

**From:** AARP Blacksburg Chapter aarpblacksburg@gmail.com  
**Subject:** November 2023 AARP Blacksburg Newsletter  
**Date:** October 28, 2023 at 1:40 PM  
**To:** dgc2@vt.edu



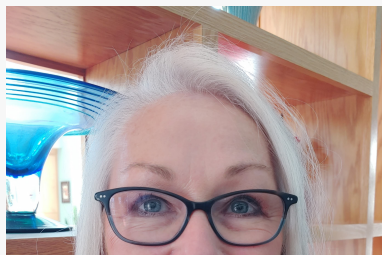
# AARP Blacksburg Newsletter



**November 2023**



**Pam Knox and Fred Piercy, Editors**





**Leslie Pendleton**  
**AARP Blacksburg President**

## **President's Message -- November, 2023**

The fall season and coming holidays always remind me to feel gratitude for the positives in my life. I am thankful for the opportunity to have served as Chapter President over the last three years. It has been an honor as well as a valuable learning experience. All the time and effort dedicated by officers, board members, committee chairs, and volunteers is truly appreciated.

At our November chapter program, our membership will vote on the slate of 2024 officers and board members. Several chapter members drawn from the 30 new members who joined AARP Blacksburg in 2023 are represented on the proposed slate. This is a very exciting and gratifying development as we continue to recoup from the impact of COVID-19 on chapter participation. Over the last three years, while COVID-19 prevented and curtailed member participation in programs, events, and activities, our chapter fared much better than some other chapters across the state. While this fall's new strain of COVID resulted in a new booster vaccine, current participation at our chapter programs averages about 10-15%.

Our newsletter editors, Pam Knox and Fred Piercy, publish a very informative digital newsletter four or five times a year; at a recent board meeting, they reported a 50% open rate. Given these statistics, there are two primary questions for which I have no answers as I vacate my leadership position at the

questions for which I have no answers as I vacate my leadership position at the end of the year. First, which aspects of chapter culture, programs, events, and activities might motivate a larger percentage of dues-paying members to actively participate? Secondly, how can we better engage in effective outreach to elder members who may no longer drive, or may have ongoing health and mobility issues, as well as limited access to technology, factors which can lead to experiences of loneliness and isolation? We all recognize that post-retirement interests, activities, and circumstances change and evolve over time, however, connection with others is a critical factor for successful aging and overall wellness.

I hope you can and will connect with others at the November and December chapter events. I am very excited about the November chapter program by Chris Sokol, “Backyard Birds in Winter” on Tuesday, November 21<sup>st</sup> at the Blacksburg Community Center from 11:30 am-1:00 pm. Attracting winter birds to my yard is something I enjoy, so much so that I took a risk and left my bird feeders up too long in the spring. I attracted a 7-foot bear to our front door three times in one night!

Our annual holiday luncheon is scheduled for Tuesday, December 12 from 11:30am – 1:00pm at the at Warm Hearth Village Center. Program Committee Co-Chair Wendy Baldwin has recruited as our guest speaker Virginia Tech Distinguished Professor Emeritus Paul Siegel, poultry geneticist and 2023 Golden Goose awardee. Undoubtedly, Dr. Siegel’s reflections on his work with chickens, mentoring graduate students, and life in retirement will be an informative and fun way for the chapter to end the year.

Happy holidays to you and your families. Best wishes for a safe, healthy, and fulfilling 2024!

Leslie

## **In This Issue:**

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## **Blacksburg Chapter #2613**

### **Chapter Officers 2023**

#### **Blacksburg Chapter #2613 Chapter Officers 2023**

President – Leslie Pendleton, [lkpendleton@gmail.com](mailto:lkpendleton@gmail.com)  
Vice President – Jerry Niles, [niles@vt.edu](mailto:niles@vt.edu) and Don  
Creamer, [dgc2@vt.edu](mailto:dgc2@vt.edu)  
Secretary – John Burton, [jburton@vt.edu](mailto:jburton@vt.edu)  
Treasurer – Pat Ballard, [pballard@vt.edu](mailto:pballard@vt.edu)

Board of Directors (term ending date)

2024: John Burton, Judith Jones, Beth Grabau, Fred Piercy, Nola Elliot

2025: Pam Knox, Wilma Dotson, Pat Hipkins

Newsletter Editors: Fred Piercy and Pam Knox

AARP Chapter Website: [www.blacksburgaarp.org](http://www.blacksburgaarp.org)

#### **Committee Chairs**

Awards: John Burton, [jburton@vt.edu](mailto:jburton@vt.edu)

Care: Leslie Pendleton, [lkpendleton@gmail.com](mailto:lkpendleton@gmail.com)

