

Membership Meeting –TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2007

ENTERTAINMENT BY MOOD SWING

Blacksburg Senior Center

11:30 a.m. - Bag lunch, music and fellowship

Program from 12 noon to 1:00 p.m.

To forestall the winter blahs, we have scheduled a delightful program for our first 2007 membership meeting. *Mood Swing*, a group of local musicians (**Karl Sanzenbach, Bob Thomas and Cathy Stell**) will entertain us with music from the 30's and 40's. This is the music that many of us listened to as we grew up. Sit back, relax and listen. We look forward to a real treat and a program you don't want to miss. Invite a friend!!



2007 Chapter Officers and Board at December Holiday Luncheon

Seated: (l to r) Angela Little, Connie Anderson, Nancy Eiss

Standing: Brian Allen, Jim Wightman, Carl McDaniels, June Schmidt,

Jo Ann Underwood, Dan Fleming and 2007 President Jim Gaines

JIM'S JOTS

Jim Gaines, President

Carl McDaniels really took our chapter into the stratosphere with a series of new beginnings and a great handling of our regular activities; a web page, a history, a record number of members, a radio show, a television show, (cable channel 2--WTOB), a book fair, and whatever I have failed to mention. So the stratosphere is pretty well taken care of for a while. Let's revisit some of our old standbys, namely, driver safety; tax-aide; home safety, comfort and convenience; and identity theft. We can position ourselves to be the SW Virginia focal point in these four activities, sending out missionaries to help the whole area. Let's go to it!

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

The three maladies which effect the membership of all organizations like our local chapter of AARP are: MOVE away, FADE away and PASS away. Our membership now stands at 389 which includes 10 Complimentary; 16 Life Time; 7 Life; and, 2 Honorary members. First, the good news - 103 members have already renewed their membership for 2007. Won't you join them now? 218 members paid their 2006 dues but now owe for 2007. A convenient membership renewal form is found on the last page of this Newsletter. You may want to consider becoming a Life Time member at the bargain basement price of \$100 per single / joint couple and never have to worry again about whether you owe the present year dues. Now the not-so-good news: 33 members have still not paid their 2005 dues. This fact places an undue burden on the membership committee. By recent board action, persons not paying their dues by May 1st will be dropped from the membership.

A postcard welcoming new members to our chapter is now in use. 500 copies of our November Newsletter with a cover letter were mailed to Virginia Tech retirees who are not members of our local chapter. 17 persons have already joined the chapter as a result of this mailing. We hope that a number of other retirees, who may be members of national AARP, will also choose to become members of our local chapter. Any questions about membership can be directed to *Jim Wightman* at 552-2007 or jpdad@bev.net.

CALENDAR NOTES

Monday, January 15, 10 a.m., Senior Room, Blacksburg Recreation Center: BEV Seniors invites you to a special presentation on **Seniors and Cell Phones**. *Young Seok Lee*, doctoral student at VT, will conduct a Q & A session about cell phone usage. Ever have problems finding or using features? Most manufacturers follow a pattern in design, so he should have answers for you. *Young* may have some follow-up on his survey about Seniors' use of the cell phone. What survey? Well, we shall have more of the surveys with us, designed to give insight into what Seniors want from them, from rare usage to incessant. Contact me at (cell 558-8849). *Frank Lau*.

Tuesday, February 20, Chapter AARP Membership Meeting: Most seniors prefer to continue living in our own homes as we age, even when this entails some hardships. Dr. *Larry Alexander*, publisher of "Home Sweet Home," a free newsletter for seniors, will talk to us about how to make our homes safer and more accommodating so we can live longer and more enjoyably in them. *Harriett Cooper*

BLACKSBURG AARP CARES

The *Caring Committee* will send members *get well, sympathy or thinking of you* cards. Contact *Kathy Jeffers* (951-3946) and let her know the type of card to send. Please include the member's name and address so the card can be sent in a timely manner.

