



The

# Lodger

October/  
November  
2014  
Issue 8

NEWSLETTER FOR RESIDENTS AND FRIENDS OF THE LODGE AT OLD TRAIL



## Furry Tales



*Although four-legged family members are bona-fide residents of The Lodge, many are seldom seen or heard. Beginning with this Furry Tale, we will introduce you to others of these interesting occupants.*

This October is like every other month to Daisy, but to resident Mary Trogdon it marks Daisy's 18th birthday and a loving relationship lasting nearly that long. Daisy is Mary's Pomeranian dog who has lived with her since infancy when she was able to hold her new puppy in the palm of her hands.

Daisy is showing signs of age now (she has lost her hearing and her teeth), but she is of firm foot, "feels right-at-home" in The Lodge, and remains her extrovertish self.

Thinking of their happy times together, Mary recalls how Daisy would come running into the living room to bark along with the *Think* theme music on the *Jeopardy* TV show, an antic she and her deceased husband never tired of.

While *Jeopardy* was in, dog food was out. Mary says she spent a fortune on every kind sold, only to have it all refused. So Daisy has been fed people food during her 18 years.

And the licking of her master's and mistress's feet under the covers had to stop, so Daisy was soon relegated to Mary's baby doll crib which has been her private bed all these years.

Daisy travels every year to California by airplane with Mary for a family visit. "She doesn't require any medicine and travels in her pet carrier at my feet without a peep," says Daisy's proud companion.

We wish Daisy a very happy birthday. Chicken cordon bleu for birthday dinner, Jesse?



## OLD TRAIL VILLAGE UPDATE

Soon Old Trail Drive will be a straight shot from The Lodge garage. Construction of Ashlar Avenue from Claremont to the roundabout will start any day now. • Watch for big food and drink changes at Trailside Coffee. The shop is now managed by the owners of two popular restaurants at UVA Corner and downtown Charlottesville. • The price of homes in the Village climbed to a median of a half million dollars in 2014. • Village managers are aware of the critical need for a local pet grooming business.

## RESIDENT FOCUS

The twin children of Russell and Virginia Isner were privy to the freshest baked goods in Elkins, West Virginia. Their dad and grandfather were co-owners of West Virginia's biggest house-to-house bakery. For over 20 years, the bakery was an Elkins institution that expanded into Morgantown. But like the dial telephone, house-to-house bakery sales became obsolete and the Isners closed the bakery in 1970. That did not slow down Russ and Ginny. With the twins sprung from the nest, the Isners packed up their belongings to move to Morgantown where Russ started another business and Ginny went back to work.

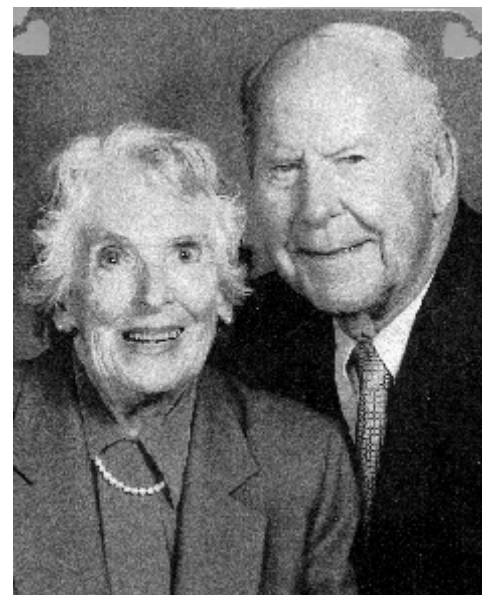
His father's influence got Russ interested in baking. After serving in the U.S. Navy in Norfolk where Russ Jr. was born, Russ Sr. became a top official for the A&P grocery chain in charge of company bakeries. Ginny is an Elkins native whose father was a well known local business man. She and her sister spent much of their childhood riding horses, much to the envy of other kids, says Ginny.

The couple did not meet until after Ginny had graduated from Davis & Elkins College, a 100-year-old school in Elkins associated with the Presbyterian Church, and Russ had spent two years at Dartmouth College and four years in the U.S. Navy.

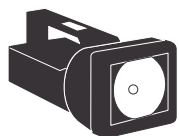
With the outbreak of World War II in his sophomore year at Dartmouth, Russ and a number of other students left school to enlist in the U.S. Navy. After completing flight school in Jacksonville, Florida, his squadron was assigned to the flagship USS *Bunker Hill*, where landings required utmost precision to catch the arresting hook and avoid going out of control.

