

Blacksburg News



June 2007, Volume 24, Issue 6

Limited Enrollment Still Open for the Driver Safety Course

Several spaces are still available for the AARP driver safety course, to be held from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 13, and Friday, June 15. The course will be offered at Blacksburg Community Center, 725 Patrick Henry Drive. Call Curt Finch at 552-8179 to sign up or get additional information.

This 8-hour classroom refresher course assists drivers age 50 and over in refining current driver skills and developing defensive driving techniques. The course does not include any examinations. Enrollees must attend sessions on both days to receive completion certificates.

Graduates may be eligible to receive state-mandated multiyear discounts to their auto insurance premiums.

Enrollment is \$10.00, payable by cash or check to "AARP" at the start of class. Blacksburg AARP Chapter #2613 and the Blacksburg Community Center are sponsoring the course.

— Curt Finch, Member Chapter Board of Directors

June Picnic will feature pot-luck food and White Elephants' auction

The AARP picnic will take place on Tuesday, June 19, from noon until 3:00 P.M. at Nellie's Cave Park — rain or shine.

The pot-luck lunch is sure to be as delicious as they are at all of our picnics, so come early and hungry. Plates, spoons & forks, cups and drinks will be supplied.

In addition to bringing a dish to share, please bring that lamp you no longer need, those extra utensils or the old vase for our white elephant auction. If you have a white elephant you want to get rid of (or anything else) we'll sell that too. Hope to see you there!

— Harriett Cooper, Program Chair

Jim's Jots for June

Our daughter Anne is getting married on the 16th in Asheville, NC, and paper messages, email, phone calls, snail mail, and all other forms of communication are happening all at once. Therefore, if you happen to get an invitation to the wedding and you want to come, just come on.

About Work Days, Hokies United, and helping build Memorials to the 32 victims of April 16th: I have talked to several people at Tech, and my phone contact there is Matt Garth. Next I will talk with a recent graduate named Sumeet Bagai, who is the "hands on" guy about actual jobs. Our Chapter Board is ponder-

ing this matter, and I ask you to ponder it also and call me about it (552-6851). The money is still coming in, and the projects will probably go on for years. If you want our Chapter to get involved, let us know. Hopefully, this will never happen again, so if we are going to join in, now is the time.

Come to the Picnic June 19th, celebrate heartily, then we will take our July and August break.

— Jim Gaines, President

Shred-a-Thon — Saturday, June 23

10 a.m. — 2 p.m.

Christiansburg Recreation Center

Help prevent identity theft, shred unwanted documents, protect your important information, and clean out the clutter.

For more information contact Sergeant Kevin Tucker, Crime Prevention Specialist, at 382-3131.

Sponsored by Christiansburg Parks & Recreation, Cintas

What is a Father?

A father's that someone
who's special and kind,
Who does thoughtful things
with his family in mind —
The one who gets dearer
as years come and go,
Who gives you a love
that you never outgrow —
And although this description
fits only a few,
It surely applies
to a father like you!

2007 Blacksburg AARP Chapter Board

Officers

President: *Jim Gaines* gaines@vt.edu
1st Vice President: *Jim Wightman* jpdad@bev.net
2nd Vice President: *Angela Little* anglittl@naxs.net
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Treasurer: *Brian Allen* mballen@prodigy.net
Associate Treasurer: *June Schmidt* schmidtj@vt.edu

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

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

Class of 2009:

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

Chapter meetings are the *third* Tuesday of each month at the Blacksburg Community Center, Patrick Henry Drive, at 11:30 a.m. Bring a bag lunch; the club provides napkins, coffee, and tea; the program starts at noon.

Board meetings are the *first* Tuesday of each month at the Blacksburg Community Center, Patrick Henry Drive, at 9:30 a.m.

