Tony Lawson Hired As MEOC Pace Director

A program being established locally which provides a one-stop health care and social center for elderly residents in Lee, Scott and Wise counties and the city of Norton now has a director. Mountain Empire Older Citizens Executive Director Marilyn Pace Maxwell announced recently that Tony Lawson of Lee County has been hired by Mountain Empire Older Citizens, Inc. to serve as the Director of the new Mountain Empire PACE Program. PACE is the acronym for Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly.

“Tony is the absolute perfect person to make this ten year dream of MEOC’s Board, Advisory Council and staff a reality. Tony brings the right combination of talents, skills, vision, experience and passion to MEOC to lead us successfully in this exciting new venture—to have PACE in our area would truly be a Godsend for not just our frail elderly friends, neighbors and relatives, but an equal blessing for their families and caregivers,”

See LAWSON, on page 2

Tony Lawson, Director, Mountain Empire PACE

Tony Lawson (left), Director of Mountain Empire PACE and Marilyn Pace Maxwell, (right) Executive Director of Mountain Empire Older Citizens, Inc., proudly display the architectural drawing of the new Mountain Empire PACE facility. This program will provide a one-stop health care and social center for elderly residents in Lee, Scott and Wise counties and the city of Norton.
said Maxwell.

MEOC was recently awarded more than $3.6 million in grant and loan funds to build the first rural PACE Center in the nation. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development Agency is providing MEOC with a $3.4 million low-interest federal loan to build the 15,000-square foot structure on land adjacent to the agency’s corporate offices on 3rd Ave. East. Congressman Rick Boucher and State USDA Rural Development Director Ellen Davis made the announcement of this funding at a press conference held recently at MEOC. Additional funding has been awarded to MEOC PACE from successful grant proposals to The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services and The Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services, and The Wise County Industrial Development Authority has donated property for the PACE Center to MEOC.

Individuals enrolled in the Mountain Empire Older Citizens PACE program will be able to live in their own homes while receiving health care and therapy at home or in the new PACE Center.

Lawson brings a wealth of experience to the new venture. Most recently, he was Executive Director of the Southwest Virginia Graduate Medical Education Consortium (GMEC), an agency that supports medical training in rural and underserved communities.

“Setting up Mountain Empire PACE is a real challenge. It is calling on every skill that I have picked up over 30 years spent in health and education- from research methods to cross-discipline planning to service coordination to systems development, professional recruitment and day-to-day business management. The work is hard but satisfying,” Lawson explained. “And I believe that PACE will be a tremendous benefit for people in our region.”

He said that while the PACE model has been available in U.S. cities for more than 20 years, it is a new approach to health care for people in rural Virginia.

“Most people in our area treasure Family, Home, and Community, and most of us choose to spend our days in familiar places with the people we love,” Lawson said. “PACE suits Southwest Virginia because a community-based model enables frail seniors to live at home and still get the special care and attention they need.”

Lawson said our overall health care system is “sort of fractured.” We get health care in piecemeal fashion from many different sources. Lines of communication within the overall system are easily broken or have never been connected. He noted that PACE is designed to heal fractures in the health system by improving communications and coordinating the provision of care.

As people age, they need many health care providers - doctors, nurses, therapists, pharmacists, dietitians and others. Each provider does his/her part, but none of them is responsible for overall patient care. Each patient has to filter through and make sense of all the directions given by various professionals, manage
appointments with a shifting, growing set of clinicians, and trust that everyone involved in the case is exchanging vital information. While doing all this, patients have to cope with problems that come with age – changes in mobility, memory loss, heart disease, diabetes, depression, reduced income, unsafe housing, isolation and loneliness.

“People do their best to coordinate their own care, but they don’t always know what to expect from clinicians or even what services are available to them,” Lawson explained. “Navigating a complex health system while coping with personal problems can be too much for frail seniors and their families to handle without help.”

Lawson said that the PACE model assembles all the pieces of a broken health care system into a seamless whole. In PACE, each participant is assigned to a care team that includes a doctor, nurse, pharmacist, social worker, home care coordinator, dietician, personal care aide, driver, physical therapist, speech therapist, and occupational therapist. The care team assesses the needs of each person who enrolls, creates a plan of care for them, and makes sure that they get every service included in the plan. The team works closely with participants and their caregivers to implement each action plan.

