

South Austin AARP

Chapter 2426

Website: www.southaustinaarp.org

August 2020

Wednesday
August 19, 1:00 p.m.
Cap Metro Project Connect
Jackie Nirenberg
Online via Zoom

Project Connect is the bold new transit plan of the City of Austin. It includes a new light rail system, a downtown transit tunnel, new Metro Rapid routes and vehicles, a transition to a zero-emissions fleet and much more. Join AARP Chapter 2426 as we host Jackie Nirenberg, the Manager of Community Involvement of CAP Metro. She will be giving us recent updates of Project Connect, how it will affect seniors, and Jackie will be answering our questions.

All Chapter members with an email address will receive an email to invite you to the ZOOM meeting. You will simply click on a link and it will take you to the meeting. Please keep on mute for the program. Members without email can listen in by calling 1- 346- 248- 7799, Meeting ID: 332 125 3417 to participate. All Aboard!!

Message from the President
Crespin Guzman

Hello Members, August heat, COVID 19 Pandemic and our Virtual World, notably ZOOM! Yes, this is what we have in store for you at this time but CHEER UP! Things will undoubtedly change hopefully for the better and as soon as our Wednesday, August 19th Membership Program presentation is done for you. Please look for more

information in this newsletter or later advisories as to how you can participate.

This will be strictly a Zoom presentation and not to be confused with a Regular Membership meeting as we have been used to having in the past. Under the New Normal that we operate under at least for now, we will continue to have separate Board of Directors Zoom meetings which will continue to be open to the membership for participation as well.

This month's Board meeting will be held August 26th. This will give the Board a good opportunity to assess the role of Zoom programs for the overall good of the Chapter and its membership. There are a number of factors to consider as we move further into the virtual direction of connecting with you our members during these challenging times.

To me, this sounds exciting! So please join us as best you can manage. Stay safe.

Future Programs
Randy Hsi

AARP Chapter 2426 will be moving its program content to an online format. Future scheduled programs are:

September 16: Lowering the Cost of your Prescriptions, Randy Hsi confirmed

October 21: The Aging Brain, Dr Burtleson, Neurologist

November 18: Affordable Housing in Austin, Tabitha Taylor, City of Austin

Programming will be hosted on Zoom on the scheduled date at 1 pm. Contact Randy Hsi chapter program committee chairman with questions at rhsi@healthmarkets.com.

The South Austin Senior Center provides newsletter on activities.

A recent SASAC activities newsletter has been attached to this Chapter 2426 newsletter.

To sign up to receive SASAC newsletters via email go to this website:

<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/south-austin-senior-activity-center>

Scroll down on the left hand side until you see a place to enter your email address and click the SUBSCRIBE button.

Legislative

Mary Ragland

Get Ready to VOTE!

October 5, 2020 is the last day to register to vote for the November 3, 2020 election.

If you aren't sure you are registered, you can find out at <https://teamrv-mvp.sos.texas.gov/MVP/mvp.do> or call 800-252-8683.

Governor Abbott has extended dates for early voting because of COVID. New dates for early voting are October 13 through October 30.

To Vote by Mail

Request a mail in ballot at

<https://webservices.sos.state.tx.us/forms/5-15f.pdf>

or call 512-463-5650 for an application. You can either request it online, or print it out and mail it in. You must request an application to vote by mail by October 23. To vote by mail in Texas, you must be 65 years or older; be disabled; be out of the county on election day and during the period for early voting by personal appearance; or be confined in jail, but otherwise eligible.

2020 Census

Have you completed the 2020 Census yet? If not, do it now! You can do it online at <https://my2020census.gov>, or by phone at 844-330-2020. If you did not respond by July, you will receive a paper form to complete. If you still don't respond, census takers will come to your door.

Not only does the Census affect federal support and political representation, but it also has a direct, practical

effect on the local economy and public safety. Businesses use Census data to decide where to build factories, offices, and stores, which creates jobs. Developers use the Census to build new homes, and local governments use the Census for public safety and emergency preparedness.