AARP Blacksburg Chapter #2613
P.O. Box 10082, Blacksburg, VA 24062
Web: <http://civic.bev.net/aarp/>

**Entries Needed for
Fourth of July Parade
2007 Theme:
400 Years of Virginia History
contact Gavin Faulkner
faulkner@bev.net or
<http://mttabor.ruritan.org>**

Committee Chairs

Caring:

Lula Roberts lula.roberts1@verizon.net
Kathy Jeffers kats7772000@yahoo.com

Chaplains:

Ken Dawson kdawson@vt.edu
Norman Grover ngrover@vt.edu

Chapter Awards:

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Jim Owens jowen@vt.edu

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Jo Ann Underwood joa@vt.edu
Harriet Damant hdamant@verizon.net

History:

Jim Gaines gaines@vt.edu

Hospitality:

Cerrie Coil cerrie@verizon.net
Mary Ellen Moore mem@vt.edu

Legislative:

Dan Fleming dbflem@vt.edu

Membership:

Jim Wightman jpdad@bev.net

Nominating: *Class of 2007*

Program:

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Virginia Tech Retirees Association Liaison:

Jim Wightman jpdad@bev.net

Ways And Means:

Margaret Kates connie@vt.edu
Jim Moore mem@vt.edu

Webmaster:

Connie Anderson connie@vt.edu

Recycle Bulbs and Batteries Downtown

Don't throw your dead batteries and burned-out fluorescent bulbs in the trash!

The Downtown Merchants of Blacksburg want to help keep toxic heavy metals out of the local waste stream and ground water. We will recycle old household batteries (alkaline or rechargeable) and fluorescent bulbs free of charge. Just bring them to any downtown merchant.

— Leslie Hager-Smith, Director, Downtown Merchants of Blacksburg

Editors: Mary Holliman, and Ryan Donnelly — email: mchollim@vt.edu

More Info on Drug Price Lobbying

Pharmaceutical companies and drug industry trade groups spent a record \$155 million lobbying Congress between January 2005 and June of last year, according to a new study out this week from the watchdog group Center for Public Integrity.

The drug industry sent 1,100 lobbyists scurrying over Capitol Hill in each of the last two years to make sure legislation in its favor gets passed and that unfavorable bills do not. The drug industry's number-one target is to keep a majority of the 540 members of Congress from passing legislation to curb high drug prices by allowing Medicare to negotiate prices on behalf of the 43 million people with Medicare.

The result?

People with Medicare watch as the prices for their prescriptions spike, leaving them without needed medicines because they simply cannot afford to take them. According to an AARP analysis, manufacturer prices for commonly used brand-name drugs increased 6.2 percent last year, nearly double the cost-of-living increase in Social Security checks.

The pharmaceutical industry lobbied Congress aggressively in 2003 to push passage of the Medicare Modernization Act, the law that created the Medicare drug benefit (Part D). Drug lobbyists got friendly lawmakers to stick in a provision prohibiting the federal government from negotiating lower drug prices for people with Medicare, as the Department of Veterans Affairs does for our veterans and states do for their Medicaid populations.

As *60 Minutes* reported on April 1, the drug companies soon after gave these same friendly lawmakers lucra-

tive lobbying jobs. Among them is former Congressman Billy Tauzin, now head of PhRMA, the pharmaceutical industry trade group.

The ban on negotiations has ensured that Part D is a boon to drug makers' profits. That is why PhRMA and drug companies are spending millions to make sure the prohibition stays in place.

Enough is enough. Drug coverage that still leaves people unable to afford their medicines is no great benefit. It's time Congress stands up against the pharmaceutical lobby and passes legislation enabling the government to secure affordable drug prices for people with Medicare. It's time to start working toward a drug benefit that puts the well-being of older adults and people with disabilities first, ahead of the special interests of the drug industry.

— Medicare Rights Center
release, 4/5/06

LTC Insurance Guides Available from SCC

Virginians considering long-term care insurance (LTC) coverage for themselves or their parents now have a useful new guide from the State Corporation Commission (SCC)'s Bureau of Insurance.

