



Serving the greater New River Valley, Virginia

February 15 Chapter Meeting

Inside the Blacksburg Rescue Squad

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Mode Johnson from the Blacksburg Volunteer Rescue Squad (BVRS) will be giving an informative talk about the rescue squad at our February meeting. He will discuss what the rescue squad does for community members and, in turn, what community members can do to help the rescue squad. Besides responding to 911 calls to assist local residents, the rescue squad is trained and equipped to perform many other services that will be explained.

Membership of the 90-member, *all volunteer* rescue squad will be reviewed and—surprise—this is not just a young person’s endeavor. Members of the squad are constantly training and have special equipment for, not only the usual, but also the unusual situations and/or obstacles the rescue squad may confront on any call.

Mode became an EMT and joined the rescue squad at age 62 after retiring from Virginia Tech in 2006. At Virginia Tech he held positions in Student Affairs, the College of Veterinary Medicine, and Central Administration. At BVRS,



Mode Johnson

he has served as President and Vice President, and currently serves on various committees. Mode’s work with BVRS has been recognized by several awards: 2007 Rookie of the Year; 2013 Member of the Year; and American Legion Post 182 Emergency Medical Technician Outstanding Public Service Award of the Year in 2013.

President’s Column

According to the Georgian calendar, February is the second month of the year, and also the shortest month. February had 28 days until Julius Caesar gave it 29, and 30 days every four years. According to tradition, Augustus, the Roman emperor, took one day off to add one day to August, the month named after him. We now have February with 28 days, and 29 on leap years.

Februa is the Roman festival of purification, held on February fifteenth.

Whether we consider the month of February a bow to the Roman Emperor Augustus or as a time of purification (from what, I am not sure), it is for us the third month of winter and should at least offer a glance of hope that Spring is coming soon.

At the member public meeting in January, I took advantage of the unfortunate absence of our planned speaker (his father passed away) to speak to the assembled audience about “the state of the chapter.” There was much good to be described and our recent accomplishments, especially during this past year, were highlighted and served as examples of the anticipated future pathway for the chapter.

I also highlighted several possible new goals or things both big and small that can and should be changed to make our chapter even more relevant to the world in which we now live. We had a very good first 40 years of service to our communities, but if we are to remain relevant we must reach out to our constituencies in new and welcoming ways. We need to strengthen our relationships with other organizations, diversify our membership and expand it, identify more member-leaders for new projects, encourage volunteerism among members, open our doors to allow community leaders to help us shape our future, and we need to

Upcoming Events

February 1–April 15, Tax-Aide program (p. 5)

February 17, “Seniors Decide” Presidential Candidates Forum Viewing Party (p. 5)

February 25, Blacksburg library chili crawl, noon: www.nextthreedays.com/FeaturedEventDetails.cfm?E=370415

September 14, Health Fair (p. 4)

Dues are Due!

If you haven’t yet paid your dues for 2016, please use the form on the back of this newsletter.

If you have paid, consider an additional contribution to the local chapter for its projects and expenses. Thanks!



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.

Please bring a food donation (a can or box of non-perishable food) to the AARP chapter meeting. We collect food at each monthly chapter meeting for the food banks in Blacksburg and Christiansburg.

This newsletter is published nine months each year, except for July, August, and December. Send suggestions for content to Carolyn Rude, carolyn.rude@comcast.net

Remembrance of friends who died in 2015

Today I will be assisted by Clarence Obody. In the movie *It's a Wonderful Life*, Clarence is the angel who helps a compassionate but despairingly frustrated businessman named George Bailey. Clarence shows George all the lives he has touched and how different life in his community of Bedford Falls would be had he never been born.

Quoting Clarence, "Strange isn't it. Each man's life touches so many other lives. When he isn't around he leaves an awful hole, doesn't he?" Today we remember many friends who have touched our lives and left a hole in our hearts.