Title 13 of the U.S. Code protects the confidentiality of all your information. Only authorized individuals have access to the stored data, and the information you provide to the Census Bureau may only be used by a restricted number of authorized individuals who are sworn for life to protect the confidentiality of your individual responses. Your answers cannot be used against you by any government agency or court.

City of Austin Budget

The Austin City Council is now considering the budget, and the most controversial issue this year is the police and public safety. Two of the groups with opposing views are the Greater Austin Crime commission, <http://www.austincrime.org> who want to restore current funding for police, and the Austin Justice Coalition, <https://austinjustice.org> who want to reallocate some police funding and redirect it to other community services.

Livable Communities in a Time of Protest

By Rodney Harrell, July 9, 2020

From the AARP website

AARP has published a blog written by Rodney Harrell . He is vice president of family, home and community at the AARP Public Policy Institute. His areas of expertise include livable communities, housing, residential patterns, and community development. He urges us to look at the whole community:

I will never forget the 61-year-old African American woman I interviewed during my dissertation research years ago; when searching for a home, she only looked in majority-Black neighborhoods because she was concerned her voice would be silenced in a predominately White neighborhood."

"I would like to be a part of the decision-making process, and I would like to have whatever I have to say to be heard just as they would, and that might not sit too well with some Whites, especially those who have not really gotten on board with this race thing," she told me.

As protests over racial injustice have erupted worldwide following the deaths of African Americans Ahmaud

Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd, I wonder if she is more optimistic about the future, now that many people appear to recognize the racism that has plagued our communities for too long. As we move from recognition to action, I see a path forward in fully embracing a Livable Communities approach. True Livable Communities take the whole community into account, including all members and all neighborhoods. Inclusive, open conversations, with purposeful outreach to all segments of the community are a start. But policy development and implementation must follow these conversations, with a process that takes differences into account.

Listening to the Protests The killings of Arbery, in February, Taylor, in March, and Floyd on May 25 resonated beyond the communities in which they lived. These events exist on a long timeline of racial injustice and inequality for African Americans that traces back to a history of slavery, followed by legal racial discrimination, and continuing today with unequal treatment, not just by law enforcement, but in many facets of life. Floyd's killing was a trigger - in the days that followed, protests about racial injustice began across the country, and continue to this day. Much of the policy attention coming from the protests has focused on policing. That is an important issue, but there are broader inequalities that are boiling over into widespread societal frustration, and these have been exacerbated by COVID-19 and its economic fallout, which has **disproportionately impacted African American communities**. Disparities in access to housing, education, health care, healthy food and other community elements and services, not to mention employment opportunities, provide a backdrop of the circumstances that are faced by many African Americans and others on an ongoing basis. The **AARP Livability Index** was designed with a neighborhood-based approach for this very reason – looking at the neighborhood level allows us to see disparities within a community.

Protestors are being heard. Recently, the movement gathered behind the phrase **“Black Lives Matter”** has sparked a wider effort to focus on racial injustice towards African Americans to ensure equal treatment and opportunity. By the end of June, many corporations had embraced the spirit of Black Lives Matter, and organizations as diverse as the Marine Corps, NASCAR and the state of Mississippi had taken actions to remove divisive symbols of the Confederacy,

which many find to be offensive due to those symbols' connection to the Jim Crow era, slavery and subjugation of African Americans. The importance of community symbols on livability must be considered. Let's take a neighborhood beautification example: If a community improves sidewalks and beautifies a park but residents must cross a street named after a Confederate general or face a statue of that general in the park, the improvement effort may be meaningless. It will remain an isolating and divisive place to some citizens in the community, especially older African Americans who may feel excluded or not empowered to raise their concerns, much as my interview subject feared.

Black Lives Matter in Livable Communities

Community leaders need to view concepts such as Livable Communities through lenses such as Black Lives Matter. We cannot look at counties, cities or towns as a unified whole where one action always serves all. We must also focus on smaller cohorts within a community if we are to address issues in an equitable manner. For instance, if the majority-African American neighborhood within a community does not have access to healthy foods, and is identified as a “food desert” with no nearby grocery stores, then it is not sufficient to say the community as a whole has several grocery stores.