Consumers can request free individual copies of the *Virginia Long-Term Care Insurance Rate Guide*, as well as *A Shopper's Guide to Long-Term Care Insurance*, by calling the Bureau of Insurance toll-free at 1-877-310-6560. Consumers who are hearing- or speech-impaired may call through the SCC's Telecommunications Device for the Deaf and hard of hearing (TDD) at 804-371-9206.

Consumers may also find the *Virginia Long-Term Care Insurance Rate Guide* and additional information about long-term care insurance on the Bureau's website at <<http://www.scc.virginia.gov/division/boi>>

— Dan Fleming

Virginia Public Access Project (VPAP) The Trusted Source for Information on Money in Virginia Politics

Several chapter members have expressed interest in learning more about the Virginia Public Access Project (VPAP). This organization, which is dependent on donors, is a non-profit, non-partisan organization founded in 1997 to fill a critical hole in the state's regulation of campaign contributions.

VPAP provides a computer database offering detailed information on gifts and contributions given to each member of the General Assembly, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and the Attorney General. The data are shown by election cycles, and you can get data for a single election or a total for the past eight years.

It is fascinating and somewhat scary to see all the millions given in money and gifts from special interest groups to our state political leaders. In addition, the site provides detailed information on the financial holdings of each legislator.

VPAP can be found on the internet at www.vpap.org

— Dan Fleming, Legislative Chair

There is no mechanical problem so difficult that it cannot be solved by brute strength and ignorance. — *William's Law*

Nothing is as inevitable as a mistake whose time has come. — *Tussman's Law*

Exercise — Walking and Swimming

from *Home Sweet Home*
Number 3, 2007, p. 1-3

Indoor Walking — Walking indoors at a mall or a gym has several advantages. One, you never have to worry about rain, snow, the heat, cold, or dogs. Two, the surface is almost always the same — smooth, consistent, and level.

Two malls in the New River Valley are good for walking and both are free. They are: 1) University Blvd. Mall in Blacksburg — It is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 2) New River Valley Mall in Christiansburg — Thanks to the mall's General Manager Mike Poldiak, it is open from 7:00 am to 9:00 pm, except Sundays from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm.

In addition to mall walking, there are four other fine indoor recreational centers. They are:

1) Christiansburg Recreation Center at 1600 North Franklin Street (382-2349). *It costs \$75 for a senior couple (both over 50) for 6 months.* Their wonderfully renovated center (formerly a Lowe's store) has an indoor track with two walking lanes and one for running which is 8 laps to the mile. It is open M-Th from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm, Fridays from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm, Saturdays from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm, and Sundays from 1:00 pm to 7:00 pm.

2) The Radford Recreation Center is located at 200 George Street in a beautiful new building with a great view (731-3633). Their indoor track is 12 laps to a mile and is open as follows: M-F from 5:30 am to 10:00 pm. On Saturday, it is open from 5:30 am to 8:00 pm, Sunday from 1:00 pm to 8:00 pm. The cost is \$5 for one time or \$50 for 6 months (for one senior over 50).

3) Radford University's Dedmon Center (831-5345) is located down by New River. It is 6 ½ laps (or 7) to the mile. Seniors (60 and older) not connected with the university can join the Highlander Club for \$150 a year, good for walking, swimming, etc. The hours are M-W-F from 6:00 am to 10:00 pm, T-Th from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm.

4) Blacksburg Community Center on Patrick Henry (961-1149). Best times are 8:00 am to noon, for free, around the basketball courts.

Outdoor Walking — Outdoor walking has several advantages. It is free, you can start right from your house, and you can enjoy the sights and

sounds of nature and your home town through the seasons.

In walking outdoors, consider routes that have sidewalks or where traffic is light. Also consider walking at times during the day other than rush hours.

- 1) Walk three times a week.
- 2) Start with short distances.
- 3) Make it a habit so you will continue walking.
- 4) Watch for cars near you.
- 5) Set your own pace.
- 6) Wear light-weight, comfortable shoes.
- 7) Wear clothes drivers will be able to see easily.

He's Still Walking at 92 —

He is Homer Dickinson, age 92 and 1/3, who is 6' 4" tall. He walks most days from his home on Glade Road in Blacksburg. If it's cold, he drives to the University Blvd. mall and walks inside.