Participants in PACE receive services at the PACE Center, in their homes, and elsewhere as needed. People come to the Center for socialization, meals, recreation, physical, speech, and occupational therapies, medical care, counseling, personal care, and medicine. In their homes, participants receive personal care, skilled nursing, homemaker services, medicine, nutrition, and restorative therapies as needed.

When participants need specialty medical care, PACE makes appointments, provides transportation and coordinates care with the specialists. The PACE doctor admits and follows patients in the hospital or nursing home as needed.

“The PACE team oversees care for each person enrolled to help them live safely and independently in their own homes,” Lawson explained.

Mountain Empire PACE is one of the first rural PACE organizations in the United States. Lawson said he is honored to be a part of the new program and believes PACE meets a deeply felt need in our area.

“I live in a place called Millers Chapel, in a house about 100 yards from the two room shack where I was born. My house is within earshot of my mother, brother, aunts, uncles, and cousins. I have known most of my neighbors all my life, or at least all their lives. Millers Chapel is a beautiful place with hills and hollows and pastures and patches of woods framed by distant mountains. One focal point in the community is a church that sits on the crown of a gentle hill. The church faces another hill across a deep hollow, and on that second hill is a second focal point, the well-tended cemetery where generations of my ancestors rest in peace. The spiritual bond between the church and cemetery is almost palpable: it vibrates like the plucked string of a violin. I feel at home in Millers Chapel, where I am part of the past, the present, and the future,” said Lawson. “But to unfamiliar eyes, there is nothing special about Millers Chapel. It looks like hundreds of other rural communities in the mountain region. I guess that’s my point: every place in the mountains is special to the people who live there.” He continued, “I love my corner of the universe, and I want to live here until my time comes. I’m proud to be a part of PACE because the program enables people like me to live where we choose, secure in the knowledge that help and support is close at hand when we need it.”

Lawson can be reached at MEOC at 276-523-4202 or 800-252-6362 for more information on the planning for a PACE Program for Lee, Wise, Scott Counties and The City of Norton.
Our Home, Our Family, Our Life, Too

Don’t Leave Hometown, Family and Friends For Rehab

Come to Heritage Hall in Big Stone Gap

Ms. Dezarn recently broke her left leg and had surgery at Wellmont Lonesome Pine Hospital. She then choose Heritage Hall-Big Stone Gap for inpatient rehabilitation.

“Everyone is good to me here. Our goal is for me to walk out of here and be able to live in my home with little or no help. I know it will happen soon.”

— Ruth Dezarn.

Heritage Hall

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Patty Akers - Administrator

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276-523-3000 Fax 276-523-0531
Second annual ‘Duck Race’ nets $10,000

By Ida Holyfield
Editor
Reprinted with permission from The Post

Half the proceeds of the second annual Heritage Hall Nursing Home and Mountain Empire Older Citizens Duck Race is going to Christmas gifts, clothes, replacement false teeth and new glasses for residents at the nursing home.

The other half will go toward paying fuel bills for folks who feel the chill not only from the weather, but from the grim prospect of persistent poverty and

See DUCK, on page 8

See More Photos on Page 6

MEOC SESEKS VOLUNTEERS TO COUNSEL SENIORS ON HEALTH INSURANCE

The Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (VICAP) is seeking volunteers to provide free health insurance counseling for area seniors 65 and older. Training sessions will be provided for these volunteers to be able to assist people with Medicare and decisions about Medicare supplement and long-term care insurance.

VICAP is looking for volunteers who are comfortable working with people and numbers. People who are licensed to sell insurance, or who consult in the insurance business, are not eligible to participate in the volunteer program.

The Virginia Department for the Aging sponsors VICAP in cooperation with the State Corporation Commission’s Bureau of Insurance and other agencies and organizations. Since 1993, VICAP has reached tens of thousands of Older Virginians with information and help on health insurance issues. If you would like to become a trained VICAP counselor and help our area seniors, please call MEOC and talk to Jennifer Spangler (1-276-523-4202 or 1-800-252-6362)
Organizers moved the ‘duck drop point’ for this year’s race downstream a couple of hundred feet from the walking bridge that crosses the Greenbelt, in the area above Kentucky Fried Chicken, Gilliam Funeral Home, the Black Diamond store and Riggs Animal Hospital. Officials said they were looking for swifter water to give the ducks a better start.

This year, with a swifter current behind them, the ‘racers’ stayed in a tighter unit and moved rapidly downstream.

