A Day in the Life of PACE: Come Join Us

It is a challenge to document and share the total PACE experience because it encompasses so much, but the photo essay put together in this issue tries to do just that! We have tried to show the reader all the many different services and opportunities available to those enrolled in the PACE Program. We have heard people say PACE just sounds too good to be true! Well, it is all true and even more comprehensive than is shown in this edition of The Mountain Empire News!

If you have not visited the PACE Center, you should plan to do so. You will leave feeling impressed with not only the beautiful building, but with all that is going on there. Come meet our caring and very capable staff and learn more about PACE and see for yourself if it is the program you have been searching for! For many, PACE is the answer to the level of care that will allow them to continue to live at home and be part of the community.

Once enrolled in PACE, you and your family will work with the PACE team to set your individualized goals and to develop your schedule and activities to accomplish those goals; it is a plan customized to meet your individual needs! It is certainly not a one size fits all program. This is an attempt to show you what being in PACE really means in its totality. Check us out and come visit. If you need a ride to visit the PACE center, we will come pick you up! For more information, simply call Pam Stewart at Mountain Empire PACE at 276-523-0599.

Some Mountain Empire PACE participants require assistance in getting ready in the morning to come out to the PACE Center. MEOC Personal Care Aide Jennifer Gibson of Coeburn assists PACE participant Mr. James Mann, also of Coeburn. Personal Care is available to those in PACE needing this service. The wonderful Personal Care Aides work under the direction of Registered Nurses at MEOC in the Family Support Services Department headed by Julia Trivett Dillon.

Jennifer Gibson prepares and serves Mr. James Mann breakfast before he leaves his home for PACE. Personal Care Aides perform so many valuable services which include assisting with bathing, dressing, preparing meals, shaving and other personal needs.

Jennifer Gibson assists Mr. James Mann as he awaits the arrival of MEOC Transit to take him to the PACE Center for medical care, exercise, therapy or just whatever Mr. Mann has on his schedule at PACE that day!
MEOC Driver, Jeff Brummett of Wise, arrives at the home of Mr. James Mann, assisted by Jennifer Gibson, to transport him to PACE. MEOC has an award winning Transit Program with well trained, very caring drivers. Mountain Empire Transit, like all programs at MEOC, serves people throughout Lee, Wise, Scott counties and the City of Norton.

MEOC Driver, Bob Dwyer of Wise, operates the wheelchair lift for PACE participant Mrs. Evelyn Adams, Wise, as she arrives at the PACE Center for the day. Mountain Empire Transit buses are fully accessible and equipped to serve all people. MEOC drivers have won the state Roadeo championship the past 4 years and are so well trained in Passenger Assistance Techniques.

Intake and Enrollment Coordinator, Pam Stewart of Appalachia, pins a name badge on PACE participant Mrs. Bobbi Potter of Big Stone Gap as she arrives at PACE. Beth Dwyer, a personal care aide from Big Stone Gap, and PACE participant, Mr. Jerry Ayers, also of Big Stone, follow closely behind.

Bert Dowdy of Norton sings to his fellow PACE participants to get the day started. People at PACE have many talents and enjoy sharing them with their friends at PACE.

Exercise is an important part of the day for many people at PACE. Mr. Carlos Hamilton of Wise and Mr. Verlin “Bam” Collins of Appalachia participate regularly in supervised weight training. Other types of supervised exercise are offered at the PACE Center, all part of a total effort to improve strength, flexibility and improve overall health and well-being. It works!
Mrs. Alice Hedrick of Jonesville also participates in the exercise activity circle at PACE as do so many. It is a choice, but most people choose to participate and are rewarded for their efforts by feeling better after exercising, plus, find it encouraging and more fun to be part of a group exercise activity.

A nutritious lunch is served at PACE daily. The meals are under the direction of Registered Dietitian Natasha Kennedy. Personal Care Aide Georgia Fan-non of Coeburn is shown serving drinks as people begin to gather for lunch.

Visiting the fully staffed medical clinic at PACE is a major benefit of being in PACE. The PACE clinic is directed by Dr. Bickley Craven and includes a Nurse Practitioner as well as several Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses. Pat Rouse, RN, (left) of Lee County evaluates Mrs. Shirley Lawson of Big Stone in the PACE clinic.

Big Stone Gap resident, Donna Mahan, the PACE Recreational Therapist, visits with PACE participants before lunch. Pictured here are Mrs. Norma Stapleton and Mrs. Joyce Ruth-erford both of Big Stone Gap.

Mr. Bill Craiger of Coeburn is all smiles as he enjoys his lunch at the PACE Center.
PACE Physician, Dr. Bickley Craven, performs a clinical evaluation of Mr. James Mann of Coeburn in the PACE clinic which is conveniently located adjacent to the other activities going on at the PACE Center. Dr. Craven is available five days per week to see PACE participants at the Clinic greatly increasing access to medical care for people at PACE. If a PACE participant absolutely is unable to get out of their home to come to the clinic, Dr. Craven and her staff make house calls.

Mr. Charles Scott of Jonesville exercises on one of the several NuStep Machines at the PACE Center as part of his Pace Center exercise program.

PACE Clinical staff Janet Bolling, R.N. of Norton (left) and Dr. Bickley Craven (right) of Abingdon counsel with PACE participant, Mr. James Mann of Coeburn, while in the PACE clinic. The Clinical staff works closely to see that PACE participants receive appropriate medical care of the highest quality.

Mr. Charles Scott of Jonesville participates in occupational therapy under the direction of PACE Occupational Therapist, Beth Bell of Jonesville. Occupational and Physical Therapy are critical components of the PACE program with dramatic positive changes noted in so many PACE participants.

Mr. James German of Rose Hill undergoes prosthetics training with Doctor of Physical Therapy, Gemma Aguirre (right) of Wise and Candi Wiggins, Physical Therapy Assistant from Big Stone (left).

