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AARP offers fun, food and more to members and guests



(from left) Gilchrist County AARP Chapter #2133 Treasurer Katherine LaBarca, Secretary Loretta Lyell, Vice President Debbie Destin and President Jimmie Sheffield tell guests and members about club matters.

Story, Photos and Video

By Jeff M. Hardison © May 18, 2017 at

OTTER SPRINGS -- Forty-four people found the perfect mix of fun, food and fellowship at Otter Springs Park and Campground on Tuesday (May 17) when Gilchrist County AARP Chapter #2133 conducted its monthly luncheon meeting.

While it was the best of times, there were a few times, too, when leaders and members mentioned the death of Meveree Carlisle Pope, 92, of Trenton. She lost her life in a traffic accident in Chiefland on May 10.

Pope was said to be “the backbone” of this chapter of the American Association of Retired Persons.



Marion Poitevint a member of this AARP Board of Directors, as well as being a member of the Gilchrist County Board of County Commissioners and a member of the Gilchrist County Chamber of Commerce, gives out slips as an AARP board member. These papers are to record volunteer service hours.

As of Tuesday, there were 71 paid members, one “gift” member, and six honorary members. There were seven honorary members before that fateful

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accident a week ago yesterday. Pope was an honorary member.

While some sorrow and mourning were part of that day with the passing of this great lady, the speaker of the month was a real day-brightener.

Luther Beauchamp, attorney, author and professional speaker shared some funny stories.

And as Public Relations Chairman Joseph Blich had promised, this meeting was well-worth attending – just as the 44 members and guests discovered.

Attendees received valuable information as to what is happening in the local area. They were invited to continue efforts as volunteers. Everyone enjoyed a great lunch, good fellowship, and several people won door prizes. And there was more.



Luther Beauchamp tells one of his many jokes.

LUTHER BEAUCHAMP

Luther Beauchamp is mostly retired as an attorney. When he was more active in practicing law, his focus was more on civil and family matters rather than criminal proceedings.

He may enjoy his time more now as a speaker.

Beauchamp has been spoken in more than 30 states, from Miami, Florida to Moses Lake, Washington, and from Santa Barbara, California, to Basin Harbor, Vermont.

In regard to his speaking engagement Tuesday, he founded it on the question “Can you take a joke?”

He shared with the audience that he knows he is relatively short in stature. Listeners learned, though, that he has a tall sense of humor. All of the jokes he shared did not reflect well on him, but he was able to laugh with everyone from the humorous points in those jokes.

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VIDEOS CAN BE SEEN FROM THE LINK ON THE MAY PAGE

In this video, Luther Beauchamp tells a joke about something leading to him taking a speech-improvement course in college at Florida State University, and one of the conversations he had with an instructor. To set the stage before this point, he told listeners about his many accomplishments in public speaking in high school, and now in orientation at college, he had read a paragraph as had some other freshmen. Three were called aside...

The speaker told the people that he always enjoys coming to the AARP chapter in Gilchrist County, and he feels like he has a lot of friends there.

His first funny story set the tone for the other stories. Beauchamp said he wanted people to think back to the early 1940s. His parents had two girls and a son at that time. The girls were 7 and 4 years old. And the little boy was 3 years old at the time, he said. His parents had ordered an ice-cream churn through the Montgomery Ward catalog, and they were awaiting its delivery.

His sister was at a friend's house one day. His sister's friend's mother said, "Guess what's new at your house; at your momma and daddy's house.

"She (his sister) said, 'An ice cream churn!'"

She started dancing all around and got excited, Beauchamp said.

"No," the friend's mother said. "It's a baby brother."

He continued his joke.

"That's the day I was born," he said. "I started out as a disappointment. My sister Frances is the quietest one of the five children. And we think she just never got over that trauma."

His next joke was set up by telling the group that he attended Sunday school and church as a child, and he still attends.

He spoke about a hymn for children that has as part of its lyrics "I've got the peace that passes understanding
Way down in the depths of my heart!"

"I thought they were saying 'I've got a piece of plastic understanding down in my heart'" he said.

The speaker went on to tell the people about his memorization of Bible verses.

Back when, there was a camp down in Gulf Hammock, he said. There was a young pastor there and he was meeting in a boys' group.

The pastor had spoken about Simon Peter who said "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," Beauchamp said as he spoke about the young pastor.

"And upon this rock, I will build my church," the pastor said, "and... And what?"

Beauchamp said he raised his hand because he knew the answer.

