

Blacksburg News



May 2007, Volume 24, Issue 5

A Letter from the Virginia AARP —

May Meeting — Delegates to Report on '07 General Assembly

April 27, 2007

Dr. Karen Roberto, Director
Center for Gerontology
237 Wallace Hall
Blacksburg, VA 24061

Dear Dr. Roberto,

The tragedy that happened at Virginia Tech on April 16 has significantly impacted the lives of every American. AARP has also been profoundly affected by the loss of innocent lives. Many of our members, their children and their grandchildren have a direct relationship with the Virginia Tech community. The AARP Chapter in Blacksburg has deep ties to Virginia Tech. Several AARP staff and their children are either alumni or current students of Virginia Tech. We know that our 36 million members now feel a personal connection to you and the Virginia Tech family.

We know that healing takes time and the staff and volunteers of AARP want you to know that we stand with you in the weeks and months ahead. As an expression of AARP's deepest sympathy and in a desire to support you as you move forward, AARP will make a memorial contribution to the Virginia Tech Center for Gerontology Scholarship Fund in the amount of \$1,000 for each of the 32 innocent lives that were lost on that tragic day, for a total of \$32,000. We hope this memorial contribution will be an encouragement to you and to future students who choose Virginia Tech to prepare for careers that advance the issues of aging.

Warmest regards,
(signed) Bill Kallio
State Director

Our program for May 15th features "A Report from the General Assembly" by Delegates Jim Shuler and Dave Nutter. Come and hear them discuss what happened during the past General Assembly session and what will be coming up in the future.

Our annual picnic on June 19th will feature a White Elephant auction, so start looking around your house for once-cherished items that you no longer want. Be sure to bring some cash, for you may also find just the thing to fill the space you recently vacated.

—Harriett Cooper
See photo on page 5

Home Safety for Seniors

Our chapter has recently acquired an excellent book/DVD set entitled, "Home Safe Home." This media package contains many safety tips, ideas for inexpensive additions to baths and kitchens, and creative hints for keeping seniors safe in their homes.

The package will be available at our May meeting for your inspection. You may purchase your own copy for \$23.45 — which includes shipping and handling, at firstSTREET (TechnoScout), 1998 Ruffin Mill Road, Colonial Heights, VA 23834; or you may contact Nancy Eiss at nseiss@verizon.net to check out the chapter copy.

— Nancy Eiss
Co-Chair, Publicity

Jim's Jots for May

WORK DAY — May 10th — I have the directions to the site in Pulaski where Habitat for Humanity is building two houses and preparing ground for more houses. We have to muster at least 10 people to work there May 10th, so please come help. They say they can

gainfully use up to 30 or 40 people, so don't be bashful about showing up. Be at the Community Center (where we meet regularly) at 8:30 a.m. to pick up a copy of the directions for each vehicle, and we will get underway. See you there!

see Jim's Jots, page 4

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
Secretary: *Virgil Cook* vcook@vt.edu
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Associate Treasurer: *June Schmidt* schmidtj@vt.edu

Board of Directors

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Tom Jeffers kats7772000@yahoo.com
Harriet Damant hdamant@verizon.net

Class of 2008:

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

Class of 2009:

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

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/>

Committee Chairs

Caring:

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

Chaplains:

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Norman Grover ngrover@vt.edu

Chapter Awards:

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Jim Owens jowen@vt.edu

Community Service:

Mike Sporakowski eagle1@vt.edu

Financial Planning:

Dale Oliver jdoliver@vt.edu

Health Care:

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 dbflein@vt.edu

Membership:

Jim Wightman jpdad@bev.net

Nominating:

Class of 2007

Program:

Harriett Cooper chayabrona@verizon.net

Public Relations:

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Telephone:

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Margaret Kates connie@vt.edu
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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

Handy Guide to Modern Science:

1. If it's green or it wiggles, it's Biology.
2. If it stinks, it's Chemistry.
3. If it doesn't work, it's Physics.

Breaking Language Barriers for Safer Construction Sites

“The rate of deaths for Hispanic workers on construction sites has been increasing immensely since 1995,” says Dr. Carlos Evia, Assistant Professor of Professional Writing at Virginia Tech and chair of the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity. “The training materials that federal agencies have created are in English and the workers can barely read Spanish.” Herein lies the problem.