Chaplin: Sandy Birch, [birch@vt.edu](mailto:birch@vt.edu)

Community Service: Judith Jones, [judith@vt.edu](mailto:judith@vt.edu)

Financial Review: Jerry Niles, [niles@vt.edu](mailto:niles@vt.edu)

Health and Wellness: Leslie Pendleton, [niles@vt.edu](mailto:niles@vt.edu)

Hospitality: Terry Wildman, [wiley@vt.edu](mailto:wiley@vt.edu)

Leadership Development Co-Chairs: Jerry Niles, [niles@vt.edu](mailto:niles@vt.edu) /Don Creamer, [dgc2@vt.edu](mailto:dgc2@vt.edu)

Legislative: Vacant

LLI Partnership: Jerry Niles, [niles@vt.edu](mailto:niles@vt.edu)

Mailchimp/Website: Don Creamer, [dgc2@vt.edu](mailto:dgc2@vt.edu)

Membership: Wilma Dotson, [wdotson7@juno.com](mailto:wdotson7@juno.com)

Newsletter Co-Chairs: Pam Knox, [knoxphd@comcast.net](mailto:knoxphd@comcast.net) and Fred Piercy, [Piercy@vt.edu](mailto:Piercy@vt.edu)

Program Co-Chairs: Wendy Baldwin, [wendybburg@gmail.com](mailto:wendybburg@gmail.com) and Pat Hipkins, [phipkins@vt.edu](mailto:phipkins@vt.edu)

AARP Virginia Liaison: Ben Crawford, [ben.crawford@vt.edu](mailto:ben.crawford@vt.edu)

Community Foundation Liaison: Vacant

TOB/BCC Liaison: Joy Herbert, [jherbert@blacksburg.gov](mailto:jherbert@blacksburg.gov)

VTRA Liaison: Vacant

## **Loneliness and Older Adults: Solutions to a Growing Epidemic**



**by**

**Fred Piercy and Pam Knox**

Alice, a 77-year-old widow, hunkered down during the covid pandemic, but even now she stays to herself most days in her small apartment. She doesn't hear much from her son in Oregon. She assumes that he's busy with his job and family. Her friends have drifted off or died and her arthritis keeps her from doing the hobbies that she used to enjoy. For company, Alice leaves her TV on. She drinks more wine these days, sometimes quietly cries to herself, and longs for connection. She doesn't feel much hope that life will change. What she does feel is lonely.

Human beings, by nature, are social creatures. We all need human connection, the feeling of closeness and affection of friends, family, and community. We take for granted the presence of others. Their absence can make us aware of our isolation and can result in loneliness. Loneliness is a complex emotion that we are all susceptible to, regardless of age, gender, or ethnicity.

It is important not to confuse being alone with being lonely. One can be alone (i.e., in solitude) and not experience loneliness. That is, one can be happy alone. Solitude is voluntary and can have mental health benefits. For many people, solitude is about recharging through spending time on one's own. On the other hand, the loneliness that Alice experiences is usually involuntary and involves increasing feelings of separation, abandonment, or rejection by others despite her craving social connections. It is often accompanied by spiraling feelings of isolation, sadness, and despair. There are lots of Alices in the world.

United States Surgeon General Vivek Murthy warns of the growing “epidemic of loneliness and isolation.” Even before COVID, half of all American adults experienced loneliness and disconnection from their communities. This loneliness threatens American’s health in many ways. **According to Murthy (2020), when people are disconnected from friends, family, and communities, there is a sharp rise in their risk of heart disease, dementia, depression, stress, alcoholism, and drug abuse, stroke, and poor life expectancy.** Research has found that loneliness can also generate anger, resentment, and even paranoia. It is as bad, or worse, for our health, as being obese or smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day. Holt-Lunstad, Smith, and Layton’s (2015) study of the power of human connections found that, in contrast to those with weak social relationships, individuals with strong social relationships are 50% less likely to die prematurely.

Loneliness is particularly problematic for seniors. Consider these statistics from the Associated Retirement Community Operators (ARCO) in Britain:

- Individuals over the age of 65 report that they spend more than 100 days alone each year

- 24% of people over 65 reported feeling lonely some or most of the time
- 1 in 5 people over the age of 75 may not speak to or see another person for an entire weekend

Dr. Jamie Wilson, UK dementia psychiatrist at the National Health Service, explains that older people in the UK are at risk of loneliness as a result of:

- Retirement
- Living alone
- Health decline, including fear of injury or illness
- Becoming dependent on care
- Loss of spouse
- Lack of support from friends or families, often due to relocation or diminished friendship networks
- Lack of hobbies and other activities in their lives
- Environmental factors (e.g., inaccessibility issues, lack of public transport) Insufficient funds and poor living conditions
- Literacy issues and language barriers
- Discrimination, crime, and safety concerns which limit their opportunities to engage in their community.