At the finish line, Lisa Gilliam and Heritage Hall Administrator Patti Akers joined two volunteers from Mountain Empire Older Citizens, Tim Begley and Bill Begley in plucking winners from the water. Plastic bags were pre-marked for place winners, so that ducks could be scooped from the water and immediately placed in the appropriate bags. Crowds dotted the Greenbelt and open spaces at the Jessie Lea RV Park and Campground to watch the event.
2007 MEOC Walkathon Exceeds $150,000 Goal!
Full details and photos in next issue of the Mountain Empire News.
Teens Teach Caregivers Internet Basics

By Ida Holyfield
Reprinted with permission from The Post

A pilot program that in 2005 was first in the nation to have teens teach Internet skills to in-home caregivers may soon become a model for hundreds of communities across the country.

In that first round of sessions, caregivers — who may be confined to the home for days on end looking after Alzheimer’s or dementia patients — were taught how to access the Internet, email and online chat rooms.

They were provided used Wise County School System computers and given Internet connections for a year while they learned to connect to others through the technology which was so new to them.

See TEENS, on page 10

Duck

continued from page 5
ongoing prescription drug costs.

Proceeds from this year’s Duck Race, like last year’s, were divided three ways, officials said. Prize money took $2,500 of the revenue and the sponsoring partners split the rest.

Heritage Hall staffers say needy residents at the nursing home will benefit from race proceeds all year. After the holidays are over, the giving will continue for those who have no families to see to their needs, Director of Human Resources Lisa Gilliam explained.

“Some of the residents need clothes, and don’t have them, or their dentures get lost or damaged. They need new glasses, but there’s no one to come forward and help them. That’s where the Resident’s Fund steps in.”

MEOC officials will be using their share of the money to shore up the agency’s Emergency Fuel Fund until the annual MEOC 10K Walkathon, set for Sunday, May 6, at 2 p.m. at Powell Valley High School.

With weather forecasters predicting a chilly spring following the recent warm weather, the need for assistance with elderly residents’ heating bills will be significant, they predict.

Both agencies expressed appreciation for the community support they received in staging the Duck Race.

Will the event be repeated next year? “Absolutely,” said Gilliam.

Volunteers have already collected the ducks used in this year’s race, cleaned them up, and stored them for the 2008 event, she said.
When time is measured in heartbeats and hope, we’re here.

At the Emergency Room of Lee Regional Medical Center, we guarantee that it will be less than 15 minutes before an incoming patient interacts with a medical professional. This timely service is one example of the dedication of our top quality emergency physicians and staff. They are ready 24 hours a day, seven days a week to serve your needs. With the full resources of a state-of-the-art hospital behind it, the ER at Lee Regional Medical Center is the place to turn when the worst happens to those who mean the most.

Lee Regional Medical Center
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276-546-1440
Recently, Mountain Empire Older Citizens officials, project partners, two dozen teen volunteers and 19 caregivers finished up work on a revised five-week session of the Tech World Teens and Alzheimer’s Caregivers Technology Project, staged this second time at the request of The Brookdale Foundation Group.

MEOC Executive Director Marilyn Maxwell explained that based on results achieved by first-round participants, who continued to build on their Internet skills, foundation officials believed the program could benefit caregivers across the country.

Last fall, Maxwell said, Brookdale Foundation officials asked the agency to repeat the program, updating the instructional notebook and providing videos of the sessions to help the foundation evaluate ways to launch a national model.

Now, Tech World: An Information Portal, may help folks in inner cities, rural areas and remote sections of the nation to feel more connected through similar intergenerational learning programs, Maxwell said.

In the Powell Valley High School based sessions, teens exhibited incredible patience, and seniors were delighted to see how quickly they could learn with one-on-one instruction.

See BASICS, on page 12
ATTENTION!
IF YOU ARE FIFTY-FIVE
OR OLDER,
WILLING TO SHARE YOUR
SKILLS AND ABILITIES
AND
LOOKING FOR
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES...
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TO FIND OUT MORE, CALL
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MOUNTAIN EMPIRE OLDER CITIZENS, INC.

PHONE:  (276) 523-4202
(800) 252-6362
"This is great," Buena Evans of Coeburn said as tutor Nick Moss of McClure looked on. "It was confusing at first. I'd forget my password and I was afraid I'd mess up. I'd never even turned a computer on, but now, I'm sending emails."

Marvin Miller of Big Stone Gap noted, "I believe a lot of us older people would like to get into this, if we had somebody like these kids to be right with us and teach us."

