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# Blacksburg News

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September 2007, Volume 24, Issue 7

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## General Assembly Candidates' Forum AARP Blacksburg Chapter #2613 September 18, 2007

**What:** A chance for area residents to meet and hear candidates for the Virginia General Assembly present their views on issues and to respond to questions about problems facing Virginia.

**Where:** Blacksburg Community Center, located just East of North Main St. at 725 Patrick Henry Drive before Blacksburg High School.

**When:** 9:00 to 9:50 AM – Light refreshments will be provided and candidates will be invited to meet attendees – 10:00 to 11:30AM. Candidates will present their legislative goals followed by questions from the audience.

Nancy McCord will be the timer for the forum, and Karen Finch and Jim Moore will be screening the questions from the audience. Cards will be placed on the refreshments table to be filled out by those interested in submitting questions to the candidates. The questions will be screened by Jim and Karen and submitted to Jean to ask the candidates, who will have one minute each to respond.

**Why:** Virginia's government faces serious issues that the General Assembly must consider in 2008, including those of interest to people over 50 such as long-term care services, health-care reform, and economic security, particularly the need to regulate predatory lending.

**Candidates Attending:** Delegate candidates Peggy Frank, Delegate David Nutter and Delegate James Shuler; Senate candidates Michael Breiner and Ralph Smith, and Senator John Edwards.

**Moderator:** Jean Jadhon, co-anchor, WDBJ 7 television news.

— More Info on page 3 —

## Introducing Jean Jadhon

Jean Jadhon — co-anchor of *News 7 at Six*, anchor of *News 7 at 5* and a reporter who spends mornings reporting stories in the field — is the forum moderator.

A native of central New York, Jean is a graduate of St. John Fisher College in Rochester. She started as a reporter in Binghamton, New York, before heading to Syracuse as a reporter for the ABC affiliate there. Jean's work then took her to her first anchoring job, as the weekday anchor at an independent station in the Fort Myers-Naples market. She has also taught television newswriting at Hollins University.

Jean is well known for her amiable personality and outstanding work as a reporter.

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## Jim's Jots, September

Please read all of Dan Fleming's words about our AARP Blacksburg Legislative Forum and take part in it one way or another.

Visit the Voter Express and select one or more of the handouts. Attend the program on September 18<sup>th</sup> and hear what the candidates have to say. Bring in one or more people to register to vote. Pick some other option. Have some fun with it! We will also have Jean Jadhon.

We need several new committee chairs right away. If you are interested in some function on the Board, please call me (552-6851). Volunteerism. That's what it is.

— Jim Gaines, President

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## Shop at Barnes & Noble November 3 — Support Our Community Partner, Montgomery County Public Schools

In an effort to raise funds for the Montgomery County Public Schools, one of our Community Partners, the Blacksburg AARP Chapter is working together with Barnes & Noble to host a Book Fair at their Christiansburg store in Spradlin Farms Shopping Center.

The Book Fair will be held from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Saturday, November 3, 2007, when Barnes & Noble will donate to the Public School of your choice, a percentage of every sale made with an accompanying Book Fair Voucher. The vouchers will be available at the AARP Chapter Meeting on October 16th, and will soon appear as a download document from our AARP Chapter

See *Shop at B&N*, page 2

# 2007 Blacksburg AARP Chapter Board

## Officers

**President:** *Jim Gaines* [gaines@vt.edu](mailto:gaines@vt.edu)  
**1st Vice President:** *Jim Wightman* [jpdad@bev.net](mailto:jpdad@bev.net)  
**2nd Vice President:** *Angela Little* [anglittl@naxs.net](mailto:anglittl@naxs.net)  
**Secretary:** *Virgil Cook* [vcook@vt.edu](mailto:vcook@vt.edu)  
**Treasurer:** *Brian Allen* [mballen@prodigy.net](mailto:mballen@prodigy.net)  
**Associate Treasurer:** *June Schmidt* [schmidtj@vt.edu](mailto:schmidtj@vt.edu)