To the world you might be one person, but to one person you might be the world.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

While the dominant topic for the upcoming session of the General Assembly is expected to be how to fund ever growing transportation needs, there are also several proposals of interest to seniors as well. Here are some items proposed by *Governor Kaine*. He wants to remove more than 300,000 Virginians from the tax rolls by increasing the filing thresholds for individuals and married couples. The threshold for a single filer would go from \$7,000 to \$12,000. For couples, it would go from \$12,000 to \$24,000. About half of those individuals pay taxes now. The other half have their pay docked and have to apply for refunds at the end of the year. It appears at this point that this proposal will be approved since it costs very little.

Kaine also proposes adding \$700,000 to help area agencies on the aging expand meal deliveries to an additional 135,000 seniors. In health care, he wants to raise the salaries of nursing instructors by 10 percent. The nursing shortage in Virginia will reach 16,000 by 2015 if nothing is done to provide more nursing educators.

Another financial problem facing Virginia, like all states is the growing cost of Medicaid. Despite having one of the nation's strictest income eligibility requirements, Virginia's Medicaid costs already make up more than 15 percent of the state's budget. As aging boomers need long-term care, costs will continue to swell. In 2005, Virginia Medicaid programs had an average of 700,000 on the rolls, about 10 percent of the state's population. The national average was about 19 percent.

The most expensive problem is finding money for long-term care for the elderly and the disabled. While they are 30 percent of Medicaid recipients, they make up 70 percent of the costs. There are bills to offer more options to people such as home and community-based care, rather than only thinking of nursing homes. As the federal debt mounts, there are efforts at the national level to dump more of the cost of Medicaid on the states as no political leaders seems to want

to face up to reforming our ever deteriorating health care system.

Dan Fleming, Legislative Co-Chair

NEW AARP VIRGINIA PRESIDENT

Warren Stewart has succeeded *Ruth Nelson* as president of AARP Virginia. *Stewart* has been a guest of our chapter several times in the last two years. "*Warren (Stewart)* is an ideal selection to be the top AARP volunteer in Virginia," said *Ben Crawford*, State Training/Communications Coordinator, who served as a member of the selection committee. "*Stewart* was Superintendent of Schools for Goochland County (VA) for many years and has been an outstanding AARP VA State Coordinator for Advocacy the past six years. To know *Warren* is to like him."

The 2007 Advocacy agenda for AARP VA includes the following legislative priorities/goals:

- * Place in the Virginia Code the overarching public policy that prioritizes consumer choice for long-term care services.
- * Build a foundation for a Virginia-developed unified flexible financial system for the long-term care system that provides funding to follow individuals as their needs change.
- * Increase funding for additional caregiver grants.
- * Expand staffing of the Virginia Ombudsman Program.
- * Support funding for the "No Wrong Door" Initiative.
- * Support demonstration projects that better coordinate existing transportation services for seniors.
- * Support reforms to protect consumers from predatory lending.

Members interested in more or up to date information can call the Legislative Update Hotline at 804 344-3079 or toll-free at 866-542-8164. Consider becoming an AARP email advocate by signing up at www.aarp.org/va. Those who sign up will receive weekly Legislative Update emails during the General Assembly session, which will highlight important actions in the General Assembly the prior week.



Our Legislative Chair and noted author, *Dan Fleming* (center) visits with former state senator *Madison Marye* and *Jim Webb* prior to *Webb's* election as our U. S. Senator. A number of other AARP Chapter members were present at this meeting in the Blacksburg Library. For *Dan Fleming's* contributions, leadership and other numerous leadership activities in the chapter, *Dan* was selected to receive the prestigious **2006 Chapter Service Award** for service to the Blacksburg Chapter and to the community.

THANK YOU LETTER

From *Constance "Connie" Anderson*

To our AARP Chapter #2613 Membership, the Board of Officers and Chairs, and the Chapter Awards Committee, I would like to express my deepest appreciation for the honor bestowed upon me as the recipient of the **2006 Community Spirit Award**. This recognition by such a distinguished AARP Chapter for "Outstanding Community Spirit," means that in some small way, I am sharing my expertise of years of university computer technology knowledge with community members.

Those who know me personally, through my membership in many community organizations, twenty-five years plus of Virginia Tech employment, and my

Blacksburg Senior Center involvement, realize that my predominant dedication since retirement has been towards senior computer literacy. As a volunteer, my own benefit results in a personal rapport or relationship with an individual as a "significant to effective educational technique."