We must acknowledge that these disparities and differences are the result of multiple historical and current factors, but a clear factor is racial discrimination. In the housing space alone, the Fair Housing Act was passed in 1968 in order to end housing discrimination. Yet, we know housing discrimination still exists. A recent exposé unveiled real estate agents in Long Island, NY steering African Americans away from certain neighborhoods. Another report revealed that people of color were more likely than whites to be denied a conventional home loan in 61 metro areas. Strategies that start with the assumption that everyone is treated equally are flawed. All community members should be part of a participatory process to ensure all are heard, and policies should be developed and implemented taking into account the needs of the entire community. AARP's **What is Livable** study illustrated just how important it is to have the voices all community members' represented. We found that African American and Latino families ranked “implement or increase funding for affordable housing programs” much higher than did White respondents. We also found other policy differences based on disability, driver

status, and income. Different issues resonated more with certain groups. The questions we must continuously ask are: How are all identifiable groups served, do they have a voice in the community, and do the policies that we implement reflect the needs of all?"

Chapter 2426 Volunteer *Nancy Crowther*



Rebel in a wheelchair: The ADA at 30 in the rearview mirror

Written by Nancy Crowther

I never thought I would make it this far, much less this long. July 26, 2020 marks the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Often referred to as [the most comprehensive civil rights act for persons with disabilities](#). Ever.

I made a few contributions to the outcomes. I am a trailblazer, after all. The [lawsuit against UT](#) in relation to inaccessible shuttle bus service got the ball rolling in 1983, then sidewalk access design and construction came forth, then training in eligibility for paratransit, and my favorite, travel training – just to name a few.

When I was growing up in Killeen, Texas, I knew I was different. It was not until the wheelchair showed up when I was 6 years old that I knew things were changing. Why did I have to use this? None of my three sisters had to use one. Unlike their rites of passage with two-wheeled bicycles, I was given this four-on-the-floor rolling chair powered by my hands pressing on the wheel rims. It was bulky, ugly, and took a strong person to fold it up and put in the trunk of the car before I could go anywhere.

Little did I know how much it would change the way the world would treat me.

What? Riding to school in an ambulance? To junior high school?

Why? There were no rides on the yellow bus for me. No “short buses” for students with disabilities then.

It got to be fun after a while, except that everyone knew when I arrived and when I left. It was Standard Operating Procedure to have the lights flashing when I was boarding or de-boarding the van. This did nothing for my social life or my self-esteem.

Fast forward, I graduated from UT (even surprised myself) after having whipped up the student population of people with disabilities to recognize the massive injustice that was prevalent on campus. Missing ramps to buildings, having to change classrooms for access at the beginning of each semester, UT’s attitudes toward “rebels in wheelchairs.”

Eventually I ended up in federal court to defend my rights to ride shuttle buses. Something I learned from my father was to never take no for an answer. I wanted access to the shuttles. We lost the battle (David and Goliath, what was I thinking?) but won the war when access to shuttle service was mandated in the ADA. This experience molded my focus toward justice and access, not just for me but my comrades with disabilities.

Being an untraditional social worker, a role I relished, I managed to get a job at Capital Metro in 1989 (no, I did not drive a bus) as an Accessible Transportation Specialist – a title that meant if it had to do with disability, give it to Nancy.

Then in 1990, the ADA became law. Suddenly, we had laws and regulations to implement. I was placed in charge of the Department of Transportation rules for implementing the regulations for Capital Metro’s compliance under the ADA and access to services for people with disabilities. Uh, I don’t remember learning how to do that in school.

From bus access designs for maximum accessibility, testing and design for safely securing wheelchairs, accessible bus stops and signs, driver customer service training, paratransit planning, community outreach, and all the nuts and bolts that went into making transportation truly accessible to all persons with all different disabilities. As early as 1993, Capital Metro became the first transit authority in Texas to become 100 percent wheelchair accessible. I was a maestro to an orchestra of thousands who made this happen. Never a prouder moment. And it grew to today with 30

years in the rearview mirror. The hardest battle to fight, but I didn't take no for an answer.