While the ARCO and Wilson articles focus on Britain, the same risks are present across the United States. Dr. John [Cacioppo](#), a researcher at the University of Chicago, states that, “loneliness serves as a signal to attend to and take care of the social connections that define us as a species.”

Symptoms of loneliness include:

- Lack of interest or motivation
- Loss of interest in hobbies
- No interest in socializing
- Sleep disturbances or memory problems
- Unexplained or aggravated aches and pains
- Neglect of personal hygiene and other daily routines
- Seemingly unexplained sadness or feelings of despair

Depression, cognitive decline, deterioration of one's mental health and physical condition can increase the risks of death in adults 52 years of age and older. When older people living alone develop symptoms and lack social connections, they tend to not seek medical assistance. Loneliness and isolation can have a devastating impact on the health of an older adult, particularly around holidays when memories of past family gatherings come to mind. Murthy's general report (2023) is a wake-up call to action. As he states, "Our individual relationships are untapped resources, a source of healing in plain sight...to help us live healthier, more productive, and fulfilled lives." All of us can improve our lives by strengthening our connections and relationships.

### **What Can You Do?**

Below we share a few ways you can address loneliness in your life. This list is long but certainly not exhaustive. You may think of others, as well.

**Volunteer.** The more you give, the more you get. Helping others supports connection, but also gets you out of yourself. Murthy states that service activities are particularly helpful in dealing with loss. One idea: Engage in intergenerational opportunities by being a mentor. You have lots to offer. Check into organizations such as the Big Brothers Big Sisters (540.449.2698) or the Montgomery County Christmas Store (549-381-0585). Warm Hearth Village also engages in intergenerational projects.

**Try meditation.** Mindfulness activities like meditation reduce stress and support a more positive, centered lifestyle. If you join a mindfulness group through a local organization (e.g., Blacksburg's Inspired Elders group, [www.Instillmindfulness.org](http://www.Instillmindfulness.org)), it also becomes one more way to increase your circle of friends.

**Take community classes on subjects that interest you.** For example, investigate the wide range of classes you can take at your local library, arts or recreation centers, or the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech (Link: <https://www.cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning/>).

**Get involved in local community activities.** These will vary according to



where you live, but the chances are you'll have access to a singing or walking group, dance classes, book clubs, bridge, bingo, quiz nights, and faith groups. Check out the public library and community centers as well as websites like the [NextThreeDays.com](http://NextThreeDays.com) for what's happening in the area.

**Check out church activities.** Churches offer many ways to meet people. There are social functions, potlucks, dances, religious interest groups and other activities. Most churches have websites so you can see first what a particular church has to offer.

**Try Meetup.com.** Almost every community has a [meetup.com](http://meetup.com). Whatever your interest, from hiking to reading to bridge, knitting, networking and skill sharing, there are thousands of people who share it on Meetup. Events are happening every day—sign up for free to join the group of your choice.

**Stretch yourself with challenges that get you moving and meeting others.** For example, challenge yourself to take 2-3 walks a week, to say hello to 2-3 strangers a week, or to begin 2-3 conversations with people you don't know well each week.

**Take time to reach out to a friend or family member.** If you feel down, it is easy to think nobody wants to visit you. Express yourself authentically. If you would like to see someone, don't stay silent. Tell them and plan a time. Friends, family, and neighbors will appreciate receiving an invitation to come and spend some time with you. Remember, the more you reach out to others, the more they will reach back to you.

**If you don't have friends or a family, make one.** One of the advantages of aging is the opportunity to create new family or friendship groups. If there is someone that you think might be interesting to get to know, step up and introduce yourself. Ask questions. When you express interest, people often reciprocate. Stretch that friendship circle by being inclusive. Actively engage with people of different backgrounds and experiences.

**Keep in touch by phone.** Having a chat with a friend or relative over the phone can be the next best thing to being with them regardless of whether they

phone can be the next best thing to being with them regardless of whether they are near or far away. Call people and answer their calls. Texting may be efficient but it's not personal. And when you do call, don't multitask. Listen fully. Remember to focus on the quality of the time that you are sharing.

**Learn how to use a computer.** If your friends and family live far away, a good way to stay in touch, especially with grandchildren, is by using a personal computer, smartphone, or tablet. If you don't know how to use one, libraries and community centers often hold regular training courses that help older people learn basic computer skills. For example, computer science students at Virginia Tech assist older adults with technology through their CS Squared Program. The class meets on Fridays from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm at the Blacksburg Community Center. (Link: <https://sites.google.com/vt.edu/cssquared/home>; Email: cs2@vt.edu). (You can also ask a grandchild to teach you.)