I have utilized this rapport in my almost forty-five years as a basic biochemistry research assistant in university environments such as Purdue, Johns Hopkins, Brandeis, University of Louisville Medical School, and Tennessee-Knoxville, before coming to Virginia Tech. My most significant support in the laboratory and now in the community, is that of my husband, *Bruce*, of fifty-six years, who acts as my general housekeeper and social secretary, allowing me the freedom to make house calls to seniors and to serve at the Blacksburg Senior Center.

To volunteer is to share time and talent to those in need, and as a child of parents who married at ages over forty, I am fortunate to exist, but wish I had many more years to maintain my community spirit, a self-rewarding effort that enriches my life.

In AARP solidarity (*unity of a group that is based on a community of interests, objectives, and standards*) and sincere gratitude for this wonderful award, (signed by *Connie*)



Constance "Connie" Anderson receives the Chapter **2006 Community Spirit Award** from *Carl McDaniels* at December Luncheon.

Volunteers are not paid---
Not because they are worthless,
But because they are priceless

YOU ARE INVITED

to attend AARP Virginia's **Long-Term Care Day at the General Assembly**, Wednesday, January 24, 2007. Join AARP Virginia as we rally to support initiatives to improve the long-term care system in Virginia. Use your voice to let our elected representatives know that we have the power to make it better! 10:00 a.m. Kick-Off Rally at the Bell Tower on Capital Square in Richmond. From 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon visit with Legislators in their offices. At 12:00 noon a complimentary lunch will be provided at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. If interested, call *Ben Crawford* (961-5733).

AARP TAX-AIDE

It's that time again for AARP Tax-Aide for the 2006 tax year! This should be an exciting time for us, for we now have two full stations for your convenience. As usual, the Recreation Center located on Patrick Henry Drive will be our principal sponsor Tuesdays, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., starting February 6.

The YMCA Thrift store will be our second location, at 1000 North Main Street, 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Mondays, starting February 5. The YMCA has set aside space for us, straight back from the front door, but away from the store area. It should be the beginning of a fruitful association, with greater access to those residents who will be professionally helped by our free tax service. And that includes electronic filing!

The front desk of the Recreation/Senior Center can get you started. Call them at 961-1149. You will be called back to receive information about the where and when. In the meantime, set aside a large envelope for your tax papers as received, last year's return (helpful), Social Security ID and /or papers for all who will be included in the return, and deductions which you wish to have us take for you.

We shall be here to take this annual stress from your life, file for you electronically, and at an unbeatable price-----FREE! --*Frank Lau*

BLACKSBURG AARP CHAPTER OFFICERS 2007

PRESIDENT: Jim Gaines gaines@vt.edu

1st V P: Jim Wightman jpdad@bev.net

2nd V P: Angela Little anglittl@naxs.net

SECRETARY: Virgil Cook vcook@vt.edu

TREASURER: Brian Allen
mballen@prodigy.net

ASSOCIATE TREASURER: June Schmidt
schmidtj@vt.edu

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CLASS OF 2007:

Don Elson elsond@vt.edu
Tom Jeffers kats7772000@yahoo.com
Harriet Damant hdamant@verizon.net

CLASS OF 2008:

Curt Finch crfinch@vt.edu
Margaret Kates connie@vt.edu
Frank Lau franklau1@msn.com

CLASS OF 2009:

Dan Fleming dbflemin@vt.edu
Nancy Eiss neiss@vt.edu
Jo Ann Underwood joa@vt.edu

Note: If space permits, Committee Chairs will be listed in the February Newsletter.

WE GET LETTERS

Our chapter receives a number of "thank you" letters for donations and community service. These letters are usually shared as received with those attending Membership and Board meetings. They are then turned over to the Chapter History Committee. Recently, letters have been received from Habitat for Humanity—*Changing Lives... One House at a Time*, the Food Pantry and Blacksburg Community/Senior Center.