Candi Wiggins (left), Beth Bell (back), and Kryssy Hensley (right) walk with PACE participant Mrs. Joyce Williams, Duffield, as she undergoes strength training.
Over 350 walkers from all across southwest Virginia participated on Walkathon Sunday to raise money for MEOC’s Emergency Fuel Fund. Walkers from churches, youth groups, schools, businesses, community organizations and many concerned individuals made this day a great success. Each walker is so important to the cause and because of their efforts our older citizens can rest easier when the winter storms and icy cold temperatures hit.

MEOC Walkathon Raises $164,231 with More Funds Expected

Walkers, runners, babies, amblers and every type caring person around had a grand time participating in the 39th Annual Mountain Empire Older Citizens (MEOC) Walkathon held, as always, on the first Sunday afternoon in May. On May 4th, over 350 walkers, a host of community sponsors and so many valuable volunteers raised $164,231 for MEOC’s Emergency Fuel Fund which assists older people in Lee, Scott and Wise Counties and the City of Norton with heating emergencies during winter months.

MEOC Executive Director Michael Wampler said he was “overwhelmed and extremely grateful” with the huge turnout and all the widespread community support of Walkathon 2015. “The Emergency Fuel Fund for the Elderly is truly the community’s fund and we are so thankful for each individual and for every business, organization and faith community represented. We are blessed to live in an area where people care this much about their older friends and neighbors,” Wampler continued.

He attributed the success year after year of this fundraiser to the community’s awareness that all money raised stays in this area and that it all goes directly to assist older persons who are in danger of being without heat.

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It is tradition for The Union High School Band to officially kick off the Walkathon and lead the walkers as they begin the 6.2 mile course. Band members are pictured here leading the 39th Annual Walkathon, starting the walkathon off in high spirited style. We so appreciate all the young people supporting their older friends, neighbors and relatives.
The Wise County Treasurer’s Office was well represented at the walkathon! Walkers from left to right are Treasurer Delores Smith, Cathy Proffitt, Joye Lawson, Whitney Mullins, Hannah Williams (daughter of Barbara), Barbara Williams, Sonia Salyer and Gail Luntsford. We appreciate their involvement. They look like they are having a great time!

MEOC’s walkers enjoy a hamburger picnic with friends immediately following the 2015 Walkathon. MEOC is so very thankful to volunteer Robbie Boggs who grilled over 500 hamburger patties. Walkers cool down in the cafeteria of Union High School immediately following the walk and have the opportunity to enjoy a hamburger and fixings, baked beans, chips, drink and a snack cake. Pictured from left to right are Pam Scott, Dr. Art Van Zee, Anna Faye Wilson and Mountain Empire PACE Medical Director Dr. Bickley Craven. Art and Anna Faye, both of Lee County, have walked most of the 39 walkathons held over the years having raised lots of money. We welcome Bickley and Pam as first time walkers.

(Left) MEOC Board Member Nancy Bailey, Big Stone Gap, helped coordinate registration at the Walkathon. MEOC Board Member Ethel Daniels, Norton, volunteered to help coordinate the picnic food line. MEOC Board Member Steve Garrett, Jonesville, walked and has been a long time walker in the event. We appreciate Nancy, Ethel and Steve and all the many other volunteers who make the event run smoothly and to be the success that it is.

(Right) Pictured are Lisa Whisman RN, MEOC Personal Care Supervisor and Lilli Whisman, Lisa’s granddaughter and Derek and Jessica Whisman’s daughter. Lisa and family are with the church group from Pleasant Hill Baptist Church of Keokee. This group has walked in the Walkathon for the past nine years. Lilli was our youngest walkathon participant. Make plans to bring your group next year and walk with them!
Thank you to the new group from Coeburn who joined us at the Walkathon! Many groups design their own tee shirts or wear the same color tee-shirts for the Walk. Pictured from left to right on the front row are Wayne Salyer, Sandy Salyer, Patty Stidham, Sharon Collins and Robert Collins. Pictured from left to right on the back row are Darrell Stidham and Hunter Corder. We look forward to welcoming them at Walkathon 2016!

Senator Bill Carrico, his wife Paula and daughter Emily walked together at the 2015 Walkathon. MEOC is so thankful for Senator Carrico’s continued advocacy and friendship. Thanks to the Carrico family for joining us on Walkathon Sunday!

“The Walkathon is the largest fundraiser for the Emergency Fuel Fund and this type of commitment from community individuals and organizations really jumpstarts our fundraising for this often lifesaving program. We are so very, very close to meeting our goal of $165,000 for this Walkathon. If you have not made a donation to the Annual Walkathon, please know that we are continuing to accept donations.”

- MEOC Executive Director
Michael Wampler
during cold winter months. He reiterated that none of the money raised is ever used for any type of administrative cost. Every cent is used to purchase oil, coal, gas or wood or to pay an electric bill for a person over age sixty (60) in MEOC’s three-county, one city service area.

Participants included longtime walkers, first-time walkers and those in between as well as many volunteers who manned rest stops and worked at the after-walk picnic, including Robbie Boggs of Mid-Mountain Heating & Cooling who grilled 500 burgers!

Thirteen organizations and businesses that donated or otherwise raised $5,000 or more were designated as community sponsors. 2015 community sponsors were Humphreys/Red River Coal, Norton City Schools, Heritage Hall — Big Stone Gap, Oliver Coal Sales, Wise County Board of Supervisors, Dominion Foundation, Staff of Mountain Empire Older Citizens, United Way of Southwest Virginia, University of Virginia’s College at Wise, Old Dominion Power Company, Wells Fargo, FasMart, and Freedom Chevrolet.