"I wrote him step-by-step instructions," his granddaughter and tutor Kari Miller said. "I can do a little on a computer, but I never got far with it because I was always afraid to delete stuff. Now that I understand how things work, I'm on target, a lot more confident," Carolyn Shepard said.

"These folks are doing amazingly well," noted Pat Johnson, Wise County instructional technology coordinator. "Some of these adults had never touched a keyboard and have gone from learning what a backslash is to searching websites for medical information. The interaction with the students has been great."

Family members are often reluctant to teach their elders about computers, she noted, because they literally don’t know where to begin. These students, however, learn computer orientation and teaching skills in three preliminary sessions, then follow a structured plan to take their charges through the remaining two sessions. After classes end, reference notebooks with screen pictures and detailed instructions refresh participants’ memories.

This second time around, instruction focused more on chat rooms and email, with easy-to-follow steps to get computer users from one format to another, Anne Duesing, of the University of Virginia’s Health Sciences Library Outreach at UVa-Wise, noted. "We’re planning a follow-up session at MEOC, just for caregivers, to build their skills in health information research and do a chat room review."

"The chat room is especially important for caregivers who may be up in the night with their loved ones, and need someone to communicate with about what they’re going through," she noted.

At session’s end, Maxwell presented the teens with letters of recommendation for use with job or scholarship applications and a special gift selected by Johnson: an MP3 player that brought "oo’s" and "ah’s" around the room.

"I want to be a teenager like them," a program participant said as she saw the teens’ delighted reactions.

"I want to know what they know about computers," another participant said. "I’m getting there."

The back of a “graduation” t-shirt given to participants lists the program partners for this session: MEOC, the Brookdale Foundation Group, Wise County Schools, PVHS, Alzheimer’s and Related Disorders Research Award Fund; Virginia Center on Aging at Virginia Commonwealth University, University of Virginia’s Health Sciences Library Outreach at UVa-Wise, Southwest Virginia Alzheimer’s Association, the Regional Adult Education Program and the Virginia Department for the Aging.
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Is Your Income Below $12,250 (one person household or $16,500 for two)?

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**YOU WILL RECEIVE:**
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(276) 523-4202
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WALKATHON 2007

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HERITAGE HALL
HEALTHCARE AND REHABILITATION CENTERS
Black History Programs Presented at Local Schools

On Tuesday February 13th and Thursday February 22nd Mountain Empire Older Citizens’ Foster Grandparent Program and MEOC’s Retired and Senior Volunteer Program sponsored Black History events at Appalachia and Stickleyville Elementary. Jack Mooney, Norton; Lue Carson, Pennington Gap; Jake Ravizee, Lynch, Kentucky; and Justin Preston, Clinchco, presented music and story telling.

Sixth grade students enjoying the Black History Day program held at Appalachia Elementary School are (from left) Ashley Mullins, Deonna Trent, Brandee Childress, Tessa Sloan, Tessa Mullins, Kelsey Harris, Alayna Timberlake and Karley Harris.

Jennifer Spangler (right), MEOC Foster Grandparent Director and Justin Preston chat following the Black History Month program presented at Appalachia Elementary School. Justin gave a moving presentation reciting Martin Luther King Jr’s “I Have A Dream” speech.

Stickleyville Elementary School staff and members of the Black History Committee pose for a picture following the presentation educating students on black history events. Pictured are (row one) Jack Mooney and Jake Ravizee; row two (from left) Virginia Spence, Lue Carson, Ralph Cox, Lula Reasor, Jennifer Spangler and Lynnette Stuart.
Library Hosts Black History Month Performance

By Hannah Morgan
Staff Writer
Reprinted with permission from The Post.

The afternoon of Sunday, Feb. 17, the C. Bascom Slemp Library hosted a performance of local singers and speakers, entitled “Blues Singing Women: The Sorrow Songs,” to recognize February as Black History Month.

The hour-long presentation was written by Howard Cummins and incorporated many aspects of black culture, including traditional songs, female singers, discussions about athletic standouts and the inspirational leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

“It’s great to be recognized as a culture, not just a race,” said Flo Patterson, one of the blues singers. “Thank you for allowing us to share our culture with you.”

The room was filled with nearly 30 people from the community and it was crowd-diverse in age and race. In the front row, a 2-year-old girl danced in her grandmother’s lap to songs such as “Steal Away,” “We Shall Not be Moved,” and “Oh Freedom,” led by Lynnette Stuart and Josie Ellis. Other performances and speeches were given by Dovie Sowards, Donny Jenkins and Flo Patterson.

