



The

# Lodger

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NEWSLETTER FOR RESIDENTS AND FRIENDS OF THE LODGE AT OLD TRAIL

## Another Lodge Innovation

In this era of rapid change, even trash is being rethought. By viewing trash as a resource instead of a throwaway, commercial composters are popping up here and elsewhere to offer another way for disposing of food scraps. The Lodge recently embarked on its own effort by employing the services of a new Charlottesville area composter that collects food scraps from The Lodge kitchen on a twice weekly basis to make nutrient-rich soil.

"We are not only helping the environment," says The Lodge's Tess Marshall, "but we also hope for an economic advantage as well." Even though there is a cost to The Lodge for the composting service, solid waste disposal cost will be reduced by eliminating food from that waste stream.



Organized in 2011, Black Bear Composting provides The Lodge with compostable bags and wheeled carts in which all organic kitchen waste, including food stained paper and cardboard, is placed. The company combines the materials it collects in accord with company "recipes" and arranges them in long windrows at its farm in Augusta County for six-months of decomposition. The resulting compost is shared with its customers and sold to others as a soil amendment and mulch.

As with all recycling, composting is helping to extend the life of existing land fill sites and puts off the need for creating, often controversial, new ones.

### OT Village Update

At the first of periodic meetings for residents of Old Trail, David Brockman gave a well received update on the status of the community. Brockman was hired two years ago as an experienced development manager when Old Trail owners realized changes were needed to resuscitate the development hurt by the poor economy.

He said existing businesses are "busting at the seams," making expansion of business development on Old Trail Drive adjacent to the parking area a high priority. Several businesses have indicated strong interests, but are finding that investors are still leery of commercial financing. Although the timing is uncertain, the goal of commercial

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## RESIDENT FOCUS

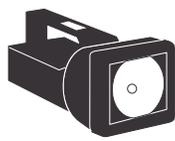
Many of us shudder at the thought of mathematics, but for Ron Herd it was his way of life. Ron was in high demand for his mastery of math which he could apply to solve unbelievable queries. He worked for a variety of operations research firms and in no time rose to the highest executive positions including the vice presidency of the internationally known consulting firm Booz Allen.

Ron, 93, relocated from Leesburg to The Lodge in April 2014 and lives in his Ridges third floor apartment overlooking the Blue Ridge Mountains. Because of a mini-stroke that affected his ability to speak, his engaging son, Milton, agreed to sit down with this reporter to review his father's past. "It must be incredibly frustrating for him," says Milt, "because his mind is sharp. But the words don't come easily,"

Ron is a native of Marshfield, Missouri, located in the south central part of the state, but was raised in southwest Kansas from the age of one. He received his undergraduate degree in economics at the University of Kansas. After being drafted, completing Officer Candidate School, and serving in combat during World War II, Ron enrolled at Iowa State University where he earned his PhD in mathematical statistics.



Although military service was not one of his favorite memories, his valiant service in the U.S. Army earned him both the Bronze Star and Purple Heart. **(Cont'd on back pg)**



# STAFFER SPOTLIGHT

A guaranteed ready smile and a cheerful greeting. You can count on that whenever meeting Janice Applebach (pronounced apple-back), the Ridges Life Enrichment Coordinator. "The perfect job for you," said a friend who saw the job announcement. At first, Janice wasn't sure, although she was beginning to feel bored at home after her 12 and 16 year-old daughters left in the morning for school.

But she succumbed to the job at her interview in August 2013 and then she came on like gangbusters. With daughters in tow, she had visited every local point of interest she could find and started compiling a list of prospective entertainers and speakers.

She can spend up to two hours a day returning calls and screening people who offer to make presentations: musicians, medical professionals, dancers, therapists and the list goes on.

Janice says that the most popular guests are the musicians. She has arranged for instrumentalists, singers, choruses, sing-alongs, and classical pianists. Hymn singing augers some mild dissatisfaction, but the municipal band concerts in Charlottesville have been a hit as well as have

outings to area restaurants.