A smartphone or tablet can be especially useful if you can't get around very easily. And with a computer, smartphone or tablet, you can share emails and photos with family and friends, have free video chats using services such as Skype (Link: <http://www.skype.com>), Zoom (Link: <https://zoom.com>), FaceTime (Link: <https://apple.com/facetime>) and What's App (Link: <https://whatsapp.com>) and make new online "friends" or reconnect with old friends on social media sites such as Facebook or Instagram (Link: <https://www.instagram.com>).

**Be kind to yourself.** Stop judging and blaming yourself. After all, you have now decided to reach out and connect with others. Good for you! Give yourself time. Remember, you don't need a whole room of friends. Just a few will do. But remember, connections take time.

**Fill your diary or calendar.** You can feel less lonely if you plan the week ahead and put things in your diary or calendar to look forward to each day, like a walk in the park or going to a local coffee shop, library, sports center, movie theater or museum. If you say hello to folks on the Huckleberry Trail, they usually say hi back. Go to a school board meeting, town hall or government hearing where people gather to engage constructively. You may find someone you feel connected to there.

**Read more about loneliness and what you can do about it.** For example, we suggest you go to the national AARP Bulletin to read about loneliness. (Link to a useful article on loneliness: <https://www.aarp.org/health/healthy-living/info-2018/loneliness-isolation-personal-stories.html>). Also, check out self-help books and articles. Psychology Today is a good source of self-help material (e.g., <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us>).

**Seek help in times of struggle.** Reach out to family, friends, health care providers, or counselors. Perhaps you'd like to talk with a mental health professional about your loneliness and what you can do about it. If so, consult your doctor or contact the following mental health facilities: New River Valley Community Services (540-961-8400); the Virginia Tech Family Therapy Center (540-231-7201), or visit the Psychology Today therapist referral service (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists>), or BetterHealth Online Therapy (<https://www.betterhealth.com>) or even the 988 crisis line.

In sum, loneliness is both common AND something you can deal with. Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, "It is not as important where we stand as it is in what direction we are moving."

## References

*Our epidemic of loneliness and isolation*, 2023, The U.S. Surgeon General's advisory on the healing effects of social connection and community. Washington, DC: Office of the Surgeon General.

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Murthy, V. H. (2020). *Together. The healing power of human connection in a sometimes lonely world.* New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Wilson, J. (2013, March 18). Battling the loneliness epidemic, *Hometouch*. (Link: <https://myhometouch.com/articles/battling-the-loneliness-epidemic>).

## Active Aging -- Your Ticket to Health



by

**Bianca Macias, MPH, CPH; Malorie Polster, MPH, CHES; Alison Vaux-Bjerke, MPH, MCHES; Katrina L. Piercy, PhD, RD, ACSM-CEP, CDR, U.S. Public Health Service**

**Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**

Older adults can gain big rewards from **sitting less and moving more**. As we age, the activities we do in everyday life – even basics like walking, getting dressed, or standing up from a chair – can become harder. Being more physically active can help make these everyday tasks easier and improve your quality of life. Being active comes with additional benefits too, like better sleep, less pain, and a better mood.

Physical activity can slow the progression or delay the onset of some chronic diseases, such as high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes. For older adults, regular physical activity is important to reduce the risk of falling and injuries related to a fall, improve blood pressure, increase fitness level, and build muscular strength.

In addition to the many health benefits of physical activity, it can also give older adults a chance to spend time with friends and family, enjoy the outdoors, have more energy, and live on their own for longer. If you're not as active as you used to be, that's okay. **It is never too late to start being more active!**

### **How much and what kinds of physical activity do older adults need?**

According to the [Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#), older adults need a mix of physical activity for health benefits

**MOVE YOUR WAY**

### What types of physical activity do older adults need to stay healthy?

- Moderate-intensity aerobic activity**  
Anything that gets your heart beating faster counts.  
at least **150 minutes a week**
- Muscle-strengthening activity**  
Activities that make your muscles work harder than usual count.  
at least **2 days a week**
- Mix in activities to improve your balance!**  
Aim for a mix of aerobic, muscle-strengthening, and balance activities.  
Try activities that count as more than 1 activity type, like dancing, sports, or tai chi.

If that's more than you can do right now, **start slow and do what you can** — even 5 minutes of physical activity has real health benefits.

Walk. Run. Dance. Play. **What's your move?**

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Older adults should be as active as their abilities and conditions allow. **Even 5 minutes of physical activity has real health benefits.**

Additional tips:

- **Break it up** – Spread activity throughout the week, rather than trying to do it all in one day.
- **Do what you can** – Doing some activity is better than doing none at all!
- **Start slow** – Gradually increase physical activity to reduce the risk of

injury. Build up to more physical activity over time.