“The Walkathon is the largest fundraiser for the Emergency Fuel Fund and this type of commitment from community individuals and organizations really jumpstarts our fundraising for this often lifesaving program,” said Wampler. “We are so very, very close to meeting our goal of $165,000 for this Walkathon.

If you have not made a donation to the Annual Walkathon, please know that we are continuing to accept donations,” Wampler continued.

Wampler also expressed appreciation to Union High School for allowing MEOC to utilize the beautiful school and cafeteria to provide a comfortable place for walkers to enjoy the event. This event would certainly not be possible without their contributions. Thank you Joe and Principal Roop.

Union High School Head Custodian Joe Miller volunteers his services on Walkathon Sunday and is the first person there and the last person to leave the high school after working hard all day. Joe is an intricate part of planning for the walk beginning in early March and continuing on up to the walk. MEOC is so very thankful to Union High School, Joe Miller and Principal Dan Roop for allowing MEOC to utilize the beautiful school and cafeteria to provide a comfortable place for walkers to enjoy the event. This event would certainly not be possible without their contributions. Thank you Joe and Principal Roop.

SAL’s PALS, a Lee County Aerobics class, joined us again at the 2015 Walkathon, their second straight year at the walk. Sally “Sal” Sexton is the Aerobics leader. They are enjoying the post walk picnic and celebrating completing the walk in support of a great cause. Pictured from left to right on the left side are Sandy Rivers, Billie Eldridge, Sally Sexton, Linda Gibson and Jennifer Long. Pictured from left to right on the right side are Beverly Graham, Teresa Collins, Susan Barber, Christie Burgan and Stephanie Woodard. Thank you!
MOUNTAIN EMPIRE OLDER CITIZENS, INC.
WALKATHON 2015
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MEOC is thankful for and appreciative of our partners and their invaluable assistance in serving people in need in our region. Pictured here are Christine Blair, Director of Norton Department of Social Services, with Stacy Robinson from Old Dominion Power. MEOC programs work with our local departments of social services and Old Dominion Power often to connect services and resources to those in need. They were part of the 2015 Forward Wise County class and through that initiative volunteered on Walkathon Day. Thank you, Christine and Stacy! Please come again!

Students from local colleges and universities participate in the Walkathon annually. Many athletic teams provide community service by volunteering at the event. This year, MEOC was thankful that University of Pikeville students from the Social Work Department participated in the 2015 Walkathon. Pictured left to right are Leonard Burks, Chelsea Schulte, Hope Hensley and Morganne Robinson. Do you have a group or team who could walk next year? Make your plans now for the 2016 Walkathon, our 40th annual one.

Grace Bradshaw, Pam Hasel and Paxton Allgyer, all of Big Stone Gap, are regular walking buddies who decided to put their walking shoes on to support the MEOC Emergency Fuel Fund this year. We are all so pleased that they did! Directly behind them and gaining ground is Delegate Terry Kilgore who has walked in all but one walkathon since he was first elected. A big thank you to all four supporters of MEOC.
Kathy Kennedy and her grandchildren Addison, Tanner and Colton Kennedy pick up their tee-shirts following the walkathon. The family walked in memory of Leigh Ann Kennedy Bolinsky, daughter of Kathy and aunt of the children. Leigh Ann was a member of MEOC’s management team and past Director of the Mountain Laurel Cancer Support and Resource Center at MEOC. We join the Kennedy family in remembering Leigh Ann. She was a bright light of sunshine to her colleagues and to all the many, many people she served during her years at MEOC. We cherish her memory.
Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program Partners With Wise County and Norton Farmers Markets

Since the beginning of May, 428 eligible older persons in Wise County and Norton City applied for the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP). This program is designed to improve nutrition of senior citizens while also helping local farmers to sell their locally grown fruits, vegetables and freshly cut herbs. In July, check books worth $40 were distributed on a first come, first serve basis and can be used at area farmers markets from July 1st through November 17th (or when the markets close). The check books consist of eight $5 checks that seniors can spend like cash to purchase fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs from farmers, at local farmers markets, who have been pre-approved by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Each eligible person within a household received one book of checks. All participants are encouraged to completely spend all of the checks. The following markets have vendors accepting SFMNP checks:

Norton — located in the all-indoor facility behind the Shamrock on 8th and Park Avenue downtown Norton each Tuesday from 4-6 p.m. This market also accepts EBT cards.

Wise — Located at Big Glades Community Square and Amphitheater each Thursday from 4-6:30 p.m. Big Glades Community Square is located across from Payless in Wise.

Big Stone Gap — Located downtown Big Stone Gap on Shawnee Avenue across from the fire station each Saturday from 8 a.m. - 12 noon. This market also accepts EBT cards.

Saint Paul — Located at Market Square on 4th Street between Russell and Broad each Saturday from 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

If you missed the opportunity to sign up this year, you may have an opportunity to participate next year. For any questions about the SFMNP, or to set up transportation to the local markets, please call MEOC at 276-523-4202 and ask to speak to Rachel Helton.

This program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and is administered by the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitation Services (VDARS). Mountain Empire Older Citizens is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Duck Race

The 10th Annual Heritage Hall and MEOC Duck Race was held on Saturday, June 13th at Frog Level Park in Big Stone Gap. Pictured from left to right are MEOC’s Director of Elder Rights Rachel Helton and Public Guardianship Director Debbie Collier accepting a $5,000 check from Heritage Hall of Big Stone Gap Administrator Bob Grindstaff to support MEOC’s Emergency Fuel Fund. The Resident Christmas Fund at Heritage Hall also benefitted equally from the annual Duck Race. The winner’s of the event were: 1. Vicky Wiandt ($1,000), 2. Fred Necessary ($500), 3. James Mefford ($250), 4. Pedro Hunnicutt ($150), 5. Sam Justus ($100), 6. Penny Wade ($50), 7. Sandy Daniels ($50), 8. Bradley Taylor ($50), 9. Ken Adams ($50) and 10. Lloyd Williams ($50).
Mrs. Nancy Osborne of Weber City receives heat therapy while at PACE. This is one of a variety of therapies available at PACE which improve physical well-being.