The son of a civil engineer, Dr. Evia spent his childhood around construction workers. “For my father, going to the office was going to the sites and dealing with all sorts of different traits with the construction workers.” After moving from Mexico to Texas later in his life, Carlos got to interact with many different Mexican and Mexican American workers, and he witnessed just how dangerous the job is for these men.

To solve the problem, Carlos is working with the Project for the Center for Innovation in Construction Safety and Health, which involves faculty and students from different departments at Virginia Tech. “The project’s main purpose is to attract more money for the school for



all the things it needs,” says Evia. “But it is also here to create research on issues related to construction safety and health. And what we need to do to address this problem is create safety materials in forms that they understand; something they can look at and understand in just seconds.”

The first phase of the project is to look for approaches to create visual materials in the form of comic books that show basic safety principles that Hispanic workers must follow. Dr. Evia collaborates with workers in Blacksburg and Fairfax when designing the visual aids. “We sit them down and say to them ‘You are the experts, what do we need to do?’ “

The second part of the project, which Dr. Evia considers “more ambitious,” is testing the structure of on-the-job training. After talking with workers, he found that most of the men do not receive proper training. Some of the workers are simply picked off of the street to do the work, are paid, then they go home. At this point, most of the advisors at the construction site do not speak Spanish; therefore, the workers can only learn by observing their peers. The ones who have been on the job the longest become the unofficial mentors of the new workers.

Now, the project team is testing a prototype to make that mentoring official instead of unspoken. “We give them incentives and evaluations to be sure the objectives are accomplished,” says Evia. “Some of these objectives include

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Safer Construction —

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making sure the worker learns basic English, seeing that he follows the required safety procedures, and ensuring that he really learns the trade." The mentors are tested to see if they have successfully trained the workers, and the workers are tested to see if the material and mentoring has actually worked.

Dr. Evia further described another leg of the project that delves into more personal matters. Interviewers from Virginia Tech's Center for the Study of Rhetoric in Society will ask the workers about important work and life issues that may be the cause of accidents on the job. "Questions that we ask these people," says Evia, "like, 'Do you live here alone?', 'Are you here with family?', or 'Are you legal here?', will be very helpful in assessing the [psychological] problems that could be affecting their performance."

Dr. Evia's background and experience with Hispanic construction workers is partly what drives him to make sure they are safe when working. The rest of him is driven by his desire to see that dedicated Hispanic workers are given the same opportunities as English-speaking workers.

All illustrations were provided by The Center to Protect Workers' Rights (CPWR) with the permission of Dr. Carlos Evia.

— Bryan Griffith

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>

Membership Notes for May —

Non-dues-paying Members Dropped from Roll

Our chapter membership now stands at 321. This represents a significant drop from the membership number reported last month.

By vote of the Board, 73 members were dropped from chapter membership for non-payment of 2007 dues. It costs about 75¢ to print and mail each copy of our monthly newsletter. Thus, if chapter dues are not paid, the chapter is subsidizing each delinquent member to the tune of about \$7–8 per year. This money could be used in support of our chapter programs, or in donations our chapter makes to worthy groups, or in community service projects.

If you know of friends who perhaps just overlooked paying their 2007 dues, please ask them to consider re-joining

this active chapter with no penalty. A convenient renewal form is found on the last page of this newsletter.

A surprising number of AARP national members do not know there is a local chapter. If you know of such persons, encourage them to become members of this local chapter. In fact, why don't you recruit a new member into the chapter and receive \$1 off next year's dues? Any questions about membership can be directed to Jim Wightman at 552.2007 or jpdad@bev.net.

— Jim Wightman
5/1/07

NOTE: A current membership list is included with this May issue of the newsletter.

May

A little rain, a little sun,
A little morning dew;
A pushing up, a reaching out,
then leaves and buds all about.

Ah! That's the way
That flowers really grow;
It helps you to know
That this is truly May.

May-apple skin, very thin,
Mild winter coming in.
May-apple skin, thick and tough,
Coming winter, cold and rough.

A wet, cold May
A barn full of hay;
By the tenth of May
Trees are goslin' gray.

Change not your heavy clothes
'Til all of cold May goes;
May full of rain
Much straw, little grain.

