



November 2013
Vol. 30, No. 9

<http://www.blacksburgaarp.org>

November 19 meeting to focus on modifying your home to fit your changing life style.

Join us for a brown bag lunch (bring your own, but drinks will be provided) at 11:30 a.m. with the program starting at noon.

The meeting will start at 12:00 noon with the usual introductions and business. The program will be "Aging in Place-Modifying your current home to fit your changing life style" presented by Tim Lawrence, President of Blue Ridge Home Improvement, Inc. located in Blacksburg. Tim is a Certified Aging in Place Specialist (ACPS). There will be a question and answer session after his presentation. Also, he will have copies of his firm's Newsletter. For those attending there is a free copy of the AARP Home Fit Guide which is a 20 page handout being used all over the USA.

President's Column

As the year draws to a close, this is our last newsletter for 2013 and my last Presidential Message. It has been a challenging and fulfilling year... our organization will be evolving as 2 of our outstanding members give up their roles and we will be looking for the next generation for leadership. Carl McDaniels, a long-time driving force in the Blacksburg AARP chapter, will be moving up I-81 to be closer to family... his contributions to the organization are too numerous to mention, so I will simply mention that he is a Past-President and an Andrus Award recipient. As our program Chair, his talent in coming up with innovative and educational programs will be greatly missed. Also, Edd Sewell, our Newsletter editor, will be surrendering his post after many years of dedicated service. He will be greatly missed... especially since no one has volunteered to take over the newsletter editing...



Our next public meeting is Nov 19th – the topic "Aging in Place" – Tim Lawrence, a Certified Aging in Place Specialist, of Blue Ridge Home Improvement will present the program. Also, we will vote on new officers and board members for 2014. The board has put forth the following slate: President Leslye Bloom; Vice President: Terry Wildman; Secretary: Virgil Cook; Treasurer: Pat Ballard; Board Members: Sally Anna Stapleton, Tina King and Tom Alston.

Our Holiday Luncheon will be Dec 10th – at a new location: Warm Hearth Village Community Center. Please see the enclosed flyer for registration information – we hope to see you there.

Tom Alston



Food Pantry Donations Needed

Don't forget to bring a food donation (a can or box of non-perishable food) to the monthly AARP meeting. Share your abundance with those who are in need of food.



Tim Lawrence, a Montgomery County native, started his business in 1979 as a small home repair and maintenance contractor.

Tim is a Certified Graduate Remodeler (CGR), Graduate Master Builder (GMB), Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS), EPA Certified Remodeler. He has been an active member of the New River Valley Home Builders Association, and served on the board of directors for over 15 years [Adapted from the company website at blueridgehi.com].

Blacksburg AARP Chapter # 2613 Financial Statement October 2013

Balance at end of September 2013 **\$4,591.83**

Credits

Debits

Kopy Korner	125.31
John Hillison (stamps for Health Fair)	138.00
Total	\$ 263.31

Balance end of September 2013 **\$4,328.52**

Balance in reserve account **\$2,682.41**

Blacksburg AARP Chapter # 2613 Membership Report November 2013

Member Profile:

Category	Individual Count	Household Count
AARP 2013 Members	243	148
LifeTime Members	36	22
Life Members	15	14
Comp Members	19	19
Honorary Members	2	1
Total Membership	315	204

Newsletters: 215

Committee: Jim Wightman (chair), Tom Alston

Election Results

On November 5 Virginians voted. In case you've not been keeping up with politics, here are the results (these are as reported Virginia State Board of Elections):

Governor

Terry McAuliffe	47.74%
Ken T. Cuccinelli II	45.23%
Robert Sarvis	6.52%

Lt. Governor

Ralph S. Northam	55.11%
E. W. Jackson	44.54%

Attorney General (undecided)

Mark R. Herring	49.88%
Mark D. Obershain	49.88%

House of Delegates (7th District)

Larry "Nick" Rush	64.98%
Michael "Mike" Abraham	34.89%

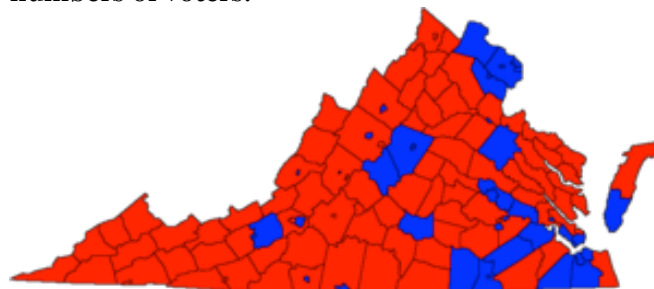
House of Delegates (12th District)

Joseph R. Yost	52.31%
James D. Harder	47.41%

The national media followed our elections very closely, and as noted above the race for governor was very close. The race for Attorney General is yet to be decided and it seems likely that there will

be a recount in that race.