The event closed with a reading of Dr. King’s speech, “I have a dream,” by 7-year-old Hayley Johnson of Gate City.

“All the participants did a wonderful job,” Cummins noted. “The program just flowed, and the interaction with the audience made the afternoon very special.”

Tunes such as Tommy James and the Shondells’ “Crystal Blue Persuasion” illustrated the underlying theme of peaceful ways to resolve problems, as adopted by Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., while the wonderful “Koom-Ba-Yah” demonstrated the wonderful spiritual legacy, Cummins noted.

“Librarian Chris Smith and the staff set up a display of books, music, CDs and other materials to illustrate the many resources available to those who want to learn more about Black History, Cummins said.

Groups participating in Sunday’s program — Community Life Volunteers of Appalachia, June Tolliver

See LIBRARY, on page 17
House Volunteers and the BigAppy Storytellers — are currently working on additional offerings for March, April and May, Cummins said.

While dates have not been set, plans are to present "Life in the Coal Camps — the Good, the Bad and the Ugly" featuring Jay Swiney, in March. Assisting will be Brownie Polly, Cummins noted.

In April, the groups present "Springtime and Wild Flowers" in the parlor at the June Tolliver House, featuring Elayne Swiney.

In May, the program will be "Games Children Play," a street program in front of the June Tolliver House. "From Hop Scotch to Kick the Can, we'll look at the games of yesterday," Cummins noted.

For more information about programs, contact Cummins at 565-0155.

Library

continued from page 16

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For more information about programs, contact Cummins at 565-0155.

(Right) Singer and songwriter Dovie Sowards’ discusses ‘Black Women and their Musical Heritage,’ and the range of music from spirituals to jazz and Blues. Singing Bessie Smith and Elizabeth Cotton songs, she brings black history to life in song.
2007 Governor’s Conference on Volunteerism and Community Service

In partnership with the Office of Volunteerism and Community Service, the Governor’s Commission for Community & National Service is charged by the Governor with saluting Virginians for their significant contributions to the life and welfare of the Commonwealth and its people. This year’s event was held in Richmond. The Governor’s Volunteerism & Community Service Awards have recognized exceptional volunteer service in Virginia for more than 16 years.

Pictured attending the event are (back row, left to right) Mattie Robertson, Crater District AAA; Barbara James, LOA AAA Roanoke; Mary Dean, Brighton’s Solid Rock, Portsmouth; Tony Williams, Senior Connections, The Capital Area Agency on Aging, Richmond; Debra Bressler, Loudoun County AAA; Lynnette Stuart, MEOC (Front row left to right) Jennifer Spangler, MEOC; Pat Hale, Crater District AAA; Jean Taylor Payne, State Program Specialist; Tammy Blair, Campbell County Board of Supervisors.

We were so very thankful to have members of the Flatwoods Job Corp assist us with putting together the recent issue of the Mountain Empire News, along with our faithful RSVP volunteers. Flatwoods volunteers and RSVP volunteers work side-by-side getting the newspaper ready for distribution.

RSVP volunteer Roxie Mabe (right) and helper, Brittany Barker, use team work to get the newspapers labeled for distribution. We appreciate your hard work!
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Pictured is Carol Bentley and Respiratory Therapist Marlene Charles.

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Big Stone Gap

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Pennington Gap
During a Super Bowl party hosted by the town of Big Stone Gap in recognition of Chicago Bears running back and Powell Valley High School alumnus Thomas Jones, items were raffled off to benefit the MEOC Emergency Fuel Fund for the Elderly. Nancy Bailey, member of Big Stone Gap Town Council, shows her support for Thomas by proudly wearing one of his jerseys while purchasing tickets to benefit MEOC from Big Stone Gap town clerk Judy Hall.