— Hubert Davis
A Folk Weather Calendar

Jim's Jots —

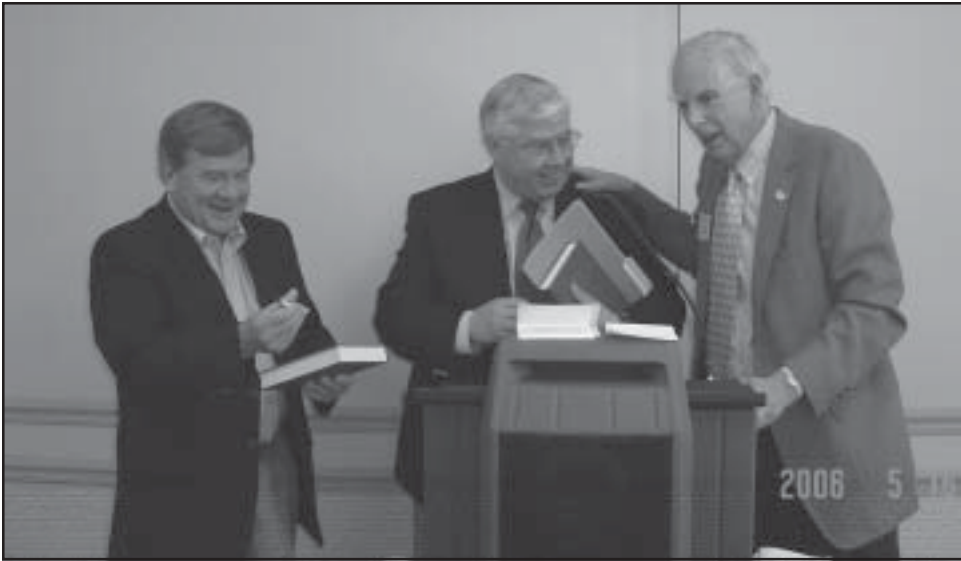
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Incidentally, I am working my way through the telephone tree at Virginia Tech to find out if our chapter can do work days with Hokies United in building memorials to the 32 victims of the recent tragedy. It will take me some days to get this done; I will keep you posted.

PAPER SHREDDER — Brian Allen has brought a shredder to the last two general meetings in case someone wants to bring papers to be shredded. If you have something to shred, bring it along. We'll keep up the service if there's a need for it, and if there's no need for it, we will drop it.

30 YEAR HISTORY — I mailed a copy to a Mr. Leo E. Hamel in Northglenn, Colorado. He wants to write one for his chapter. If you don't have a copy, and you want one, just let me know. We have roughly 35 copies remaining.

— Jim Gaines



Delegates Jim Shuler (left) and Dave Nutter (center) with AARP Legislative Chair Dan Fleming (right) at a chapter meeting last year. The delegates will be discussing the 2007 legislative session at this month's meeting on May 15.

Dan Fleming, AARP Legislative Chair, from his Commentary essay in *The Roanoke Times* Thursday, May 3, 2007:

“Woodrow Wilson once said, ‘There are men in this country big enough to own the government of the United States. They are going to own it if they can.’

“Ohio political boss Mark Hanna said more than a century ago, ‘There are two things that are important in politics. The first is money, and I can’t remember what the second is.’

“Such seems to be the case in Virginia, when \$96 million was spent in 2005 on political campaigns. The largest contributing groups were in the areas of real estate and construction, legal, banking and insurance, technology and communications, health care, energy, and natural resources. A classic example of the power of large corporations can be found in the recently completed session of the General Assembly. No other legislation will have more long-term impact on Virginia residents than the re-regulation of electric utilities. It was railroaded through to serve the desires of the utility industry while taking control away from the nonpartisan State Corporation Commission that oversees maintaining a fair balance between consumer and corporate needs. ...

“Many organizations and newspapers criticized the proposed utility legislation. All had a common message: Do not rush through such a vital and complex piece of legislation; hold it until next year. Their advice was ignored and although modest improvements were made by the General Assembly and the governor, very few really know what has actually passed. Utility officials claimed satisfaction with the result while consumer and environmental groups have expressed strong misgivings. ...

“Upon reviewing the gifts and contributions received and personal finances of state elected officials and legislators reported in the Virginia Public Access Project, it appears that our state government is in need of tighter rules on lobbying and money flowing to officials from all sources. ...

“Our democracy is threatened by the power of large corporations and financial institutions over our government. ... It is time for the voters to rebel against the influence of powerful corporate and financial lobbying groups ...”

2006 Tax Aide Team Files 122 Returns

Our Blacksburg team finished 122 tax returns this season, ranging from the 20-minute to the 3-hour preparation. The Recreation Center was again our primary sponsor, taking phone calls and providing space for two computers. This was also our first year working out of the YMCA Thrift Store, where we had two stations as well. All told, there were 315 volunteer hours given to the Community.

