



The

# Lodger

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NEWSLETTER FOR RESIDENTS AND FRIENDS OF THE LODGE AT OLD TRAIL



## Furry Tales



He is definitely a cat,"but acts like a dog." That's how resident Pat Adams describes her two and one-half year old Smoky, a large black cat that exhibits some Persian breed characteristics. The friendly, playful feline is a hit on the second floor of The Lodge. "People don't come by to see me," says Pat. "They come by to see Smoky."

Pat has always had animals as companions. Smoky is a replacement for her Schnauzer, Sobe, who grieved so for her deceased husband that she thought it best to find him a new home. Sobe is happily living with his new master for whom he took an immediate liking and who is, come to find out, the cousin of movie actor and director Clint Eastwood.

"You are it," said Pat when a "ball of black fur" jumped onto her lap at a visit with her daughter whose barn cats had produced litters of kittens. With a new name and an adoring companion, Smoky moved to his new home in Lake Monticello and then to The Lodge in November 2012.

Smoky loves to be around dogs and like a dog, he cuddles in bed or on a sofa, and responds to the "nap time" command in the afternoon by jumping on his companion's bed. He will run and fetch his little yellow ball and try to catch it on the fly.

Not yet having lost his kitty playfulness, or is it puppy, Smoky will immerse his paw in a glass of water and knock it over with an air of superiority, but not until Pat is looking squarely at him to watch his mischief.

A nice piece of calves liver or breast of chicken, Smoky? No thank you, says Smoky. He insists on nothing but Meow Mix.

Smoky is not permitted out of his apartment, but he would love to venture to the next door deck to see his neighbor. He is only allowed to watch his next-door neighbor through the screen door. His neighbor is a dog.



## RESIDENT FOCUS

Norma Lee Holland has first hand knowledge of one of the most successful government programs ever undertaken; it received unanimous approval of the U.S. Congress, was started days after the President signed it into law, and is cited as playing "an essential role in ending World War II." The U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps produced 124,000 nurses to fill a critical shortage. Norma is one of those nurses.



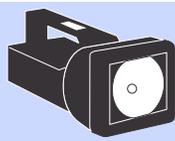
"I don't know how I passed the entrance exam," says Norma, "especially since they had questions on microbiology!" Because she was 16 years old, Norma had to wait a year to meet the minimum age requirement. Her training involved six-days a week of classroom and clinical work for three years under rigid behavioral rules and wearing summer and winter uniforms. A Nelson County native, she attended the nursing school at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. The program resulted in many nursing schools upgrading their standards to a higher uniform nationwide quality level and fostering a more academic approach to nursing.

With many nurses already overseas with the armed forces, Norma and her colleagues were desperately needed to combat the polio epidemic that was raging at home. Further training in therapeutics prepared her for treating stricken children at hospitals in North Carolina, Texas, Oklahoma, and Massachusetts. She remembers how suffering children would relax and go to sleep after she had wrapped their aching parts with warm blankets wrung out of hot water.

By 1954, the Salk vaccine miraculously cured the crippling disease and Norma had transferred out of the discontinued nurse corps into hospital service at NIH in Bethesda, Maryland. Open-heart surgery was coming into use and Norma assisted surgeons in the operating room with some of the very first patients undergoing the pioneer procedure. "I really enjoyed working at NIH," says Norma, "but two years of such stressful work was enough." Nevertheless, Norma moonlighted at GW and Sibley hospitals in Washington, D.C. while at NIH.

Norma began a new chapter in her career by entering the U.S. Air Force in 1962 as a second lieutenant and was

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# STAFFER SPOTLIGHT

Laura Ipock knew from when she was in high school that helping seniors to maintain satisfying lifestyles was what she wanted to do. Her after-school job in the dining room of a senior living community convinced her. Positive that she had found her most favored career path, Laura earned a degree in health care administration from James Madison University. She became the Piedmont Life Enrichment Director at The Lodge in 2013 after working five years at another senior living community in North Carolina.

“In planning group activities, I concentrate on finding out what interests our residents have,” says Laura. She wants to be sure residents still connect with the outside world they knew before moving to The Lodge. Upon learning that a resident was a camera buff, Laura arranged a group tour of a nearby camera museum. Mention of a favorite restaurant by a resident resulted in a group outing to that eating place. She schedules as many as eight outings in a month’s time.

She uses the same approach in planning Theme Days when she decorates and creates exhibits denoting different

times and places. These have included themes of the Wild West, a Mediterranean Cruise, and a D-Day Moment.