His combat missions included the first carrier raid on Japan and sinking destroyers, cruisers, and the super battleship *Yamato*. USS *Bunker Hill* was close to sinking after being hit by two kamikaze attack planes just before the close of the war. "A very sad day," said Russ, "when 700 crew members were buried."

Cont'd on back pg.



Ginny and Russ, 2011.



# STAFFER SPOTLIGHT

Debora Hoard has helped most of us transition from our former living environment to living at The Lodge. Now it is her turn to transition. Beginning October 1, Debora becomes the Ridges Life Enrichment Coordinator. She prefers being considered a residents service coordinator. She still expects residents to call her for small and large issues because they all know her and she knows who to contact when help is needed. But her main task is to plan and arrange social and educational activity choices for Ridges residents.

A fixture at The Lodge since March 2012, Debora has performed the role of Move-In Coordinator for more than two years. With The Lodge occupancy rate nearing 80 percent, the work load is lessening, reducing the need for one staff member assigned to only move-in coordination and allowing time for her to take on other duties. This was the first start-up business she worked for. "It's the kind of job I like because you get to do everything."

Many events are established and on-going, but Debora has others in mind. She is considering more day trips to take

advantage of the nearby historic sites of four U.S. presidents and perhaps sharing activities with the Senior Center. One danger of the job, says Debora, is to let her interests dictate. That is why she plans consulting with residents through meetings and other contacts to better determine where interests lie.

A graduate of Brown University, Debora learned, but no longer speaks, three other languages and was an exchange student in Finland and young mother in England. She is an avid reader of e-book and print fiction, likes to cook, and bicycles around Greenwood where she and her husband reside. The Youth Group Leader at her church, Debora also serves on the church's ministerial search committee. She stays connected with her three daughters, two who work in Wisconsin and Washington, D.C. and one at college in Pennsylvania.

Do not try keeping pace with Debora. You cannot. Also quick witted, she is positively the speediest walker, or is it sprinter, at The Lodge. One way of keeping up, we suppose, with "doing everything."



## This and That

**CANCELLATION OF THE PROPOSED HOTEL** next to The Lodge was both frustrating and sad for developer David Hilliard; frustrating because extensive time and investment produced nothing but plans on paper and sad because he and his partners felt they let the community down. Not yet completely recovered from the disappointment, Hilliard says he will be thinking about what can be done with the vacant space. He says it could be something interim or more permanent. New lawn, walking trails, or dog park are possibilities, or, perhaps, a hotel.

**IN THE DARK OF NIGHT** on August 20, the weather pulled off an extravaganza. An unexpected cloudburst of rain poured down on The Lodge at about 9 p.m. In less than two hours, a total of 1.6 inches of rain fell. During the event, the highest rate of rainfall was recorded at an extraordinary 4.11 inches per hour. Anybody caught in the downpour will likely not forget it.

personalizing the plates. The extra revenue goes toward transportation construction and maintenance. Some messages are "blue listed" by state authorities. ILVTOFU, stated by applicants to read "I love tofu," has been banned, for example, because of possible misreading as "I love to F. U." Here are some clean ones by Lodge residents.



**DID YOU KNOW** that over one million of Virginia's eight million registered vehicles carry personalized license plates? The letters and numbers on vanity plates are chosen by the car owner who pays more for

### The Lodger

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

Jim Clark, editor

Advisory Committee

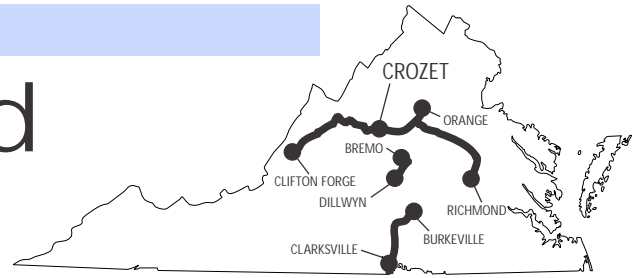
Sue Clark

Fred Lach

Gae Lach

See color edition at [lodgeatoldtrail](http://lodgeatoldtrail.com) about the lodge news & press releases

# The Little Railroad That Could



**The radical shift in railroad management is exemplified by what happened on the railroad through Crozet. Owned by the largest railroad in the eastern United States, the line is operated by a much smaller “short line” railroad. A single track and the occasional whistle (“horn” in RR lingo) of a diesel locomotive are all most of us know about what is called the Buckingham Branch Railroad, but there is much that can be told about what goes on behind the scene.**

The history of this rail line is a story in itself. Suffice it to say that this single track has provided train service across the Blue Ridge Mountains for over 150 years, made possible by tunnels built at the summit to flatten the incline for hill limited trains (see Blue Ridge Tunnel, July 2014 *The Lodger*). CSX Transportation (CSXT) acquired ownership of the rail line through a merger in 1986 with the Chessie System, successor to long-time owner Chesapeake and Ohio.