Judy C. Hall, Big Stone Gap Town Clerk/Interim Treasurer recently presented Marilyn Pace Maxwell, Mountain Empire Older Citizens Executive Director, with a donation in the amount of $468 to be used for the MEOC Emergency Fuel Fund for the Elderly. The donations came in as a result of the Thomas Jones Super Bowl Party. Local businesses donated items that were raffled off during the party to raise money for the fuel fund. Those businesses donating items were Dotson’s Chevrolet, SouthWest Insurance Agency, Wellmont Lonesome Pine Hospital, General Auto Parts and Dr. Chapman’s office. MEOC appreciates everyone’s support of the Emergency Fuel Fund for the Elderly.
The Ladies Auxiliary of Mountain View Regional Medical Center recently made a donation of $755 to the Emergency Fuel Fund of Mountain Empire Older Citizens. Pictured, left to right, are Auxiliary Secretary Joyce Lackey, MEOC’s Margaret McAfee and Auxiliary Vice-President Barbara Caruso, all of Norton. This donation represents a portion of the proceeds from the hospital’s Love Light Tree, a project begun by Ms. Lackey and Sister Anne. The project is in its thirteenth year. Donations may be made to honor or to memorialize a loved one with a beautiful ceremony being held on the first Tuesday of each December.

WANTED

Missing Walkathon Tee Shirt

This is the tee shirt we need to complete our collection. Check your stash. If you have this shirt would you please donate it to MEOC so that we can complete our walkathon history.

For further information contact Margaret Sturgill at MEOC, 1-800-252-6362.
Members of the Mountain Laurel Cancer Support and Resource Center Advisory Council have been busy working on various grant proposals to expand the storytelling project previously developed by the Advisory Council. The goal of this project will be to develop a professionally produced DVD of the storytelling project as well as a comprehensive curriculum of educational materials and trained community based facilitators and health care professionals. Pictured (left to right) are Ann Duesing, Outreach Librarian for the University of Virginia’s Health Sciences Library; Leigh Ann Bolinskey, Mountain Laurel Center Director and Sharon Dwyer, Virginia Tech, following a recent meeting.

Local events benefit American Cancer Society

Area residents have three opportunities coming up locally to support the American Cancer Society with evenings of fun, entertainment and fellowship. Relay for Life, a fundraising event of ACS, is an overnight event designed to spread awareness of cancer prevention, treatments and cures, celebrate survivorship and raise money for research.

In 2006, more than three million people took part in more than 4,600 Relays in the United States alone. Over half a million survivors walked the opening lap, a traditional part of all Relays, and more than $375 million was raised, making it by far the biggest fundraising activity in the world.

Local Relays will be held in Lee, Scott and Wise Counties. The Scott County Relay is set for June 15 at Gate City High School. The Lee County Relay will be June 22 at Leeman Field in Pennington Gap and the Wise County Relay will be held July 27 at the University of Virginia’s College at Wise.

To make a donation which will benefit local events, contact Leigh Ann Bolinskey, Director of the Mountain Laurel Cancer Center of Mountain Empire Older Citizens, Inc. at 276-523-4202 or P.O. Box 888, Big Stone Gap, Virginia 24219.
On January 19, a special ceremony was held at the Claude Moore Health Sciences Library at the University of Virginia to honor this year’s award winners. Gretchen Arnold presented Mir Said Siadaty and Marilyn Pace Maxwell with Friends of the Library award. Mir Said Siadaty, faculty member in the Department of Public Health Sciences, was recognized for developing ReleMed, a new biomedical search engine. As the Executive Director of Mountain Empire Older Citizens, Marilyn Pace Maxwell worked with Ann Duesing, the Library’s Outreach Librarian in Wise, to make quality health information more accessible to the residents of rural Southwest Virginia. Ann Duesing, (left) is pictured along with Marilyn Pace Maxwell and the award she received.

Protect : Protect yourself from Medicare errors, fraud, and abuse

Protecting your personal information is the best line of defense in the fight against healthcare fraud and abuse. Every day, consumers get ripped off by scam artists. Medicare and Medicaid lose billions of dollars each year. You can make a difference!

Here are some ways to take an active role in protecting your healthcare benefits:

- Treat your Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security numbers like a credit card number. Never give these numbers to a stranger.
- Remember, Medicare doesn’t call or visit to sell you anything.
- Don’t carry your Medicare or Medicaid card unless you will need it. Only take it to doctor’s appointments, visits to your hospital or clinic, or trips to the pharmacy.
- Record doctor visits, tests and procedures in your personal health care journal or calendar.
- Save Medicare Summary Notices and Part D Explanation of Benefits. Shred the documents when they are no longer useful.

Detect : Learn to detect potential errors, fraud, and abuse.

Even when you do everything right, there is a chance that you could be a target of healthcare fraud. There are a lot of ways that your personal information can be used without your permission.