Laura also serves as Community Relations Coordinator, a role that fits her more comprehensive understanding of senior living as a trained health care administrator. She reaches out to doctor offices, churches, and other places, mostly in Augusta County “on the other side of the mountain,” to make more people aware of The Lodge and to encourage them to come for a tour.

She shares her talent for music with Piedmont residents, singing and accompanying herself on the guitar. Her renditions of *Crazy* and *Yesterday* at recent Theme Day events were appreciated big time

Laura sings in a church choir and is a swimmer and card shark. She is a native of Harrisonburg and commutes to The Lodge from her home in Mount Crawford.

We thank you, Laura, for your enthusiasm and creativity.



## This and That

A stroll through the hallways of The Lodge will reveal a variety of apartment entry door decorations. Here is a sampling.



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  
See Internet edition at [lodgeatoldtrail](http://lodgeatoldtrail) →  
about the lodge →  
news & press releases



**In Memory**  
*It is with great sadness that we lose the presence and friendship of Gae Lach, an early promoter and supporter of The Lodger. We miss her and her readiness to examine each newsletter edition before publication for errors and readability. Gae will remain among our fondest memories.*

Hand-made Gouda Cheese by Trappistine Nuns

# Monastery Cheese from Crozet Shipped Throughout the 50 States

On a winding gravel road along the Moormans River in a rural corner of Albemarle County sits Monastery Drive. Turning on to Monastery Drive is like going into an Alice in Wonderland setting. It is in this majestic landscape where six Trappistine nuns lived like pioneers in a log cabin while building a monastery and establishing a fledgling cheesemaking factory that now produces massive amounts of heralded Gouda cheese known throughout the 50 states. The cheese is not made just to sell—it is the means for self-sufficiency by the Trappistine sisters whose religious community now numbers 15.

Sister Barbara Smickel knows the history of Our Lady of the Angels Monastery intimately. She is one of the six who settled in Albemarle in 1987. At 77 years of age with a contagious cheerfulness, Sister Barbara is the designated spokesperson for the monastery and overseer of the cheesemaking. She says that in the beginning none of them knew a thing about cheesemaking. But eager to learn and unaware of what they were in for, Sister Barbara sought lessons from cheesemaking Trappist monks in Kentucky and from Jim and Margaret Morse of Brookneal, Virginia, who generously shared their valuable experience and expertise. Learning was the easy part, it turns out.

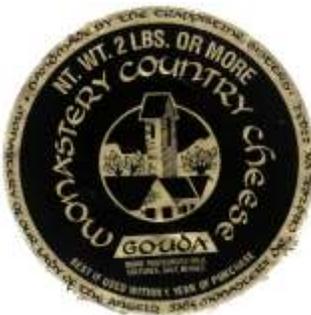
A used and cranky milk pasteurizer required extensive repairs. Minerals in the cheese, although harmless, were not wanted, so a water treatment system had to be purchased to remove the minerals from well water. That was after a filter system was installed to remove any possibility of sediment in the water. The first two-pound wheels of Monastery Country Cheese were finally produced in 1990.

Milk and culture are the primary ingredients of the cheese. Opting to purchase the milk from a local Mennonite dairy farmer which is delivered once per week, the sisters decided not to have cows themselves because of the extra labor involved. The special culture is shipped from a Wisconsin producer who obtains it from Denmark.

A batch of cheese is started at 4:30 in the morning and completed by 4:30 in the afternoon. By adding the culture to the pasteurized milk, the mixture is transformed



*Our Lady of the Angels Monastery*



*The black and gold cheese label was designed by a monastery nun.*



*Sister Barbara*

into curds and whey. After cooking the curds, the moisture is removed by pressing hand-cut curds into solid balls, soaking them in brine tubs for another 14 hours, and hand-painting them with a special rind for aging. Each cheese is dipped in a protective red wax coating prior to shipping.

During a cheesemaking day, the sisters still find the time to pray and attend afternoon Mass. “While cheesemaking is a way of life here,” says Sister Barbara, “our monastic life still comes first.” So too, their religious habits are normally worn, except during cheesemaking and while performing other chores when jeans and shirts are standard fare.

Some 33 weeks out of the year are devoted to cheesemaking. A total of about 11,000 wheels of two-pound Gouda cheese is produced in a year, all of it sold out by the Christmas season. Orders by mail are shipped by priority mail. “The Crozet Post Office tells us we are one of their best customers,” says Sister Barbara, “and they come right to the monastery to pick up the orders we have packaged.”