Below is a map of the Commonwealth showing how each county and city voted (blue=Democrat and red=Republican). When this map was presented in a class, one student remarked that it made no sense – how could the Democrats win when most of the counties voted majority Republican. Remember that we don't elect officers on the basis of number of counties, but on total votes and the higher populations of Northern Virginia, Tidewater, and Richmond have larger numbers of voters.



Community Service News

I've noticed this year that we have gone from Halloween to Christmas – city decorations, stores and even individual home décor. What happen to November? What about autumn and Thanksgiving? There must be a way to slow things down. Life is too short to rush from one month to another. Let's take time to enjoy November: Election Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving. Take time to serve others: Visit the VA Hospital and say Thank you to a Veteran; take a bag of food to your local food bank.

This is a great season to get involved in volunteering: **The Montgomery County Christmas Store** is looking for volunteers to assist with setting up the store and accepting donations, contact 381-0585. **Habitat for Humanity Restore** needs volunteers to serve in various operations of the store. **Montgomery Museum** is in need of docents. **Carilion NRV Medical Center** needs volunteers, contact Julia at 731-2428. **Salvation Army** needs tutors for an after school program on Tuesdays and Thursdays. **Good Samaritan Hospice** is looking for volunteers for Family Support, contact Deborah Lovelace at 381-3171.

Slow down and use the month of Thanks to give back to others.

Sally Anna Stapleton
Community Service Committee

The Holidays...A Time for Fun, Food and Conversation

New River Valley Agency on Aging
Tina King, Executive Director

The holiday season is almost here . . . Thanksgiving is just a few weeks away! Family visits over the long holiday weekend will be a time for fun, food and conversation.

Speaking of conversation, perhaps this is the year that you want to broach some sensitive topics with family members such as driving, independent living, end-of-life issues, finances, etc. If you are finding it difficult to communicate about sensitive topics, you are not alone. According to research by Home Instead Senior Care, many older adults and their family members find it very difficult to talk about these topics. Many find it hard to get beyond the barriers of fear of losing independence, protecting privacy and/or respecting privacy, a reluctance or inability to acknowledge some of the changes that aging brings, and a lack of clear guidelines for having such conversations.

Families have unique patterns and ways of relating, but one thing that most families have in common is their love and concern for each other. It is important to remember that older adults and adult children care about each other. Honesty and mutually respectful communication are the keys to overcoming the barriers.

Rather than waiting for a crisis, it is important to take the time now to open conversations, gather information, reflect, discuss again, make appropriate changes now and plan for the future. The reward is everyone's peace of mind.

Listed below are some tips from Dr. Jake Harwood, the author of *Understanding Communication and Aging*, on communicating with adult children on sensitive topics.

- Be assertive. State clearly and firmly what you need and want. Treat your family members with respect and insist they respect your dignity
- Focus on issues that are most important to you
- Choose the times and places that work best for you to have serious conversation
- Keep notes or list to help you remember important items
- Raise important issues that are on your mind

- Look for points of agreement; avoid defensiveness, anger and accusations
- Listen and try to understand each other's point of view. Express appreciation and love
- Keep issues in perspective and remember what's most important is your relationship with your family

Having vital documents prepared will help ensure that your wishes are known and respected. Below are some of the documents that can be prepared and/or updated to give you and your family peace of mind when the unexpected happens:

Will, Power of Attorney, Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care, Living Will, Current Medications and dosages, and a "Pre-Planning Checklist" that includes contact names and account numbers for pensions, insurance policies, investments, bank accounts, safe deposit boxes, properties; contact information for your accountant, attorney and financial consultant; and funeral arrangements.