In a touching ending, while holding his daughter Zuzu in his arms, George glances down on a pile of money and his eye catches what is buried on the pile—Clarence's copy of *Tom Sawyer* left for him as a gift. Zuzu opens it and they find an inscription written in it: "Dear George, remember no man is a failure who has friends. Thanks for the wings, Love, Clarence." Then a bell rings on the tree.

Zuzu says, "Look Daddy. Teacher says every time a bell rings, an angel gets his wings." "That's right, that's right," says George, "Attaboy, Clarence." Only George realized the full significance of the bell ringing. It rings for Clarence who has earned his wings by succeeding with a tough assignment—and also rings for George's awakening...freedom from stress and pressures. He has recovered joy and happiness.

Today we remember nine of our departed members who brought great joy to their families, colleagues and friends. Without any theological reasoning or research, I can believe there are angels like Clarence—and our good friends—who are watching over us, and we will ring a bell for each.

James Moore died April 23. He was an associate professor emeritus of Agricultural Economics at Virginia Tech, specializing in Farm Management. Known as the department innovator, Jim was always the first to try new technology, including the very first Radio Shack TSR-80 model. His colleagues remember fondly the annual September departmental parties hosted by Jim and his wife Mary Ellen. Jim was 91.

Joyce Lewis died July 20. A leader and community activist, Joyce served as President of the Blacksburg Regional Art Association and President of the Montgomery County Mental Health Association. She also served as Chairman of the Montgomery County Republican party and was elected to and served 20 years on the Blacksburg Town Council. Other than being a wife and mother, one of her most rewarding activities was serving as a tutor to help adults learn to read.

Clark Webb passed away July 25. Clark came to town in 1978 as a leader of Project Home Repair, a group that helped low-income residents fix their residences. In 1982, he opened Annie Kay's, a health food store that became one of the town's

countercultural landmarks. Clark always wanted to be involved and to help those in need...from raising money for refugees in the Balkans to building Blacksburg's ties to the Nicaraguan town of San Jose de Bocay. For a quarter century, Clark and his wife Phyllis Albritton, were a power couple among those on the left-leaning side of Blacksburg political circles. Clark was 65.

Kenneth Dawson died September 10. After receiving a PhD from the University of Maryland, Ken returned to his undergraduate alma mater as an assistant professor at Virginia Tech. Having traveled to 60 countries and all of the United States, Ken helped develop liaison relationships between Virginia Tech and many nations including China, Japan, Brazil and Egypt. Ken shared his faith by teaching Sunday School for over 50 years and serving as the longtime chaplain of the Blacksburg Chapter of AARP. Ken was 88.

Wendell Hensley passed away September 20. He was employed at Poly-Scientific, Inland Motors and Force. Wendell was in the Jaycees, served on the Board of Supervisors, New River Community College Board, Commission on Local Government, Masonic Lodge, and was a Boy Scout Leader. He had a passion for antique cars and sports vehicles and was an avid Virginia Tech football and basketball fan. Wendell was 75.

Janet Blum died on October 29. Throughout her husband Joe's career in the Air Force and then 10 years as a VT faculty member, Jan's major emphasis was on the care and nurturing of their children. She still found time to volunteer with the Reach-to-Recovery Program of the American Cancer Society and also worked in the Blacksburg Interfaith Food Pantry for many years. She began recreational running while living in Hawaii in the 70s and continued running and walking until just a short time before her death, documenting a total of just under 20,000 miles. Jan was 80.

Margaret Genter Cain died November 14. She was an active member of Blacksburg Presbyterian Church, serving as a deacon and both president and treasurer of Presbyterian Women. Peggy was instrumental in the founding of the Easter Seal speech and hearing clinic for children in Christiansburg during the 50s and was also an active volunteer with the blood mobile. She was an avid reader and had a keen interest in keeping her mind active and current. In her 90's, Peggy continued to do daily crossword puzzles and use her personal computer for email and internet research. Peggy was 95.