Although he walks for just about a half mile, he is getting more exercise than many of us. Not bad for someone who has been retired 25 years from Hercules where he worked as a Senior Process Engineer.

Some of you may have bought light bulbs and brooms from him in recent years to help the Lion's Club. Homer, pictured below, also likes to exercise his mind with such brain teasers as "What percent of the sun's rays strike the Earth?"

You can get more information on walking online at

<www.SeniorNavigator.org>
Click on "Aging Well" and select the article "Walking: A Step in the Right Direction."

Everybody, do as Homer Dickenson does, get out and walk.
(reprinted with permission from *Home Sweet Home*, "Exercise — Walking & Swimming," (No. 3, 2007), pp. 2-3.



Meet the Candidates Forum Scheduled for September 18

AARP members are asked to place on their calendar a Meet the Candidates Forum to be held at the Blacksburg Community Center on Tuesday, September 18. The meeting will also be open to the public. Light refreshments will be served from 9:30 to 10:00 and the meeting will run from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

All the candidates running for the General Assembly who represent any part of Montgomery County will be invited to attend. After each candidate has presented his or her positions on

from *Home Sweet Home*
Number 3, 2007, p. 3

Swimming — The Blacksburg Aquatic Center is located on Patrick Henry Drive (961-1852). Lap swim is M-F from 6:00 am to 9:00 am, 10:00 am to 2:45 pm, and 7:15 pm to 9:30 pm, Saturday from noon to 6:00 pm, and Sunday from 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm. It costs \$3 per visit, or \$25 if you buy a 10 swim pass.

The Dedmon Center pool is open to Radford University employees and Highlander Club members for \$150 per year. Lap swim is M-W-F from 6:00 am to 9:45 pm, T-Th from 8:00 am to 9:45 pm, and Sat-Sun from 9:00 am to 7:45 pm.

The War Memorial Pool at Virginia Tech holds lap swim M-W-F from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm and T-Th from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. Open recreational swim is M-F from 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm. The pool is closed on Saturday but open Sunday from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Call 231-7086 for more information.

During the summer, there are outdoor pools at Hethwood, Shawnee Swim Club (private), the Blacksburg Town pool, the Montgomery County Frog Pond, and other apartment complexes.

issues, written questions will be taken from the audience. Virginia AARP has agreed to contact Montgomery County AARP members about the meeting by postcard.

At this time, at least two contested races are expected for the fall. Two seats in the House of Delegates and

two in the Senate are up for grabs in the November election.

If you are not currently registered to vote, you will be able to do so at the meeting.

This meeting will replace the regular September meeting of Blacksburg AARP.

Free
SHRED-A-THON
Saturday, June 23rd
10am — 2pm

- **Help prevent identity theft**
- **Shred unwanted documents**
- **Protect your important info.**
- **Clean out the clutter**

For more information contact
Sergeant Kevin Tucker, Crime Prevention Specialist
540-382-3131

To be held at the
Christiansburg Recreation Center
(no businesses please)

SPONSORED BY:

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TRIAD

Blacksburg AARP Board Minutes, Chapter 2613

June 5, 2007

1. Call to order—President Jim Gaines called the meeting to order at 9:34.

Members present: Brian Allen, Connie Anderson, Virgil Cook, Harriett Cooper, R. B. “Ben” Crawford, Nancy Eiss, Donald Elson, Curt Finch, Dan Fleming, Jim Gaines, Tom Jeffers, Margaret Kates, Angela Little, Carl McDaniels, Mary Ellen Moore, Dale Oliver.

Absent: Cerrie Coil, Harriett Damant, Frank Lau, June Schmidt, JoAnn Underwood, Jim Wightman.

2. Approval of the Agenda—There was a request for an update on the safe-driving course. The agenda was approved with the addition.