All returns were electronically filed, and that included state filings for MD, NC, NY, CO, NJ, WV, OR, AZ, besides VA. I have completed two previous year paper-amended returns, with 4 more to come, plus 1 extension for this summer. You have to like it!

My many thanks to Jim Hardell, Charlie Coale, and Jim Wilson for working Blacksburg as well as Christiansburg. Pat Ray does not do taxes, but was invaluable in helping with the tiring paperwork. Our 85% repeat clients points to the quality of our work, which I hope to expand by setting up a walk-in service at the YMCA Building next year.

— Frank Lau

Said a romantic roué in Rome
when he found a gray hair
on his comb:

“It is not that I care
if my whole head is bare —
I simply prefer monochrome!”

Way out on those wide open spaces
a gambler kept cards different
places.

He was finally shot
for what he had got —
no Queens and no Kings and five
Aces.

— Gordon King
A Diplomat's Book of Limericks

Blacksburg AARP Board Minutes, Chapter 2613

May 1, 2007

1. Call to order—President Jim Gaines called the meeting to order at 9:34. Jim Gaines called attention to a meeting in Roanoke to meet Senator Brandon Bell and challenger Ralph Smith, candidates for the State Senate. Also, the Habitat for Humanity day of service is May 10. There will be an announcement in the newsletter.

Members present: Brian Allen, Cerrie Coil, Virgil Cook, Harriett Cooper, R. B. “Ben” Crawford, Nancy Eiss, Donald Elson, Dan Fleming, Jim Gaines, Tom Jeffers, Frank Lau, Angela Little, Carl McDaniels, Mary Ellen Moore, Dale Oliver, June Schmidt, JoAnn Underwood, Jim Wightman

2. Approval of the Agenda—Carl McDaniels requested time to discuss whether to donate to a fund to help victims of the shootings and their families.

3. Approval of the April minutes—the board noted one correction: The holiday luncheon will take place on December 4, not December 18 as indicated in the minutes. Jim Wightman moved approval of the April minutes with the correction. The motion passed.

4. Treasurer’s Report—Brian Allen reported little activity. The balance in the checking account is \$4608.97.

Carl McDaniels asked whether the chapter should contribute to a fund for the victims of the April 16 tragedy. Two possible funds are The United Way of the New River Valley and Hokie Spirit. Jim Gaines will appoint a three-person committee to look into the issue and report at the June 5 meeting.

5. Newsletter—Dan Fleming suggested that the president’s message appear on the front page.

6. Website Report—Connie Anderson was absent, but she submitted a report by e-mail, which is excerpted below.

(1) The counter at webpage bottom “expired” and the new one is the only one I could find without advertising links.

(2) Need update on Driver’s Ed... If slots are filled, then I should remove from website... (Communication needed)

**Our program for May 15th features “A Report from the General Assembly” by Delegates Jim Shuler and Dave Nutter. Come and hear them discuss what happened during the past Assembly session and what will be coming up in the future.

**Our annual picnic on June 19th¹ will feature a White Elephant auction, so start looking around your house for once cherished items that you no longer want.

Be sure to bring some cash, for you may also find just the thing to fill the space you recently vacated.

7. Programs for the Remainder of the year—Harriet Cooper asked about possible dates to reschedule Dr. Thurman Lockhart’s program on aging and accidents. Dr. Lockhart’s April 17 program was canceled because of the upheaval on campus. September 18 is out because of the pre-election forum. Carl McDaniels reported that we have applied for support from the state AARP for the September program, including bringing the Get out the Vote van and helping to bring area candidates to the meeting.

For the October 16 program, Frank Lau will discuss pitfalls to avoid for the 2007 tax filing. Also, Diane Brodie Scott will present a mini program on adult foster care.

Harriet asked about rescheduling Dr. Thurman Lockhart for the November 13 meeting. The board agreed to this date. Several members expressed concern about the lack of an election wrap-up for the November meeting. President Gaines said that he would call the meeting early to allow a few minutes for a wrap-up.

Dan Fleming expressed concern about our not considering what legislative issues we would support in 2008. The consensus was to schedule such a program in January.

8. Membership—Jim Wightman’s report is excerpted below.

“ Our membership now stands at 394 which includes 11 Complimentary; 8 Life; and 5 Honorary members.

“ 34 members [4 singles and 15 couples] have paid LifeTime (\$100) dues, resulting in \$1710 net income; 8 members have paid their 2008 dues; 255 members have renewed their membership for 2007; 50 members have not paid for 2007; 23 members have not paid their 2006 dues.