Best wishes to all for a healthy and Happy Thanksgiving! May a thankful spirit prevail now and every day of our lives.

For more information on pertinent topics on aging and supportive services, contact the New River Valley Agency on Aging at 980-7720 or by e-mail at nrvaoa@nrvaoa.org.

Looking forward to new newsletter editor

It has been a privilege and interesting experience to serve as your newsletter editor for the past few years, but it's now time for someone else to take the job.

When President JoAnn Underwood asked me to do the newsletter for one month while then-editor Mary Holliman went to Nicaragua, I was glad to do it. Little did I know that one short month would turn into several years!

Thanks for the opportunity to have served.

Edd Sewell

AARP Blacksburg Chapter #2613

Chapter meetings are the third Tuesday of each month at the Blacksburg Community Center, Patrick Henry Drive at 11:30 a.m. 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.

PO Box 10082

Blacksburg, VA 24062

www.blacksburgaarp.org

Library News and Events



Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library
One stop, unlimited possibilities

Elizabeth Sensabaugh
Blacksburg Library Supervisor

All branches of the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library offer a variety of programs for your entertainment and ongoing education! The November 2013 calendar offers the spectrum of opportunities. Do you enjoy the arts? We have a program for that. Preparing for Thanksgiving and want to create place cards? We have a program for that. Want to learn about early Alzheimer's detection? We have a program for that. Are you an avid reader who likes to discuss books? Again, we have a program for that! Please see dates and times below for corresponding programs in the Blacksburg Library. If you prefer email notifications for upcoming library events, please visit us on the web at www.mfrrl.org. On our homepage you can register your email address to receive branch specific program information straight to your inbox!

Of course MFRL is also about books, and recently we've added several new books in large print. Tell us about a book you've liked and we'll introduce you to other authors and books of similar interest. Check out John Le Carre's new book *A Delicate Truth*. If you're a fan of Le Carre's works of espionage, you might also like *Red Sparrow* about a spy game between Russia and the CIA, written by Jason Matthews. Readers of gentle fiction who enjoy Maeve Binchy should check out her newest large print book *A Week in Winter*. If you like Binchy, try reading Patrick Taylor. His new book is *An Irish Country Wedding*, his seventh book in the Irish Country Doctor series. If psychological thrillers are your guilty pleasure, read Nicci French's newest book titled *Tuesday's Gone*. For more nail-biting, psychological suspense, read Ruth Rendell's most recent publication, *The St. Zita Society*. If you need a laugh, Jennifer Weiner and Mary Kay Andrews offer light comedies of error in their new titles *The Next Best Thing* and *Ladies Night* respectively. MFRL is happy to provide personalized reading suggestions. Fill out a form online or ask for a paper form within the library. We'll put together a customized reading list to reflect your interests!



Blacksburg Library November Programs:

- **Sunday, November 17, 3:00-5:00 p.m.** Join us for *Poetry Inspired by the Artwork of Diego Rivera & Frida Kahlo*. Presented by Carolyn Kreiter-Foronda, Poet Laureate, 2006-2008, and offered in partnership with the Blacksburg Regional Art Association. Carolyn will read her poetry and discuss other artists including Leonardo da Vinci, Vincent van Gogh and Georgia O'Keeffe.
- **Wednesday, November 20, at 12:00 p.m.** Annette Clark, Family Services Director with the Central and Western VA Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, will conduct a workshop about early Alzheimer's detection in *Know the 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's*. Light refreshments provided and reservations requested.
- **Friday, November 22 all day while supplies last!** Stop in to create tissue paper pumpkin place cards to use at your festive Thanksgiving dinner table!
- **Monday, November 25, at 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.** Participate in our **Talking About Books** and gather with fellow book lovers about the *New York Times Bestseller The Language of Flowers* by Vanessa Diffenbaugh. Coffee and conversation provided!



Thanksgiving: Myths and Realities

By Martin Kelly

[from <http://americanhistory.about.com/>]

In America today, Thanksgiving is generally seen as a time to get together with loved ones, eat a ridiculously large amount of food, watch some football, and of course give thanks for all the blessings in our lives. Many homes will be decorated with horns of plenty, dried corn, and other 'symbols' of Thanksgiving. Schoolchildren across America will 'reenact' Thanksgiving by dressing as either pilgrims or Wampanoag Indians and sharing a meal of some sort. All of this is wonderful for helping create a sense of family, national identity, and of course remembering to say thanks at least once a year. However, as with many other holidays and events in American History, many of these commonly believed traditions about the origins and celebration of this holiday are based more on myth than fact. Let's look at the truth behind our celebration of Thanksgiving.