Then CSXT relinquished its operating responsibilities in 2004, in a move that reflects the changing railroad landscape, when it entered a lease agreement with what some might say a “Toonerville Trolley.” While the lessee began as a mom and pop operation, it has proved to be a respectable railroad operator.

CSXT did what the biggest railroads were doing; abandoning rail lines that were deemed unprofitable. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, mileage of the nation’s major track system shrank by about half in the period from 1960 to 2000!

When 53-year old Bob Bryant retired from a career with CSXT in 1988, he bought the soon-to-be-retired 17-mile Buckingham Branch after convincing a major customer, a local banker, and CSXT that he could not only run trains on it but make it profitable. With just two employees and a used locomotive, Bryant started running trains for customers that CSXT had found unprofitable to serve. Swallowing his pride, he accepted state grant fund matches to help rebuild badly neglected track, establishing a beneficial relationship he has maintained with the state of Virginia.

By 2004, Bryant had a staff of 13 employees, including his CEO son Mark and his wife Annie who learned railroad financial management from scratch. His daughter Lois serves on the board of directors. The little railroad was succeeding, growing customers and

replacing worn-out infrastructure.

Some 15 years after Buckingham was established, CSXT was planning to lease out its rail line through Crozet. The line was no longer a company core holding, but complete abandonment was not in the cards. The switching of cars and associated labor costs to serve individual customers were considered money losers. CSXT still needed the line, albeit to haul empty westbound cars. Loaded eastbound cars are routed over a flatter grade rail line that does not have the capacity for returning the westbound empties.

Given the record of Bryant’s achievements on his 17-mile railroad, it was no small wonder that in 2004 his railroad won the competition to lease the 200-mile line running between Richmond and Clifton



*A Buckingham Branch freight train en route from Staunton to Charlottesville near Crozet.*

DIVISIONS (miles)	
Buckingham	
Dillwyn to BreMO	17.3
Richmond & Allegheny	
Richmond to Clifton Forge	200
Virginia Southern	
Burkeville to NC state line	58

Forge. To meet his new challenge, Bryant quadrupled his staff and bought more locomotives. He calls it the Richmond and Allegheny Division.

Those empty cars were significant. Bryant negotiated to credit that traffic to Buckingham. The empty car traffic and six weekly Amtrak trains would pay “trackage right” fees which would add significantly to the line’s revenue stream.

Buckingham’s attention to customer service and business development is paying off. The railroad is providing daily service when needed to customers who were seeing CSXT trains only once or twice a week. Between 2004 and 2009, train traffic had doubled and customers were on the increase.

The Bryants continue to consider expansions by including other lines that face abandonment. In 2009, Buckingham took over an expired lease with Norfolk Southern to operate a 58-mile line called the Virginia Southern Division between Burkeville and the North Carolina border.

To the delight of rail fans, Buckingham partners with the Old Dominion Chapter of the National Railway Historic Society in offering seasonal excursion rides in vintage passenger cars from its headquarters in Dillwyn on its maiden rail line. In December, rides on “Santa Trains” are offered through this partnership.

Besides keeping up with track and signal maintenance and controlling vegetation growth, what else does the future hold? The Greenbrier Presidential Express looked like another trackage-right possibility, but the first class weekly between Washington, D.C. and the Greenbrier Resort has faded from reality because of traffic conflicts on the single track. Without sidings long enough to park CSXT trains so the Express could pass, scheduled trains would suffer unacceptably long delays.

**Cont’d on back page**

## Resident Focus (from front pg.)

Russ's heroism earned him three Distinguished Flying Crosses, three Air Medals, and three Bronze Stars.

Ginny and Russ crossed paths after his discharge when Russ decided to live with his grandparents in Elkins. She was working in the business office at Davis & Elkins College when Russ matriculated there to finish his college education. They were married in 1946 and will celebrate their 68th wedding anniversary in October.



*Russ piloted the F4U Corsair on many combat missions during World War II.*



*The newlyweds in 1946*

Russ and his father founded Dutch Oven Bakery with more hope than assurance. After building the bakery, they sent three trucks and drivers to make house calls, carrying a large basket of bread, cakes, and pastries to front doors. The service was a hit. At its peak, the business had 125 trucks and three bakeries. But after 20 years, Russ says there were forces working against house-to-house marketing. "Houses would empty during the day and buying habits were changing because of growing two car families and supermarkets," says Russ. They closed the business and sold the properties in 1970.

