



Serving the greater New River Valley, Virginia

May 19 Chapter Meeting

Say Hello to your AARP Benefits

by Brian Jacks, Associate State Director for AARP's Virginia State Office

In his role as Associate State Director, Brian Jacks directs volunteer programs and community service. Working with local community leaders, he leads programs with volunteers serving on AARP Virginia's Community Outreach Teams in the western parts of the commonwealth. Brian has been employed by AARP since January 2002, and currently serves as the state office lead on the issue of senior hunger. He manages Virginia's Annual Community Food Drive, which raised over 100,000 pounds of food this year. Brian has also overseen educational campaigns that increased intergenerational physical activity opportunities in the greater Richmond area.

Brian has a degree in Industrial Management from Purdue with a concentration in Health Sciences. His favorite physical activities include backpacking in Virginia's wilderness, kayaking on the James River, and sailing catamarans on Lake Michigan.

Program plus: Salvation Army in the NRV, by Kim Rutherford

Kim is Associate Planned Giving Director of The Salvation Army, National Capital and Virginia Division. She will suggest/explain a program that can add to your retirement income through giving. She is from the small Southwest VA town of Grundy. She is working on an MBA at Virginia Tech as well as a Certified Fundraising Executive designation.

President's Message

A Cautionary Tale: Lyme Disease

The intruder is stealthy, totally silent, practically invisible, and it is actively looking for victims. You may have survived multiple encounters with this intruder, but in Virginia the result for increasing numbers of people is anything but benign.

I am not your typical reader of *People Magazine*; in fact I almost never pick it up. One recent cover story in *People* did attract my complete interest, however. This is the story of Avril Lavigne and her "secret health crisis." In the subtitle she says, "I thought I was dying." Well, this does sound like a bit of hype, but someone who knew of my experiences with *the intruder* pointed out the story to Sue, my wife, who advised me to read it. Perhaps you should too. I can confirm with personal experience some of the misery that Avril Lavigne was reporting. Her story, and many others like it, is about one of the fastest growing vector-borne diseases in the country, Lyme disease. (www.people.com/article/avril-lavigne-lyme-disease-bedridden)

Amazingly, just as I'm finishing the above paragraph, a new message pops up on my email. This is my sister in Texas, sending me the following story with the recommendation that I read it now. (www.humanthology.com/lyme-disease/2014/9/15/slyme-disease-how-a-speck-changed-my-life-forever). I did read it right away, so now let me share just a bit of what shows up in my own medical history.

I grew up on a farm, and for most of my life I have lived in areas where ticks flourish. No big deal. For sure they are disgusting intruders, and when attached are

please turn to p. 3

Upcoming Programs and Events

May 18: Reception sponsored by Lifelong Learning Institute (p. 4)

June 16: Chapter picnic and white elephant sale—*save those white elephants!*

September 8: Living Well@50+ conference

No programs in July and August.

Please bring a food donation (a can or box of non-perishable food) to AARP chapter meetings. We will distribute it to the food banks in Blacksburg and Christiansburg.

Volunteer(s) needed

Prepare the monthly newsletter for mailing—pick up at the copy shop, affix labels, complete an online form, and take to the post office—about 2 hours/month. If you can help—perhaps with a friend—contact John Hillison (js.hillison@gmail.com) or Terry Wildman (wiley@vt.edu).



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.

Home Matters: Aging in Place in the NRV

By Nancy Brossoie, Raleigh Priddy, and the Aging in Place Leadership Team

By 2030, the number of persons aged 65 and older living in the New River Valley (NRV) is expected to double. In the more rural and remote areas, older adults will likely represent 25–33% of all residents. Similarly, housing stock in the NRV is aging. In fact, half of all homes in the NRV were built more than 40 years ago. Thus, older residents in the NRV are likely to live in homes that require substantial modifications, upgrades, and repairs to remain habitable in the coming years and are less energy efficient than newer homes.

Ninety percent of older adults want and expect to **age in place**—that is, remain living in their homes, in the communities they love, near their friends and family. Yet, 70% can expect to need some form of healthcare services—services that are currently available and preferable when delivered in home and community-based settings. Home-based care is far less expensive (to individuals, their families, and society) than hospitalization or nursing home admission, which may be needed if care is not provided. To take advantage of home-based care, an older adult's home often needs to be modified or repaired. Yet, most older adults live on incomes that can cover only basic costs of living, not home modifications and repairs.