Sister Barbara and five other nuns were sent to Virginia in 1987 by Mount Saint Mary’s Abbey in Wrentham, Massachusetts, considered the Mother House of the monastery. The abbey had grown so successfully that it became necessary to expand. The 507 acre property was a perfect find for it contained space for a monastery in a quiet, pastoral setting and, as important, an existing cheese barn that would serve to meet their self-supporting needs. Trappistine nuns do not vow to remain silent but they do minimize conversation.

Sister Barbara felt a calling to monastic life  
**Cont’d on back page**

Resident Focus (from front page)

eventually assigned to a military hospital in Ankara, Turkey that cared for military personnel from throughout the middle east. While there, Norma spent vacation time in Europe and also met Clayton Holland, an Air Force officer who became her husband-to-be. They married in 1966 after they both moved to Florida when Clayton was assigned to Eglin Air Force Base and Norma was discharged with the rank of captain. Norma continued as a civilian nurse until 1984 when she retired. Clayton died in 1990.



*Nurse Norma, 1948*

Norma moved to The Lodge in 2012. Very few family members are still alive, but returning to Virginia was important to her. "A Virginian born and bred," jokes Norma, "a Virginian till I'm dead." Her Virginia roots are strong. Her grandfather A.G. Bryant developed the first rural mail route in Nelson County and carried the mail by horse and buggy for 40 years from the post office named for him. She can remember being told that the orphaned girl adopted by her grandparents would wrap hot bricks in a blanket to keep her grandfather's feet warm while delivering mail. Her nephew lost his wife and three of his daughters living in Roseland from the hurricane flooding that ravaged the county in 1969.

There probably is not much Virginia history unknown to Norma. She is currently reading *The Love and Hate in Jamestown*, despite having already read three other books on Pocohontas. She just finished reading a book on Martha Washington and has read biographies on Jefferson and James Monroe. In fact, she assigned herself a project to read at least one book on every one of the U.S. presidents. Norma says "I would have done it, except that biographies have not been published on every president."

She has the reputation in The Lodge of being the "Queen of History" and a resource for anyone with a history question. She blames poor history teachers for so many people not having an interest in historical knowledge.

If age hadn't precluded dancing, Norma would likely still jitterbug. She and her sister became jitterbug addicts, at the time when dancing and the big bands were popular. They went to Richmond nearly every weekend when the town was "crawling" with GIs who were anxious dancing partners. She remembers going to hear Tommy Dorsey and Guy Lombardo whenever they performed in Charlottesville.

The Cadet Nurse Corps remains her most profound memory. It launched her and so many other women on an honorable career, out of reach for many if it were not for the free tuition and stipend that it afforded. The Nurse Corp is the only uniformed service that has not been granted either national recognition or veteran status. Efforts are underway to change that. Advocates are attempting to sell Congress on recognizing "the heroes nobody knows about." Now we know about one of them.



*Norma's  
Nurse Corps  
graduating  
class, 1948*

### **Monastery Cheese (from p. 3)**

as a young woman while still living with her family in California. She took her vows at the Massachusetts convent and just observed her 58th year as a Trappistine nun.

Our Lady of the Angels Monastery is also feeling the effects of growth. The temporary chapel housed within the plain, well-kept brick building has become too small for the growing monastery community and its many guests. Up to 40 visitors attend Sunday Masses, crammed into seating to the side of the sanctuary.

Relief is on the way. Groundbreaking will take place soon for a long-awaited \$2.8 million church. The two-story structure, expected to be completed in early 2016, will be connected to the monastery and contain space for a relocated library, a welcome center, and a cheese sales area. Donations and cheese sales are providing much of the financing.



*Drawing of planned church to be attached to the existing monastery.*

Visit [www.olamonastery.org](http://www.olamonastery.org) on the Internet for more information, a picture gallery, and cheese order forms. Because demand often exceeds supply around Christmas time, it is best to order before Thanksgiving. Cheese is also sold to visitors at the monastery.

When asked how long the Gouda will last after purchase, Sister Barbara will say, "as long as you can resist it!"

### **DIRECTIONS**

From Crozet, continue north on Crozet Ave. thru 4-way stop sign four miles to T intersection at Garth Rd. (Rt. 614).

Right on Garth Rd. two miles to Millington Rd. (Rt. 671) on left.

Left on Millington Rd. one mile to Clark Rd. (Rt. 674) on left, just beyond Moormans River bridge.

Left on Clark Rd. one-half mile to monastery on right.

Ring doorbell and a sister will greet you inside.