Nancy Crowther continues improving justice and access for people with disabilities through her work with ADAPT of Texas, the Personal Attendant Coalition of Texas (PACT), and American Association of Retired People (AARP) Chapter 2426. She is a long-term member of SAFE Disability Services' Program Advisory Committee.

Travel
Mario Macaluso

Dear Travelers

I miss seeing you and taking you on day-trips. In time they will resume and we will be able to share person-to-person and have fun again. For the time being here are some thoughts that invite us to think about the nature of true happiness.

"Rivers do not drink their water. Trees do not eat their fruit. The sun does not shine for its own. Flowers do not spread their scent for themselves. They live for others. It is the rule of Nature. Life is beautiful when you are happy, however life is much better when others are happy because of you. Our nature is to be of service. He who does not live to serve, he does not serve to live." Israelmore Avivor

Be well and keep on smiling!

Mario

Tours Coordinator

Our chapter donated to the Vaughn House in memory of Ray Vaughn. His family sent this message:
*To: Members of AARP Chapter 2426
Thank you for your donations to the Vaughn House.
Ray really missed attending your meetings and participating in your good work.
Thanks for your thoughtfulness.
Sally, Leanne and family of Ray Vaughn*

**2020 Officers
And Committee Chairs**

- Officers**
- President: Crespin Guzman 737-222-8155
 Vice President: Nancy Crowther 512-808-7486
 Secretary: Ed Gonzales 512-444-3335
 Assistant Secretary: Marilyn Totten 512-280-8030
 Treasurer: Bill Nicholson 512-481-8464
 Assistant Treasurer: Rosie Perez 512-440-7050
 Board of Directors (in addition to officers):
 Wanda Hasley 512-280-9276 and Marie Martinez 512-276-4771
- Committee Chairs**
- Community Service: Pat Thomas 512-441-1485
 Deborah Fennell 512-282-9931
- Greeters: Marilyn Totten 512-280-8030
 Health: Laura Dutton 512-740-9370
 Gail Glick 214-808-6622
 Hospitality: Connie Flores 512-536-0694
 Legislative: Mary Ragland 512-280-2661
 Membership: Joann Cepero 773-710-2053
 Newsletter Editor and Web Manager:
 Diane McGowan 512-923-3218
- Program: Randy His 512-663-8196
 Phone Committee Chair:
 Elaine Benton 512-799-2224
 Sunshine: Kathryn Stone 512-441-6038
 Travel: Mario Macaluso 512-432-5255

Community Service Committee
Pat Thomas
Deborah Fennell

A Little Wisdom from the Community Service Committee

The Pandemic won't last forever. We all look forward to a time when we can return to normal. In the meantime let us think of ways we can help serve the Austin Community. I have been in contact with the following organizations to determine how we can be of help. You may recall that last year one of our programs was a representative from **Integral Care** speaking on the topic of mental health. During this current time of great stress mental health is a priority. I want to make you aware of an organization in our neighborhood. The Judge Guy Herman Center for Mental Health Crisis Care is located at 6600 E. Ben White Blvd., directly behind the Central Health Southeast Health & Wellness Center. Judge Herman's court handles involuntary mental health commitments, and he has long fought for a new, better-suited point of access for those in an immediate

state of crisis. It is a 16-room facility. Although the vast majority of mental health crises resolve within 48 hours, expensive inpatient care, ill-equipped emergency rooms, and jails have historically been the only options for EMS and police to respond to a mental health crises. The Judge Guy Herman Center for Mental Health Crisis Care is designed to support first responders like APD, the Travis County Sheriff's Office, Seton Psychiatric Emergency Department, etc., and provide adequate, short-term crisis care that includes stabilization, assessment, and treatment in a secure and therapeutic residential environment. Operated by **Integral Care**, the center is the result of a collaboration of local health care organizations including Central Health and St. David's Foundation, and will offer "the right level of care at the right time, reduce cost of care and improve health outcomes for patients." I do not yet have a definite answer on how we can be of help but am thinking we might be able to provide departing patients with a small plastic bag filled with simple items like tooth paste, pen and note pad, socks, a one day bus pass, etc. Or we might provide the facility with needed office supplies. I am waiting for a call back from the center director.