## Board of Directors

### Class of 2007:

*Don Elson* [elsond@vt.edu](mailto:elsond@vt.edu)  
*Tom Jeffers* [kats7772000@yahoo.com](mailto:kats7772000@yahoo.com)  
*Harriet Damant* [hdamant@verizon.net](mailto:hdamant@verizon.net)

### Class of 2008:

*Curt Finch* [crrfinch@vt.edu](mailto:crrfinch@vt.edu)  
*Margaret Kates* [connie@vt.edu](mailto:connie@vt.edu)  
*Frank Lau* [franklau1@msn.com](mailto:franklau1@msn.com)

### Class of 2009:

*Dan Fleming* [dbflein@vt.edu](mailto:dbflein@vt.edu)  
*Nancy Eiss* [neiss@vt.edu](mailto:neiss@vt.edu)  
*Jo Ann Underwood* [joa@vt.edu](mailto: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/>

## Shop at B&N, from page 1

website, <http://civic.bev.net/aarp/>.

Please help support our Montgomery County Public Schools by shopping at the November 3<sup>rd</sup> Barnes & Noble Book Fair with a Book Fair voucher. This is a perfect time to schedule your Holiday shopping, as well as purchasing books and CDs for your personal library.

## Committee Chairs

### Caring:

*Lula Roberts* [lula.roberts1@verizon.net](mailto:lula.roberts1@verizon.net)  
*Kathy Jeffers* [kats7772000@yahoo.com](mailto:kats7772000@yahoo.com)

### Chaplains:

*Ken Dawson* [kdawson@vt.edu](mailto:kdawson@vt.edu)  
*Norman Grover* [ngrover@vt.edu](mailto:ngrover@vt.edu)

### Chapter Awards:

*Don Elson* [elsond@vt.edu](mailto:elsond@vt.edu)  
*Jim Owens* [jowen@vt.edu](mailto:jowen@vt.edu)

### Community Service:

*Mike Sporakowski* [eagle1@vt.edu](mailto:eagle1@vt.edu)

### Financial Planning:

*Dale Oliver* [jdoliver@vt.edu](mailto:jdoliver@vt.edu)

### Health Care:

*Jo Ann Underwood* [joa@vt.edu](mailto:joa@vt.edu)  
*Harriet Damant* [hdamant@verizon.net](mailto:hdamant@verizon.net)

### History:

*Jim Gaines* [gaines@vt.edu](mailto:gaines@vt.edu)

### Hospitality:

*Cerrie Coil* [cerrie@verizon.net](mailto:cerrie@verizon.net)  
*Mary Ellen Moore* [mem@vt.edu](mailto:mem@vt.edu)

### Legislative:

*Dan Fleming* [dbflein@vt.edu](mailto:dbflein@vt.edu)

### Membership:

*Jim Wightman* [jpdad@bev.net](mailto:jpdad@bev.net)

### Nominating:

*Class of 2007*

### Program:

*Harriett Cooper* [chayabrona@verizon.net](mailto:chayabrona@verizon.net)

### Public Relations:

*Norman and Nancy Eiss* [nsjeiss@verizon.net](mailto:nsjeiss@verizon.net)

### Telephone:

*Harriett Cooper* [chayabrona@verizon.net](mailto:chayabrona@verizon.net)  
*Margaret Kates* [connie@vt.edu](mailto:connie@vt.edu)  
*Rhoda Lau* [mommakit4@msn.com](mailto:mommakit4@msn.com)

### Virginia Tech Retirees Association Liaison:

*Jim Wightman* [jpdad@bev.net](mailto:jpdad@bev.net)

### Ways And Means:

*Margaret Kates* [connie@vt.edu](mailto:connie@vt.edu)  
*Jim Moore* [mem@vt.edu](mailto:mem@vt.edu)

### Webmaster:

*Connie Anderson* [connie@vt.edu](mailto:connie@vt.edu)

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## 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

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Editors: Mary Holliman and Ryan Donnelly — email: [mchollim@vt.edu](mailto:mchollim@vt.edu)

# The Civil War and the Rise of Embalming in America

**Dr. James (Bud) Robertson**

**Monday, September 24, 2007**

**7:00 p.m.**

**YMCA-VA Tech**

**1000 North Main Street,**

**Blacksburg**

You and your friends are cordially invited to attend this public program sponsored by the Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Virginia Blue Ridge.