Board Minutes, January 2, 2007, Blacksburg Community/Senior Center

9:30 a.m. President Jim Gaines called the meeting to order. Members present: Brian Allen, Doris Abraham, Connie Anderson, Cerrie Coil, Virgil Cook, Harriett Cooper, R. B. "Ben" Crawford, Nancy Eiss, Dan Fleming, Jim Gaines, Tom Jeffers, Frank Lau, Carl McDaniels, Glen Mitchell, Mary Ellen Moore, Dale Oliver, June Schmidt, Jo Ann Underwood, Jim Wightman

Adoption of Agenda: Since no agenda had been distributed, President Gaines chose to use the basic outline of a previous agenda. There were no objections.

Programs: Cooper expressed need for an assistant who could work her/his way into the chairmanship. Future programs: January 16 will feature Mood Swing, a group that performs primarily music from the '30's and '40's. February 20 program will feature Larry Alexander on safety at home. The safety-at-home topic turned to the need for some type of buddy system among seniors. Abraham indicated the Radford police regularly call seniors who live alone and some local churches have a buddy program. Cooper requested this be placed on the agenda of a future meeting. Anderson said that we need to gather information on available services in this area.

Treasurer's Report: No report. Allen will prepare a one-page summary for the newsletter. *Editors note:* no space for full report--available upon request. Report shows recent donations made to Montgomery Christmas Store, Town of Blacksburg (4 tables), Food Pantry, Community Band, RSVP, Free Clinic, Habitat for Humanity, AARP Foundation. December 06 balance \$3,798.69.

Newsletter: President Gaines indicated that we need an editor for the newsletter. Ben and Carol Crawford wish to give up the editorship after the publication of the January issue.

President Gaines indicated he had thank-you notes from groups whose projects we supported over the past year. Allen indicated he also had several letters. Connie Anderson suggested a list of these notes be placed in the newsletter so that members would know what we are doing with their money.

Future Agenda Items: President Gaines listed items he wishes to be included on future agendas.

1. Driver safety

2. Home choices for people who wish to stay at home and kinds of available services. Allen pointed to exercises people might do at home. Joy Herbert and Paul Smeal would be excellent resources.

3. Tax-Aide. Frank Lau reported two sites for preparing returns: the YMCA on Mondays from two to six and the Community Center on Tuesdays from 11 to three. The IRS has implemented many new restrictions. For example, preparers' computers must contain encryption software. Clients will need good identification such as photo ID's and Social Security cards, for preparers need to be sure of who you are. The YMCA will probably bring in students to help. On February 19, Frank will conduct a tax-pitfalls program at the YMCA Open University. When asked about conducting such a program for our chapter, Frank indicated that it would be better to have such a session after this year's tax season. The new tax code, which took affect on January 1 will have new requirements concerning pension plans, and taxpayers will have to keep more meticulous records of their charitable contributions. Cooper said she would plan on Frank's presenting a program in May. Allen suggested an announcement in the newsletter.

4. Identity theft. President Gaines wishes to organize a committee to work on this. In response to a question, President Gaines indicated that he would like both a program for a chapter meeting and formation of a committee to work on the issue.

Audit Report: Dale Oliver reported he and Ken Martin looked over the books and found them correct. A motion was made that the audit report be received. The motion passed.

Volunteer Recognition: Schmidt reported we have sponsored the volunteer-recognition celebration for five years--with the Red Cross, the YMCA, and what used to be the Voluntary Center, but now RSVP has come in raising the number of sponsoring organizations to four. Last year, Carilion gave us \$200, but Montgomery Regional gave us nothing whereas in the past they had donated \$300. It is difficult to determine the exact cost because RSVP, for example, cannot contribute money. Therefore, they contributed food, and the YMCA printed the programs. Oliver moved we continue the sponsorship. The motion passed.

Membership Jim Wightman handed out a report that included the following:

Membership stands at 389 which includes 18 Lifetime (\$100); 7 Life (advanced in years), 2 Honorary; 10 Complimentary; and 33 delinquent. Master copy of the mailing labels for January Newsletter will be ready 1/5/07. Copies of the membership list as of 1/5/07 will be given to Cerrie Coil [new member name tags], Kathy Jeffers [member care], and Jim Gaines [president].

Welcome-to-our chapter cards are being sent to new members.

