

RICHFIELD *News about Richfield Living and its people* Life

Winter 2016

Andy Bryant is known as The Oaks ambassador

Andy Bryant's big smile and his enthusiasm for everybody and everything at The Oaks make him seem far younger than his 90 years.

"I'm so glad you're back," he told resident Polly Frith, giving her a big hug as she entered the Alleghany Room where his own surprise party was about to happen, unbeknownst to him. That kind of enthusiasm is typical for Andy.

"I just love living here, and love the people and the staff," he explained. "They're just one big family." The self-appointed



Andy Bryant gets hugs from his daughters Debby Patsel of Vinton, left, and Nancy Robbins of Salem, at a surprise reception for Andy on Jan. 20 to celebrate being chosen as "Mr. June" in the 2016 Virginia Health Care Association calendar he is holding.

ambassador at The Oaks is known for his warm, outgoing spirit. "Why he looks so youthful is because he's happy," said daughter Nancy Robbins of Salem, at the reception for her dad on Jan. 20. (continued p. 7)

Two chosen as "Calendar Guys" by state association

Two Richfield Living residents are featured as "calendar guys" in the 2016 statewide calendar published by the Virginia Health Care Association. They are The Oaks' ambassador Andy Bryant, who is 90, is and former radio and television personality "Bobby Bell" Fenderson, 82, who resides at the Recovery and Care Center.

They were selected out of nominations from the entire state as Faces and Stories in Virginia's Long Term Care Facilities. Andy and Bobby Bell were announced in January when the calendar was released, and were presented with copies of the calendar.

Bobby "Bell" Fenderson made friends around the world on radio

Bobby "Bell" Fenderson continues to make friends the way he did when he was a radio and television personality.

At Richfield's Recovery and Care Center, Bell is known for his generous and compassionate nature. The 82-year-old who is Mr. February in the state calendar grew up in Covington where he became a local celebrity who was known by his radio name, "Bobby Bell." His career took him across the United States, to the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

Roanoke-area residents remember the veteran for his television show on WSLs Channel 10, where he hosted a dance party for teenagers similar to the Dick Clark Show.



Snow Ice Cream, Tin Foil Ornaments, Homemade Fruit Cake Soaked in Brandy

Eating snow ice cream, oyster stew, making fruit cakes; miniature cardboard-and-cotton villages under the Christmas tree, balls and toy cars for boys or a little girl's longtime wish for a real-looking baby doll. Those are some of the memories Richfield residents recalled from their favorite Christmases.

Hugh Walsh remembers getting his first pair of long pants



Hugh Walsh recalls decorating a hardwood sapling and helping make fruitcakes soaked in wine.

Like many other little boys, Hugh Walsh got balls and bats, little airplanes and cars at Christmas. But one year stands out. "I remember I got my first pair of long pants. I didn't have to wear knickers any longer," he said.

Although it was traditional for Hugh's family to cut a wild cedar tree for Christmas when he was growing up near Norfolk, he recalls the year his father had an idea for a prettier tree sturdy

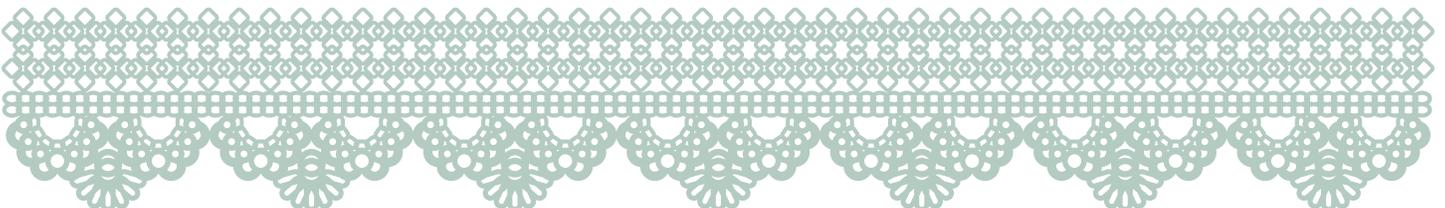
enough to hold decorations. "He cut a cone-shaped deciduous tree, used medical cotton for snow and taped blue lights on the tree. There was blue paper with silver stars."