In recognition of growing housing and service challenges, Successfully Aging at Home in the New River Valley—a grassroots, community-based initiative—was established to meet an unmet and growing need: the ability of residents to age in their homes and communities. The initiative is guided by the **Aging in Place Leadership Team**—a collaboration of eight regional organizations that emerged during the 2010–2013 NRV Livability Initiative:

- NRV HOME Consortium
- NRV Area Agency on Aging
- NRV Habitat for Humanity
- Center for Gerontology at Virginia Tech
- Virginia Dept. for Aging and Rehabilitative Services
- Community Foundation of the NRV
- Virginia Tech School of Construction
- NRV Planning District Commission

Aging in Place Leadership Team activities have included:

2013 Aging in Place Workshop

Over 80 community members met in Christiansburg to discuss the meaning of aging in place and conceptualize

housing options and neighborhood configurations that could extend independence for older adults and foster healthy and successful aging across the lifespan. The housing, neighborhood, and community designs that emerged reflect regional values, priorities, and culture, support resident independence and self-determination, facilitate social interactions, and promote stewardship and conservation of the natural environment.

2014 Aging in Place Workshop

Response to the first workshop exceeded expectations and attendees were eager to delve deeper. A follow-up workshop was held to explore the financial, policy, and decision-making obstacles that traditionally interfere with making our homes and communities truly lifespan friendly. The event was attended by over 130 participants, including community professionals representing aging services and advocacy, housing and community development, local and State government, as well as community members. 25% of attendees traveled from other regions of the state (e.g., Richmond, Charlottesville, Roanoke, and Danville) to learn more about how the NRV was addressing aging in place.

Workshop discussions were robust and led to identification of next steps to effectively promote aging in place in the NRV.

2015-16 Action Plan

Home modifications program. The Community Foundation and its partners (Habitat for Humanity of the NRV, Town of Blacksburg, NRV Agency on Aging, Center for Gerontology at VT) were recently awarded Partners for Places funding to implement an energy and aging home modification program for lower-income older adults in Blacksburg in 2015–17. This project will build cross-sector partnerships to pilot a program of targeted home modifications to facilitate aging in place and improve energy security for vulnerable citizens.

Time Bank (NRV HOME Consortium). A Time Bank is a community-based network of mutual support in which members exchange skills and services instead of money. The Neighbor-to-Neighbor Network time bank for the NRV is expected to launch in Fall 2015. It will not only provide a means to acquire needed help and donate services but will encourage meaningful engagement and connection among all NRV residents.

Regional housing survey (Center for Gerontology at VT). Although some housing data has been collected in the NRV, there is limited information about the condition of homes occupied by older adults. This survey is intended to help uncover the depth and scope of need in the NRV to facilitate growth of home repair and modification programs.

Coordinated and centralized home and community-based service information (NRV Agency on Aging). NRV residents should be able to locate and access local services (regardless of payor source) to assist them in living safely and with as much independence as possible while remaining in their homes as they age. Plans for developing a centralized resource center from which providers and residents can obtain community-based service information are underway.

Land use and development policy (NRV Planning District, Town of Blacksburg, Community Housing Partners). Home design is critical, but beyond the home itself, neighborhood design can either hinder or facilitate successful aging. Our objective is to translate the visions developed in the HOME Matters Guidebook into action and spur real changes in the way housing is designed and built in the NRV.

AARP Age-Friendly Community certification (NRV HOME Consortium and Center for Gerontology at VT). The Age-Friendly Community (AFC) certification implies commitment toward improving the lives of residents regardless of age, disability, or need. By embracing this mission, the NRV will be better positioned to: address changing demographics caused by the aging of residents and the outmigration of younger adults; respect inclusion and diversity among residents; reach out to builders and developers to educate them on why supporting AFC objectives supports their business; and plan for and adapt lifespan friendly communities.



A guidebook for lifespan friendly homes, neighborhoods, and communities in the NRV can be downloaded at <https://nrvhome.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/home-matters.pdf>.

To learn more about these efforts, please contact

Elisabeth Willis - EWillis@blacksburg.gov

Tina King - tinaking@nrva.org

President's Message *(continued)*

reluctant to let go. Tick checks are important but in reality they are hit or miss for most of us. No big deal...until it is.

First sign was a rash on one thigh, another starting on the other leg. A long motorcycle trip was coming up. Better see my doctor. After a quick look he left the room and returned with a document showing exactly the pattern we were seeing...a "bull's-eye" pattern. Bypassing the available Lyme test, I was put on Doxycycline, and two days into the trip the rash was disappearing. Again, no big deal...until it is.