- **Find what works** – Activities that are fun, like playing with the grandchildren, or activities that are a chore (literally), all count!
- **Plan it out** – Use an [activity planner](#) to set goals, pick activities to try, and track your progress.

You can visit the [Move Your Way® website](#) to find even more tips and information about physical activity. Try out the [interactive activity planner](#) to build a personalized weekly physical activity plan, set goals, and track your progress.

There are many ways to get active!

- **Find a partner:** Family, friends, and caregivers can partner up to be active together. Activity can be more fun with a buddy!
- **Participate in a group:** Group settings like fitness classes at the community center or walking groups at the local park can increase activity and have the added bonus of providing friendship, emotional support, and accountability.
- **Work with a professional:** Receiving guidance from a health professional or trainer can help participants set goals, monitor progress, maintain accountability, and feel accomplished.

To get the latest information about the Physical Activity Guidelines, Move Your Way campaign, and other physical activity updates, sign up for [the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion's physical activity listserv](#).

### **For professionals who work with older adults**

Check out the [Physical Activity Guidelines Midcourse Report: Implementation Strategies for Older Adults](#) to learn more strategies to support physical activity among older adults in a variety of settings.

## **AARP Tax-Aide Program in the New River Valley**





**Pat Ballard**

It's never too early to think about income tax preparation. The local AARP Tax-Aide Program will be in full swing again this year. This program is always looking for new volunteers.

The program operates out of the Christiansburg Recreational Center on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday afternoons and Saturday mornings. We also make a trip to the Senior Center in Giles County and to the Shawsville Library for a day of tax preparation.

Tax Preparers are required to pass an IRS test before they can prepare taxes. The Tax-Aide program provides instruction sessions to enable everyone to pass the test and to prepare returns within our scope. Last season program volunteers prepared 807 tax returns with 22 volunteers.

There are positions that are administrative in nature and do not require someone to pass the test to be a tax preparer. Examples would be public relations, marketing, local coordinator, and client facilitator. If you or anyone you know may be interested in working with the Tax-Aide program, please have them get in touch with Pat Ballard at 540-449-1804 or by email at [pballard@vt.edu](mailto:pballard@vt.edu).

"In the midst of winter I finally learned that there was in me an invincible summer."  
-- Albert Camus

## **Dr. Paul B. Siegel to Speak at AARP Blacksburg's Annual Holiday Luncheon**



**Dr. Paul B. Siegel**

Our annual holiday luncheon is scheduled for Tuesday, December 12 from 11:30am – 1:00pm at the Warm Hearth Village Center, 3287 Warm Hearth Drive, Blacksburg. (Registration information will be sent to you at a later date.) Our speaker for this event will be Virginia Tech Distinguished Professor Emeritus Paul B. Siegel, poultry geneticist and 2023 Golden Goose awardee. The title of Dr. Siegel's presentation is, "Retirement for Me" in which he will reflect on his work as a chicken geneticist, his mentoring of graduate students, and his life in retirement.

About Dr. Siegel: Imagine a single science experiment – run by a single scientist – for 65 years and counting. Paul B. Siegel doesn't have to imagine it. He lives it. Siegel, 90, still visits nearly every day the Virginia Tech lab where he began his seminal work with chickens in 1957. That's when Siegel



where he began his seminal work with chickens in 1937. That's when Siegel began breeding two lines of chickens, one high-weight and one low-weight; those lines continue today, along with another longtime set of lines related to immunity. This work is well-known to poultry scientists throughout the world and serves as a foundation for modern methods of raising and breeding chickens, a major global food source. The impact of Siegel's work on humans, rather than chickens, is perhaps his most profound contribution: he has trained and mentored hundreds of students throughout his distinguished career.

## Upcoming Chapter Speakers



**Chris Sokol**

**Tuesday, November 21, 2023- *Backyard Birds in Winter: How to Identify Birds that Overwinter in the NRV.* Speaker: Chris Sokol, NRV Bird Club Member and Virginia Master Naturalist. 11:30-noon, coffee and conversation; noon-1 PM presentation. Place: Community Room, Blacksburg Community Center.**

In 2015, Chris Sokol trained as a Virginia Master Naturalist (VMN) and is currently serving as the New River Valley VMN Chapter President. She discovered the New River Valley Bird Club during her training and has been an active member and “birder” ever since, birding at every opportunity. She is happy to share what she knows while volunteering at Claytor Lake State Park’s Discovery Center, leading hikes, and giving presentations at local libraries.