Origins of Thanksgiving

The first interesting thing to point out is that the feast shared with the Wampanoag Indians and the first mention of Thanksgiving are really not the same event. During the first winter in 1621, 46 of the 102 pilgrims died. Thankfully, the following year resulted in a plentiful harvest. The pilgrims decided to celebrate with a feast that would include 90 natives who helped the pilgrims survive during that first winter. One of the most celebrated of those natives was a Wampanoag who the settlers called Squanto. He taught the pilgrims where to fish and hunt and where to plant New World crops like corn and squash. He also helped negotiate a treaty between the pilgrims and chief Massasoit.

This first feast included many fowl, though it is not certain that it included turkey, along with venison, corn, and pumpkin. This was all prepared by the four women settlers and two teenage girls. This idea of holding a harvest feast was not something new to the pilgrims. Many cultures throughout history had held feasts and banquets honoring their individual deities or simply being thankful for the bounty. Many in England celebrated the British Harvest Home tradition.

The First Thanksgiving

The first actual mention of the word thanksgiving in early colonial history was not associated with the first feast described above. The first time this term was associated with a feast or celebration was in 1623. That year the pilgrims were living through a terrible drought that continued from May through July. The pilgrims decided to spend an entire day in July fasting and praying for rain. The next day, a light rain occurred. Further, additional settlers and supplies arrived from the Netherlands. At that point, Governor Bradford proclaimed a day of Thanksgiving to offer prayers and thanks to God. However, this was by no means a yearly occurrence.

The next recorded day of Thanksgiving occurred in 1631 when a ship full of supplies that was feared to

be lost at sea actually pulled into Boston Harbor. Governor Bradford again ordered a day of Thanksgiving and prayer.

Was the Pilgrim Thanksgiving the First?

On December 4, 1619, a group of 38 settlers, led by Captain John Woodlief, arrived at Berkeley Plantation in Virginia, from Bristol, England. On the banks of the James River the Englishmen proclaimed, "*We ordaine that the day of our ship's arrival at the place assigned for plantacon, in the land of Virginia, shall be yearly and perpetually kept holy as a day of Thanksgiving to Almighty God.*"

Beginning of the Yearly Tradition

During the mid-1600s, Thanksgiving as we know it today began to take shape. In Connecticut valley towns, incomplete records show proclamations of Thanksgiving for September 18, 1639, as well as 1644, and after 1649. Instead of just celebrating special harvests or events, these were set aside as an annual holiday. One of the first recorded celebrations commemorating the 1621 feast in Plymouth colony occurred in Connecticut in 1665.

Growing Thanksgiving Traditions

Over the next hundred years, each colony had different traditions and dates for celebrations. Some were not annual though Massachusetts and Connecticut both celebrated Thanksgiving annually on November 20 and Vermont and New Hampshire observed it on December 4. On December 18, 1775, the Continental Congress declared December 18 to be a national day of Thanksgiving for the win at Saratoga. Over the next nine years, they declared six more Thanksgivings with one Thursday set aside each fall as a day of prayer.

George Washington issued the first Thanksgiving Proclamation by a President of the United States on November 26, 1789. Interestingly, some of the future presidents such as Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson would not agree to resolutions for a national day of Thanksgiving because they felt it was not within their constitutional power. Over these years, Thanksgiving was still being celebrated in many states, but often on different dates. Most states, however, celebrated it sometime in November.