Admission is free, and light refreshments will be served following the program. Contact Isabel Berney at 961-0804 or fcavbr@bev.net for more information.

Dr. James Robertson is the nationally renowned Civil War historian who appears regularly on The History Channel, CNN, A&E, and PBS. He is the author or editor of more than 20 books, an Alumni Distinguished Professor at Virginia Tech, and the Executive Director of the Virginia Center for Civil War Studies at Virginia Tech.

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## More Info on Forum,

**from page 1**

**AARP Virginia Voter Express:** The colorful AARP Voter Express will be outside at the front of the community center to provide information on a variety of topics of interest to seniors.

**Voting Registration:** If you are not registered to vote in Virginia, you will be able to do so at the meeting. For more information, check the Blacksburg AARP website:  
<http://civic.bev.net/aarp/>

# Candidates' Forum Program September 18, 2007

**Opening remarks:** Jim Gaines, President

**Greetings:** Blacksburg Mayor, Ron Rordam

**Introduction of Moderator:** Jim Gaines

**Forum:** Moderator Jean Jadhon will present the forum guidelines and oversee the forum.

**Candidates:**

Senator John Edwards, Senatorial District 21, unopposed

Delegate Dave Nutter, House District 7,

Ralph Smith, Senatorial District 22

Mike Breiner, Senatorial District 22

Ms. Peggy Frank, House District 7

Delegate Jim Shuler, House District 12, unopposed

**Closing remarks:** Jim Gaines, President

These two questions were sent to candidates in advance.

1. Virginia ranks seventh among the states in per-capita personal income, yet ranks 42<sup>nd</sup> in state spending for education and 48<sup>th</sup> in Medicaid payments.\* This pattern of low financial support continues in other areas ranging from social services to transportation.

Virginia state taxes rank low compared with most other states, and unfunded mandates dump a heavy burden on local governments and the property tax. Looking ahead, Medicaid costs will soar for the state as the boomers begin to retire by 2011. In addition, budget projections for next year are worsening, with reduced state revenues of \$1.2 billion projected for the next two-year budget cycle\*\*

**How should Virginia state government cope with looming financial problems in Medicaid as well as in areas such as education, social services and transportation? (Two minutes allowed for a response.)**

2. According to *The Roanoke Times*\*\*\*, 96,831 people were so trapped by payday loans that they took out more than 13 loans each with annual percentage rates reaching 782 percent.\* Last spring, the General Assembly would not even accept a 72% cap on such loans, while many other states have capped, or eliminated, payday lending. Governor Kaine wants the General Assembly to revisit this issue in 2008.

**What is your position on payday lending? (One minute allowed for a response.)**

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A teacher took over a new class.  
"What's your name?" she asked one little boy.

"Jule," he replied.

"Not Jule," she said. "You shouldn't use contractions. Your name is Julius."  
"What's your name?" she asked the next boy.

"Billious," he replied.

\* *Virginia Compared to Other States*, Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, January, 2007.

\*\* Report from The Commonwealth Institute, August 1, 2007.

\*\*\* *Roanoke Times*, May 22, 2007.

Noise proves nothing, Often a hen who has laid an egg cackles as if she has laid an asteroid.