Robert Comparin passed away November 16. Bob served in the Air Force, and upon leaving the service in 1949, took advantage of the GI Bill to earn his BS, MS and PhD in Mechanical Engineering at Purdue. In 1964, Bob began his long career with Virginia Tech as a professor of Mechanical Engineering, becoming head of the department in 1983. He sup-

Remembrance of friends who died, continued

ported hands-on student based programs and was especially passionate about cars, creating the original “Car Factory” at Virginia Tech. A lifelong hunter and fisherman, Bob was also a founding member of the Shawnee Hunt Club and a gun safety instructor. Bob was 87.

Leslye Bloom died November 17. A talented artist, Leslye held Bachelor’s, Master’s, and doctoral degrees in art education from Pennsylvania State University, and she used that education to work with Virginia Tech’s art education program. She was pioneer in the field of combining traditional and digital media, and called it “computage.” Leslye had a passion for rescuing dachshunds and is survived by two of the loving pups she rescued, Orion and Elmo. She will be remembered for her leadership in the VT Retirees Association and AARP, serving as our president and making numerous visits to Virginia congressmen and our state legislators to advocate for seniors. Leslye was 70.



Welcome, Abbey O’Farrell

Abbey O’Farrell is serving as a Field Study Intern with AARP Blacksburg chapter for the Spring 2016 term. From Richmond, she is a senior student in Human Development, *cum laude*, at Virginia Tech and is interested in employment in non-profit organizations. She has already proven her worth to the chapter by attending some planning sessions of the Executive Committee of the Board and has undertaken other assignments. She is evaluating our website, studying an inexpensive method of sending mass emails to chapter members, and helping with chapter programming activities.



Abbey has a “can do” attitude that will make her a valuable member of any organization with mutual interests.

We are lucky to have Abbey working with us for a few months. Please welcome her to our team.

President’s Column, continued

reach more individuals and groups in all of our surrounding communities in meaningful ways.

I received many positive comments about being brought up to date about our history and about our current challenges. Unfortunately, we need more money to accomplish some of our goals and we have modified our membership form to encourage extra donations to the chapter beyond regular dues. Many already have accepted this invitation and our bank account is looking better every day. I pledge to you that we will not waste these additional resources and that we stand ready to be accountable for all actions taken by the Board of Directors.

I have received some thoughtful feedback from the speech. Some have even suggested that an annual account of the state of the chapter might be a good topic for one of our public meetings. I encourage each of you to offer your suggestions for how we can achieve the stated new goals and how we need to change make our chapter even more relevant to our community constituencies.

I am excited about the extensive planning now underway for the 2016 Health and Wellness Fair offered in partnership with VCOM. Jennie Reilly, Angela Little, and Wendy Baldwin are giving careful and professional leadership to planning and we all owe them a debt of gratitude. This is not an easy assignment, as I’m sure John and Sharon Hillison who have conducted the event for several years would testify. Look for frequent reports on the website and in the newsletter about this coming event.

Those of you with email addresses should look for a message soon from me inquiring whether you would be willing to receive your monthly newsletter as an attachment to an email message. There might be several advantages to choosing this option and I will articulate them in the email message that I send.

Finally, I want you to know that we have a student intern working with us this academic term. She is Abbey O’Farrell, a senior student in Human Development at Virginia Tech. She is interested in future work with non-profit organizations and already has proven her worth to us. Her daytimes are mostly taken up by classes and other responsibilities on campus, but I am hopeful that she can make some of our public meetings so that I can introduce her to you personally.



Meet New Board Member, Wendy Baldwin

Wendy Baldwin and her husband, Del Futrell, came to Blacksburg for one major reason—grandchildren. Their older daughter and her husband had graduated from Tech, and they really liked Blacksburg. So did Wendy and Del after so many visits here. When it looked like it might be a good time to retire, this was a logical choice. There are now four grandchildren, aged 2–12, which makes it irresistible! Wendy has lived in Blacksburg for two years.