Sarah Josepha Hale and Thanksgiving

Sarah Josepha Hale is an important figure in gaining a national holiday for Thanksgiving. Hale wrote the novel *Northwood; or Life North and South* in 1827 which argued for the virtue of the North against the evil slave owners of the South. One of the chapters in her book discussed the importance of Thanksgiving as a national holiday. She became the editor of the Ladies' Magazine in Boston. This would eventually become the *Lady's Book and Magazine*, also known as Godey's *Lady's Book*, the most widely distributed magazine in the country during the 1840s and 50s. Beginning in 1846, Hale began her campaign to make the last Thursday in November a Thanksgiving national holiday. She wrote an editorial for the magazine about this each year and wrote letters to

governors in every state and territory. On September 28, 1863 during the Civil War, Hale wrote a letter to President Abraham Lincoln "as Editress (sic) of the 'Lady's Book' to have the day of annual Thanksgiving made a National and fixed Union Festival." Then on October 3, 1863, Lincoln, in a proclamation written by Secretary of State William Seward, proclaimed a nationwide Thanksgiving Day as the last Thursday of November.

The New Deal Thanksgiving

After 1869, each year the president proclaimed the last Thursday in November as Thanksgiving Day. However, there was some contention over the actual date. Each year individuals tried to change the date of the holiday for various reasons. Some wanted to combine it with Armistice Day, November 11 commemorating the day when the armistice was signed between the allies and Germany to end World War I. However, the real argument for a date change came about in 1933 during the depths of the Great Depression. The National Dry Retail Goods Association asked President Franklin Roosevelt to move the date of Thanksgiving that year since it would fall on November 30. Since the traditional shopping season for Christmas then as now started with Thanksgiving, this would leave a short shopping season reducing possible sales for the retailers. Roosevelt refused. However, when Thanksgiving would again fall on November 30, 1939, Roosevelt then agreed. Even though Roosevelt's proclamation only set the actual date of Thanksgiving as the 23rd for the District of Columbia, this changed caused a furor. Many people felt that the president was messing with tradition for the sake of the economy. Each state decided for itself with 23 states choosing to celebrate on the New Deal date of November 23 and 23 staying with the traditional date. Texas and Colorado decided to celebrate Thanksgiving twice!

The confusion of the date for Thanksgiving continued through 1940 and 1941. Due to the confusion, Roosevelt announced that the traditional date of the last Thursday in November would return in 1942. However, many individuals wanted to insure that the date would not be changed again. Therefore, a bill was introduced that Roosevelt signed into law on November 26, 1941 establishing the fourth Thursday in November as Thanksgiving Day. This has been followed by every state in the union since 1956.

**AARP Chapter 2613
Board of Directors
November 5, 2013
Board Minutes**

Call to Order--President Tom Alston called the meeting to order.
Officers Present: President Tom Alston, Vice President Leslye Bloom, Secretary Virgil Cook

Board Members: Don Creamer, Nola Elliott, John Hillison, Jim Montgomery, June Schmidt, Sally Anna Stapleton, Terry Wildman

Non-Board-Members, Committee Chairs and Appointees: R. B. "Ben" Crawford, Margaret Kates, Carl McDaniels, Jewell Ritchey, Edd Sewell, Jim Wightman, Juanita Wightman

Approval of Minutes--Don Creamer moved that the minutes for October 1 be approved. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report--Secretary's Note: Pat Ballard will replace Brian Allen as treasurer in December.

Brian Allen distributed the report to the Board by email. The entire month's expenses were copying the newsletter (\$125) and stamps for the health fair (\$138).

A motion to receive the report passed.

Chapter Awards--Juanita Wightman. Juanita noted that she will pick up the plaques for the chapter awards today. The committee will make two awards. Doris Abraham will take over the chairmanship of the Awards Committee.

Announcements--John Hillison reported that the chapter Web site will become the repository for documents. Newsletters will be stored on the Web site. Doris Abraham will still keep pictures and other historical material. Don Creamer reported that the site is getting hits.

Don Creamer explained changes in the committee structure resulting from the October Board retreat. Driver safety training will be collapsed into Sally Anna's Community Services Committee, and the Health Committee will be collapsed into the Health Fair Committee. The health Fair will take place on Wednesday, September 17, 2014.

New Business

Charitable donations--John Hillison. The committee made the following recommendations for charitable donations:

Blacksburg Recreation Center	\$500
Micah's Soup for Seniors	\$300
NRV Agency on Aging	\$300
Free Clinic of the NRV	\$300
To Our House	\$300
Center for Gerontology	\$300
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$2,300</u>

The committee also recommended that a representative from each charity be invited to attend the holiday luncheon.