## VA AARP 2007 Goals

### Economic Security:

- Support national efforts to assure the long-term solvency of Social Security
- Rollout new products to help members better plan for their retirement needs
- **Advocate for legislation to curb abuses in predatory lending and payday loans**
- Educate our members on how to avoid frauds and scams
- Promote the *Best Employers* program and improve employment for older workers
- Support and promote Tax Aide and SCSEP

### Health and Supportive Services

- Provide help to all Virginians in understanding and accessing Medicare Part D
- Conduct state-wide seminars on LTC choice, quality, access, and affordability
- **Continue our multi-year legislative campaign to improve access, quality, financing, and services in Virginia's long-term care system**
- **Assure that Long Term Care is a central issue in the 2007 Virginia elections**
- Advocate for improving the quality of health-care services and actively engage in the healthcare reform debate
- Expand our *Faith in Action* partnerships and recruit volunteers to help frail seniors maintain their independence at home

### Livable Communities:

- **Advocate for increased funding for mobility services for older citizens and the disabled**
- Build on the mobility conversation begun in VA and engage volunteers in transportation planning at the community level
- Educate members on housing options that will help them maintain their independence

## Predatory Lending — A Hot Issue for 2008 General Assembly!

A key issue that will be back before the 2008 General Assembly is to place a cap on the interest rate that payday lenders charge to borrowers. Such legislation failed in 2007, but is still very alive.

A person may borrow \$500 for two weeks, paying a fee of \$75 that leaves \$425. Many borrowers that can't pay the first loan end up in a debt trap that results in their sinking deeper and deeper into debt with an annual percentage interest charge of 390 percent.

Most of the states surrounding Virginia have capped payday interest rates at 36%, including Maryland, West Virginia, and North Carolina. The District of Columbia is expected to join suit in the near future.

Answering the cry of where do people go for such a loan, a 2007 North Carolina study reports that "two-thirds of people who had been payday loan borrowers say that the absence of payday lending has had no effect on them at all. Of the one-third that remains, a 3-to-1 margin says that payday lending is a bad thing, as opposed to a good thing."

Virginia AARP along with many other social justice and consumer groups are urging Virginia legislators to cap payday lending. Unfortunately, the payday-lending industry is spending millions of dollars in Virginia lobbying to prevent a 36% cap. One way to overcome this powerful lobby is for the public to let their Delegate and Senator in the General Assembly know their views. All candidates at the September 18 forum will be asked their position on this issue.

— Dan Fleming, Legislative Chair

- Partner with *Rebuilding Together* to modify 12 homes and demonstrate the value of minor modifications for independent living
- Support the work of Driver Safety, Car Fit and Family conversation programs in VA

### Volunteer/Member Engagement:

- Develop the AARP Virginia Diversity Advisory Committee and expand AARP reach into diverse communities in a meaningful way
- Actively recruit, train, and recognize AARP volunteers across the state
- Conduct an annual *Leadership Training Institute* and chapter training programs
- Demonstrate AARP's community presence through participation in local events
- Recognize the accomplishments of all volunteers through the annual all-volunteer assembly

## Why Join Blacksburg AARP?

**TO: Work Together  
Make New Friends  
Make a Difference**

By joining and *Working Together*, we make more effective use of our time, talent, experience, and expertise to help make the New River Valley a better place to live and work.

By joining, we *Make New Friends*. We meet to discuss common concerns, share information, and enjoy each other's company through sporting events, travel, fairs, picnics, and meaningful service projects.

By joining, we *Make a Difference* in the lives of others and in our community. A positive difference! AARP is active with vital state and national issues, and exerts considerable influence over policy decisions.

— Ben Crawford

# Blacksburg AARP Board Minutes, Chapter 2613

September 4, 2007

## Members Present:

R. B. "Ben" Crawford, Dale Oliver, Tom Jeffers, Connie Anderson, Margaret Kates, Brian Allen, Virgil Cook, Cerrie Coil, Jo Ann Underwood, Curt Finch, Harriett Cooper, Dan Fleming, Donald Elson, Jim Gaines, Mary Ellen Moore, Carl McDaniels, Nancy Eiss, Angela Little