Most of their lives Wendy and Del lived in the DC area. Wendy worked at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and Del worked at the Food and Drug Administration. When she retired from NIH, Wendy decided to “treat” herself to the careers she had missed because she started at NIH right after graduate school. That meant five years as VP for research at the University of Kentucky and then five years leading the poverty, gender, and youth program at the Population Council in New York. That work was all international and involved using research to make lives better for young people in developing countries. That background is important to her interest in AARP because she has long been interested in how communities function to improve lives.

After this 10-year interlude, Wendy went back to DC for 3 1/2 years. Because Del stayed in Kentucky when she moved to New York, they experienced 8 1/2 years of “extreme commuting.” First she flew to Kentucky each weekend and then, after they moved to Blacksburg, she drove from DC. Wendy says, “That is altogether too much time on Interstate 81 and 66...so retirement was starting to look like a good idea.”

Wendy loves to travel. In her job with the Population Council she visited 14 countries in Africa, several in Asia, and the usual European hubs. She also treated her husband and herself to a safari at one point and it was “a most amazing experience.” However, she has traveled so much that now she is quite happy to stay still for a bit!

When she was visiting Blacksburg before moving here, she went to the Ruritan fish fry. The Panjammers were the live music that day. Wendy says, “Now, if you had asked me to name the 500 things I might do in retirement, I wouldn’t have put “play a steel drum” on that list, but, once I heard them I knew I had to do it! I’ve been playing with the band for almost two years now and it is a great group with terrific leadership and absolutely the most fun.”

Wendy learned about the local AARP chapter from Nola Elliot, a former AARP board member. Both of them are in Mt. Tabor Ruritan. AARP appeals to Wendy’s interest in community involvement and political awareness and action. The Lifelong Learning Institute is just the kind of activity she was hoping to find in retirement—and the course she took in the fall was great. Now she is helping to plan the September 14 AARP Health Fair—another activity that brings the community together and helps everyone, members or not. Health

and health care are critically important for all, and especially as we age. AARP can be an important voice in the debate about access to health care as well as for the support of a healthy lifestyle.

Wendy is trained in demography, the study of populations. Her specialization in demographics has been in fertility or, more broadly, reproductive health.

In her work in the US and abroad, it became clear that when women can control their fertility they are able to invest in their own education and skills as well as the health and wellbeing of their families. She has seen the good that voluntary family planning does for so many women. However, the issues are not simple, and research is needed on contraceptive methods as well as on how individuals and families make decisions and get access to services to help them achieve their goals. In the international sphere, family planning programs but also programs that help reduce child marriage and support girls’ education not only improve the lives of women, but also pay tremendous benefits for the children.

Welcome, Wendy, and thanks for getting involved!



Health Fair Scheduled for September 14 in Christiansburg

The AARP Health and Wellness Fair is getting geared up for the fourth event. The Fair is held every other year, so mark your calendar for September 14, 2016.

This year we will continue our relationship with VCOM but hold the event at the Christiansburg Recreation Center. “We are so pleased at the positive response we have had from previous exhibitors and we expect even more visitors than last year,” says Jennie Reilly one of the three organizers (others are Angela Little and Wendy Baldwin).

This is a great place to come get free screenings, flu shots, blood pressure and glucose tests, and learn about services that make life better for seniors. For example, ever wonder about those bright, large keyboards that make computer use easier? An exhibitor may demonstrate it. Other exhibitors will talk about tools and programs to make fitness easier.

Mark your calendars and come join us 12–4 pm for the AARP Health and Wellness Fair, September 14, 2016. If you haven’t exhibited in the past but are interested for the 2016 Fair, send an email to Wendybburg@gmail.com.

Seniors Decide: Feb. 17, 2016

The nation's only forum where all of the presidential candidates are invited to address issues that are important to America's older adults

Presidential candidates from both parties have been invited to participate in the Seniors Decide 2016 forum. This forum has been developed by the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations to provide a fair and unbiased platform for sharing the views of candidates for President of the United States on policies and programs affecting older Americans. The 72 member organizations that make up the LCAO represent a diverse membership of older Americans and their caregivers, and professionals engaged in the public policy arena.