Time for annual physical, summer 2011. Reported something new. Severe knee pain in a partial squat position. Initially passed off as just something to deal with; why should a guy my age be doing full squats anyway? Ok, guess I'll just deal with it. Two weeks later I was back at the clinic. No way I'm just dealing with this. Plus, by now some other suspicious symptoms are becoming apparent. In the service of brevity, lets just report that over the next couple of months I visited an orthopedic surgeon, did about six week of rehab with no benefits, visited a rheumatoid arthritis specialist with nothing showing from her tests.

In the meantime I've been doing some research of my own, and becoming increasingly convinced that we were missing something important—the Lyme disease angle. The symptoms are now worse, knees in very bad shape, wrist joints painful, lower abdomen muscles very sore, and elbows are in pain. Plus, I've had a couple of tick bites, but no tell tale bulls-eye rash pattern.

There is more circumstantial evidence. A close neighbor, young teenager, is in bad shape with no energy, sleeps most of the day, and then develops bells palsy. Lyme disease is confirmed but only after his mother and sister did considerable research of their own and forced consideration of Lyme. Treated with Doxycycline, he got better. One of our dogs was treated as well, and any local vet in my area will tell you that testing positive for Lyme is almost an epidemic among dogs. (Note that in the Amy Tan story, she comments that the surest way to tell if your area is a hot spot for Lyme is to check with local vets.)

With my symptoms worsening I did finally receive a Lyme test (it was positive) and was treated with antibiotics for a month. At the very end of that month the symptoms finally receded. Then about a month later the symptoms returned, and I was back on Doxy for two months. Near the end of the two months, and only at the end, I noticed some relief and finally I returned to normal. Double relief because the Doxy was killing my stomach.

Just to clarify, the effects of chronic Lyme are not just irritating, they are close to disabling. It was difficult to dress

Notes from the Public Libraries

Develop a Hobby at the Blacksburg Public Library

Are you interested in considering a new sport or hobby? MFRL is a good place to start exploring your opportunities for a new and different kind of fun. From fly-fishing to quilting, we'll be offering a variety of programs that will inform and entertain you in May and June.

Fly Fishing and Fly Casting Basics May 26, 6:30 pm

This workshop (for all levels of experience) will be presented by Trout Unlimited members Pete Jackson and Lynn Hayes. An understanding of the techniques and fundamentals can make learning easier and more enjoyable. The evening will bring laughter and fun, and the presenters will provide the necessities for everyone to have a chance to cast and test their new skills--although you'll have to imagine the water and fish yourself.

Quilting Workshop June 5, 5:30 pm

Would you like to explore your handiwork at creating a small quilt? The Textile Artists of Virginia (TAVA) will provide all the necessary supplies for creating a fabric postcard suitable for mailing, framing or hanging. All you have to do to participate is reserve a spot by calling 540-552-8246 or emailing Cathy Prati at cprati@mfrl.org. Attendance is limited to 20 crafting participants, so please don't wait to sign up. You are welcome to come observe the new hanging art work and the hands-on quilting process.

Travel back in time with the Mason Jar Time Capsules, on display in the glass cabinet through June. Local artist Matthew Dowdy began his mason jar time capsule project in 1996 when his grandmother suggested he store and display small knick-knacks and other little treasures in an old mason jar. Take a trip down memory lane!

Elizabeth Sensabaugh, esensabaugh@mfrl.org

Learn About Health in Christiansburg

On two Tuesdays in May, the Christiansburg Library will offer opportunities to learn from health professionals.

Body's Structures May 19, 6:30-8:00 pm

Lee Matthis, Doctor of Chiropractic, and Jennifer Ivey, a Licensed Massage Therapist, will talk about the how to maintain your body's proper structure so that your body's functions do not suffer.

Stress, Blood Chemistry May 26, 6:30-8:00 pm

Dr. Matthis and Janelle Anderson, Licensed Health Coach, will discuss how to decrease "stressors" in your life, and the significant role that blood chemistry plays in chronic stress-related diseases.

New Book For those of us who enjoy books about the English language, *Alphabetical: How Every Letter Tells a Story*, is British poet and radio host Michael Rosen's delightful romp through the Roman alphabet. You may remember reading to your children or grandchildren, *Going On a Bear Hunt*, Rosen's award-winning children's book of twenty-six years ago. His new adventure takes adults on a letter hunt, and concludes with some fun and challenging alphabet games.

Pamela Hale, phale@mfrl.org

President's Message (continued)

myself, almost impossible to turn over in bed, and when sliding from my drivers seat to the ground the pain was shocking. Only with a number of shuffling steps was I able to resume anything resembling a normal stride. Fortunately, I was able to avoid the neurological issues that are often associated with untreated Lyme Disease.