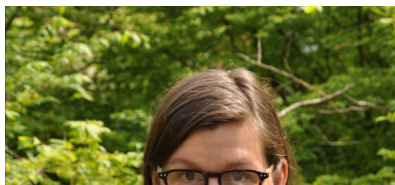
Discovery Center, reading hikes, and giving presentations at local libraries.



**Chief Todd Brewster**

**Tuesday, January 16, 2024 - Seniors and Safety, Especially When Living Alone. Speaker: Blacksburg Chief of Police Todd Brewster.** 11:30-noon, coffee and conversation; noon-1 PM presentation. Place: Community Room, Blacksburg Community Center.

Chief Brewster is a native of Tazewell, Virginia, and a graduate of Radford University. He began his career as a Dispatcher for the Blacksburg Police Department in 1997 and became an officer in 1999. He continued to advance in his career with the department, working through the ranks of sergeant and lieutenant while supervising the Accident Reconstruction Team and serving as the DMV Grant Coordinator. Chief Brewster was promoted to Police Services Captain in November 2020 where he has since overseen the criminal investigations unit, accreditation, community outreach, recruiting and hiring, and the training unit. He has also served as a volunteer firefighter with the Blacksburg Fire Department as well as the Christiansburg Fire Department.





**Carol Davis**

**Tuesday, February 20, 2024 - Your Solar Questions – Answered! Speaker: Carol Davis**, Blacksburg Sustainable Program. 11:30-noon, coffee, and conversation; noon-1 PM presentation. Place: Community Room, Blacksburg Community Center.

Carol Davis is the Sustainability Manager for the Town of Blacksburg, Virginia. In this role, she works on a broad range of sustainability issues, including: climate mitigation, adaptation and resiliency planning; alternative transportation; land use policies that advance green building and affordable housing; local and state energy policy; aging-in-place; water quality; and stewardship of public lands. In her spare time, She also volunteers at the Poverty Creek Trails Coalition and the Montgomery County Dialogue on Race and serves on the boards of Sustainable Blacksburg, The New River Land Trust, and the New River Valley Bike Kitchen. Davis is an alumni advisor for Alpha Phi Omega, a gender inclusive service fraternity at Virginia Tech.

## **AARP Blacksburg Community Events**

### **Blacksburg Recreation Center**

Don't forget to check out the offerings with Joy Herbert, Senior Supervisor at 540.443.1142 or [jherbert@blacksburg.gov](mailto:jherbert@blacksburg.gov) . Check in for more information on joy rides to:

- The Green Valley Book Fair and Shenandoah Heritage Farmers Market

- "Miracle on 34" Street" at the Carter Theatre
- "A Christmas Carol" at the Wohlfarth Haus Dinner Theatre, Wytheville
- Mystery Dine outs
- Holiday Buffet at the Hotel Roanoke
- Pennsylvania Dutch Country

Additional Offerings include:

Party Bridge (donation)	Wednesday/Friday	12 PM	
Mahjong (Free)	First and third Tuesday	1 PM	
Spunsters (Free)	Thursday	1PM	
Knitters (Free)	Second Wednesday every month		10AM-12PM
Book Club (Free)	Thursday, November 9	2PM	

*Six Feet Deep Dish* by Mindy Quigley

Thursday, December 14 2PM

*Syria's Secret Library* by Mike Thomson

Date Night Dance Class (\$19 per class)

Tuesday November 8 7-9PM East Coast Swing

Wednesday, December 7 7-9PM West Coast Swing

Tuesday, January 10 7-9PM Waltz

### **Christiansburg Parks and Rec**

Contact Tammy Caldwell for Senior programming details at [tcaldwell@christiansburg.org](mailto:tcaldwell@christiansburg.org) or 540.382.2349 ext. 2003.

Bunco Second Wednesday

Mahjong Wednesdays 1-4 PM

Move and Groove, Scrabble, Aerobics, Balance and more...

### **NOVEMBER**

#### Thursday, November 2

Lee Worley in Concert

Rising Silo Farm Brewery, Blacksburg

6:00 PM-8:30 PM

#### Friday, November 3

Clover Hollow in Concert  
Rising Silo Farm Brewery, Blacksburg  
6:00 PM-8:30 PM

Javon Jackson with Nikki Giovanni and Nnenna Freelon  
Moss Arts Center at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg  
7:30 PM- 9:00 PM

Saturday, November 4

Genealogy Saturdays  
Alexander Black House and Cultural Center, Blacksburg  
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Craig Vaughn in Concert  
Chateau Morrisette, Floyd  
1:00 - 4:00 PM