Here are some steps you can take to detect potential errors, fraud and abuse:

See FRAUX, on page 24
**Fraud**

*continued from page 23*

- Always review your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) and Part D Explanation of Benefits (EOB) for mistakes. Access to your current Medicare account is available 24 hours a day, simply visit www.MyMedicare.gov.
- Compare your MSN and EOB to your personal health care journal and prescription drug receipts to make sure they are correct.
- Look for three things on your billing statement:
  1. Charges for something you didn’t get
  2. Billing for the same service twice

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**In Memoriam**

**June 16, 1962 - March 24, 2007**

The MEOC family was saddened to learn of the death of fellow employee Rob Milby on Saturday, March 24, 2007. Rob worked as a dispatcher in the MEOC Transit Department and truly believed in his job at MEOC and what the agency does for the people of Southwest Virginia. A hard worker with one of the most positive attitudes, Rob consistently received praise for his customer service skills. Rob was named MEOC Transit Employee of the Quarter for the First Quarter 2007 posthumously.

---

Report: If you suspect that you have been a target of errors, fraud, and abuse, report it.

If you suspect errors, fraud or abuse, report it immediately! You will protect other people from becoming victims and help to save your Medicare benefits.

Here are the steps you should take to report your concerns and abuse:
- If you have questions about information on your Medicare Summary Notice or Part D Explanation of Benefits, call your provider or plan first.
- If you are not comfortable calling your provider or plan or you are not satisfied with the response you get, call your local SMP, at 1-877-808-2468.
MEOC Welcomes New Transit Employees

The Mountain Empire Older Citizens Transportation department is pleased to welcome a host of new employees. They include:

Nita Branham
Coeburn

Keith Davis
Big Stone Gap

Claude Blair
Big Stone Gap

Kristy Lovell
Big Stone Gap

Jan Head
Pennington Gap

MEOC Transit Replaces Older Vehicles

The Mountain Empire Transit Department recently replaced two older model Jimmys with two new Ford Explorers.
Pharmacy Connect of Southwest Virginia
Offers
FREE MEDICINE FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES
If you need medicine and can’t afford it, we may be able to help!

Who can get help?

Adults of ALL AGES who do not have insurance that pays for their medicines. People who have Medicare Part D may be eligible for free medicine through this program.

How do I get help?
Call 1-800-252-6362
Your doctor must participate by writing a prescription and signing the application.

Our friendly and helpful staff will complete all the necessary paperwork for you.
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Lee County Animal Hospital, Inc. .................Jonesville
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Dr. Theresa Dunton ...................................Big Stone Gap
Mid-Mtn. Heating & Cooling .........................Big Stone Gap
Dine Mullins ............................................Coeburn
Jerome Wright .........................................Keokee
Zelma Aichel ............................................Wise
Sharon Foster ...........................................St. Charles
Johnny Patterson .......................................Big Stone Gap
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McGraw-Hill Companies ..............................Princeton, New Jersey

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  Beech Grove Sunday School .......................Big Stone Gap
  Preceptor Alpha Omega ..............................Norton
  West End Baptist Church
  Ladies Auxiliary ....................................Big Stone Gap
  Angela Kennedy ......................................Wise
  Wise Primary School ................................Wise

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J. H. Gibbs Foundation .................Charlotte, North Carolina
Ewing Church of the Brethren ...........Ewing
Good News Church ..........................Pennington Gap
Ronald and Marilyn Wright ..........Church Hill, Tennessee
Independent Church of God ........Mt. Carmel, Tennessee
Darthula Baptist Church ..............Hiltons
Mary's Chapel Church .........................Coeburn
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Christ Episcopal Church .................Big Stone Gap
Imboden United Methodist Church ......Imboden
Mildred Horne ..............................Coeburn
Guest River Baptist Church .............Norton
Joseph and Doris Berta .................Big Stone Gap
Trinity United Methodist Church 
  Church Honeycutt Class ...............Big Stone Gap
Mossie K. Hall ..............................Pennington Gap
Ewing First Baptist Church .............Ewing
Artesian Baptist Church .................Big Stone Gap
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Norton Education Association ...........Norton
Norton Elementary School ...............Norton
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Jewell Anderson ............................Big Stone Gap
Walt and Teresa Rivers ...................Big Stone Gap
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Clarence E. Phillips .......................Coeburn
Powell Valley National Bank ..........Jonesville
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Betty Carter ...............................Duffield
Cumberland Resources Corporation ..........Wise
School Sisters of Notre Dame ..........Mankato, Minnesota
Bankers Insurance .........................Charlottesville
Frazier & Mann Fuel Oil Co. Inc. .....Weber City
Cindy Robinette ..........................East Stone Gap
Betty Bailey ...............................Ewing
Zelma Aichel ...............................Wise
Linda Begley ...............................Big Stone Gap
Betty Carter ...............................Duffield
Gerald Compton ..........................Gate City
Julia Dillon ...............................Big Stone Gap
Sharon Foster .............................St. Charles