3. Approval of Minutes—the minutes of May 1 were approved as distributed in the newsletter.

4. Treasurer’s Report—Brian Allen reported the beginning balance as \$4608.97. He made two payments to Pocahontas Press in May for the April and May newsletters and a payment to Kopy Korner of \$173 for copying the membership list. He also renewed our insurance policy with Liberty Mutual (\$95). The current balance is \$4117.02. The board voted to approve the report.

5. Newsletter—Because Jim Wightman was absent, Connie Anderson reported that Jim had prepared a new labels list, correcting entries that caused two newsletters to be sent to the same address. Some people use different, professional names, contributing to the duplication. Connie pointed out that there are membership forms on the Web site and in the newsletter. She can add any new members to the labels list so that they can receive the newsletter. Jim reported that Mary Holliman will also be doing the

labels this month because he will be out of town for his daughter’s wedding.

The issue of material for the newsletter was raised. It was pointed out that Mary Holliman is an editor, not a reporter. It is the board’s responsibility to find and submit relevant material to Mary. Jim Gaines promised to write a couple of articles for the September issue.

6. Web Site—Connie Anderson reported that Mary Holliman sends her a PDF copy of the newsletter, which she puts on the chapter Web site. She removed the driver’s-ed link because the slots were filled. Jim Gaines reported that there has been one cancellation, meaning that they can take one more student. He would like to add several alternates in case of the usual, last-minute cancellations. He suggested taking five more applications and referring them to Curt Finch.

7. Program—Nancy Eiss reported that the picnic will take place on June 19 at Nellie’s Cave Park. The Hospitality committee will take care of paper products, drinks, and ice. Connie stressed that the picnic must be featured at the top of the first page of the newsletter including all of the details. Members should bring items for the auction. Carl McDaniels will serve as auctioneer.

Harriet Cooper reported that the September program will focus on the upcoming elections. Area candidates for the General Assembly will be invited to attend the program. Carl McDaniels said that the state AARP will donate \$200 to help with program expenses. Coffee and doughnuts will be available. A forum with the candidates will follow. Dan Fleming raised

the possibility of only a few of the possible six candidates attending the meeting. Jim Shuler and John Edwards are expected to run unopposed. There is a Republican primary on June 12 between Brandon Belle and Ralph Smith for Belle’s seat. The Democrats are running Peggy Frank against Dave Nutter. AARP Virginia plans to send cards randomly to people in the district. Attendance was low at the May meeting. The newsletters’ being mailed late probably contributed to the lower attendance.

Carl McDaniels pointed out that we could have a large turnout because we are inviting other groups to participate: the Radford AARP, the Tech retirees group, the area retired-teachers group, and the Blacksburg-High-School government class. We have ample time for broad publicity. Because this is not an ordinary program, we could have a large turnout, which might require more money.

Carl reported that the rules have changed for getting the Voter Express Van. We can have it for a week, but a member who has passed the driver’s-ed class must pick up and return the van. Virginia AARP will pay for an overnight stay for the person who picks up the minivan. It was suggested that a notice should be placed in the newsletter soliciting volunteers to pick up and return the van. Ben Crawford emphasized that the van is an easy-to-drive minivan. It is stocked with valuable voter information. Ben volunteered to coordinate the work involved in getting and returning the van, and getting it to area venues during the week that we have use of it. Carl volunteered to take the van to Warm Hearth on Monday, September 17.

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Minutes, June 5, 2007 —

Connie Anderson pointed out that we need to submit questions in advance for the candidates to respond to. She can post the responses on our Web site as they become available.

In October, Frank Lau will speak on avoiding tax pitfalls in 2007. Also in a mini-program, Diane Brodie Scott will speak on adult daycare.

In November, Dr. Thurman Lockhart will speak on the physical changes as we grow older. The program has been rescheduled from April because of 4/16.

8. Workdays—Jim Gaines reported that the May workday fell through, perhaps because of the delay distributing the newsletter. He suggested doing something for the Tech memorial under the Hokies United umbrella. Matt Garst is the local contact for the project. We can work as much as we wish, from the dirty stone-and-mortar work, to carpentry, to working with placing plaques. The plans have been made, but the projects need more people. Work could go on for years. Right now, the project is so wide open that there is yet to be a list of jobs.