Committee members - Don Creamer, John Hillison, and Sally Anna Stapleton

Sally Anna Stapleton outlined the program of To Our House. This organization provides meals and lodging for homeless men in the area from November through March. Participating churches house and provide meals for the men each week. The men meet at Community Action in Christiansburg for rides to the church that is hosting the group for the current week.

John Hillison moved that the recommendations be accepted. The Motion passed.

Don Creamer shared the contents of a letter from the town inviting us to participate in the Christmas Parade.

Committee Reports

Membership—Tom Alston. There were no changes from the October report. A form will be included with the newsletter as an insert with places for paying for both the Christmas Lunch and the 2014 dues.

Programs—Carl McDaniels. The November 19 program will feature Tim Lawrence from New River Home Improvement. Mr. Lawrence will discuss home modification to allow seniors to stay in their homes longer. Carl would like to distribute flyers for the November meeting in places such as Kroger where many seniors shop.

Legislation—Ben Crawford distributed Val Coluni's report. The report listed crucial issues for us and for AARP and elaborated on several state and national issues. The full report appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

The candidate forum was very well done.

The national office is no longer holding national conventions. They've gotten so large that they are unmanageable. They now hold too meetings, calling them big events. The next Big Event will be held on May 8 in Boston.

Hospitality--Leslye has not been given a signed contract from Warm Hearth because the director has been ill.

Community Service—Sally Anna Stapleton. Sally Anna reported on food collection which yielded about 2500 pounds. She has also collected many coats. She is helping with a manual on food pantry management. The first draft has been completed, and the complete manual should be available by mid to late December.

Sally Anna attended a workshop in Vinton on healthcare. She learned about navigators, specially-trained people who help applicants enroll in insurance policies included in the Affordable Care Act. The number for Virginians to reach navigators is 888-392-5132.

Public Relations--Terry Wildman. Terry has sent flyers on the upcoming chapter meeting to area news outlets.

Leading Lights and State Office Award—Juanita Wightman reported that we have material on the Leading Lights Award and that her committee will submit the name of a strong candidate. The nominations are due by February 17, and the awards will be presented at a dinner at the German Club on April 10. Juanita asked for suggestions on how to get nominations from chapter members instead of all the suggestions coming from people involved in Board meetings. Jim Montgomery reported that three of our chapter members will receive awards from the state. The recipients are Leslye Bloom and John Hillison for the Virginia Education Award, Val Coluni for the Virginia Advocacy Award, and Sally Anna Stapleton for the Virginia Service award.

John Hillison reported that BRIAN Jack did take our concerns to the state. We received an immediate apology and a promise that they would do better.

Caring--Margaret listed the cards that she has sent.

Virginia Retirees Association—Margaret Kates Reported that there will be a tour of the Arts Center on November 21 at 10:00.

AARP of Virginia--Ben Crawford reported that the national office is trying to come up with a method of local organization as a substitute for forming new chapters. Carl McDaniels observed that important projects originate in the local chapters—food drives, other community-service projects, and excellent programs for chapter meetings.

Adjournment—The meeting was adjourned at 11:14.

Virgil A. Cook, Secretary

Virgil A. Cook, Secretary

2013 Officers & Board Members

Officers

President Tom Alston [tpalston@gmail.com]

Vice President Leslye Bloom [leslye@leslyebloom.com]

Secretary Virgil Cook [vcook@vt.edu]

Treasurer Brian Allen [brian.allen@prodigy.net]

Board of Directors

Class of 2013 –

Tom Alston, [tpalston@gmail.com];

Jim Montgomery, [jhmontgome@verizon.net];

Juanita Wightman, [wightman@vt.edu]

Class of 2014 –

Leslye Bloom, [leslye@leslyebloom.com];

**Tom Alston, President
AARP Chapter #2613
P.O. Box 10082
Blacksburg, VA 24062**

**Nonprofit
Organization
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Put November 19 on your calendar – Find out what you might want to do to make your home one in which you can continue to live as you age.

The meeting will start at 12:00 noon with the usual introductions and business. The program will be “Aging in Place–Modifying your current home to fit your changing life style” presented by Tim Lawrence, President of Blue Ridge Home Improvement, Inc. located in Blacksburg. Tim is a Certified Aging in Place Specialist (ACPS).

Visit the new Blacksburg AARP website at www.blacksburgaarp.org and let Don Creamer know what you think of it!