Homemade fruit cake was traditional for many families. "My mother and sisters would start before Thanksgiving, going to the store to buy the ingredients," Hugh said. I would help mother lift the heavy tube pan. After the cake was baked, my parents would wrap it in cheese cloth soaked in wine. It would last until February," he remembered.

Elaine Nuckols, who also lives in The Oaks, recalled her family stored fruit cakes in "firkins" or lard cans, "and we soaked the cake in brandy." While she recalled her dad usually cracking walnuts "when the weather was bad and he couldn't work on houses," Jane Byrum remembers it was her mother who cracked black walnuts and almonds for Christmas cakes.

Elva Miller recalls snow ice cream

Christmases were simpler when most of the residents were growing up, often because of necessity. Snow ice cream – made by mixing sugar and milk and pouring it over fresh snow - was



one of Ridgecrest resident Elva Miller's favorite memories. "Christmas was kind of meager for our family," said Elva, who grew up near Elkview, W.Va. "I was the last of 10 kids and my dad died when I was 3. My mother could only buy us one gift each. We didn't hang up stockings and didn't have a tree until one of my brothers started having little ones of his own," Elva said. "Christmas trees weren't all that available, so I cut a limb, tied it in a corner and decorated it," she said.

They celebrated Christmas at church and also at school. She recalled riding the train to get to Elkview High School. "We got free tickets to and from on the train. That train was a lifesaver for us. We walked almost a mile."

The former Elva Morris married when she was 16 – like her mother had, she remembered – and she and husband Cecil, who were married 46 years until he died on New Year's Day 21 years ago, loved riding motorcycles together. "He drove and I rode," she pointed out. "We toured all over, to a Honda Hoot in North Carolina, to Kentucky, and across the lower part of Canada.

"I miss those days," said the mother of Pauletta Smith, a nurse who works in assisted living at Richfield. Elva's other daughter, Pamela Miller, lives in Texas. Elva also has two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



Jane Byrum made replacement clothes for her favorite childhood dolls Elizabeth Ann and Betty.

Jane Byrum's family built a village under the tree

The Oaks resident Jane Byrum grew up in the Portsmouth area, and her family bought their trees. "We would use strings of big lights, and put on the tinsel string by string," she remembered. "Later when it got to be the fashion we had a village, with

little houses under the tree.

Mama would build up cotton for a hill. We had a Santa Claus on skis. I still have one of the little animals from that village," she said.

"Most of the time when Santy Claus came he would put our presents in a circle underneath the tree. He never wrapped anything. My mother cooked an old hen, and we had a Smithfield ham or a fresh

"Christmas trees weren't all that available, so I cut a limb, tied it in a corner and decorated it..."

-Elva Miller



Elaine Nuckols remembers her mother's Christmas village.

ham. We also had a coconut raisin cake, and what I thought was really good was sweet potato pie,” Jane said.

Elaine Nuckols’ family made decorations from foil gum wrappers

Because their family didn’t have electricity at their home until she was in high school, Elaine Nuckols said she and her seven siblings saved the foil from gum wrappers to cover sycamore balls, and used colored paper to make chains.

The Oaks resident preserved many of her memories by writing a Christmas letter for her family for 35 years, writing “my impressions of people in the family, such as my mama was crazy about apples. She was never without apples by her side.”

Another family treasure is “all of my mom and dad’s love letters. They gave me an entirely different impression of Mom and Dad,” said Elaine, who was one of eight children.

“We were country people, who burned a Yule log. The boys would cut a great, big log and soak it so it would burn a lot longer, all through the Christmas season,” she remembered.

