



The

# Lodger

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NEWSLETTER FOR RESIDENTS AND FRIENDS OF THE LODGE AT OLD TRAIL

## A California Adventure

**By Terry McLane**—Growing up in Brooklyn, N.Y., in the 1930s and '40s, living with my parents and sister, we took few vacation trips anywhere west of the Hudson River, and those usually to the great state of New Jersey. The exception was a train journey to Canada during which we slept overnight in the sleeper car—my parents on the bottom, my sister and I on the top. The train whistle in the middle of the night lulled us to sleep.

Summer meant subway rides to the beach at nearby Coney Island. During high school I was permitted to take the subway to Manhattan with a friend, but never alone. I guess today you'd say I had "helicopter parents."

In 1952, after high school graduation, I attended nursing school at St. Clare's Hospital in Manhattan. This was an adventure in itself! First time living away from home and in a mixed ethnic community in Hell's Kitchen was a lot different than in our small Irish-American community in Brooklyn.

I made several new friends at St. Clare's and we often walked to Times Square for pizza. One idea we talked about constantly was living and working in California after graduation. While it was scary to think about living so far from home, it was also exciting.

Six months after graduation in January 1956, our adventure began. Three of us 20-year-old gals, Jane, Janet, and myself, flew to Los Angeles, where we had obtained positions as registered nurses at Good Samaritan Hospital and found a small apartment with a Murphy bed in the living room.

None of us knew much about cooking but we stocked the kitchen and had lots of laughs trying new ideas. We met two fellows who were transplanted New Yorkers and they became traveling companions on our days off. No romantic interests, just friends on days off from the hospital, driving to different beaches in a convertible with the top down and singing the latest songs. What could be more Californian?

I was nervous starting work at Good Samaritan, but I found that St. Clare's prepared us well. We all had staff positions on the Medical/Surgical units.

I have fond memories of trips to Palm Springs and my first visit to the desert seeing the night sky when so many stars looked like tiny diamonds on black velvet made an impression, since we did not see many stars in New York; taking

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*Terry, Janet, and Jane at Lake Arrowhead (left) and Terry (2nd from left) and friends posing in the open-top convertible at Long Beach.*

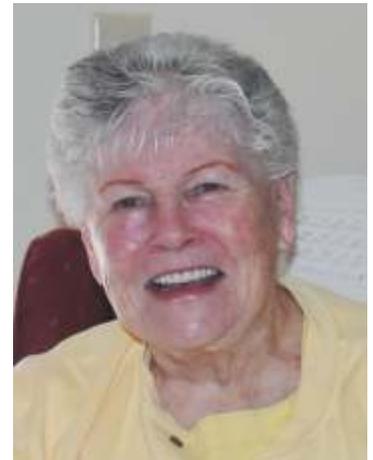
## RESIDENT FOCUS

Mona Beery had to wait for 30 long years after two unsuccessful marriages before finding her Prince Charming. During that time as a single parent, she raised her three children, went from a secretarial position at the Pentagon to being a dental assistant, a licensed real-estate agent, and administrative assistant to a Fairfax County school superintendent, and missed earning an associate degree in English by the lack of just one required course. Her marriage to retired architect Edgar Beery occurred on the shores of the Sea of Galilee in Israel in 2000. He died in 2007. Mona became a resident of The Lodge in 2017.

Both Edgar and Mona attended the same church in Annandale, Virginia, but it was on a church mission trip to Israel when they met. Their friendship blossomed and a year later she caught him on the telephone with the Israeli Embassy asking whether he could get married on another mission trip they were planning. "Oh, we are getting married?" she exclaimed when he got off the phone. The rest is history. They chose the Sea of Galilee where most of the ministry of Jesus had occurred.

Mona was born in Minneapolis, but her parents moved to Washington D.C. when she was a year old. "My father made money," says Mona, a literal fact since he worked for the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing where he became assistant director. She attended D.C. public schools until her senior year and went to work for the Pentagon as a secretary upon graduation from Washington and Lee H.S. in Arlington, Va.

As a single parent with two sons and a daughter, she returned to working at the Pentagon, but was delighted to discover a job with Fairfax County public schools where she advanced to serve as administrative assistant to a regional school superintendent and "learned the ins and outs of the school system." The hours were better and the job put her closer to the children.



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## Resident Focus (cont'd)

She and the children would escape as often as possible to Rehoboth Beach, Delaware on weekends, walking the beach and boardwalk, and attending movies. They camped at the beach in Mona's travel trailer. Always excited about trips to the beach, the children would willingly prepare for their getaways, says Mona, so that they could be on the road within 15 minutes after she got home from work and extend their beach trips for as long as possible before heading back home.

A bundle of energy and the single bread-winner in the family, Mona also attained a license to sell real estate part time for two years and worked two nights a week as the hostess at a Marriott Inn. Her interest in the English language prompted her to enroll at Northern Virginia Community College in pursuit of a diploma in English for which she lacked just one course requirement.