On Wednesday, February 17, at 1:00 pm, you'll be able to watch Seniors Decide 2016 forum from wherever you are, as long as you have access to the internet. You can watch from your office or home to hear what the candidates for President are saying about policies and programs for older Americans. There is no charge for the viewing and anyone interested in this important conversation is invited to attend.

Our chapter president Don Creamer will host a **Viewing Party of the forum** on Wednesday, February 17, at 1:00 pm.

Please let Don know as soon as possible if you are interested in attending so that he will be able to judge whether his home is large enough or whether he should move the Viewing Party to a larger space. Email him at dgc2@vt.edu.

Older Americans and others interested in this important conversation are invited to participate prior to the Forum by encouraging the candidates to participate via Social Media—Facebook & Twitter—including #SeniorsDecide in social media messages. Candidates' social media contact information can be found online at www.seniorsdecide.org.

In addition, questions for the Forum may be submitted online at www.seniorsdecide.org.

HD Broadcasts in Blacksburg: Opera, Ballet

Frank Theaters in Blacksburg (First and Main) is shows HD broadcasts of the Royal Opera and Royal Ballet performances (from London). The August-September issue of the AARP newsletter included the schedule for Metropolitan Opera broadcasts and ballets at the Regal Cinema in Christiansburg. Tickets, Christiansburg: www.fathomevents.com

Tickets, Blacksburg: www.rohcinema.com (note that show dates in Blacksburg differ from those at this site)

In Blacksburg, the performances are on Sundays with encores on Wednesdays. Times will be announced at the website the week of the performance but are usually 6:30 pm or 6:50 pm.

The Royal Opera, 2016

3/6 *La Traviata*
3/9 Encore
4/17 *Boris Godunova*
4/20 Encore
5/22 *Lucia Di Lammermoor*
5/25 Encore
7/24 *Werther*
7/27 Encore

The Royal Ballet, 2016

senior tickets \$15
2/14 *rhapsody*
The Two Pigeons
2/17 Encore
5/1 *Giselle*
5/4 Encore
6/12 *The Sleeping Beauty*
6/15 Encore

The AARP Tax-Aide program

The 2016 tax-aide program begins February 1 and ends April 15. The location is the Christiansburg Recreation Center (Senior Activity Room). If you need help with your taxes, please call to schedule an appointment: 382-2349.

Counselors will be available he schedule for preparing taxes according to this schedule:

1:00 – 4:00 pm, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday

9:00 am – noon, Saturday

If you are interested in volunteering with this program, please contact Pat Ballard: pballard@vt.edu • 382-1189

Chapter Officers 2016

President • Don Creamer, dgc2@vt.edu

Vice President • Ben Crawford, ben.crawford@vt.edu

Secretary • Sally Anna Stapleton, sanna418@gmail.com

Treasurer • Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu

Board of Directors

2016—Tom Alston, Tina King, Sally Anna Stapleton

2017—Pat Hyer, Jerry Niles, Shirley Peterson

2018—Wendy Baldwin, Ryan Martin, Ray Van Dyke

Visit Your AARP Chapter Website at www.blacksburgaarp.org



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 Don Creamer, President
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 Blacksburg, VA 24062

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Member Application for 2016

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Phone: _____ Email: _____

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

New ___ Renewal ___ 90+ years old (free) ___

Please consider an additional donation to support our AARP chapter and its projects. \$10 ___ \$25 ___ \$50 ___ \$100 ___ Other \$ ___

Donations to the Blacksburg Chapter help us carry out our mission and community service activities while keeping member dues as low as possible. However, donations to the chapter are not tax deductible.

Please make your check payable to "Blacksburg AARP Chapter #2613."
 Mail the check and this form to: .

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