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NEWSLETTER FOR RESIDENTS AND FRIENDS OF THE LODGE AT OLD TRAIL



Furry Tales



The namesake of the fictional dog that was the star in the 1970s box office hit, Benji is instantly recognized by Lodge residents as Betty Johnson's agile, pure white companion dog. A friend to all, Benji is a six-year-old male Bichon Frise which in French means curly lap dog. They are known to have a merry disposition and high intelligence and are thought to have been favorite companion dogs of ocean-going seamen in the 14th century.



Betty's earlier experience with a dog was not to be repeated. Jacque was a Standard Poodle, a beautiful dog says Betty, but unknown to her, they are hunters. Jacque would stand at her window, looking for any animal that moved, insist on seeking them outside, and then yank on his leash in mad pursuit down the street. After

one month of this athleticism, Betty parted company with Jacque.

And then a listing by SPCA caught her eye. Upon meeting Benji for the first time, the bond with Betty and her husband Charlie was immediate. In fact, the bonding was so evident that SPCA dispensed with the normal week-long wait period to allow Benji to accompany the Johnson's right away to their home in Waynesboro before moving to the Lodge. Surprisingly, Benji was considered too much trouble by the family who turned him in to the SPCA for adoption.

Lodge residents will remember how Benji would hop from the floor with a perfect landing into Charlie's lap while sitting in his motored wheelchair. Charlie has since moved to an intensive care facility in Charlottesville where Benji is often seen as a visitor. He continues his acrobatic leaps, but more often into Betty's lap instead.

True to the Bichon obedience trait, Benji marches to his crate whenever Betty departs without him from her apartment and he often looks at her in the evening as if to say "isn't it time for bed" as he awaits a signal to retire to his crate.

Thanks to Benji, Betty is assured of her daily exercise; they go for walks at least four times a day.

RESIDENT FOCUS

If you think that Dick Carpenter looks like an artist when dressed with his Scotch plaid cap, you would be right. Dick is a talented 89-year old who uses drawing chalk and paper to create unusually fine artwork of things he sees in real life or conjures. Using a medium that was also favored by Michelangelo and Picasso, Dick has found many eager buyers of his originals and has developed, with the cooperation of a printer that he befriended, a way of producing highly accurate reproductions. His doorway and apartment at The Lodge are adorned by some of his originals and reproductions. Dick moved to The Lodge in 2014 and resides in Seasons Memory Care.

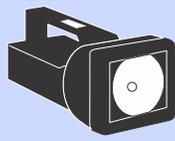
Drawing is Dick's hobby. "It's a great hobby for anyone recovering from illness or injury," he says. Family members remember him attributing his drawing skills to early training he received at an art school as a child in Kansas City, Missouri and encouragement from his mother.

A native of Kansas City, Dick's father was treasurer of one of Kansas City's iconic businesses, the Kansas City Life Insurance Company established in 1895. But Dick's part-time job at the pharmaceutical company where his aunt worked influenced him to prepare for a career in chemistry. With undergraduate and graduate degrees in chemistry from the University of Missouri, he joined Kansas City's Midwest Research Institute in 1951 to start a career as a chemist.

Dick discovered and patented a process for manufacturing liquid fuels with exceptionally high energy-to-weight ratio. The invention led to a contract with Callery Chemical Company in Washington, D.C. Dick worked for Callery until 1964, when he became a senior researcher and then Chief of the Environmental Policy Division of the Library of Congress. There he served



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STAFFER SPOTLIGHT

We watched Matthew “Matt” Schropp as he prepared food for the residents who came to the third floor dining room for lunch. His hands darted about, methodically pulling ingredients from a number of containers as he created multiple Taco salads and catfish sandwiches. The plates were whisked away by the servers as Matt grabbed a stack of warm dishes for more lunch orders recorded by the servers on paper slips hanging on a rack over his head. Nearby stood the insulated cart brought from the first floor kitchen with the hot and cold lunch ingredients prepared by another crew. All the while, the rapid movements of the workers went without a hitch, silent cues indicating what was to be done next. Teamwork was evident and that is what Matt believes is essential for a quality food operation.

Matt was hired as Executive Chef in December, 2015. He comes to The Lodge with a passion for the food industry, and also a deep desire to assure meal satisfaction for those who no longer cook for themselves. His attraction to The Lodge comes in part from memories of a relative dissatisfied over the food she was served at a nursing home and her begging for the meals she was used to at home. He thinks some of his passion for the industry may be inherited; his grandparents owned and operated a restaurant in Pennsylvania.