I have been in contact with **Drive A Senior**. They are using paid drivers and taxi service during the pandemic. The number of patients has decreased because medical doctors are discouraging office visits and are able to handle many issues via the telephone. I am thinking of 2021/22 when fundraising may be a necessary item. We may be able to provide cookies and tea after a church concert.

Packaged food for food pantries is welcome but we currently don't have a place to collect and store such items. If your local church has a need for items, let me know what they need.

Stay safe with a mask on your face, a prayer in your heart and kind words for all you encounter.

**A little humor from our friend Ed Gonzales.
Do not let them take the temperature on your forehead as you enter the supermarket, because it erases your memory. I went for macaroni and cheese and came home with two cases of beer.**

Volunteer Hours

Ed Gonzales

Total for 2020 : 3100 Hours

Please send or email your number of volunteer hours. Look on the last page of the newsletter for the form.

Chapter 2426 Treasurer's Report

Bill Nicholson

BALANCE SHEET AS OF JULY 31, 2020

Assets

Chapter Checking Account	\$ 2,487.27
Travel Checking Account	376.83
Savings Account	25.00
Receivable from Clark Travel	<u>609.75</u>
Total Assets	<u>\$ 3,498.85</u>

Mario Macaluso was reimbursed for \$609.75 for deposits he had made from personal funds for two day-trips cancelled because of the OVID-19 Issue. His reimbursement is from the Chapter Checking Account and becomes a Receivable from Clark Travel. The Chapter has no liabilities as of July 31, 2020.

DUES

Since the February meeting ten members have paid 2020 dues. Of the 242 members listed on the Membership Roster there are 79 members yet to pay their \$10 dues for the calendar year 2020.

MEMERSHIP ROSTER

So, the Roster is up to date, the dues owed; changes in a member's mailing address, telephone number or email address; or change to dues exempt member status because of attaining 85 years old are to be sent to:

Bill Nicholson, 12512 Gun Metal Dr.,
Austin, TX 78739 or emailed to
wr.nicholson@outlook.com.

The Membership Renewal 2020 form can be found on the last page of this newsletter. Please submit it with dues payments and changes in personal information for the Membership Roster. The Roster is a source of information for the board members and the chairs of the various committees.

Together, You Can Redeem the Soul of Our Nation

Though I am gone, I urge you to answer the highest calling of your heart and stand up for what you truly believe. ~

John Lewis, Civil Rights Activist and Rep (D) GA



NOTE: You may read more about his life on the AARP website: <https://www.aarp.org/politics-society/history/info-2020/john-lewis-obit.html>

Mr. Lewis, the civil rights leader who died on July 17, wrote this essay shortly before his death, to be published upon the day of his funeral. It was printed in the NY Times and is reprinted by permission.

While my time here has now come to an end, I want you to know that in the last days and hours of my life you inspired me. You filled me with hope about the next chapter of the great American story when you used your power to make a difference in our society. Millions of people motivated simply by human compassion laid down the burdens of division. Around the country and the world you set aside race, class, age, language and nationality to demand respect for human dignity.

That is why I had to visit Black Lives Matter Plaza in Washington, though I was admitted to the hospital the following day. I just had to see and feel it for myself that, after many years of silent witness, the truth is still marching on.

Emmett Till was my George Floyd. He was my Rayshard Brooks, Sandra Bland and Breonna Taylor. He was 14 when he was killed, and I was only 15 years old at the time. I will never ever forget the moment when it became so clear that he could easily have been me. In those days, fear constrained us like an imaginary prison, and troubling thoughts of potential brutality committed for no understandable reason were the bars.