She retired after 30 years with the school system.

Mona and Edgar enjoyed vacationing on cruise ships. Their trips included one that went from Florida to California via the Panama Canal with a return trip by air that was interrupted by an unexpected overnight sleep on the benches inside the Atlanta airport terminal. Weather had grounded all flights, delaying their return to South Carolina where they were living after moving from Virginia. They lived in a coastal, gated community across from Pauley's Island, a barrier island that is one of the oldest resort areas on the east coast. "Lovely neighbors, a nice place to live, and I loved to be on the beach again," says Mona.

"I would be living on Pauley's Island now if Edgar was still with me," says Mona.

Edgar suffered a stroke in 2005 that left him paralyzed and wheel-chair bound. "He was easy to care for and never lost his caring ways or his great sense of humor."

Thinking that a dog companion would make good company for Edgar, they went to an animal shelter hoping to make an appropriate choice. Come to find out, the decision was made for them. They knew right away that a dog named Sandy made Edgar her choice when she was the only one to lay her head on Edgar's lap. Fourteen-year old Sandy has now adopted Mona as her constant companion at The Lodge, never leaving Mona out of her sight.

A long-time bridge player, Mona also enjoys reading historical novels including the *Outlander* series of eight historical novels which was later adapted for television. Although she is the owner of an iPad tablet, she has not yet been tempted to read books in the electronic format.

Mona has close-by family members with her two sons living in

northern Virginia, her daughter in Charlottesville, and a brother in Fredericksburg.

She found The Lodge with the assistance of her "wonderful" daughter-in-law searching the Internet. Mona says choosing The Lodge, however, was her decision and she is more than happy with her choice.



*Clockwise from top, Edgar and Mona in 2005, Sandy, their lovable rescue dog who is believed to have been abused by her previous owners, and Mona and her daughter posing in a costume photo taken on one of their many trips to the Rehoboth Beach boardwalk.*

### The Lodger

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### Adventure (cont'd)

a weekend trip to San Francisco with a trolley ride to Fisherman's Wharf; seeing the swallows come back to Capistrano in the spring when we visited the Mission churches; taking an overnight trip to Lake Arrowhead with a cabin in the woods; driving the Coast Highway with wonderful scenery and lots of laughs along the way; seeing the huge HOLLYWOOD sign from most anywhere in the city, and visiting the newly opened Disneyland resort.

After about seven months, my two friends had to return back East. Since I was not brave enough to stay alone, we all returned together. In some ways I would have liked to stay, but I also missed my family and life in NYC. I guess I am an East Coaster at heart.

Looking back on our time out West, I realized California

is different mainly in that Californians are very open and friendly right away, and they seem to enjoy life more. They really take advantage of the wonders that nature has bestowed on their state.

I grew up a lot on this trip and learned a lot about myself on this adventure. I can do a lot more on my own than I thought, and I have kept two lifetime friends. I am basically a shy introvert, but I learned that if I push myself to be more open to strangers and ask questions about them, I make more friends.

After living in New Jersey for over 50 years, I now live in the beautiful state of Virginia here at The Lodge, where I have many new friends, and our Blue Ridge mountains surrounding Crozet are every bit as beautiful as the mountains in California.

# Museum memorializes Virginia's transport evolution



There are dozens of transport museums in the United States, but the Virginia Museum of Transportation is the only one exhibiting the most powerful steam locomotive ever built. And few others have such extensive collections that span all modes of transportation. Officially recognized by Virginia's General Assembly as the state transportation museum, it occupies a huge national landmark in downtown Roanoke with ample front-door parking reserved exclusively for museum visitors.

The museum's collections include some 2,500 objects divided into rail, road, and air galleries. One of the special exhibits even recalls how railroads made it possible for circuses to thrive by traveling from one city

to another.

The more than 50 rail exhibits include steam and diesel locomotives, freight and passenger cars, and a D.C. Transit street car once used in Washington D.C. Visitors can enter replicas of an early train depot and the actual cab of a diesel locomotive. A four-tier model railroad with multiple trains operating on 600 feet of track depicts major sites in the Roanoke region. Another exhibit details the incredible story of the Claytor Brothers, two railroad giants who were born and raised in Roanoke. Robert Claytor headed the Norfolk and Western Railroad and the successor Norfolk Southern. W. Graham Claytor, Jr. headed the former Southern Railroad and was also Secretary of the Navy.

But the museum's crowning glory is the Norfolk & Western steam locomotive number 611, the only Class J still in existence and refurbished for periodic excursions. It is parked at the museum when not in service. **(cont'd next page)**



*The Aviation Gallery includes airplanes and the Auto Gallery has cars, trucks, and specialized vehicles dating back to 1904. The famed N&W 611 locomotive pulled its last train in 1959 and is on display when not under maintenance or in excursion service.*



## Transportation Museum (cont'd)

The Automotive Gallery includes early model Ford automobiles and trucks, several models of Studebakers, horse-drawn vehicles, and a 1918 Kline Kar and 1923 Piedmont Roadster. The Piedmont was made in Lynchburg and the Kline Kar in Richmond. Only two other Piedmonts and one other Kline Kar are known to exist.