Mr. Bert Dowdy of Norton prepares for a game of pool after lunch. This is a favorite afternoon activity of several men and women at PACE.

Mr. John Foster of Duffield takes time out of his day to meet with PACE Social Worker, Kristy Lee of Rose Hill. PACE Social Workers provide invaluable assistance to PACE participants in so many ways.

Mr. James German of Rose Hill receives dietary guidance from PACE Registered Dietitian Natasha Kennedy of Wise. Natasha provides individualized nutritional guidance to PACE participants and answers lots of questions from participants, particularly those with special dietary needs.

Mr. Ray Fields of Duffield waits patiently for the next Bingo number to be called. This is a favorite afternoon activity for many at PACE.
MEOC Care Coordinator Kim Gibson (left) of Norton, on a recent visit to the Mountain Empire PACE Center to assist participants in signing up for MEOC’s Fan Care and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Programs, talks with Patsy Jennings of Wise.

MEOC Transit Driver, Donnie Bledsoe of Big Stone Gap, delivers liquid nutrition to PACE Participant, Mrs. Dianna Boggs of Wise. PACE participants receive home-delivered meals and special liquid nutrition such as Ensure.

Personal Care Aide Athina Witt of St. Charles assists Thelma Bledsoe of Pennington Gap as she boards the bus to return to her home in the afternoon. Practically all PACE participants use Mountain Empire Transit in making their round trip visits to the PACE Center and for visits to area specialists.

Mr. James Mann of Coeburn meets with RN supervisor, Sandy Salyer, also of Coeburn, to discuss the home care services he receives. Sandy visits him at least once every thirty days and more often if needed to discuss his personal care services and to assess if there needs to be any changes in his service.

MEOC Lifeline installer Jody Hay of Clintwood demonstrates the use of the Lifeline personal help button to PACE participant Sylvia Sampson of Big Stone Gap. Lifeline is a personal emergency response system which helps keep people safe in their homes.
On April 8, the Virginia Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Disorders Commission held a Dementia State Plan Listening Session at the MEOC main campus in Big Stone. The session was one of five conducted across the state to gather input to develop the Virginia Dementia State Plan to respond to dementia related needs throughout the Commonwealth.

The developed plan will include goals, objectives and strategies that Virginia can employ to ensure the state is prepared to support individuals with dementia and their caregivers now and in the future.

Forty-six local family caregivers and professionals were in attendance at the Listening Session. Lynne Seward, Virginia Alzheimer’s Commission Chair, reviewed the purpose of the sessions in the process of developing the next Dementia State Plan. Ms. Seward encouraged attendees to share their experiences and challenges as well as comments on the plan. She provided an overview of the Commission’s purpose and highlighted the quality of comments received at Big Stone Gap when the Commission held a listening session here in 2011 with the first Dementia State Plan.

MEOC Director of Family Support Services Julia Trivett Dillon organized and coordinated the event. Julia serves as well on the Virginia Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Disorders Commission. Carter Harrison, Public Policy Director with the Virginia Alzheimer’s Association, provided a brief overview of the new Dementia State Plan and noted what would happen following the listening session. He informed the audience about the next steps in the development process.

Turn-out for the Listening Session was very good as indicated in a portion of the group pictured here. Michael Wampler, MEOC Executive Director, raises his hand as he is recognized by the chair.

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group that the plan will not sit on a shelf noting that the Commission is very focused on accomplishing all the goals, objectives and strategies, some of which have received substantial edits since 2011.

Dementia Services Coordinator, Charlotte Arbogast, with the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services also attended the session.

Themes of those sharing at the Listening Session in Big Stone Gap are as follows:

• Need for more information and training for families on how to deal with the disease and care for their loved one.
• PACE and MEOC have been a tremendous help for family caregivers and these services need to be expanded.
• Need for increased access for coordinated medical care that includes evaluations, placements and medications.
• Caregivers reported feelings of isolation and of being overwhelmed.
• Need for separate sections at hospitals and emergency rooms for those with dementia.
• Caregiver guilt and how to manage it.
• Need for more caregiver support such as respite services, adult day health care, support groups, PACE and personal care.
• Need for more tax incentives and relief for caregivers who have to quit or leave full time employment to care for loved ones.
• Increased training for professional caregivers (including medical and health providers).
• Increased challenges with most residents going out of state for hospital care with the consequence of not being able to be screened while in the hospital for Virginia Medicaid Waivered Community Based services.
• Make Virginians aware of the CARE Act.
• More collaboration between health and human services providers.

Reverend Ronnie Mutter, Big Stone Gap, shared with the group gathered some of his family’s concerns in caring for family members. He spoke of the importance of MEOC’s PACE Program to his family and how the many PACE services combined to provide not only outstanding and total care to their loved one, but that PACE also provided real peace of mind to the whole family.

Virginia Alzheimer’s and Related Disorders Commission Chair Lynne Seward (standing) explains the purpose of the Listening Session and the process to be followed. Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services Dementia State Services Coordinator Charlotte Arbogast assisted in facilitating the Listening Service.

Sister Jackie Hanrahan, Tacoma, shared her concerns both from a personal family caregiver’s perspective and from a regional perspective in her role as Co-Founder and Director of Appalachian Faith and Ecology Center. She also serves on the Caregiver Services Advisory Board of MEOC.
Loretta Stapleton, Big Stone Gap, speaks of her years of caregiving experience. Loretta has served as caregiver for her son, her mother and her mother-in-law. She was named Virginia Caregiver of the Year approximately 10 years ago. Loretta thanked and acknowledged the work of the Alzheimer’s Commission and the progress made over the last four years in accomplishing goals in the previous state plan.