Blue Phoenix in Concert  
Rising Silo Farm Brewery, Blacksburg  
6:00 PM-8:30 PM

Sunday, November 5

Bruce Mahin in Concert  
Chateau Morrisette, Floyd  
1:00 - 4:00 PM

Wednesday, November 8 & Thursday, November 9

Kate Mills in Concert  
Rising Silo Farm Brewery, Blacksburg  
5:30 PM-8:30 PM

Medea on Media  
Seongbukdong Beedoolkee Theatre  
Moss Arts Center at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg  
7:30 PM – 9:00 PM

Friday, November 10

Craig Vaughn in Concert  
Chateau Morrisette, Floyd  
1:00 - 4:00 PM

Shade Tree Mechanics in Concert  
Rising Silo Farm Brewery, Blacksburg  
5:30 PM-8:30 PM

Saturday, November 11

Greg Wilson Trio in Concert  
Chateau Morrisette, Floyd  
1:00 - 4:00 PM

Mist on the Mountain  
Rising Silo Farm Brewery, Blacksburg  
5:30 PM-8:30 PM

Sunday, November 12

Women's Volleyball  
NC State vs. Virginia Tech  
Cassell Coliseum, Blacksburg

Two for the Road in Concert  
Chateau Morrisette, Floyd  
1:00 - 4:00 PM

Monday, November 13

VT Philharmonic in Concert  
Moss Arts Center at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg  
7:30 PM-8:30 PM

Thursday, November 16

Furious Jones in Concert  
Rising Silo Farm Brewery, Blacksburg  
5:30 PM-8:30 PM

5:30 PM-8:30 PM

Performance: Invoke  
Moss Arts Center at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg  
7:30 PM- 9:00 PM

Friday, November 17

Sam Bendula in Concert  
Rising Silo Farm Brewery  
6:00PM-9:00 PM

Saturday, November 18

Chris Shepard in Concert  
5:30 PM-8:30 PM

Sunday, November 19

Women's Volleyball:  
Wake Forest vs VT  
Cassell Coliseum, Blacksburg  
1:00 PM – 3:00PM

Wednesday, November 22

Women's Volleyball:  
Clemson vs VT  
Cassell Coliseum, Blacksburg  
1:00 PM – 3:00PM

Saturday, November 25

Women's Volleyball:  
UVA vs VT  
Cassell Coliseum, Blacksburg  
1:00 PM – 3:00PM

Thursday, November 30

Performance: Deantoni Parks (Technoself)  
Moss Arts Center at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg

7:00PM – 8:15 PM and 9:00PM-10:15PM

## **DECEMBER**

Saturday, December 2

Genealogy Saturdays

Alexander Black House & Cultural Center, Blacksburg

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Roanoke Symphony Orchestra's "Holiday Pops Spectacular"

Moss Arts Center at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg

4:00 PM- 5:30 PM

Sunday, December 17

The Messiah

Blacksburg Master Chorale

Moss Arts Center, Blacksburg

4:00 PM- 5:30 PM

## **JANUARY**

Tuesday January 23

Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis performs "Max Roach at 100"

Moss Arts Center, Blacksburg

7:30 PM – 9:00 PM

Wednesday, January 31

Cirque Mechanics: Zephyr a Whirlwind of a Circus

Moss Arts Center, Blacksburg

7:30 PM- 9:00PM

**Ben Crawford Recognized at  
Salvation Army's Annual Banquet**

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### **Robert (Ben) Crawford**

The Salvation Army Post of the New River Valley held their annual banquet in Christiansburg in March, 2023. Christiansburg Mayor Michael Barber and Pulaski Mayor David Horton (by video) made comments. The popular Salvation Army Division Band played during the reception and dinner. **Ben Crawford of Blacksburg, a member of the board of directors of AARP Blacksburg, was honored with a plaque and lifetime board membership for his service as Advisory Board Chair from 2017 to 2022.**

The Salvation Army NRV Post serves Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski counties and the City of Radford. The Post in 2022 fed more than 3,333 persons, provided groceries to nearly 4,500, emergency assistance to 1,125 and gave Angel Tree toys and clothes (for Christmas) to more than 1,000, including 64 needy seniors.

The Post operates a family store, soup kitchen, food pantry, social service office, Angel Tree program and more. The soup kitchen serves hot and tasty meals Monday and Friday from noon to 1:00pm. The 30-day food pantry is open Tuesday and Thursday from 2:30 to 3:30pm and the Angel Tree program purchases Christmas gifts for seniors and children up to 12 years old.

Some 60 million meals are served each year by the American Salvation Army across the USA.

# AARP Blacksburg and The Common Ingredient (TCI)-NRV Partner for Hunger Action Month



**Volunteers Pictured above: The top picture includes, from left to right, Don Creamer, Ann Deaton, and Pat Ballard. The bottom right picture includes, from left to right, Wilma Dotson and Deborah Martin.**

**by  
Leslie Pendleton**

September was Hunger Action Month across the United States. Organizations

such as Feeding America, AARP, and the nationwide network of food banks, along with multitudes of volunteers, stand together to fight hunger.