“ Recall that RED dots were placed on the labels of our April Newsletter, representing the 101 dues delinquent members. This action may have resulted in 28 members paying their 2007 dues.

“ There are now 73 dues-delinquent members. The list of dues delinquent members was distributed to the Board to learn of any possible extenuating circumstances. By vote of the Board, these members will be deleted from our Membership List. This will result in the removal of 56 mailing labels, and our mailing costs will be

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Minutes, May 1, 2007 —

reduced accordingly. These dues-delinquent members will not receive a copy of our May Newsletter.

9. **Legislation**—Dan Fleming reported that AARP strongly supported S3, which allowed Medicare to negotiate drug prices. The bill passed by a vote of 55–42, with Senator Webb voting for the bill and Senator Warner voting against it.

Brian Allen asked whether we should formally thank Governor Kaine for his speech at the convocation on April 17. President Gaines then pointed out the governor's quick action on mental illness. Brian Allen moved that the board write a letter to Governor Kaine thanking him for his speech and thoughts at the convocation on April 17 and for his quick action on gun purchasing by the mentally ill. The motion passed.

10. **History**—Carl McDaniels reported that a copy of the history will be mailed to North Glenn, Colorado.

11. **Awards**—Don Elson reported that a packet containing a set of application forms for awards available to the

Chapter from Virginia AARP will be sent to President Gaines sometime within the next two months. The applications will be due back in Richmond in August.

12. **Caring**—Tom Jeffers reported that he continues to send out cards, and he solicited names from members. Members mentioned several names.

13. **Other Business**—Carl McDaniels reported that AARP Virginia in conjunction with Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation have been holding a series of planning workshops on human service mobility. AARP is cooperating, trying to raise questions concerning our age group. Carl and Ben had planned to attend the workshop, but the April 18 meeting was rescheduled for May 15. Carl and Ben hope to attend during the morning. Carl expressed his belief that we should show our interest in these issues, such as mobility and access.

14. **Publicity**—Nancy Eiss listed places where she sends notices of our meetings: *Roanoke Times, News Mes-*

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senger, Warm Hearth, BEV Calendar, NRV Today, WTOB 2, WDBJ 7, WSL 10, and Senior News. She asked for suggestions for other media outlets where she might send reports. Frank Lau suggested investigating the TV scrolling system on the Warm Hearth cable system. People seem to pay attention to the information, for he received several requests for tax returns because of the service. Nancy went on to tell the board that the chapter now owns the DVD and booklet, "Home Safety for Seniors: Tips for a safe, independent life at home." Several members suggested that information on purchasing the video be made available at the chapter meeting and in the newsletter.

15. **Adjournment**—Don Elson moved that we adjourn. The motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Virgil A. Cook, Secretary

Secretary's Note: The annual picnic will take place on June 19 at Nellie's Cave Park.

AARP Benefits —

Do you ever wish you could go to just one source to find out about health insurance and health care discounts, travel planning, financial and legal services, and discount shopping?

Well, you can! And it's right at your fingertips.

The Spring 2007 *AARP Benefits Directory* contains this information and much more — everything from vacation-planning to finding credit card rebates; from free professional consultations to reduced legal fees; from discounts on Reebok walking shoes to books discounted as much as 35%.

As an AARP member, don't let these valuable services and discounts pass you by. The directory is updated quarterly, so make sure you have the latest version.

You can access it on the AARP's website at:

www.aarp.org/aarp_benefits

Extensions of Murphy's Law —

Any tool, when dropped, will roll into the least accessible corner.

— *Anthony's Law of the Workshop*

If it jams, force it. If it breaks, it needed replacing anyway.

— *Lowery's Law*

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

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

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
Paid
Blacksburg, VA
Permit No. 32

Before Night Falls

I need to do
a few important things:
free-fall, hang-glide,
tap-dance, catch the gold
ring; sing torch songs
in smoky cabarets,
be a run-away —

fall in love again
with a dozen men —
dye my hair red,
hear words never said —
wear sables,
dance on tables,
swim with whales,

hear one nightingale.
Instead I sit and write
words that will surely
fade — sip lemonade,
pull garden weeds,
plant seeds.

Night, inescapable,
is circling my room.
I want to hold the world
close — SPIT in the face
of doom.

from *Catching the Light*
by Lynn Kozma, p. 92

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.