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NEWSLETTER FOR RESIDENTS AND FRIENDS OF THE LODGE AT OLD TRAIL

Lodge Ladies Take Trip Down Memory Lane

In a setting reminiscent of times gone by, ladies of the Lodge recently enjoyed an old-fashioned afternoon tea. Upon entering the dining room, each guest received a vintage hat to wear for the occasion. Table decor continued the vintage theme with elaborately decorated hats mounted on white columns, as well as "dress-up" accessories from a previous era, including little white gloves, beaded handbags, linen handkerchiefs, scarves, broaches, and crystal perfume atomizers.



Along with a choice of tea, tempting delicacies arrived from the kitchen of Chef Matt and his culinary staff. Friend of the Lodge Sally Askew (photo below) provided and arranged the decorations from items among her many collections.



The tea party ended with a round of applause for Sally, Chef Matt, and the Lodge staff in appreciation for a creative tea party flavored by a trip down memory lane.

—Jean Sellers

More photos next page

RESIDENT FOCUS

Woodrow Wilson was President and the United States had not yet entered the first World War. That was 102 years ago in 1915 when Lodge resident Theodore "Ted" Korol was born the son of Polish immigrant parents in New York City. With a trace of a New York accent and the body and mind aspired to by men 50 years his junior, Ted still exhibits an amazing appetite for staying productively busy. His busyness is confined to model ship building now, but Ted has a long history of applying his engineering training to the design of a variety of industrial and consumer products. He says there was never a lapse of more than two weeks inactivity between switching from one job to another. In fact, he remembers taking on a new job during one of his vacations.

The son of Stanislaw and Michalina Koralewski, Ted says his last name was shortened by dropping the "ewski" on his birth certificate by the doctor who brought him into this world, "but he erred in the spelling anyway—it should have been Koral."

In his final high school year, Ted enlisted the aid of the school guidance counselor who helped him decide on what he wanted to be. Having excelled in his math classes, he and the counselor decided that engineering would be a good fit. Ted applied to MIT, Rutgers, and Columbia University. "MIT did not accept my application," says Ted, "they only took the best." In 1937, he graduated from Columbia with a B.S. in civil engineering.

His first engineering job was with the drafting department of a company in New Jersey that designed and built multi-tiered bookstacks, most notably for the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Engineering students were trained to hand-letter



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Resident Focus (cont'd)

and draw accurate scale drawings, often in ink, and Ted used his new-found skill in producing meticulously hand-drawn drawings.

According to Ted, engineering jobs seldom last long. A year later, he was preparing scale drawings for the General Motors Futurama exhibit at the 1939 World's Fair in New York. From the contour maps produced by Ted and five colleagues, workers constructed the exhibit that took visitors through a multitude of urban and rural scenes on an 11 minute ride in a car of the future. Six months later, the job was completed.

Two more short-term jobs engaged his engineering skill in detailing the configuration of reinforcing bars used in concrete production, the imbedded steel used to give concrete the strength where needed, a job which he found boring.

Then he heard that the Panama Canal was hiring. He applied as a structural engineer, got accepted for employment, and received a ticket to sail to Panama on an ocean steamer on May 31, 1940. But he ran into a problem.

He had planned to bring his girl friend Edna of four years to Panama after he found a place to live, until her parents found out and read them the riot act. Scurrying to arrange a wedding, Ted and Edna became husband and wife on the very afternoon of his departure for Panama. He spent his honeymoon alone on the voyage. Edna joined him a few weeks later.

His job in Panama was to prepare the construction drawings for bomb proofing the machinery that operated the canal locks with massive steel and concrete armament.

Going home for a mandatory two-month vacation proved too boring for Ted. He jumped at the opportunity at what he thought would be temporary employment helping to design a drydock big enough to accommodate the largest World War II warship afloat. He did not return to Panama. Three years later he was commissioned Ensign with the U. S. Navy Seabees and went to Camp Peary in Williamsburg for basic training (now a training facility for the CIA).

