



BLACKSBURG NEWS

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Chapter # 2613

March 2001

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Darrell Clowes

This past month has been an interesting one for me - one dominated by weather. I missed our last meeting because I was visiting my sister at her new home in southern Maine. It was delightful. The weather was cold!! The snow was deep and the woods were wonderful. Their part of Maine, Bridgton, is just forty miles from Conway, New Hampshire but it makes Blacksburg look like an urban setting. During the day the sun sparkles on the two feet deep snow and the light glimmers off the white birches and the rich green of the conifers. We skied downhill and cross country on wonderful slopes with few people and modest tariffs, watched ice sculpture, visited woodworkers, and ate in comfortable country inns and small local eateries. My brother-in-law demonstrated his snow blower and my sister showed how she shopped for survival at their once a week, hour plus trek to a "real" grocery store. It was a fascinating return to the world of my first twenty-five years and a delight. I drove there and back in my old pick-up truck to carry family treasures each way, and the opportunity to wander the back roads of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont in winter was too much to miss. I wallowed in it. It was wonderful. I returned via West Virginia and a two day skiing adventure with friends at Canaan Valley where we experience another nice snow fall and a resurrected southern winter.

I returned to the New River Valley and the flu. Ugh!! Then the threat of the "perfect storm" loomed over us. Our monthly Tuesday, Executive Committee meeting, was snowed out by the inch and a half of snow that strangled the NRV. My sister told me that they received two and a half feet of snow and were forced to call a one hour delay in school! But some good did come out of the whole thing. Inspired by my revisited youth, I set out to the meeting anyway. Most had the good sense to stay home when they had an excuse, but a few showed up. Probably because they had nowhere

2001 BLACKSBURG AARP CHAPTER DUES \$6.00

Dues are coming in slowly with just over 100 paid as of March 9. This is less than half of last year's membership. Please renew your membership.

Ben Crawford is our Membership Chair. If you have friends who should be members, please bring them to the next meeting and encourage them to join. Dues can be paid at the meeting or sent to Ben. His address follows:

**Ben Crawford
200 Cork Street
Blacksburg, VA 24060**

Have I paid my dues for 2001? Check the mail label on your Newsletter. If "2001" appears on the label, you have paid.

Those of you who are 90 years old and older do not pay dues. Your label should read "Life Member." The current membership list has the following members that are 90 years of age or older:

Alice Dewitt	Elizabeth Hoffman
Edward Mundie	Beverly Printz
Nelle Trent	Lottie Trimm

Please tell Ben or Don Elson if you have any correction to make to this list.

else to go that morning. Jim Moore, Frank Lau, Ben Crawford, Vincent Talley and I decided to be a committee anyway despite the fact that we didn't constitute a quorum. After all, what is a committee? A favorite definition of mine calls it .."A group of the unwilling, picked from the unfit, to do the unnecessary". That seemed to fit, so we went ahead.

We talked about the concern that less than 100 of our 200+ members had paid their dues threatened our solvency for the year. Then we joked about the wild extravagances we indulged in that we would miss and then sought out members (not in attendance) who could make up the difference in the budget with one big check. Its fun when you don't have a quorum and are not responsible. Then we soberly decided it was important to be noticed in the community so people would be aware and support us. That led us to consider that we ought to do things worthy to deserve the notice. This was a dangerous line of thought and led us to discuss the two projects we are planning for this spring.

Some progress has already been made. We have engaged the Agency on Aging and the Social Services Department for the county to work with us and identify individuals and families that need assistance with independent living. Joe Maxwell has agreed to head a work group to identify a needed home improvement type project and to complete that project. The state AARP organization will contribute up to \$1,000 and our chapter will provide the planning and the construction work. Joe will also be looking for volunteers from our chapter, from Virginia Tech and from other organizations to assist us.

A second work group is being organized to work with the Agency on Aging and the Social Services Department among others to identify a number of individuals and homes that need assistance for their independent living but less assistance than actual home modification. This group will work to identify actual needs, state AARP will supply a standard "basket" of independent living aids and we will augment that as needed for each family. This is a joint project with the Christiansburg AARP chapter and should serve 20-25 families in each community.

More progress needs to be achieved in the next two months, but we have made a good start. Hopefully these projects will contribute to the community and help establish us as contributors to the community. Hopefully we will gain respect and recognition, but the old fashioned way – by earning it. We invite your participation.