Other recent activities include a talk on stroke awareness and the formation of a book club.

Janice finds the time to publish monthly activity calendars, flyers, and weekly updates announcing dozens of upcoming events.

She is planning with others Scottish Day when the winning team "walking" to Scotland will be announced. Team

members equipped with pedometers calibrated in miles are counting their steps in a race to be first. "I am in real trouble," says Janice, "when someone's pedometer is not working."

Other events in the planning stage include Frank Sinatra Day and a day to celebrate the tradition of USOs that entertained troops away from home. Janice is also hoping to continue "resident focus," an event when a resident makes a presentation on a hobby or experience.

Her friend was right. Despite her training in social work and accounting, Janice is eagerly pursuing her new cause to promote socialization and a sense of community among Lodge residents. An added bonus: she lives with her husband and children in Old Trail Village, just a short walk to The Lodge.



## This and That



**EVEN IF YOU DON'T LIKE GAMES**, you might get hooked on Backgammon. A two-player board game of chance, Backgammon is a centuries old game dating back to 3000 BC! The Lodge has three Backgammon tables and volunteer John Rockett (whose parents live in Piedmont) is eager to teach anyone how to play. Call Piedmont Life Enrichment Coordinator Laura at 3203 to arrange meeting with John.

McTague (former Ridges resident Mike Orend's son-in-law), a dye that benefits fish and suppresses weed growth by shading the underwater was added to two ponds. Familiar with use of the non-toxic dye in the pond on his property, Jeff likens it to the coloring agent used in beer on St. Patrick's Day. Unless washed away by a gully washer rain, the dye can last as long as three months.

**THE LODGE SURROUNDINGS** are a virtual wildlife menagerie with the following species having been spotted. Perhaps you can add to the list. Frogs are so far unidentified.

American crow  
American goldfinch  
Canada goose  
Cardinal  
Carolina wren  
Great blue heron  
Ground hog  
Mourning dove

Northern mockingbird  
Red fox  
Red-tailed hawk  
Red-winged blackbird  
Turkey vulture  
White sulphur butterfly  
White-tailed deer  
Yellow swallowtail butterfly

### The Lodger

Issued every other month for residents and friends of The Lodge at Old Trail.

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Ideas for publication are welcome by contacting Sue, Gae, Fred, or Jim.

**YOUR EYES WERE NOT FOOLING** when water in the retaining ponds turned blue. Thanks to volunteer Jeff

# Blue Ridge Tunnel: Historic Landmark Grows in Stature

Cynics remark that it took longer to get restoration of the nearly mile-long Blue Ridge Tunnel started than it took to build the whole 150 year-old tunnel by hand! True, a bike trail through the abandoned tunnel has been talked about for 10 years and the tunnel was built in eight. That talk has finally resulted in action. Grant money is in hand and construction of the first phase is imminent. Its completion will allow public access to this historic landmark for the first time. That is great news for hikers and bikers and is equally as exciting for historians, educators, would-be geologists, and just-plain tourists. The tunnel represents a treasure trove for all.

Just nine miles from The Lodge, the Blue Ridge Tunnel is both a civil engineering marvel and historic artifact. Built in the 1850s, it was used for 86 years by steam-engine trains hauling passengers and freight through Crozet and across the Blue Ridge Mountains at Rockfish Gap. The tunnel was closed and replaced in 1944 by a parallel tunnel built for larger rail cars that still remains in operation. The original tunnel was donated to Nelson County in 2006 by the CSX Corporation, the last of four different railroads that owned the track and tunnel. Nelson County has been in the forefront to transform the abandoned tunnel into a tourism and recreation bonanza, with Albemarle and Augusta Counties hoping for some dividends and providing moral support.

