



Look for a Zoom link sent through email a day before the meeting. The meeting will open at 11:45 for greetings and conversation. The program will begin at noon.

President's Message

Leslie Pendleton

January Coffee Talk

Our first Chapter Coffee Talk took place January 26. We talked about a number of topics and gained helpful suggestions for future chapter programs and coffee talks. The importance of “implications for seniors” and “categories of age-focused topics” were emphasized as desirable for both chapter programs and coffee talks. Actually, it’s simply nice to have a chance to connect and talk about what’s on our minds.



Several ideas were proposed:

1. Listen to and discuss TED Talks on issues of aging and offer chapter programs on age-focused topics—for example, the brain and emotions, aging and stress/anxiety.
2. Recognize that “history and nostalgia are very powerful” for seniors. For example, as one member asked, “How have the landmarks in our community changed over time?” “How are these changes affecting us?”

Many of us even enjoy opportunities to talk about the history of our lives.

3. Remember the *Jetsons*, their flying car, and Rosie, the robot maid? Things we once only dreamed of are now becoming possible through technological advancement. This is good news in many ways, but the long-term societal impact is still unknown. Take, for example, autonomous vehicles. Imagine a day when an elderly person who no longer drives can continue to run his or her own

Feb. 16 Chapter Meeting

Reactive Balance Training as a Fall Prevention Exercise

Mike Madigan

Falls are a constant threat throughout our lives. This entertaining and relevant talk will describe ongoing research at Virginia Tech that aims to develop novel balance training exercises to reduce the risk of falls.

Mike Madigan is a professor in the Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, VT. One of his research areas is slips and falls.



- errands, travel to see friends and loved ones, or just go out for a drive on a pretty spring or fall day.
4. Think about how many children today are struggling with virtual learning, hybrid school days, and the impact of the pandemic on their recreational choices and social lives. Perhaps more than ever, grandparents are being called upon to provide support and care for their grandchildren. Given the hardships we seniors have experienced over our lifetime and the wisdom and resilience that we have gained because of those hardships, how can we talk to and support our own grandchildren about these challenges? “How can we help them distinguish between opinion and fact” when so many adults are struggling with that, too?

Upcoming Events

- Feb. 16, Tax Aide begins (p. 1)
- Apr. 3, VT Big Event (p. 3)

Monthly Coffee Talks

Fourth Tuesday, 8:30–9:30 am

Feb. 23 Apr. 27

Mar. 23 May 25

February coffee talk topic: As a follow-up to the February chapter program, we’ll watch a video on evidence-based fall prevention programs, discuss personal and family stories with falls, and set and/or share personal goals for fall prevention.

To receive Zoom invitations for the Coffee Talks, please email Leslie Pendleton, lkpendleton@gmail.com.

Upcoming Chapter Programs

(Third Tuesday, noon, via Zoom)

- March 16, Alec Smith, Emotions in economic and financial decisions
- April 20, Mark Blanks, Research on

Tax-Aide Program Begins

The Tax-Aide program begins February 16, by appointment only, with no-face-to-face meetings. Clients should call **382-2349** to make an appointment.

Clients will need to complete an information packet before their appointment. They will also need a second appointment to pick up their prepared tax return.

Hours

1–4 Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday
9–noon Saturday

A special thanks to Jerry Niles for the idea of coffee talks as a way to connect with each other. We hope to see you at our February coffee talk!

Meet new board members Tom Hohenshil and Todd Solberg

Thanks for serving!

Tom Hohenshil

Tom is the youngest of three brothers, growing up on a dairy farm near Smithville, Ohio. He graduated from Smithville High School, where he was primarily interested in socializing and participating in athletics, lettering there in football and track. Although Tom wanted to play college football, he was too small, too slow, and didn't think getting hit a lot was all that much fun anyway—a really bad combination for a Heisman aspirant! After a lackluster high school academic career, he earned degrees from Kent State University in business administration, school psychology, and counseling/psychology.

While in high school, a romance developed with a cute cheerleader named Sue, which progressed over several years and resulted in a happy marriage lasting 55 years and counting. Sue earned her B.S. in English education and an M.A. in counseling, spending more than 20 years as a school counselor in Montgomery County and Radford City Schools. A daughter, Kara, joined the family, and they now have two grandsons, ages 13 and 15. Kara is a reading specialist at Prices Fork Elementary, and her husband, Jason, is vice president of a local bank.

Prior to coming to Virginia Tech for a 34-year career in counselor education, there were stops along the way as an Ohio school psychologist and a psychologist in a regional mental health center providing services for children and adolescents. Tom also taught summer school in several other universities and spent a year teaching in Europe where Boston University offered a M.A. in counseling psychology for U.S. Army Officers. After retirement from Virginia Tech, Tom and Sue moved to the Raleigh area for 14 years to be near their daughter and family. While there, Tom volunteered with a regional food bank, and drove a route for Meals on Wheels.

Hobbies include Hokie football, basketball, and other sports, along with boating and biking. Tom also likes to dabble in real estate. He buys cosmetically challenged houses which have “good bones” in vacation areas (usually around lakes or rivers), renovates them, uses them for a couple of years, sells/flips them, and then starts the process all over again. The latest project began at Claytor Lake in December.

Tom believes that the Blacksburg Chapter of AARP is a talented group of highly skilled members who have a lot to offer others. There seems to be a lot of flexibility encouraging members to contribute valuable services *as they wish* to others. It is that combination of talent and flexibility which makes the Blacksburg Chapter such an award-winning organization.



Tom, Sue, and grandsons

Todd Solberg

There is so much to be thankful for living in our community. The Blacksburg chapter of AARP and many organizations have exceptional people who do so much to help others. These facts drew me to accept the invitation to join the Board of Directors of the chapter.