PROGRAM FOR MARCH

March 20: "Colonial Medicine" -- Kitty Brennan
The membership meetings are held in the Blacksburg Community Center at 11:30 a.m. Remember to bring a friend and your bag lunch. Drinks are provided.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST – April 17

Put on Your Calendar! Want to have some good food and good information? If so, come to the Tuesday, April 17 AARP meeting. A pancake breakfast will be served including sausage prepared by head chef Jim Moore and his able assistants from 11:00 a.m. until noon.. The cost will be \$3.00. At noon, Delegate Jim Shuler will give us an overview of what happened this year in the General Assembly and what is the latest word on redistricting. By this fall, legislative districts will be quite different in most of the state.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT FROM RICHMOND

Dan Fleming

The dominant feature of this year's session of the General Assembly centered around the car tax rebate and the budget. One proposal supported by AARP to provide a prescription drug program for low income seniors died in committee as did the proposed increase for health credits for retirees under the Virginia Retirement System. The deregulation of electric utilities was continued despite concerns raised by area legislators. The proposal to have those over age 70 take an eye examination every two years to renew their driver's license passed the Senate and died in a House Committee. Of considerable concern is the effort by the Governor to draw from the state retirement fund to fund the operating budget. The Governor argues that the fund is so large that less needs to be paid into it. Critics point out that it has dropped several billion dollars in the past three months and that when the large numbers of those now working for the state become eligible, there will not be enough money to cover the retirement from the fund. Governor Gilmore disagrees with this position. It is now up to the nine member State Retirement Board to decide what action is to be taken on the Governor's request.

BUDGET FOR 2001

The budget for 2001 was approved at the February board meeting.

INCOME

Dues (225 @\$6.00)	\$1,350.
Interest	40.
Total Income	\$1,390

EXPENSES

Gifts/Donations	\$ 100.
Printing & Mailing Newsletter.	850.
Bulk Mailing Permit	100.
Administrative costs.	125.
Miscellaneous	215.
Total Expenses	\$1,390.

Recommended philanthropic activity (receipts/expenses) \$ 500.

D-DAY MEMORIAL TRIP

Frank Lau

I called Abbott Trailways, to get information about this year's trip to the D-Day Memorial in Bedford. Cecil Driver and myself went last year to the Dedication ceremony and were very impressed by the Park, and also Abbott's handling of the trip.

I spoke to a gentleman in the tour department named Briggs, who confirmed that we could have our own pickup here in Blacksburg, for a minimum of 30 people. The bus holds 54. Cost would be \$19/person, which includes a box lunch. Tentative pickup would be at the Blacksburg Community Center on Patrick Henry Drive.

Particulars of trip On Wednesday June 6th:

Leave 7:00 a.m. from Blacksburg
Unload at close-in area for buses. (This is essential to clear the area for the arrival of President Bush.)
Ceremony starts at 10:00 a.m.

I offered my services as the Group Leader, handling the arrangements with Abbott and the Community Center. **Reservations should be made with me by Friday, March 16th**, so I may confirm with Abbott on March 19th. They **MUST** have the 30 minimum by April 1st.

Please use any one of the following means to contact me.

304 Woodbine Drive, Blacksburg, VA 24060
Phone: (540) 961-0516 FAX: (540) 961-2259
E-mail: franklau@earthlink.net

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

"Waste Water Options for Tom's Creed Basin"
Monday, March 26 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Blacksburg Municipal Building Council Chambers. Sponsored by the League of Women Voters

"Living Downstream: An ecologist looks at cancer and the environment" Sandra Steingrabber
Wednesday, March 28 at 7:30 p.m. in the Donaldson Brown Center. Sponsored by many local groups.

DON'T DO SOMETHING THAT WILL MAKE YOU NEED BLOOD!!

Now is not a good time to need blood. In this Red Cross Appalachian Blood Region of 45 hospitals, there is an average two-day supply. The winter months are the time of year when blood donations are very low.

Blood donations have been down dangerously for the last few years. People have quit donating and there is no such thing as artificial blood. One in 10 patients entering a hospital needs blood and the minimum need is around 3 pints. A case of bleeding ulcers can use 3-10 pints. The Red Cross estimates that 97% of us will need a blood transfusion by age 72, but only 5% of us donate. That's a hard ratio to live with.