(Above) Carter Harrison, Public Policy Director with the Alzheimer’s Association staff, shared a brief overview of the new Dementia State Plan with the audience at the Listening Session at MEOC.

(Above, right) Matt Bloomer, Big Stone Gap, shared the obstacles faced in his father’s struggles with Alzheimer’s and the difficulty in finding institutional settings appropriate to his father’s condition once it became impossible to care for him at home.

(Right) Betty Elkins, retired school teacher of Tacoma, expressed her concerns as a caregiver for her husband. She reminded the audience of the steep learning curve it is for family caregivers and the need for training opportunities for caregivers to learn about the disease and how to provide the care needed.
Harold Lester Memorial Golf Tournament Supports Work of Mountain Laurel Cancer Center of MEOC In Record Setting Style

Seventeen teams participated in the Fifth Annual Harold Lester Memorial Golf Tournament held Friday, June 5, at Lonesome Pine Country Club in Big Stone Gap. The tournament supports the Harold Lester Memorial Fund, a program of Mountain Empire Older Citizens, Inc.’s Mountain Laurel Cancer Support and Resource Center.

The Harold Lester Memorial Fund was established in 2011 by MEOC and the family of Harold Lester to assist cancer patients in Lee, Scott and Wise Counties and the City of Norton. This fund, which is used to help meet many of the unexpected needs of cancer patients of all ages not addressed by other cancer resourc-
es, began when family and friends of the late Harold Lester wanted to honor the memory of this well-known and well-loved educator in the Wise County School System who was devoted to helping family, friends and neighbors.

“This is really a perfect way to honor the memory of my father,” said tournament organizer Mark Lester. “He took such pleasure in small and sometimes large—he didn’t advertise what he did—acts which made someone’s life better. Even in the midst of his own fight with cancer, he looked for ways to help someone else. His family and friends want to keep his memory and work alive and the Harold Lester Memorial Fund.

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Members of the first place team in the Spartan flight were Bob Pippin, Mike Mullins, Thomas Asbury, and John Graham.

Finishinng in a tie for first place in the Bear flight was (pictured left) the team of Ronell Yu, Walter Aguirre, Pablo Carpio, and Butch Claustro and (pictured right) the team of Ralph Lawson, Stan Zirkle, Mark Lester, and Dr. Kent Blazier.
does that.”

“The community really gets behind this tournament,” said Michael Wampler, Executive Director of Mountain Empire Older Citizens. “It’s because of the good work it supports, but also because of the good man it remembers. Mr. Lester was a larger-than-life figure for so many people who remember him as a principal and coach. Moreover, Mr. Lester was a person of faith who put his faith into action.”

To date, $33,073 has been raised to support the services of the Mountain Laurel Cancer Center as a result of the golf tournament. Donations continue to come in. There is a myriad of ways that the donations are put to use on behalf of cancer patients which is the beauty of the Harold Lester Memorial Fund. Examples of services are assistance with cancer related travel both in and out of the region, groceries, fuel bills, building ramps, liquid nutrition, medication assistance, insurance counseling, and the list goes on.

“We are so grateful to the many volunteers and supporters who joined efforts and money to make this the most successful fundraiser yet for the Harold Lester Memorial Fund,” stated Maggie Christian Gilbert, Coordinator of The Mountain Laurel Cancer Center of MEOC.

For more information about or to make a donation to the Harold Lester Memorial Fund or to any of the services of the Mountain Laurel Cancer Center, contact Maggie Christian Gilbert, Coordinator of the Mountain Laurel Cancer Center of Mountain Empire Older Citizens at 276.523.4202.

University of Virginia Masters Program
Nursing Students Teach Understanding Cancer Workshop at MEOC

MEOC was fortunate recently to have visiting masters level nursing students from the University of Virginia’s School of Nursing (Charlottesville) who provided health screenings and health education on a variety of topics to participants of MEOC programs and services. Members of MEOC’s Norton congregate nutrition site participated in an Understanding Cancer workshop taught by the nursing students, who also provided teaching to an MEOC Foster Grandparent in service. From left to right: UVA Cancer Center Research Affiliation Administrator Nila Saliba, students Alison Hess, Kate Walker, Cory Caldwell, Emma Poland, Seth Wood, UVA Assistant Professor of Nursing Emma Mitchell, students Megan Zannoni, Becca Hedges Noonan, Hannah Kaylor, Morgan Cobb and Mackenzie Dunn. The students’ trip to southwest Virginia served as an educational experience for them, also, as they learned about our unique culture and our health status as a region. Many of them expressed how very welcoming and friendly they found the area and its people.
MEOC’s Norton site participants and staff really enjoyed the Understanding Cancer workshop presented by students from UVA Wise School of Nursing. Understanding Cancer was developed by the Appalachia Community Cancer Network, a program of the National Cancer Institute, and is designed to train community members on prevention, early detection, treatment and resources. Individuals thus trained become community lay health workers, or lay navigators, who can share information with their families, churches, co-workers, friends and neighbors and can “navigate” them to helpful resources. Pictured are, front, left to right, Barbara Mullins, Debbie Adams, Peggy Peters and Pauline Newton; back, left to right, Alan Lee, Betty King and Judy Horne.

As part of their training on the damaging effects of sun exposure, UVA Wise nursing students brought with them an ultraviolet camera which shows skin damage which the naked eye cannot see. John “J.P.” Patterson of Big Stone Gap is about to have his photograph taken. J.P. attended the Understanding Cancer workshop taught by the students at MEOC.

UVA Wise Nursing student Cory Caldwell (right) shows MEOC Executive Director Michael Wampler what the ultraviolet camera showed about sun damage to his face. Most people, including Michael, were surprised, if not shocked, at the sun damage they saw.