The Blue Ridge Tunnel is heralded as a major accomplishment of Colonel Claudius Crozet who was the first to envision a railroad linking Virginia's Piedmont with the Shenandoah Valley. He picked Rockfish Gap for crossing the mountain barrier and designed and supervised its construction as well as that of three shorter tunnels



East portal of original tunnel.

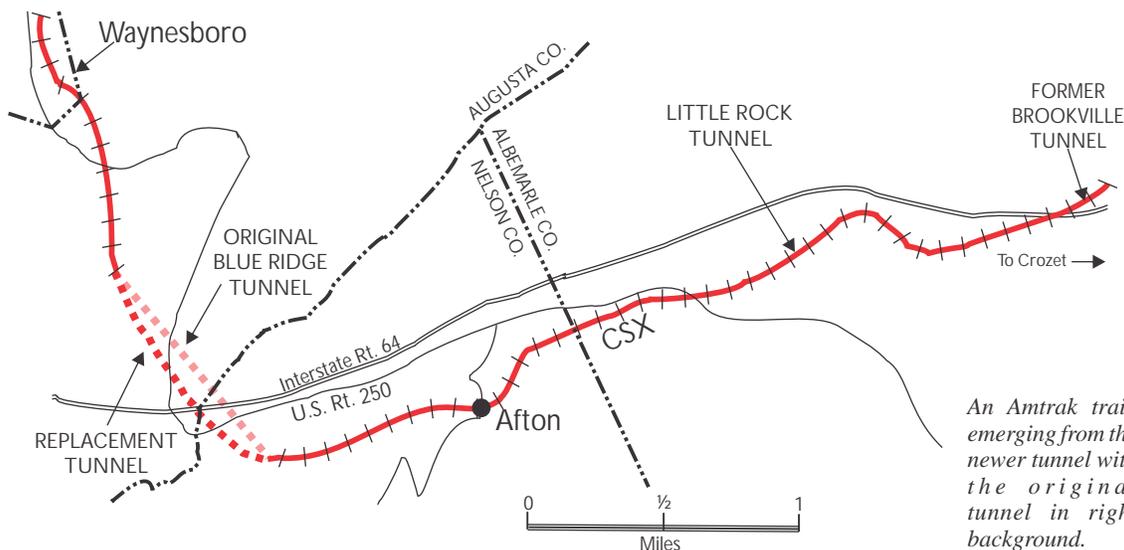
the mountainous route required. The 100 foot long Little Rock Tunnel is the only one of the four that remains in use.

A former French military officer, Crozet was a founder of the Virginia Military Institute and its first president before engineering the mountain crossing. The small village we know as Crozet was renamed from Waylands Crossing in 1870 in honor of the talented Frenchman who died in 1864. The new name was chosen by an official of the C&O Railroad, predecessor of CSX, in time to be emblazoned on Crozet's first railroad depot.

Claudius Crozet is also remembered for steering workers from both ends of the 4,273 foot long Blue Ridge Tunnel to meet at the mid-point within just six inches of each other. The ingenious Crozet devised a siphon to rid the excavation of water and horse-powered pumps to exhaust smoke and supply fresh air for the laborers.

The arduous labors of the workers, however, are what made this project possible. Over 1,000 Irish immigrants and an estimated

Cont'd on back page



An Amtrak train emerging from the newer tunnel with the original tunnel in right background.

## Resident Focus (cont'd from front page)

A serious student, Ron nevertheless found time at Iowa State to meet and marry his girlfriend Jean in 1947 while working on his degree. Prior to her marriage, Jean served as a nurse during World War II. She died ten years ago after 56 years of togetherness.



*Jean Herd at her nursing graduation, 1943.*

It is difficult for a non-mathematical mind to comprehend the complexities of the problems that Ron yearned to tackle or his ability to solve them despite the unique challenges. In his consulting career, he directed many systems analysis efforts on a variety of technical and research contracts, including designing mathematical models for war gaming for U. S. Army operations, assessing the risk in manned lunar landings, and evaluating sampling plans for the Salk polio vaccine. He was the first

to apply reliability analysis techniques to automobiles for General Motors, manned space vehicles and satellites for NASA, and copying machines for Xerox.