I was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1940 to Norwegian parents.

Education

- Brooklyn Technical High School with a Certificate in Chemistry
- Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, BS in Mathematics with a minor in chemistry and graduate work in Operations Research

We moved to Blacksburg in 1977, and I joined the faculty of the VT Department of Geological Sciences.

I managed the Electron Microprobe, SEM, and X-ray diffraction laboratories from 1977 until 1999.

I published and co-authored more than 50 papers in many fields.

We live in the Hethwood community, and our four daughters attended Blacksburg H.S. and Virginia Tech.

Public service

- Board of Supervisors, Montgomery County, District F
- Chairman of the Public Service Authority
- Recreation Commission, Floyd Montgomery Regional Library
- Hethwood Foundation Board of Directors
- Blacksburg H.S. PTA president
- Sunday school teacher
- Scouting
- Rotary Paul Harris Fellow

I hope to assist our AARP chapter in these challenging times.

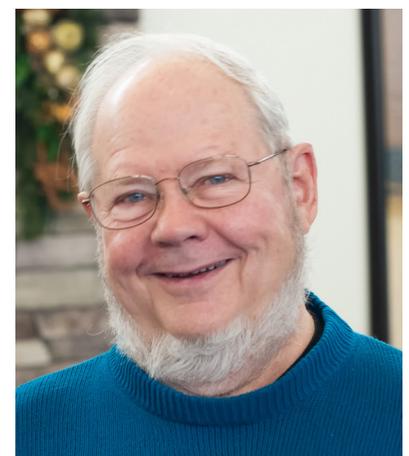


Photo by Peter Magolda

Y at VT Senior Connections Program: Helping Seniors Stay Socially Engaged *Enrique Robelleo*

Limits on social gatherings because of the pandemic have made it difficult for people to socialize and build community. No one has been impacted more than seniors. The Y is attempting to tackle this issue by expanding its Senior Connections Program from Warm Hearth to the broader New River Valley community.

Senior Connections, sponsored by the YMCA at Virginia Tech, was started in the 1990s. The program matches Virginia Tech student volunteers with individual seniors. This program aims to prevent social isolation and promote inter-generational communications by creating enriching one-on-one experiences, companionship, and mentoring opportunities for residents and students. These relationships are developed by social interaction on a weekly basis throughout the the school semester and beyond.

Interactions have included possibilities like these:

- Putting puzzles together or playing cards
- Reminiscing about past experiences and family history
- Sharing craft activities
- Exchanging stories
- Attending events together

Due to COVID-19, our program has shifted to a virtual program where our student-senior pairs are communicating and talking over letter writing, phone calls, email, and/or Zoom.

Some things to consider:

- This program is not a paid companion service, but is a free volunteer service being sponsored by the Y.
- Students will not perform any medical related tasks or be responsible for resident transportation or errands.
- Enrollment in this program is voluntary and can be terminated by either party at any time. However, we encourage interactions to last through the school semester.

“We are so happy to have a partnership with Senior Connections. The benefit from the student volunteers making meaningful connections with our residents is truly wonderful,” said Jonathan Tate, activities director at Warm Hearth Village.

Our student volunteers are also enjoying their time meeting with seniors. Samantha Steiner, Program Leader of Senior Connections said, “Senior Connections has allowed me the chance to interact with the senior community in a remarkable way. During these unprecedented times, it’s extremely comforting to know I am not alone. Writing letters back and forth with seniors has allowed me to exchange stories and experiences and talk through how we are handling these crazy times. I’d love to be able to connect to more seniors in the area so we can all learn from each other and make these tough times a little easier.”

If you or someone you know might enjoy intergenerational companionship, please contact Samantha Steiner, Program Leader at srconnections@vtymca.org or call the Y at VT at 540-961-9622. The program accepts applicants on a rolling basis; there is no signup deadline.

The Big Event April 3, 2021

The Big Event at Virginia Tech is a student-run day of service that has grown into the second largest event of its kind in the nation. Every spring, thousands of students, faculty, and staff come together to complete nearly 1,200 community service projects throughout Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and the New River Valley with the purpose of saying *Thank You*.

The spring 2021 Big Event is scheduled for April 3. All projects must be completed outdoors. Homeowners must wear masks and maintain social distance when interacting with volunteers.

Due to the uncertainty that COVID-19 presents, The Big Event at Virginia Tech is unable to guarantee that project completion will occur in the Spring.

Complete a job request form at

<https://registration.vtbigevent.org>

LLI Courses for Spring

Many LLI courses and special events still have openings. They begin mid to late February. See the possibilities at

<https://www.cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning>



Blacksburg Chapter #2613

Chapter meetings are the third Tuesday of each month via Zoom at noon. Members will receive the link by email a day before the meeting. Board meetings are the first Tuesday of each month at 10 am.

Chapter Officers 2021

President • Leslie Pendleton, lkpendleton@gmail.com
Vice President • Lisa Moose, lisa.m.moose@outlook.com
Secretary • Terry Wildman, wiley@vt.edu
Treasurer • Pat Ballard, pballard@vt.edu
Assistant Treasurer • Ruth Anne Niles, rniles2@icloud.com

Board of Directors

2021: Doug Feuerbach, Judith Jones, Lisa Moose, Leslie Pendleton
2022: Linda Correll, Chuck Burrell, Kai Duncan
2023: Todd Solberg, Tom Hohenshil

Newsletter editor: Carolyn Rude, carolyn.rude2@gmail.com

AARP Website www.blacksburgaarp.org



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**Blacksburg Chapter
Member Application for 2021**

mail this form or join/renew online at blacksburgaarp.org/online-payments

Name: _____

Spouse/Partner: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

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:

AARP Blacksburg Chapter • P.O. Box 10082 • Blacksburg, VA 24062