

The 2017 tax-aid program begins February 1 and ends April 15. The location is the Christiansburg Recreation Center (Senior Activity Room). If you need help with your taxes, please call to schedule an appointment: 382-2349.

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

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

9:00 am – noon, Saturday

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

Great Decisions Program Begins Feb. 8

The Montgomery County League of Women Voters and the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech invite the public to participate in **Great Decisions**, an annual eight-week nonpartisan community discussion on international affairs. This award-winning program, using materials prepared by the Foreign Policy Association, is in its 63rd year and is presented in many locations nationwide.

Great Decisions begins Wednesday, February 8, 2017, from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm and will continue for eight consecutive Wednesdays. Sessions will be held at the German Club Manor on Southgate Drive in Blacksburg.

Discussion topics for the 2017 program include: The Future of Europe; Trade and Politics; Conflict in the South China Sea; Saudi Arabia in Transition; US Foreign Policy and Petroleum; Latin America's Political Pendulum; Prospects for Afghanistan and Pakistan; and Nuclear Security.

Great Decisions helps you make sense of these complex topics and rapidly changing events. Read a short essay from a briefing book and view a video prepared by the Foreign Policy Association, then join a discussion with community members facilitated by a local expert, usually a faculty member.

Great Decisions is one of 20 courses offered by the Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI) in Spring 2017. Course participants will be required to become LLI members (\$35), but there is no course fee for Great Decisions, in recognition of the partnership with the League of Women Voters. The Great Decisions briefing book may be purchased for \$25 from Volume II bookstore. A copy will be on reserve in the Blacksburg library for in-library use. A Kindle version is available from Amazon.

Register for Great Decisions and all other LLI programs at the LLI website: www.cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning. If you need registration assistance, please email or call Leah Coffman, LLI Registrar, 540-231-4364 (direct line) or 540-231-5182.



Blacksburg Chapter #2613
Terry Wildman, President
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 **Member Application for 2017**

Name: _____

Spouse/Partner: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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

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

Please consider an additional donation to support our AARP chapter and its projects. \$10____ \$25____ \$50____ \$100____ Other \$____

Donations to the Blacksburg Chapter help us carry out our mission and community service activities while keeping member dues as low as possible. However, donations to the chapter are not tax deductible.

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

Tom Alston - P.O. Box 10082 • Blacksburg, VA 24062