500 copies of our November Newsletter were mailed to Virginia Tech retirees who are not members of our local chapter. A cover letter was included citing chapter highlights and inviting them to join the local chapter. So far, 17 persons (3.5%) have joined as a result of this mailing.

Motion: Moved that Past Presidents of our chapter, who served 10 or more years ago, be offered Honorary or Life Membership in this chapter. Background: While reading our chapter history, I was struck by the fact that most of our Past Presidents who served 10 or more years ago are not presently members of our local chapter. A list of all Past Presidents is attached (not included in this newsletter). My list would include Denver Bragg (first president and active in Sports Club), Mildred Beecher (active in Sports Club?), Mary Tom Long (active in Torch Club), and Jim Owen (presently a dues paying member). It would be a plus for our chapter to offer them Honorary or Life Membership and let them know that their past service to our chapter is still appreciated.

The list of past-due (did not pay for 2006) members is attached (names not included on minutes).

Review before you leave today and jot down any particulars you feel I should know about before removal of the names. He asked if Joy Herbert should pay dues: she works with the chapter as a part of her job with the Town of Blacksburg and is too young for regular membership. McDaniels moved that Joy Herbert be given complimentary membership for 2007. The motion passed.

After completing his oral report, Wightman moved that past presidents who served more than 10 years ago be given honorary membership. The motion passed.

General Assembly: Dan Fleming reported on issues facing the upcoming General Assembly. Pundits predict a lot of gridlock on transportation. The governor is proposing a preschool program. The governor is also proposing to remove some 300,000 Virginians from the tax rolls by raising the minimum-income threshold from \$7,000 to \$12,000 for individuals and from \$14,000 to \$24,000 for couples. He is also proposing adding \$700,000 to help area agencies on aging expand meal deliveries. He wishes to raise the salaries of nursing instructors 10% to help address the projected nursing shortage. The most expensive problem is finding funding for long-term care for the elderly and the disabled. There will also be bills to expand home care and community care. Virginia is near the bottom of the list of states for per capita spending on Medicaid. Both Medicare and Medicaid are in trouble. Congress is likely to do very little because proposals must come from the administration.

Crawford reported AARP Virginia is staging a long-term-care day (a rally) at the state capitol on January 24 at 10:00 a.m. AARP may support us financially if several want to attend in a van or bus.

Accolades: President Gaines reported that McDaniels gave a good summary of the chapter's accomplishments at the luncheon. Carl McDaniels then listed chapter accomplishments. The Chapter web site has initiated inquiries from AARP chapters around the state and nation. Things like the Website and our sound, financial footing are the kinds of things that helped make us earn Chapter of the Year. Also, the history has been well received. People from other chapters want to see the history. Crawford indicated that we have had inquiries about the history from as far away as California. Also, the AARP magazine has inquired about it. Anderson pointed out that the history is available on the Website from the link, About Us.

Picnic: Coil reported that we have reservations for the chapter picnic at Nellie's Cave Park for June 19. The picnic usually runs from 11 to three o'clock. Allen asked people how they felt about the auction at the picnic. Everyone agreed it was a success.

11:10 Adjourned

Respectfully submitted: Virgil A. Cook, Secretary.

Jim Gaines, President
AARP Chapter #2613
P. O. Box 10082
Blacksburg, VA 24062

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NEW MEMBER OR 2007 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL APPLICATION

Membership in the Blacksburg AARP Chapter requires membership in National AARP. Contact **Jim Wightman** at 552-2007 or jpdad@bev.net if you need a national AARP application.

Date: _____

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Address: _____ City & Zip _____

Phone: _____ - _____ - _____ E-Mail _____

- Membership:
- _____ New member of Blacksburg AARP Chapter
 - _____ Renewal of membership in Blacksburg AARP Chapter
 - _____ Single membership dues **\$10 for 2007**
 - _____ Joint couple dues **\$15 for 2007**
 - _____ **Life Time \$100 per single / joint couple**

Recruited by (if appropriate) _____

Complete, attach check made out to Blacksburg AARP, and mail to: **AARP Chapter #2613, POB 10082, Blacksburg, VA 24062.** If you are already a member of the Blacksburg Chapter, please pass this form onto a friend who may be interested in membership.