Ted had considered enlisting earlier, but with the war expanding, deferral from the draft seemed unlikely, even though by now Edna and Ted were the parents of two-year old Richard "Buddy" Korol. His service included the construction of harbor facilities needed to evacuate the injured involved in the Omaha Beach D-Day invasion.



Edna Korol, circa 1940



LTJG Theodore Korol, circa 1945

Serving in both the European and Pacific theaters, he was discharged as LTJG in 1946.

After a stint with the family floor covering business, Ted longed to be an engineer again only to turn his attention to furniture building, beginning with the design and sale of study carrels, popular among schools and libraries. That led to establishing a furniture manufacturing factory and a contract with New York City to supply library furniture for city schools, much of which Ted designed. When the city faced a financial crisis, and dealer sales began falling off, Ted was forced to close the business. It was 1980 and, at 65, Ted began thinking retirement.

But over the next 30 years, he made drawings of retail and bookstore display cabinets and other furnishings for Showbest Fixture Corp., wrote computer programs for customer designer DesignLine Kitchens, and compiled catalogs for another custom store fixture manufacturer.

Edna died in 2016 at the age of 98, ending an extraordinary 75 years of marriage. Ted moved from his home in Charlottesville to The Lodge in January 2017. His son Buddy lives in Connecticut and his daughter Barbara has a home in Free Union. Ted has two grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

So what keeps Ted hale and hearty? It must have to do with activity. He becomes easily bored with inactivity. He gave up piloting an airplane because flying by himself was boring—neither his wife nor children were interested. Building scale-model early ships became a hobby because of the endless hours it takes to build them. He is hoping to find other Lodge residents interested in model building so that he can spend time teaching them his craft.

It also takes enormous ambition and unusual ability, both of which Ted has aplenty.

Tea Party (cont'd)

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of The Lodge at Old Trail.

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Vestige of Gilded-Age Life Style Remains on Display Atop Mountain

Split by the line that divides Augusta and Nelson counties, 100 year-old Swannanoa remains a remnant of The Gilded Age atop the Blue Ridge near the Afton interchange on Interstate Route 64. Were it not for the multi-million dollar rehabilitation by its current owner, Swannanoa would likely have fallen into ruin like the commercial ventures did a short distance downhill from the stately mansion where the Skyline Drive, Blue Ridge Parkway, and I-64 all meet. Ironically, the vacant and decaying commercial properties also belong to James F. “Phil” Dulaney Jr. and Skyline Swannanoa, Inc., the owner of Swannanoa, raising questions as to why he did not do the obvious: redevelop this seeming gold-mine location as the gateway to the Shenandoah Valley, Swannanoa, and the national park drives. Be that as it may, Dulaney favored the upkeep of Swannanoa palace and is making it available to the public for open houses and tours and as a backdrop for weddings and photo shoots.

Richmond lawyer and millionaire James H. Dooley finished building Swannanoa in 1913 after employing hundreds of artisans for eight years to construct the 52-room edifice. If true, the “summer home” was the result of a pre-marriage promise Dooley had made to his wife Sallie to build a mountaintop home where they lived from May to October. It is thought that the name of the estate was chosen because of Sallie’s love of swans, the bird that is depicted in a bronze emblem over the front entrance. Dooley married Sallie, a member of a prominent family living in Staunton, in 1869. Their principal residence was at Maymont, the estate they created on the James River which is now a museum and park owned by the city of Richmond.



Swan emblem at front doors.

Constructed of white marble on the exterior and Italian Carrera marble in the interior, personally selected by Dooley and imported from Italy, the structure was ahead of its day with electrical wiring throughout, its own power generating plant, and a private telephone system. Gold plated plumbing fixtures, teakwood panels, and ornamental ceilings



graced the interior. A 10-foot

high Tiffany glass window in the massive entrance hall supposedly depicts Sallie with the Blue Ridge Mountains and Swannanoa’s Italian gardens as backdrop.