In partnership with one of his former employees, Russ continued his love for cooking and baking by opening the Coffee Shoppe Restaurant in Morgantown. Breakfast, lunch, and pizzas were the bill of fare. Ginny went back to work at the graduate school of West Virginia University where she certified their students to graduate. They both retired in 1968 and returned to Ginny's family home in Elkins.

The family celebrated Russ's 90th birthday in 2011 at famed Canaan Valley. He was presented with an album stuffed with well wishes from such dignitaries as former President George H. W. Bush, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus, and golfer Arnold Palmer and many friends and admirers.

The Isners devoted much of their time to volunteer activities with their church and Russ with the Masons, of which he is a 60 year member. They are both accomplished golfers; Russ has made three holes-in-one, and Ginny has one to her credit. They often spent winters at Myrtle Beach and in Florida, where they were close to golf courses.

The winter of 2012 in Elkins was an eye opener. Their daughter informed them that "enough is enough." Twelve inches of snow, no electricity, rescue by the fire department, and two nights in a fire hall convinced them that it was time to move. The Lodge became their newest residence in August 2013.

Their daughter lives in Charlottesville and their son lives in northern Virginia. The Isner clan has grown to include three grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

Russ and Ginny say their physical conditions don't do justice to the game of golf anymore, but they still enjoy the game via a huge TV screen in the living room.

If you have not met the Isners, you don't know what you are missing. Their warmth, friendship, and sense of humor are hard to beat.



*A sports enthusiast, Russ played freshman basketball and varsity football while at Dartmouth College.*

## Buckingham (cont'd from page 3)

Plans for the \$15 million venture have been scrapped.

Increasing Amtrak service from three days a week to daily service faces the same predicament. Bryant wants to see the longer sidings and increased passenger service. It's just that he doesn't think Buckingham can or should pay for the sidings.

In the meantime, growing business on the lines they operate is a priority.

More than 200 Buckingham trains operate yearly on the line through Crozet carrying plastic pellets, wood, coal, newsprint, fertilizer, feeds, and cement.

CSXT operates trains through Crozet on an as needed basis hauling empty westbound coal and grain cars from Richmond and beyond to Clifton Forge and farther.

On Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, Amtrak eastbound and westbound *Cardinals* pass through Crozet on the way between New York and Chicago, one of just a few Amtrak trains that uses a short-line railroad. Passengers can board and alight from these Amtrak trains at railroad stations in Charlottesville and Staunton.

To put it mildly, the Buckingham Branch Railroad is an amazing success story. The enduring work of one family grew a 17-mile learning experience with two employees into a 275-mile full-fledged railroad, employing about 100 workers with over 4,000 trains operating on its tracks yearly. The big little railroad is marking its success this year with a 25th anniversary celebration in Dillwyn attended by employees, customers, and public officials.

As reported by *Trains* magazine, Bob Bryant's daughter Lois was heard to say, "Dad and Mom founded it [Buckingham Branch] on honesty, integrity, and character . . . Good people have come to work for them through the years. Good values and good people make this railroad what it is. What a great model for our culture and the community."



*CEO Mark Bryant (standing) and Bob Bryant, Buckingham Branch founder and Board Chairman.*

## FROM RESIDENT DON GOLDSTEIN

Jacob, 92, and Rebecca, 89, are all excited about their decision to get married. They go for a stroll to discuss the wedding and on the way they pass a drugstore. Jacob suggests they go in. Jacob: "Are you the owner?" The pharmacist answers, "Yes." Jacob: "Do you sell heart medication?" Pharmacist: "Of course." Jacob: "Medicine for circulation?" Pharmacist: "All kinds." Jacob: "Medicine for rheumatism?" Pharmacist: "Definitely." Jacob: "How about suppositories?" Pharmacist: "You bet." Jacob: "Medicine for arthritis and Alzheimer's?" Pharmacist: "Yes a large variety. The works." Jacob: "What about sleeping pills, Geritol?" Pharmacist: "Absolutely." Jacob: "Everything for heartburn and indigestion?" Pharmacist: "We sure do." Jacob: "You sell wheelchairs and walkers and canes?" Pharmacist: "All speeds and sizes." Jacob: "Adult diapers?" Pharmacist: "Sure." Jacob: "We'd like to use this store as our Bridal Registry."