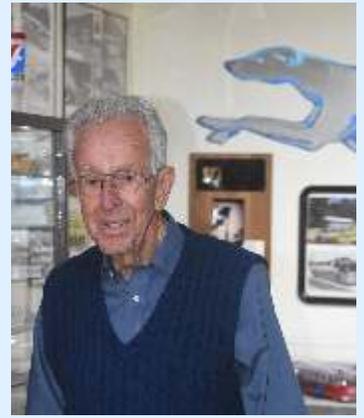
The latest gallery displays Greyhound and Trailways artifacts collected by Harry Messimer who is often at the museum telling endless stories about his former employment with both Greyhound and Trailways. (See sidebar.)

The Wings Over Virginia Aviation Collection covers the history and development of private, commercial, and military aviation in Virginia including the story of Life-Guard, the state's first air ambulance service.

The museum began on the banks of the Roanoke River in 1963 as a partnership between Norfolk & Western Railway and the city of Roanoke. It was destroyed by a disastrous flood in 1985, leaving over a million dollars in damages. Coming to its rescue, Norfolk and Western donated its former historic freight station for the reopening and future use of the museum. The 45,000 sq. ft. building was constructed in 1918 and closed in 1964 due to competition from the emerging trucking industry. The museum gets no state funding and is now an independent non-profit organization.

A visit to the museum can be made in one day including the four-hour round trip to Roanoke and lunch in one of several nearby restaurants. The museum is open Monday through Saturday from 10 am to 5 pm and Sundays from 1 to 5 pm. Admission price is \$8 for seniors. Comfortable walking shoes are recommended as is appropriate outdoor clothing since the rail cars are in an outside pavilion. Most of the museum is accessible to people with disabilities.

*Harry Messimer has an enormous collection of artifacts from the Greyhound and Trailways bus companies. His collection includes bus station signs, the famous Greyhound logo mounted to the sides of buses, and a myriad of artifacts that he has collected over the years. Many of his mementos are displayed in an exhibit room at the Virginia Museum of Transportation. He had unusual access to bus memorabilia; Messimer drove for Greyhound for 31 years and Trailways for 24. Primarily serving as a charter bus driver, Messimer saw several presidential inaugurations, the Civil Rights March of 1963, and a bit of Woodstock. At 88 years of age, he can often be seen at the museum answering questions about intercity bus transportation when it was in its heyday.*



*Roanoke was a sleepy little farming community called Big Lick until 1883 when the Norfolk and Western Railway began building steam locomotives and eventually became Roanoke's biggest employer. During its 69 year existence, the workshops built 447 locomotives, all for the N&W, including the famed high-speed Class J passenger and Class A freight steamers. The last Class A is on display at the museum and engine 611, the only Class J engine in existence, is a museum centerpiece and is fully operational. The 611 Class J locomotive could pull 15 passenger cars at 110 miles per hour and was used for daily service between Virginia and Ohio and Tennessee. The 611 derailed in 1956, due to excessive speed on a curve, and was restored to better than new condition. But by 1959, the railroad had converted to all diesel use and N&W 611 was donated to the museum. The engine was used for excursions while at the museum for 12 years before being retired until 2013 when the museum raised enough money from 50 states and 19 countries to restore it again and to serve in its third iconic career.*



## The Paradox of Old Age

Some of us may disagree, but journalist John Leland thinks that if you want to be happy, you should think like an old person. That is Leland's conclusion after following for three years six New Yorkers over the age of 85, one of the fastest-growing age groups in America. Expecting to hear about money or medical difficulties, he was surprised to learn declining abilities were not their focus but rather those things that they found rewarding.

Gerontologists call it the paradox of old age—memory tests and magnetic resonance imaging show that older people recall positive images better than negative and their brains respond more mildly to stressful images than the brains of younger people. Leland says each of the New Yorkers he befriended “showed a matter-of-fact resilience that would shame most 25 year-olds.”

Leland has recorded the stories of the six “oldest of the old” in his book *Happiness is a Choice You Make*, a 256 page collection of the lessons he learned about the influence people wield over the quality of life. The book was released on January 23 and is available in both Kindle and hardcover versions for \$12.99 or \$23.40, respectively, from Amazon. A summary was recently published in *The New York Times*.

“Uplifting and wise,” says *AARP The Magazine*. Fun-loving author Gretchen Rubin claims that Leland’s “rich experiences of the oldest old can guide all of us to lead happier lives no matter what our age,” whereas a reader of Leland’s newspaper account says “this handful of non-representative elders should not be viewed as typical or normal.”