He retired from the consulting firm he founded, Applied Sciences Group, Inc., in 1990 whereupon he and Jean moved to Gloucester to what they considered their retirement paradise. They did extensive traveling all over the United States and to Europe.

But his new found joy was the pursuit of his and Jean's family history. His interest was so intensive that they would drop everything to travel to distant courthouses and cemeteries for additions to the family genealogies. He eventually published several books that reached back as far as the 1600s and the middle ages! Compilation of the histories was slow and laborious since much of it preceded the on-line research that is prevalent today.

After Jean's death, Ron moved back to northern Virginia.

The Herd's son and daughter apparently did not inherit the mathematical interests of their father, but they are both involved in technical occupations. Their daughter Diane works on site plans for a surveying firm in the state of Maine. She and her husband are proud parents of a boy and girl.

Ron's son Milton is president of his consulting firm Herd Planning and Design, Ltd. His background is in architecture and, as a certified planner, he provides city planning services to local governments from his Leesburg location. He and his wife reside in Leesburg.

Milt points out the difference between his work as a planner and his father's work as a mathematician. "People can take potshots at what I do," he says, "because forecasting the effects of planning is largely a guessing game. My father's work, requiring precision and accuracy, was protected from easy criticism. There was no room for guess work!"



*2nd Lt Ron Herd at his OCS graduation, 1943.*

## OT Village Update (cont'd from front page)

development on both sides of Old Trail Drive is to create a Main Street feeling.

To help pinpoint sections of Old Trail Village, Brockman said the community has been sectioned into neighborhoods: West Village for the area west of Village Center, East Village for east of Village Center, and Village Highlands for the area south of Village Center. Signs with names and logos for each neighborhood will soon be displayed.

Brockman is appealing to the county for a reduction in density from the current 1,600 to 1,200 homes, a change that will help permit the park space that is planned for each neighborhood. Ultimate build-out at the lower density is expected to take up to 10 years.

"We talked about what we don't want," said Brockman, "so what do we want?" He was referring to the brewery that was reported as a potential business on Route 250 and that aroused opposition. He is soliciting development ideas to substitute for the currently designated single family homes at this location, a use that Brockman feels is inappropriate so close to Route 250.

Blue Ridge Tunnel (cont'd from page 3)

100 black slaves cut through rock harder than granite, drilling with hand tools, blasting with black powder, and advancing an average of little more than 26 feet per month.

After sitting idle for almost a decade, the tunnel was proposed in the 1950s as a propane storage facility. The grandiose scheme was abandoned before it was finished, but by then two gigantic 14-foot-thick concrete plugs had been constructed in the tunnel.

Removal of the plugs is part of the trail project, but that will not happen right away. The first phase only goes as far as the tunnel portal on the Afton end. It includes construction of trailhead parking spaces, a three-quarter mile trail on the old track bed to the tunnel portal, and signage. A safety fence will separate the trail from the adjacent active railroad track used by freight trains and Amtrak.

The remaining phases of construction will complete the tunnel restoration work and establish a trailhead on the Waynesboro end at an additional cost, as yet unfunded, of over one million dollars. A connection to the Appalachian Trail, access for travelers on the Blue Ridge Parkway, and a visitor center are ideas being thought of as possible future additions.

Private proponents of the tunnel restoration include the Claudius Crozet Blue Ridge Tunnel Foundation ([blueridgetunnel.org](http://blueridgetunnel.org)) and Clann Mhor ([clannmhor.org](http://clannmhor.org)). Local author Mary E. Lyons published Irish-worker stories and other tunnel lore in her new book entitled *The Blue Ridge Tunnel*.

Given the fascination that this historical artifact generates, the Blue Ridge Tunnel is on its way to become a top visitor attraction.