James died in 1924 and Sallie died at Swannanoa two years later. Because the couple was childless, the property was willed to James’s sisters who sold it to a business consortium intent on establishing it as a country club and golf course. President Calvin Coolidge was so impressed after spending a weekend there that he unsuccessfully urged Congress to make it a Presidential summer home. The country club went **Cont’d next page**



Swannanoa’s Tiffany window contains 4,000 glass pieces.

Swannanoa (cont'd)

bust, but the adjacent golf course still exists.

Unused for years, the mansion and surrounding 900 acres were resold in 1944 to Skyline Swannanoa, a consortium headed by Phil Dulaney's grandfather, Charlottesville businessman Alvin Tandy Dulaney, who apparently had notions of further development.

A short time later Skyline Swannanoa leased the mansion to the gifted Walter Russell and his wife Lao who found Swannanoa to be the spiritual home they had been searching for. The Russells ran the University of Science and Philosophy which operated at Swannanoa for 50 years until 1998. Walter was a philosopher, artist, sculptor, and author who died at Swannanoa in 1963. Lao continued new-age home study courses from Swannanoa until her death in 1988. Lao, the former Daisey Stebbing who immigrated from England, was Walter Russell's second wife, and creator of a large mail-order cosmetic business found fraudulent before marrying her "soul mate."

The University dropped its lease in 1998 and moved to Waynesboro. Skyline Swannanoa became the custodian of the mansion and added to the refurbishing that had been performed by the Russells. Their multi-million dollar improvements focused on replacing the tile roof, windows, and doors, and cleaning the marble.

Down the hill, the Dulaney business acumen paid off big time—at least in the short term. They saw the opportunity to cater to the thousands of motorists passing by their property on Route 250 and the Blue Ridge Parkway. They opened the iconic Howard Johnson restaurant in 1948, the Blue Ridge Motel in 1960, and the Skyline Parkway Motor Court in 1962. In 1968, Holiday Inn and an acclaimed interior restaurant

opened for business, offering spectacular views of the Rockfish and Shenandoah valleys.

But serious problems began to emerge. Interstate 64 construction was completed and major traffic was rerouted from Route 250, out of sight of the motorist services. Fuel shortages further reduced traffic volumes. Business declined and so did building maintenance. The Holiday Inn franchise was withdrawn in the mid 1990s, Howard Johnson closed in 1998, the motels suffered fire damage, and the Chevron gas station closed in 2003.

Phil Dulaney began building demolitions, only to find the cost skyrocketing due to asbestos removal requirements. Today several vandalized, vacant buildings remain. The former Holiday Inn operates as the Inn at Afton, but it is in a seriously degraded state. Further cleanup has been complicated by disabling health issues suffered by Dulaney.

Nothing in the future seems certain except the expectation of a transformation by someone, sometime, of what was a traveler's Mecca into another thriving tourist center and, hopefully, the continued presence of Swannanoa. At present, there are no signs of change.

OPEN HOUSE SCHEDULE

Select Saturdays & Sundays
11:15 am to 5 pm

- June 6 & 7, 10 & 11
- July 1 & 2, 8 & 9, 22 & 23
- August 5 & 6, 26 & 27
- Sept. 2 & 3, 9 & 10, 16 & 17, 30.
- Oct. 1, 7 & 8, 21 & 22, 28 & 29
- November 4 & 5

Admission: \$8, additional \$2 with tour
Children under 12 free
Cash or checks only

DIRECTIONS

I-64 west to Afton Exit 99
Right on Route 250 east
0.1 mile to VA Route 610
Right on Rt 610 0.3 miles
to Swannanoa Lane
Right on Swannanoa Lane
0.8 miles to mansion.



One of the ornamented fireplaces features a hand carved and mosaic surround.



All that remains at the Afton interchange are the empty Howard Johnson restaurant, with its classic orange roof, the skeletons of motel rooms, and an abandoned gas station (left).