UVA Wise Nursing student Kate Walker shares a moment with Charles Wyatt of Norton.
The Mountain Laurel Cancer Support and Resource Center in partnership with University of Virginia’s Cancer Center Without Walls initiative recently brought an Understanding Cancer workshop to members of Jonesville First Baptist Church as well as to others in the Jonesville community. The turnout was excellent! Pictured are, back left, MEOC Board member Steve Garrett, front table left to right, Elaine Davis, Betty Harless, Erma Jean Martin, Virginia Edens and Linda Coleman sitting at the front of the table.

MEOC Care Coordination Director Judy Miller presents on Early Detection at the Understanding Cancer workshop held at Jonesville First Baptist Church. Others presenting on topics including Prevention, Treatment and Resources were Betsy Grossman, UVA Cancer Center Research Navigator; Anne Duesing, UVA Claude Moore Health Sciences Library Outreach Librarian; Bill Dotson, MEOC Foster Grandparents Director; and Maggie Christian Gilbert, Mountain Laurel Cancer Support and Resource Center Coordinator.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN HOSTING AN UNDERSTANDING CANCER WORKSHOP?

Mountain Empire Older Citizens is organizing Understanding Cancer workshops across the area and needs help in doing so. If your church or organization would like MEOC to bring a workshop to your community, please contact Maggie Christian Gilbert, Mountain Laurel Cancer Support and Resource Center Coordinator, at 276-523-4202 or mchristian@meoc.org.

Understanding Cancer workshop participants and trainers break for lunch which was provided in Jonesville First Baptist Church’s recently built Family Life Center. Pastor Mike Humfleet expressed how very much the church wants the community to use the facility and emphasized that it was built with that in mind.
MEOC and Jonesville First Baptist Church Partner To Open New Senior Nutrition Site

MEOC, in partnership with First Baptist Church of Jonesville, hosted a grand opening for its new Jonesville Congregate Nutrition Site on June 24th. The event was held at the Church’s newly constructed Family Life Center that will serve as the location for the site.

Rev. Mike Humfleet along with other members of the First Baptist Church were part of the well-attended event. A presentation on senior policy issues and fraud protection was provided by special guests Laura Blevins and Ali Sutherland with The Office of Senator Tim Kaine.

“MEOC is very excited about our new partnership with First Baptist Church of Jonesville,” said MEOC Executive Director Michael Wampler. “This facility is the perfect location for a site with its large gymnasium and modern food preparation area that could be utilized for many other events.”

Rev. Mike Humfleet stated, “When the church decided to build the Family Life Center, we wanted something for the community, not just the church. We are happy to have MEOC utilizing the facility and look forward to working with others within the community.”

Debbie Sanders, MEOC Director of Nutrition Services, was very pleased with the large turnout for the grand opening. “MEOC’s Nutrition Sites offer a variety of activities for health and well-being of older adults,” said Sanders. “The new site offers a great opportunity for older adults in Jonesville and the surrounding area.”

The Jonesville Nutrition Site meets every Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the First Baptist Church Family Life Center. For more information contact Debbie Sanders at 276-523-4202.
The crowd enjoys lunch and socialization at the Jonesville Nutrition Site Grand Opening.

Pictured from L to R back: MEOC Executive Director Michael Wampler, Jonesville First Baptist Church Pastor Rev. Mike Humfleet, MEOC Board Member Steve Garrett, MEOC Nutrition Director Debbie Sanders, MEOC Care Coordination Director Judy Miller
Seated: Ali Sutherland and Laura Blevins, Senator Tim Kaine’s office.

Ann Napier of Pennington Gap is concentrating on her Bingo card and she was a winner!!

Also, enjoying the Opening Day Celebration are Jonesville First Baptist Church members Arthur and Pat Laghey of Jonesville. The Lagheys are the site’s newest members!
You have the right to decide who will make decisions for you should you be unable to handle your own affairs due to death, illness, or mental incapacity/incompetency. But you must plan ahead and choose the right document(s) before you are unable to make decisions yourself. To exercise your right to decide, in fact, you need to do this while you are judged capable of understanding the nature and consequences of your decisions.

So which document(s) do you need and how are they different? This series will demystify some of the more important ones.

*Power of Attorney*

A Power of Attorney can enable you to designate an agent to handle your personal affairs on your behalf. In this written document, you name one person you completely trust to act as your agent. You can choose co-agents, but if you choose two they may not agree on how your affairs should be handled. It is safer to choose one person to act as your agent and another as successor agent - back-up in case the person named is unavailable when the time comes to exercise the Power of Attorney.

A Power of Attorney does NOT take away your right to act on your own behalf, but gives you the proper paperwork should you need your agent to write checks for you, open or close accounts for you, buy or sell property for you, collect debts owed to you, etc.

It is important to choose someone you trust to act ON YOUR BEHALF. Any acts that benefit him or her to your detriment are illegal and are outside the scope of the powers granted as your agent.

What is the difference between a power of attorney, a durable power of attorney, and a springing power of attorney? Read on to learn the answer.

We continue our discussion of powers of attorney, which enable you to designate an agent to handle your personal affairs on your behalf. But what is the difference between a power of attorney, a durable power of attorney, and a springing power of attorney?

*A durable power of attorney will remain in effect if you later become incapacitated, but Virginia law requires language indicating that you mean for it to remain in effect upon your disability, otherwise the power of attorney will automatically terminate once you are no longer able to direct your own affairs.

A power of attorney is in effect as soon as you sign it unless it contains language stating that it will not go into effect until a specified time in the future — if you become unable to handle your own affairs. We turn our attention now to important documents for medical and after-life issues.