Though I was surrounded by two loving parents, plenty of brothers, sisters and cousins, their love could not protect me from the unholy oppression waiting just outside that family circle. Unchecked, unrestrained violence and government-sanctioned terror had the power to turn a simple stroll to the store for some Skittles or an innocent morning jog down a lonesome country road into a nightmare. If we are to survive as one unified nation, we must discover what so readily takes root in our hearts that could rob Mother Emanuel Church in South Carolina of her brightest and best, shoot unwitting concertgoers in Las Vegas and choke to death the hopes and dreams of a gifted violinist like Elijah McClain.

Like so many young people today, I was searching for a way out, or some might say a way in, and then I heard the voice of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on an old radio. He was talking about the philosophy and discipline of nonviolence. He said we are all complicit when we tolerate injustice. He said it is not enough to say it will get better by and by. He said each of us has a moral obligation to stand up, speak up and speak out. When you see something that is not right, you must say something. You must do something. Democracy is not a state. It is an act, and each generation must do its part to help build what we called the Beloved Community, a nation and world society at peace with itself.

Ordinary people with extraordinary vision can redeem the soul of America by getting in what I call good trouble, necessary trouble. Voting and participating in the democratic process are key. The vote is the most powerful nonviolent change agent you have in a democratic society. You must use it because it is not guaranteed. You can lose it.

You must also study and learn the lessons of history because humanity has been involved in this soul-wrenching, existential struggle for a very long time. People on every continent have stood in your shoes, through decades and centuries before you. The truth does not change, and that is why the answers worked out long ago can help you find solutions to the challenges of our time. Continue to build union between movements stretching across the globe because we must put away our willingness to profit from the exploitation of others.

Though I may not be here with you, I urge you to answer the highest calling of your heart and stand up for what you truly believe. In my life I have done all I can to demonstrate that the way of peace, the way of love and nonviolence is the more excellent way. Now it is your turn to let freedom ring.

When historians pick up their pens to write the story of the 21st century, let them say that it was your generation who laid down the heavy burdens of hate at last and that peace finally triumphed over violence, aggression and war. So, I say to you, walk with the wind, brothers and sisters, and let the spirit of peace and the power of everlasting love be your guide.

**CIVIC AND/OR COMMUNITY SERVICE BY
SOUTH AUSTIN AARP CHAPTER 2426 VOLUNTEERS
PLEASE EMAIL THIS INFORMATION TO ED GONZALES
Edgonzales7@gmail.com. If you do not have email,**

mail to: Ed Gonzales, 710 Kinney Avenue, Austin, TX 78704

Note: You do not have to email the form. You may list the category and the hours for that category and the total number of hours.

Name _____ **Address** _____ **Phone** _____

Category	Hours	Category	Hours
AARP Annual Day of Service		Fundraising for Community Service	
AARP Driver Safety Program		Health & Wellness	
AARP Tax Aide		Long-term Care/Nursing Home Support	
Hunger		Independent Living/ In Home Care Giving/Home Repairs	
Advocacy/Legislation/Information/Referral Services		Independent Living: Transportation Services	
Education/Scholarships or other		All Other Volunteer Areas	
Subtotal		Subtotal	
Total Volunteer Hours			

South Austin Chapter 2426 Membership Renewal 2020

PLEASE PRINT

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ Date of Birth _____

E-Mail Address: **Please Print:** _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Dues are \$10.00 per individual. If you are 85 or older, you are not required to pay dues, but must submit the form.

Checks should be made payable to: South Austin AARP Chapter 2426. Mail this application and payment to :

South Austin AARP Chapter 2426 Bill Nicholson 12512 Gun Metal Drive Austin, TX 78739

Please check any committee(s) on which you are interested in serving .

_____ Program _____ Membership _____ Hospitality/Welcoming _____ Telephone

_____ Sunshine _____ Nominating _____ Legislative _____ Community Service

_____ Health Care _____ Public Relations _____ Travel _____ Ad Hoc