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Kim Gibson .......................... Norton
Dennis Horton ........................ Weber City
Michael Pease ........................ Fairview
Hazel Ramey .......................... Norton
Jean Rhoton .......................... Blackwater
Teresa Shoop .......................... Big Stone Gap
Nancy Smith .......................... Big Stone Gap
Bob Tipton .......................... Gate City
Jerome Wright ........................ Keokee
Betty Elkins .......................... Weber City
Kenneth & Shirley Meade ............... Pound
Nancy Scott .......................... Big Stone Gap
Beulah Dinsmore ........................ Big Stone Gap

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Leonard Sargent ........................ Big Stone Gap
Marilyn Maxwell ......................... Norton
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Margaret Sturgill ........................ Pound

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Duane Tate Akridge ....................... East Stone Gap
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Geneva Skorupa ........................ Norton

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Agnes Martin .......................... Elkhorn City, Kentucky
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Children’s Advocacy Center
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Marilyn Pace Maxwell .................... Norton
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Wendell and Rebecca Caldwell .......... Big Stone Gap
Pat Bean .......................... Big Stone Gap
Coal Energy Resources, Inc. ............. Duffield
Joseph R. Carico ........................ Wise

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Appalachia Family Health Center 276-565-2760
Clinch River Health Services 276-476-2896 or 467-2201
Dickenson County Health Department 276-926-8157
Haysi Clinic 276-865-5121
Junction Center for Independent Living 276-679-5988
Lee County Health Department 276-346-2011
Mountain Empire Older Citizens, Inc. 276-523-4202 or 1-800-252-6362
Russell County Health Department 276-889-7698
Scott County Health Department 276-386-1312
St. Charles Community Health Clinic 276-383-4428, ext. 205
St. Mary’s Health Wagon 276-835-9474
Stone Mountain Health Services, Inc. 276-383-4428
Tazewell Community Health Clinic 276-979-9899
Thompson Family Health Center 276-597-7081, ext. 205
Western Lee County Health Clinic 276-445-4826, ext. 227
William A. Davis Clinic 276-762-0770
Wise County Health Department 276-328-8000
2007 Foster Grandparent Program Recognition Held

More than 50 volunteers from the Foster Grandparent Program and the Foster Grandparent Advisory Council came together for a recognition dinner on April 19, 2007 held at Heritage Church of God in Big Stone Gap. Entertainment for the evening was provided by Grace Stidham. Grace is the 13 year old granddaughter of Foster Grandparent Shirley Gardner.

A very special “Thank You” to the men and women of Heritage Church of God for the recognition dinner they provided.

Several Foster Grandparents gather for a picture following the recognition ceremony. Pictured (L to R front row) Marie Smith, Hiltons; Shirley Gardner, Hiltons; Thelma Welch, Jonesville; Pauline Newton, Norton. (L to R back row) Jennifer Spangler, Foster Grandparent Director and Zelma Aichel, Wise.

Lynn Johnston has provided 8 years of volunteer service to the Foster Grandparent Program. Lynn is a resident of Jonesville.

Five year pins were presented to (L) Patsy King, Big Stone Gap and (R) Nelda “Moe” Dennison, Appalachia. Congratulations ladies!
Betty Barker of Big Stone Gap is a volunteer at Powell Valley Primary School.

Foster Grandparent Rena Ashworth of Norton is a volunteer at Wise Primary School.

Grace Stidham and her grandmother Shirley Gardner pose for a picture at the Foster Grandparent Recognition. Shirley is a Foster Grandparent at Weber City Head Start.

Pictured (L to R) Betty Vaughan, Appalachia; Loreva Cornett, Norton; Zelma Aichel, Site Manager of the Coeburn WIN Center. Loreva and Betty have been Foster Grandparent Volunteers for 6 years.

Pictured (L to R) Margie Beach, Pennington Gap; Zelma Aichel, Wise; George Bozell, Appalachia. Margie and George celebrate their 9th year as a volunteer with the Foster Grandparent Program.