9. Legislation—Dan Fleming argued that to have any impact on legislation, we should get our concerns to the General Assembly by the beginning of fall. Dan got a brochure from Freedom First Credit Union on their payday-lending program. For example, someone who borrows \$250 from the credit union and continues re-borrowing, she/he could save as much as \$430 over six months vs. borrowing from a conventional payday lender. Only 10% get one loan, but 90% continue borrowing. Carl McDaniels suggested putting information on the Web site and including information in the newsletter.

10. Miscellaneous—Nancy Eiss

continued from page 6

will send a picture of President Gaines to the paper for an article on the national AARP's \$32,000 memorial contribution to the geriatric center at Tech.

The driver's-ed class will take place on June 13 and June 15 from 1 until five at the Blacksburg recreation center. There is still one place open. President Gaines suggested signing up five, thereby providing four alternates. The alternates should show up on June 13. Connie said that she could publish information about the class on the BEV seniors list provided someone furnishes her the information. She had removed the material because the course was filled.

Ways and Means: Margaret Kates said that she would check with Barnes and Noble about conducting a book fair similar to the one they conducted for us last year. The fair was a good moneymaker. Connie said that she could post information about the fair on the AARP leaders list. She suggested that we use the list more to pass information on to the board.

Carl McDaniels reported that on May 15, he and Ben Crawford attended a meeting on public transportation in the area. There is strong interest in providing, through VDOT, public transportation for seniors.

11. Adjournment—The meeting was adjourned at 10:58.

Respectfully submitted:
Virgil A. Cook, secretary.

An elderly man was driving way below the minimum speed limit, when a policeman pulled him over.

"Do you know why I stopped you?" the cop asked.

"Sure do, sonny. I'm the only one you could catch."

(reprinted from *Ding Bat*, Old Town Printing, Christiansburg, Virginia)

Area Transportation Concerns Aired in Regional Workshop

The Virginia Dept of Rail & Public Transportation has launched a series of regional workshops around the state with a focus of "Coordinated Human Service Mobility Plan". AARP Virginia has been a active partner in this effort.

A workshop was held May 15 in Blacksburg coving the New River Valley Area. AARP Blacksburg was represented there by Chapter Past Presidents Ben Crawford and Carl McDaniels. Chapter members who would like more information or would like to take part in the effort, please contact Ben Crawford at 961-5733 or Carl McDaniels at 552-5818.

Chapter 2613 will continue to take part in this effort, seeking to increase local transportation options for area seniors.

Driver Safety Instructors

We simply must create a cadre of driver safety instructors. We have been feeding on instructors from other chapters all these years, and it is time for us to return the favor. Curt Finch is our chairman for this effort, and he is currently in training to become a driver safety instructor.

Our chapter contains literally hundreds of people who would be great instructors, so please come forward. Call me at 552-6851 if this plea rings a bell with you, and I will get you started. Thanks. — Jim Gaines

A cab driver picked up a passenger who was wearing a hearing aid.

"Well, I guess just about everyone has something the matter with them. Take me, for instance ...

"I can hardly see!"

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

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Don't Miss —
Mount Tabor Ruritan Club Fish Frys
every second Saturday, May through September

All you can eat for \$6.00:
French fries, batter-fried fish, coleslaw, iced tea or lemonade,
cakes and cookies
(The fish batter and the cole slaw are our own secret recipes.)

Slusser's Chapel picnic shelter, 5-7 p.m.

**from *Home Sweet Home*
Number 3, 2007**

- 1) Swim 3 times a week.
- 2) Choose a lane with people who are slow.
- 3) Don't buy the cheapest goggles. Use ones with foam around the eyes.
- 4) Forget about how fast or far others are swimming.
- 5) Get comfortable with your head in the water.

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 _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ email _____

- 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
 Lifetime membership \$100 per couple

Recruited by (if appropriate) _____

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