On Sunday, September 17, volunteers from AARP Blacksburg and The Common Ingredient (TCI)-NRV joined together for a grocery storefront food collection event at Kroger on South Main Street in Blacksburg. In less than four hours, generous shoppers and employees donated enough groceries to fill the entire back seat and bed of a truck. Through this “Neighbors Helping Neighbors” collaborative project, needed food items were collected and delivered to the 512 Food Pantry at the Giles County Christian Service Mission on Wenonah Avenue in Pearisburg. Many thanks to all volunteers as well as Kroger shoppers and employees for helping to make our first AARP Blacksburg and TCI-NRV collaboration a huge success.

"When we are young, we think change is a 100-yard dash. As we get older we think it's a marathon. Eventually we see a relay race."

-- Ellen Goodman

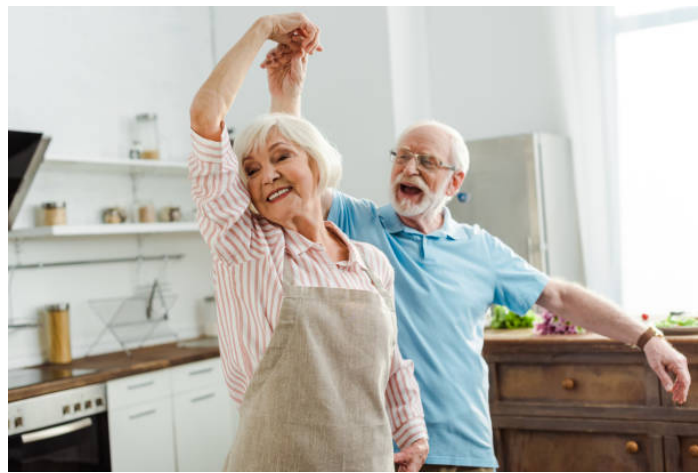
## **Todd Solberg Makes an Unexpected Donation**



**Todd Solberg with Jerry Niles (Left) and John Burton (Right)**

Longtime Blacksburg AARP Chapter member **Todd Solberg** won the monthly 50-50 lottery for food assistance at the October AARP Blacksburg speaker's meeting. Amazingly, this was the second meeting in a row where Todd held the winning ticket. And, just as he had done at a previous meeting, Todd donated his winnings (\$32 this month) to add to the contributions going to the food bank collection. **THANK YOU TODD!**

## **Your Thoughts on Later Life Relationships and Related Topics?**



**by  
Pam Knox and Fred Piercy**

Remember those books you read as a child that answered questions like “Why is the sky blue?” Life was easier then. Now, if we ask Siri or Alexa a question like, “What should I do with my life?”, we get an answer like: “I’m not sure who that is. What’s your wife’s name?” As seniors, questions, particularly those about later-life relationships, are sometimes harder to express, and answers from a robot (sorry Siri) are not particularly helpful.

For instance, here are some later-life relationship questions that may be meaningful to many of us and deserve honest, thoughtful, human answers:

- Why is it harder to make new friends?
- Who am I when I don’t have a job/career to define me?

- Is it okay to want a romantic relationship as a single person in my 70s or 80s?
- How can I meet people whether for friendship or more at this point in life?
- What can I say in an on-line dating profile?
- What to do and not to do when dating as a senior?
- Who needs a pre-nuptial? Why?
- How do you blend two families when all the kids are adults?

As your AARP Blacksburg newsletter editors, we are interested in writing an every-now-and-then column (we are retired, after all) on later-life relationships for the AARP Blacksburg Newsletter. We are both retired mental health professionals in our 70s who are engaged to be married, so all these questions have personal meaning for us, as well.

Do you have questions or topics related to later-life relationships that we might address in our column? While we may not have all the answers we can certainly help find them out for you. Please submit your questions or topics to Pam Knox at [knoxphd2@gmail.com](mailto:knoxphd2@gmail.com). Unless you tell us otherwise, what you say will be anonymous and treated with respect. Our column, "Relationships in the Gray Area," will start in the next issue.

**Blacksburg Chapter**  
**Membership Application for 2024 (or join online:**  
[blacksburgaarp.org](http://blacksburgaarp.org))

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Partner: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
 New \_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_ Life Member (90+) (free) \_\_\_\_ Lifetime member \_\_\_\_

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 check and this form to AARP Blacksburg, P.O. Box 10082, Blacksburg, VA 24062.

***Dues deadline: January 31, 2024***



Forward

*AARP BLACKSBURG CHAPTER NEWSLETTER*

Fred Piercy and Pam Knox, Editors

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