*Medical Power of Attorney*

A Medical Power of Attorney can enable you to designate an agent to make decisions about your medical treatment should you be unable to make them yourself. Your agent will only be allowed to make decisions for you if there is a decision, in writing, by your treating physician and one other doctor familiar with your case that you are incapable of making an informed decision. The agent’s authority will also come and go as your competency comes and goes, leaving decisions about your healthcare up to you when you are competent to make them.
Plan

PLAN, from Page 24

*Living Will or Advance Medical Directive

This document is in some ways like a Medical Power of Attorney, but it will allow you to state your own preference for certain treatment options when you cannot speak for yourself. It can be combined with a Medical Power of Attorney or may be used by itself. If used by itself, all decisions not predetermined in the document will be made by your treating physicians and/or your next of kin.

*Last Will and Testament

A Last Will and Testament allows you to specify beneficiaries, whether relatives or not, to receive your property (both real and/or personal) upon your death; to name an executor who will make sure that your beneficiaries receive what you wanted them to receive; to set up a trust and choose a trustee for any beneficiary too young or otherwise incapable of managing his or her inheritance; and/or to nominate a guardian for your minor children.

You cannot use a Last Will and Testament to completely disinherit your spouse (unless you have a separation agreement that entitles you to do so), nor can you use it to alter the distribution of property owned jointly with a right of survivorship or of an asset with a named beneficiary like a life insurance policy.

Why are these documents important?

By not making these decisions in advance and having the proper legal paperwork, you risk having a Court make these decisions or appoint someone to make them for you. These proceedings can be expensive, unpleasant and slow, for you, your family, and your friends. Take steps now to ensure that YOU make the decisions that are right for you and your family.

Who Decides?? has been provided by Southwest Virginia Legal Aid, a non-profit law firm serving the region's low-income residents in civil legal matters. To learn more or find out if you are eligible for services, visit www.svlas.org.
An Adventures in Missions group was recently in Scott County to provide home repairs and other volunteer work to older persons identified by MEOC care coordinators. Volunteers of all ages from several different states come to southwest Virginia each summer. The partnership of MEOC with local churches and missions teams like “Adventures” has been responsible for many home repair and home modification projects being completed for older persons in Lee, Scott and Wise County and the City of Norton that might not otherwise have been done.

Adventures in Missions is a Christian ministry group that sends thousands of people on missions every year. For several years they have partnered with MEOC to do projects for older people in southwest Virginia. Missions teams come from many different states to volunteer at PACE, do home repairs, and provide housecleaning, yard work and friendly visiting. Here an Adventures team leader poses with Edward Spivey of Gate City for whom they performed home repairs.

Fellowship House Adult Day Health Care participants and staff recently enjoyed lunch at the Golden Corral in Kingsport. Pictured left to right are Bertha Bledsoe, Gate City, Reba Lovell, Gate City, Doris Lewis, Ewing, Glen Lovell, Gate City, Linda Gannaway, Gate City and Allen Serven, Duffield.
**MEOC Receives Funding for Fans and Air Conditioners**

Many older persons without a cooling system find themselves in emergency situations during hot summer days and nights. Mountain Empire Older Citizens (MEOC) may be able to help. MEOC’s Fan-Care program began on July 1st and will end on September 30th. MEOC will distribute approximately 100 fans and a limited number of air conditioners to eligible older persons in need.

To qualify, a person must be sixty (60) years of age or older, have a situation at home that threatens health and have an adjusted gross income of at or below 150% of the federal poverty level (1 person, $1,471; 2 persons, $1,991). All incomes of persons in the household must be counted.

This program is sponsored by Dominion Virginia Power and administered by the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services. The funding is primarily for the purchase of floor, window or oscillating fans.

If you have an emergency cooling need and are interested in applying for a fan or air conditioner, please call MEOC at 276-523-4202 or 1-800-252-6362.

**VA-KY District Fair**

On Thursday, June 11th, MEOC’s Wise County, City of Norton and Lee County Congregate Nutrition Sites enjoyed spending the day at the 102nd VA-KY District Fair on Senior Citizens Day! They played Bingo, socialized with other area seniors, enjoyed lunch, enjoyed the rides and topped the day off with a Senior Citizens’ Beauty Pageant.

Pete Roberson and Bob Salyers of Coeburn enjoyed a game of Bingo at the VA-KY Fair on Senior Citizens Day.

Ellie Osborne and Peggy Peters from Norton pause for a moment from their Bingo game at the VA-KY District Fair. Bingo is one of the many enjoyable activities always planned for Senior Citizens Day at the Fair.

Wilma Swavely of Wise, the friendly voice of “Good Morning Wise County,” a Wise Country Sheriff’s Department Program, smiles for our camera at Senior Citizens Day at the VA-KY District Fair.
Jerome Wright has qualities that are hard to measure – like a love for his job and for the people he serves as an MEOC Transit driver.

But Wright also has abilities that can be measured, and he measured up so well recently that he’ll be making his second Paratransit National Roadeo appearance in three years.

Wright won the van division at the April 11 Virginia Paratransit Roadeo in Harrisonburg, leading MEOC Transit to its fourth straight state win. Wright will travel to Tampa, Fla. for the May 30 national championships. He finished third in the nation in the 2013 competition at Albuquerque, N.M. and has been a state champion two out of the last four years.

Wright was one of five MEOC Transit drivers competing at the state roadeo. Harry Crider finished fourth overall in the body-on-chassis, or bus, division. Louis Mavredes was fourth in the van competition, Jeff Whisman was sixth in body-on-chassis, and 2013 state champion Doug Ashley was ninth in body-on-chassis.

Wright also credits Danny Stallard, a three-time national champion who coaches the team.

Wright won his division by one point, finishing with a score of 707 to the second-place 706 compiled by a Blacksburg driver.

“It’s rare to win it all, but really rare when you have a streak of winning four in a row.”

MEOC Transit Director Mitch Elliott

The competitions include a written test, a wheelchair securement exercise and an obstacle course. Each of the three competitions has to be completed in 7 minutes or less and to exacting standards: obstacles have to be overcome in tolerances of just a few inches. For example, drivers are required to stop within 6 inches of a bright orange cone. The last obstacle requires drivers to accelerate to 20 miles per hour and drive between two rows of barrels that are placed at diminishing distances.