The tricky thing about Lyme is that it can mimic other possible diseases in the symptoms that show up. There is great controversy about Lyme. Some doctors apparently don't believe in it, and in some states only a handful of doctors (they're referred to as Lyme doctors) are even available to treat the disease.

So, just be aware. The intruder, that clever little tick, can find you almost anywhere in the US, but particularly in our area, and you may never know what havoc it has caused until too late. The trick is quick diagnosis and treatment, but that can be elusive. The *People Magazine* article above concludes with access to a lot of helpful information, some from the Centers for Disease Control. Thankfully, the intruder and what it can do is under much greater scrutiny these days.



The "intruder" — a deer tick, about the size of a sesame seed

Terry Wildman

The Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech invites you to

An Afternoon Conversation with P. Buckley Moss

3:30 pm, Latham Ballroom C, Inn at Virginia Tech, 901
Prices Fork Road

After an address from P. Buckley Moss, information about the Lifelong Learning Institute and a sneak preview of the fall program will be presented.

RSVP by May 15: <http://tinyurl.com/085lfgl>

Chapter News and Activities

Tax-Aide Program Serves 1,188

Your AARP Tax-Aide site was very busy during the 2014 tax filing season. Here is what we accomplished:

18—volunteers doing tax counseling and greeting clients

1,188—clients

955—federal and state returns prepared

12—amended returns

224—question and answer

28% of our clients were new this year.

61.5—average age (range 16 to 106).

53% were single

40% were joint returns

2% were married filing separately

5% were Head of Household

The AARP Tax-Aide Program always needs volunteers to help prepare tax returns. If you (or someone you know) would be interested in learn-

ing more about this program, please get in contact with Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu, or 382-1189.



Pat Ballard, Tax-Aide Program Coordinator

Legislative Report *by Val Coluni and Alison Galway*

Ethics Reform passed in special session approving, among others, the \$100/year aggregate gift cap, a definition of “widely attended events” to not include entertainments, include an executive branch representative appointed by the governor and allow former, not just retired, judges on the ethics council. The GA rejected amendments, among others, concerning travel expense for official public business and disclosure exemptions, broader definitions of personal friend and immediate family, and a process for random inspections of disclosure forms.

Redistricting: Correction to April 2015 report. All six bills AARP supported asking for independent redistricting died in House committees. The Governor vetoed several local redistricting bills as unconstitutional in timing mid-Census.

Transparency Virginia is a volunteer coalition of 29 non-profit groups with the goal of increasing public participation in government by more transparency and accountability in the governing process: timely access to scheduled committee meetings, recorded and published votes on all bills. The legislative calendar provides some information on committee meetings and hearings, but these can be cancelled without notice or others scheduled and held at the last minute. 76% of bills were killed in committee or subcommittee (often by unrecorded voice vote), reassigned and never placed on an agenda, or never got a hearing at all.

WIN Voting Machines have been decertified by the Virginia Board of Elections due to potential security problems with the wireless feature and the lack of a paper verification of individual votes. Montgomery County has most precincts already using Op-scan paper voting and should be able to cover all precincts by November 2015 elections.

Senior Citizen Scams: The latest scam is calls suggesting that the recipient is in violation of some law and must give out information and/or pay a fine immediately. Do not do this. All government agencies correspond by written letter, never demand payments over the phone or by email, and never ask for your identifying information.

Chapter Officers 2015

President • Terry Wildman, wiley@vt.edu

Vice President • Don Creamer, dgc2@vt.edu

Secretary • Sally Anna Stapleton, sanna418@gmail.com

Treasurer • Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu

Board of Directors

2015—Don Creamer, Terry Wildman, Nola Elliott

2016—Tom Alston, Tina King, Sally Anna Stapleton

2017—Pat Hyer, Jerry Niles, Shirley Peterson

Caring Committee Seeks Information

Margaret Kates has given up her role as chair of the Caring Committee. Violet Drake has assumed that role. (Thank you, Margaret, for your service during the past few years!)

The most difficult part of this job is finding out who among our membership, for whatever reason, needs to receive a sympathy, congratulations, or get well card. Violet would like for members to let her know of any occasion where such an expression of caring is needed. Contact Violet at 540-552-2807, or at vsdrake28@gmail.com.

Visit Your AARP Chapter Website at www.blackburgaarp.org



Blacksburg Chapter #2613
Terry Wildman, President
P.O. Box 10082
Blacksburg, VA 24062

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Member Application for 2015

Name: _____

Spouse/Partner: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Today's Date: _____

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

New Renewal 90+ years old (free)

***Please make your check payable to "Blacksburg AARP Chapter #2613"
and mail check and this form to:***

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