The Red Cross provides the country with about 55% of its total needs. Commercial blood collection agencies and companies collect the rest. Both of the local hospitals and the Radford hospital use Red Cross blood and except for a very serious shortage, all of it comes from this blood region. The Region needs about 300 pints a day, which means each of the 45 hospitals needs about 7 pints a day. Fifty-six thousand pints were used in the blood region last year.

Last year there were 240 Red Cross bloodmobiles in this county and they collected about 7200 pints

of blood. The AARP, New Dimension and Senior Center bloodmobile collected 35 of those pints.

There is a 56-day (8 week) wait between donations. Even those of us who would like to donate more often can't. So the community has to depend upon you. There is no age limit to blood donating. **OLD TIRED BLOOD IS A WELCOME AS YOUNG BLOOD IN AN EMERGENCY.** In fact old tired blood is good as young blood any time. We have been the generation that has kept bloodmobiles going. When we were younger, we donated much more blood per person that the young and middle-aged persons do now.

You have between 10 and 12 pints of blood depending upon your size. One pint is seldom missed. Yes, some feel uncomfortable while donating or after it is over but at the same time you should feel wonderful. The whole blood that you donate frequently is broken down into three components, which means your pint of blood may contribute to saving 3 lives.

The AARP, New Dimensions and the Blacksburg Senior Center are sponsoring another bloodmobile on **May 18 between 10:00 a.m. and 6 p.m.** Last year we got 35 pints of blood. That's not much from over 700 people in these three organizations. Yes some of you can't give blood and we understand that. But many of you can but don't. **We need your help!** This year lets go to 70 pints. We can make it if you help. Just come and try. The nurses will excuse you if you medical history says you can't donate. Please mark your calendar for May 18 between 10:00 and 6:00 to come to the Community center and donate blood to the Red Cross!!

FOOD PANTRY CONTRIBUTIONS

Our Blacksburg AARP Chapter is supporting the Food Pantry by providing canned goods and staples. **Please bring several items with you to the March 20 meeting. Set them aside now so you will remember to bring them.** Over 230 families depend on your generosity each month.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

The Board of Directors, at its January 1998 meeting, adopted the following policy relative to Board and/or chapter meetings during inclement weather:

AARP Board and/or chapter meetings will be canceled if Montgomery County Schools are closed due to inclement weather on days AARP Board and/or chapter meetings are scheduled."

TAX HELP

Here we are in Tax Season! AARP in Virginia has put its volunteer preparers through the IRS certification program again. They are now ready, willing, and very able to help our Seniors in the TCE program. In fact, we have three at the Blacksburg Center, and one at Warm Hearth. Even though complicated returns are not handled, very few need to be referred to professionals. This sponsored service is FREE. All they ask is that you get an appointment for Tuesdays at the Center, and Wednesdays at Warm Hearth. Call Frank Lau, 961-0516 or franklau@earthlink.net for further information.

AARP WEBSITE

AARP has its own website, called AARP Webplace, which features information about the Organization's activities and issues of interest to older persons. To access information on a host of topics please visit the site at <http://www.aarp.org>. Some of the information featured includes membership benefits, legislative issues, and health and wellness concerns. The AARP website also features information on this year's election cycle, including materials on selected issues and a Candidate Database and Voter Registration Information.

FRAUD WEB SITES

As a result of the Consumer University held last spring we were provided with a web site that gives a listing of questionable web sites that have been investigated for fraud. Bill Kallio writes that there is a web site with a searchable database where this information can be found:

start at www.dhhs.gov/oig
click on Electronic Reading Room

click on Office of Investigations
click on OIG Exclusions
click on Online Searchable Database

Check out this web site if you suspect a web site may be fraudulent.

FREE CLINIC OF NEW RIVER VALLEY

The Free Clinic of New River Valley needs and welcomes volunteers to join in meeting the needs of residents without health insurance in the New River Valley. A full range of volunteer opportunities is offered including office and clerical, marketing, and all health care professions. For more information, contact Amy Vaughan at 381-0820.

2001 OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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1 st Vice-Pres.	Ben Crawford
2 nd Vice-Pres.	Frank Lau
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Treasurer	Ralph Cecchini
Assoc. Treasurer	Ray Murley
Past President	June Schmidt

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Nominating	Dale Oliver
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New Dimensions Liaison

Jim Moore

Darrel Clowes, President
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