“It’s rare to win it all, but really rare when you have a streak of winning four in a row,” said MEOC Transit Director Mitch Elliott.

Given MEOC Transit’s track record of competition success, this year could almost be considered a “down” year, Operations Supervisor Gary “Yogi” Bowman said, noting that the drivers “struggled and still did well.” Winning the state competition the first time inspired drivers to take the event seriously, Bowman said:

See TRANSIT, Page 29

Eastman Volunteers

(Far left) Doug Larkins and other volunteers from Eastman begin the construction of a ramp for Sheila Lamb of Gate City. MEOC salutes the Eastman Volunteers who devote a day each year to building ramps and performing other home repair activities for older people in Scott County. This partnership is a very long and deeply appreciated one.

(Left) The finished product makes Mrs. Lamb’s house so much more accessible. MEOC Care Coordinator Irma Snodgrass was lead contact on this project.
Transit

"They realized, we can do this every year with the drivers we have."

'GOOD RETIREMENT JOB'

Wright is no stranger to transportation. From McDonough, Ga., he worked for Delta Airlines for 30 years. Based at Delta’s hub, Atlanta’s Hartsfield Airport, Wright traveled all over the world while working as a cleaner of plane interiors.

Wright’s introduction to the familiar MEOC Transit vans came when he and his wife, Barbara S. Smith Wright, were installing a well on her property before relocating to Southwest Virginia. Barbara Wright also works for MEOC, as a personal care aide.

“I saw an MEOC bus going by the house, and I told Barbara, ‘that’s what I want to do when we move up here. I want to find out about those buses; it looks like a good retirement job.’”

Wright picked up an application and took it back to Atlanta to fill out, eventually got in touch with Michael Wampler, who was Transit director at the time, and twice flew up for interviews.

“If somebody had told me in 1995 that when I retired I’d be doing this, I’d say no way. But the first day I rode with one of the employees before I went back home, that sold it to me,” Wright said. “When I saw that first group of people board that bus — I love the job, I love the people. You’ve got to respect them.”

“It’s nice to do something in later life helping other people,” said Wright, who’s driven for MEOC for 11 years. “They get to know you personally, and you get to know them. I respect all of them I have on my bus.”

MEOC’s 2015 State Championship Transit Roadeo team is pictured: Jeff Whisman, Jonesville, Gary Bowman, Big Stone Gap; Mitch Elliott, Coeburn; Jerome Wright, Keokee; Harry Crider, Jonesville; Danny Stallard, Big Stone Gap; Doug Ashley, Big Stone Gap and Louis Mavredes, Dryden.

Driver Jerome Wright won the 2015 State Championship Van Driver trophy.
Children’s health, safety main concerns

BY GLENN GANNAWAY
NEWS EDITOR
Reprinted with the permission of The Post from its April 23, 2015 edition

With blue pinwheels serving as an uplifting symbol of childhood, officials last Wednesday recognized April as Child Abuse Prevention Month.

And with one in 10 children nationwide the victim of sexual abuse, officials stressed the need for providing hope, health and safety for children everywhere. “That’s what we desire for children throughout Virginia and everywhere,” MEOC Children’s Services Director Janie Dockery said during a ceremony at Big Stone Gap Town Hall. “We want to encourage everyone in the region to participate in Child Abuse Prevention Month.”

The Children’s Advocacy Center at Mountain Empire Older Citizens had 134 new cases of possible child abuse in 2014, CAC Clinical Director LaDonna Hall said. Of those cases, 77 of the possible victims were female and 57 were male; 43 percent were of ages

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Big Stone Gap April Prevent Child Abuse Event: Release of Blue Balloons

Front row LaDonna Hall, MEOC Children’s Advocacy Center (CAC); Janie Dockery, MEOC Children’s Services; Leonard Rogers, Mayor of Big Stone Gap; Nancy Bailey, Big Stone Gap Town Council, MEOC Board of Directors and Family Preservation Services staff; Maggie Gilbert, MEOC Mountain Laurel Cancer Center/CAC Forensic Interviewer. Back row, Big Stone Gap personnel: Sgt. Detective W. Hollinger, Police Department; Tammy Grimes, Parks and Recreation Director; Pat Murphy, Town Manager and Jennifer Davis, CAC Resident in Counseling/Forensic Interviewer.
Hall also noted that, while one in 10 children is a sexual abuse victim, there has been an improvement over the years: for people age 40 and older, one in four girls and one in six boys were the victim of childhood sexual abuse.

But, Hall added, “They do get better. Families do heal, but they need a coordinated effort to do that.”

CAC contributes to that effort by providing trained forensic interviewers, evidence-based treatments, family advocates for non-offending caregivers, case management and criminal justice advocacy including court testimony.

Mayor Leonard Rogers read the town’s proclamation recognizing Child Abuse Prevention Month. The proclamation noted that:

- Preventing child abuse and neglect is a community problem that depends on involvement among people throughout the community;
- Child maltreatment occurs when people find themselves in stressful situations, without community resources, and without the knowledge of how to cope;
- The majority of child abuse cases stem from situations and conditions that are preventable in an engaged and supportive community;
- All citizens should become involved in supporting families in raising their children in a safe, nurturing environment;
- Effective child abuse prevention programs succeed because of partnerships among families, social service agencies, schools, faith communities, civic organizations, law enforcement agencies and the business community.
MEOC volunteers who worked at MEOC’s booth at RAM had the unexpected opportunity of meeting Governor Terry McAuliffe. Santana Vandyke (left) and Emma Spangler, both of Coeburn and both wonderful MEOC volunteers, present the governor with an MEOC Walkathon t-shirt.