Raised in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, Matt worked at a restaurant as a dishwasher upon graduation from high school. Promoted to the restaurant’s catering manager, he wanted to know more about culinary arts. As a result, he graduated from Indiana University of Pennsylvania with associate degrees in culinary arts and baking and pastry arts and a bachelors degree in hospitality management. He is planning to enroll in

an on-line course in employment labor relations that leads to a masters degree.

An internship at Farmington Country Club provided Matt with the opportunity to understudy several outstanding chefs. At the time, Farmington was the sixth top rated Platinum Club of America in recognition of excellence in the industry. Success in a rigorous cooking exam qualified him for a stint at the private Everglades Club in Palm Beach, Florida, working for one of the few master chefs in the world. In visits to Italy and Switzerland, he learned the art of making Italian bread and Swiss chocolates and cheeses.



On his own time, Matt works with sugar—but not for eating. He creates art works that consist entirely of sugar and sugar derivatives and can be used as center pieces at banquets, exhibitions, or weddings. The fragile sculptures are created by pouring or blowing (with a pump) the hot mixture into shapes like a glass blower does, adding colors to form a sculpture that resembles glass. When not sculpting, Matt spends time with his two Dalmatian coonhounds and a hedgehog.

His personal agenda includes an important new priority—his own wedding. His fiancée, Ciara, accepted his proposal on Christmas Day. She is the Sous Chef at the UVA Medical Center.

This and That

The Lodger
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of The Lodge at Old Trail.

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THE LODGE COUNTRY STORE is getting wheels! The store’s most favored items are going mobile on a peddler’s cart being made especially for The Lodge. In the

lobby and on the upper floors, the Country Store will be more accessible than ever. Location and hours will depend on available volunteers. So, think about becoming a volunteer peddler! Premier opening is hoped for in April. See Debora for details.

HE COULD WAIT NO LONGER. Not knowing

when Old Trail developers would landscape the area behind the Lodge, owner David Hilliard sought and received the OK to erect a board fence and to replace the temporary plastic construction fencing at his own expense. The attractive curvilinear fence gets a coat of paint next. Nice job, David!



Mountain Alert Upgrade Coming this Spring

Stunning scenic views of Rockfish Valley unfold as one travels west through Rockfish Gap on Interstate Route 64, preluding the panoramic view of the picturesque Shenandoah Valley seen on the descent toward Waynesboro. Motorists heading east in the opposite direction get the option of stopping at either one of two spectacular pull-offs overlooking the pastoral scenery. But traveling over the mountain can be dreadful, too. We were reminded of this by the chain-reaction accident on Thanksgiving weekend when daytime fog reduced visibility to near zero. Traffic was backed up for nearly 13 miles.



The Virginia Department of Transportation is very much aware of the travel hazards that can be caused by changing weather conditions. In fact, VDOT is currently concluding a five million dollar upgrade of the driver alert system first installed 40 years ago in hopes of further alleviating the frequency and severity of traffic accidents that occur during foul weather on the mountain.

Rockfish Gap, frequently referred to as Afton Mountain, is a natural location for crossing the Blue Ridge. A depression of some one thousand feet below the higher peaks of the mountain range, Rockfish Gap is the site of two major highways, a railroad, and entrances to Skyline Drive and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

The gap is also where fog often gets socked in by low-lying clouds. Even the I-64 dedication ceremony in 1972 was greeted by foggy conditions, and several days later the highway was the scene of the first fog-related accident. Fog-related accidents typically involve more vehicles and injuries than do other traffic accidents. Local old-timers can remember walking alongside their vehicles to guide them through the fog on Route 250 before the Interstate road was built.

Four years after the Interstate was completed, pavement fog lights were installed on a six-mile stretch from mile marker 98 in Augusta County to marker 104 in Albemarle, and illuminated message signs at approaches to the mountain, warning drivers of foggy conditions. The signs and lights were controlled from a building at the summit where observers could visually monitor the weather conditions.

A further enhancement in 1996 brightened the 800 lights along the edges of the roadway to help drivers avoid veering off the road. At the same time, visibility sensors were installed that enabled personnel at a new traffic operations center in Staunton to remotely monitor mountain weather conditions and to turn the new lights on when visibility got low.