1. **Call to order:** President Jim Gaines called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m.
2. **Approval of the Agenda:** The following items were added to the agenda: Publicity, Driver Safety Classes, Legislative Forum and Hospitality.
3. **Approval of the June minutes:** They were approved by acclamation as printed.
4. **Treasurer's Report:** Brian Allen reported a current balance of \$4,108.47.
5. **Newsletter:** Jim reported that he had received a lot of compliments on the June newsletter. It was agreed by the Board to have Mary Holliman continue as editor of the newsletter for the remainder of the year.
6. **Website:** Connie Anderson stated that she is doing the best she can with the information she has been given. She reported that the Legislative Forum information had been sent to lots of listserv contacts, the BEV Seniors, and the Warm Hearth Log.
7. **Membership:** Connie Anderson reported in Jim Wightman's absence. The current membership total is 335 and she has the mailing labels for this month's newsletter. Jim is resigning as Membership Chairman, so the search is on for a new Committee Chairman.
8. **Program:** Harriett Cooper reported

that Dan Fleming will give the information on the September 18 Legislative Forum, and the October 16 program will feature Frank Lau's presentation on pitfalls to avoid for the 2007 tax filing season. The November program will feature Dr. Thurman Lockhart. Cerrie Coil of the **Hospitality Committee** stated that the annual luncheon is scheduled for December 4 at the Holiday Inn and asked for feedback on the location. The price remains at \$14.00 for the luncheon. Harriett informed the Board that she plans to resign as Program Chair at the end of this year. She offered several suggestions for programs for next year.

9. **Workdays:** Jim reported that there is no new information on the workdays. It will be revisited next month.
10. **Legislative:** Dan Fleming reported on the plans for the September 18 Legislative Forum and distributed a sample program and questions for review. Coffee and donuts will be offered from 9–10 a.m. and the forum will run from 10–11:30 a.m. Dan asked the Hospitality Committee to be on hand to help with the written questions from attendees. Kurt and Brian volunteered to help in the parking lot. A table will be available for the voter registration and the AARP Voter Express will be located at the front entrance. Jim thanked Dan for his work on organizing the forum. Nancy Eiss, Chairperson of the **Publicity Committee**, reported that she had been in touch with Tony Hylton at the state AARP office and he had been very helpful with suggestions on contacting the media. He also recommended that the VA Tech Center for Gerontology be contacted.

She gave each Board member flyers to distribute and listed all the places she has sent information concerning the forum. Carl distributed the Voter Express van schedule and asked for volunteers to staff the van during the week. Ben will be traveling to Richmond to pick it up and return it at the end of the week. Flyers were also distributed on the film called "Maxed Out" playing at the Lyric Theatre on September 8.

11. **History:** Carl is continuing to work on documents to be archived.
12. **Awards:** Don Elson has submitted the newsletter for the Newsletter Award and is working on the Gordon Molten Award due in Richmond.
13. **Caring:** Tom Jeffers reported that Kathy is continuing to mail cards as requests are received. She would like to resign as Chairperson in December.
14. **Healthcare Initiative in NRV:** Volunteers are needed for this initiative and information will be placed in the newsletter.
15. **Whatever:** Kurt Finch reported that 26 people completed the **Driver Safety Course** in June and that Montgomery Regional Hospital is offering a course. Margaret Kates reported that the Book Fair will be held on Saturday, November 3 at Barnes & Noble, with the proceeds going to the Montgomery County Public Schools. A local author, Fred First, will be on hand to sign his new book. Brian Allen announced that as of September 1 there is a new ruling in Virginia concerning Medicaid and Long-term Care Insurance. The meeting was adjourned at 10:53 a.m.

— Angela Little,  
Substitute Secretary

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

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## How We Got Our Teeth

An Indian legend told by a child in the Stewart School, Carson, Nevada, 1935

People were coming to earth, and when the animals heard about it they were getting excited. They decided to have a meeting and discuss what the people would be like. Each two different animals were supposed to argue or have a sort of match together, then the one who won would have the pride of having the people have something like them.

It happened that the coyote and the snake were matched to see whether or not people would have teeth. Of course, each one wanted to win. They started to argue and then to fight. It finally ended when the coyote bit the snake while he was not on his watch. This killed the snake instantly.

The coyote was the winner, so that's why people have teeth and not fangs like the snake.

— *The Dove Always Cried: Narratives of Indian School Life*, by Marguerite Bigler Stoltz, 1994

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## 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](mailto: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.