"... and the gates of hell shall prevail against it," Beauchamp said.

"He (the pastor) said 'That's almost right,' Beauchamp continued. "I left out the word 'not'; 'and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'"

As a child, Beauchamp said he had no idea what the word "prevail" meant. However, he has not forgotten that verse since then.

Among the many jokes he shared, Beauchamp told one from when his parents owned Beauchamp Hardware, near the corner of Park Avenue and U.S. Highway 19 in Chiefland.

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A man came in looking for a refrigerator light bulb.

On that day, Beauchamp was minding the front of the store, and he had his school friend Pat Hogan with him.

He said he was uncertain whether refrigerators had a special bulb other than a normal light bulb. He said the store had GE refrigerators.

“Is yours a GE?” Beauchamp asked the man.

“Yes sir, the man said. That’s right. General Motors,” Beauchamp said. “My friend was standing behind me. When the man said ‘General Motors,’ I bit down on my lip, and my friend said ‘Fella’ what you need is a headlight.”

One story captured the concept of understanding rather than just hearing.

Beauchamp was in church one day and his wife was playing clarinet in the choir. He had taken out a root beer barrel type of hard candy as the pastor spoke.

His nephew W.O. “Brett” Beauchamp III, who was one of the church ushers, approached Luther as he sat in the pew right next to the aisle. Brett said to Luther “They need one of them in the nursery.”

Luther Beauchamp went through a long description of how hard candy is not good for children as he spoke to his nephew.

“What?” Brett said. “They need one of them in the nursery.”

Luther went on to say how they already had bibles and hymnals in the nursery as he looked around to see what they needed.

“I said, ‘They need what?’ He said, ‘They need one of them – Tom or his wife,’” Luther Beauchamp said.

He explained that the one of the two parents of a child in the nursery was needed “... and I’m sitting there trying to protect my root beer barrel.”

He mentioned that communication is more than hearing.

“I heard pretty well that day,” he said. “A lot of times I don’t. In fact, I thought about writing a book about things I thought I heard. And with the need for cataract surgery now, I could probably write a sequel about all the things I thought I saw.”

Beauchamp shared several other funny stories with the members and guests at the AARP meeting.

He provided everyone with a very lighthearted morning on Tuesday.



Mary Madsen provides the club with a legislative update concerning matters that people may find of interest in regard to state legislation this year.

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AARP Club Chaplain Joseph Blich prepares to enjoy his lunch. Although he is among the various chairs of committees, Blich waited until almost the end of the line to pick up his lunch buffet style. The keynote speaker Luther Beauchamp and a visiting guest journalist were allowed to collect their lunches first.

CLUB NEWS

Gilchrist County AARP Chapter #2133 President Jimmie Sheffield, Vice President Debbie Destin, Treasurer Katherine LaBarca and Secretary Loretta Lyell led the club.

Directors of the club are Annette Derks, Juanita Langston and Marion Poitevint. Poitevint held the American flag as the people said the Pledge of Allegiance and sang God Bless America.

Kathryn Lancaster gave a report related to Alzheimer's Disease and dementia. She mentioned that every second Thursday of the month there is a meeting at 1:30 p.m. of a support group for caretakers of people with dementia.

That meeting is at the Edward Jones office in Chiefland. It is in the same shopping center area as The Print Shop of Chiefland, on the west side of U.S. Highway 19, a couple of blocks north of Park Avenue

Committee chairs of the following committees gave reports: Hospitality Chair Faye Sheffield; Program Chair Janice Rogers; Membership Chair Katherine LaBarca and Public Relations Chair Joseph Blich.

Chairman Blich reminded listeners to "come can in hand" next month to help the Food Bank.

President Jimmie Sheffield mentioned that AARP Chapter #2133 members put in 1,199 hours of community service as volunteers in April.

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This plant was among the many door prizes. As people's names were randomly drawn as winners, the winners would select from the various door prizes. This plant was accepted by a visiting journalist whose name was called as a winner. 'People who know me might understand why I chose this prize,' Publisher Jeff Hardison said. 'First it is among the living things that God has put on the planet. But, too, it is shiny with that aluminum. So, naturally, whatever else I was doing or thinking, it became 'Oh look. A shiny object!'

THE LUNCH

There was an amazingly delicious lunch of fried chicken, and members brought a long list of salads, side dishes and desserts that is too long to note.

Overall, it is safe to say a good time was had by all, again, at the monthly meeting of Gilchrist County AARP Chapter #2133.