In a 2009 upgrade, the original incandescent fog lights were replaced with longer-lasting LED lamps that were 75 percent more energy efficient. The light fixtures are the same ones used on airport runways.

The most recent upgrade is nearly complete and is expected to become fully operational in the spring. It includes larger new “dynamic message signs” at three locations on I-64 and at the Afton interchange with US 250 at the top of the mountain. **(Cont'd next page)**

WE HOPE WE WON'T NEED THEM, but what a comfort to know the VDOT Safety Service Patrol stands ready to assist motorists in need. Uniformed drivers in specially equipped vehicles roam I-64 between I-81 and Charlottesville to provide first aid and emergency services like jump starts, fuel, and tire change help. Patrollers are also equipped to control traffic in case of accidents, disabled vehicles, or road blockages. The service is free and current schedules are from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Patrollers can be summoned by dialing #77.



Resident Focus (cont'd)

as a key interpreter of scientific information for the drafting of the National Environmental Policy Act, often referred to as the nation's environmental Magna Carta. He later became the first executive director of the Commission on Natural Resources at the National Academy of Sciences.

Tired of the pressure of life in Washington, Dick became Senior Fellow at the East-West Center in 1977, an educational and research organization in Honolulu. He and his wife moved to Hawaii where they enjoyed island life and traveled extensively in Asia, Australia and New Zealand. When Dick retired in 1993, he closed a diverse career in science that generated two patents, six books, many technical papers, and a worldwide network of friends and collaborators.

Throughout his career, Dick was supported by his wife Joanne Fisher Carpenter. They met in a Kansas City ballroom dancing studio and got married in 1948. She died in 2013. Their son, Steve, is a university professor and lives in Madison, Wisconsin. Their older daughter, Lynne, is a travel counselor living in Roatan, Honduras. Their younger daughter Wendy lives in Vadnais Heights, Minnesota. Dick is the grandfather of six grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

The secret to chalk drawing, Dick explains, is to draw on paper that has the right tack to hold the chalk. The chalk comes in about 100 colors, but it must be applied in layers to achieve a final color. Drawing chalk contains binders that help make it adhere to paper and almost impossible to erase.

Always looking for a subject to draw, Dick is keeping a watchful eye on the scene through his apartment window. When he sees the right sky and color of the mountain, he will quickly record it in a sketch that will form the basis of another drawing. He says it takes an average of 40 hours to complete a drawing.

Also on his things to do list is to learn to identify birds. Prepared with a poster guide of common birds for reference, he mounted a bird feeder outside his window and is waiting for avian traffic to visit it. Teaching an art course for beginners is another of his aspirations. "I would use a vase of flowers as a focal point and teach some basic steps, but warn my students that it has to be their painting, not mine."

Dick couldn't be more content in his living space. "I am blessed by the doctors and the care that I get here," he declared with a big smile on his face.



Some Carpenter drawings include (clockwise from upper left) a self portrait, Charlottesville's Tip Top Diner, a favorite chimney, and objects given to him by his daughter.



Alert Upgrade (cont'd)



Electronics at the VDOT Traffic Operations Center in Staunton include wall and desk mounted projections of traffic conditions on I-64 at Rockfish Gap and other roads in the Shenandoah Valley.

The new signs can display more detailed messages on weather and other conditions that have an impact on traffic flow.

Ten new cameras will monitor traffic flows, send real-time images to the Traffic Operations Center, and provide traffic information for drivers who dial into the 511 system.

Additional pavement sensors will provide the operations center with weather and road conditions throughout the mountain corridor including temperature and whether the road is wet or dry.

Staff at the operations center in Staunton monitor weather and traffic 24 hours a day on I-64. They stand ready to turn on the mountain fog lights when visibility thresholds are exceeded and they notify the state police and local law enforcement whenever traffic cameras detect accidents or other traffic problems.

The new installation is networked with fiber-optic cables, offering faster and more reliable data transfer. Since the system is also capable of displaying changeable speed limits on the message signs, mandated variable speeds is another accident deterrent that is under consideration for possible future implementation.



The original smaller message signs will be removed when the new system is deployed.

So what can we expect from more timely notifications when hazardous conditions occur. The system won't work without the cooperation of motorists to turn on lights, to slow down, and to stop tailgating. As one traffic engineer noted, roadway fog lights can't help motorists see other vehicles in the fog.