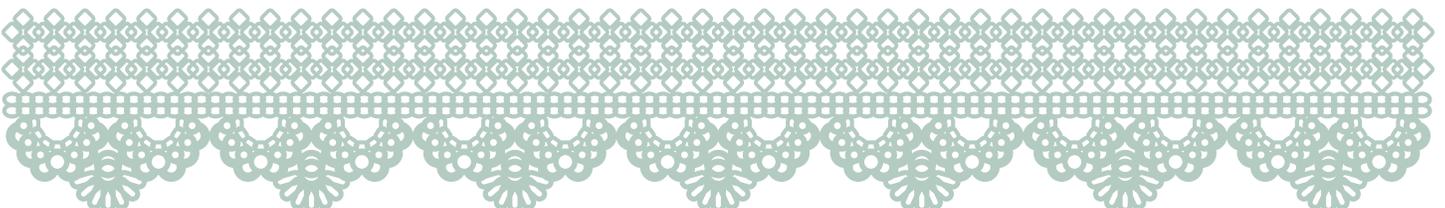
“I got a doll for Christmas most years,” Elaine remembers. “The boys always got exciting things like firecrackers. I wanted some, too. One year when I was 5 or 6 years old, they got sparklers, and I moved them from my brother’s chair where we put presents to mine. In one of my Christmas letters, I confessed,” she added. Elaine still has two of the dolls, Elizabeth Ann and Betty, in her room in The Oaks “That Santa Claus brought me. I crocheted booties for one and made the hat years ago,” she said.”

Carol Goad’s best Christmas present was her daughter

Carol Goad loves the Christmas season, and one of the reasons is that her daughter, Natalie Renee, was born on Dec. 31. “We didn’t know it at the time, but



Carol Goad holds Theodore B. Bear she named after her dad.



her name means ‘child of Christmas reborn,’ ” said the Knollwood resident, who also has a son, Darren, who lives in Northern Virginia.

Momentous events happened in her life around Christmas time. “When I was 5 I jumped on a swing on Christmas Eve and broke my leg very badly. My family put my leg on a board and took off for University Hospital in Augusta, Ga., the closest one to where we lived in South Carolina. I had a cast that covered both legs to my chest, and was in the hospital for one month,” she remembered.

Carol was worried Santa Claus wouldn’t know where to find her that year. “Daddy gathered up all the Christmas stuff Santa brought in a sheet, and brought it to the hospital. I still have the teddy bear from that year,” she said, holding up Theodore B. Bear.

“My dad’s first name was Theodore, and the B is for Beamer – the name of my imaginary playmate.”

These days, she particularly loves helping to decorate the Christmas tree in the lobby at Knollwood where she has lived for three years, and dancing at Knollwood’s Christmas party. “I love to dance,” she said.”Gale Bair, Richfield employee and the husband of Richfield’s Human Resources Assistant Rose Bair, dances with all those who don’t have partners, Carol added.

“Daddy gathered up all the Christmas stuff Santa brought in a sheet, and brought it to the hospital. I still have the teddy bear from that year...”

-Carol Goad

Wooden reindeer becomes new tradition for Murdocks

Attending Christmas Eve services at Fort Lewis Christian Church with her pastor husband, Bill, is a longtime favorite part of Christmas for Jennie Sue Murdock. They are usually with cousins and other family during the season but this time enjoyed

celebrating by themselves in their Lake Estates cottage. “This was the first year since Bill and I married in 1971 that we had been alone,” she said – except for their calico cat, Holly Noel. “I gave her Juliette Gordon Lowe’s birthday (founder of the Girl Scouts) because we didn’t know when Holly was born,” Jennie Sue explained.



Jennie Sue Murdock’s favorite Christmas decorations include a door hanger made by her mother.





She pointed out who gave the couple some of their favorite items as she packed them away after the new year began. “They have such symbolic meaning because of the givers,” she said, pointing out white glazed ceramic figures a Lutheran pastor made, and a gourd snowman created by Bill’s cousin in Baltimore.

She comes from a family that made its mark on Christmas decorations. “My grandfather, Clarence Morgan Buck, started the decorating at the Elks National Home in Bedford, and my Uncle George took it over about 1945.”

She thought back to a Christmas village her mother used to put out, and more recently, Italian manger scene figures Jennie Sue bought after the couple married.

One of the newest traditions is decorating the outside of their cottage with fresh pine garlands from Sharon and family of Idyllwood Farms at the Salem Farmers Market. And that’s who made the 3-foot-tall reindeer fashioned from a log and dogwood branch antlers, which welcomes visitors

“The greatest Christmas present anyone could ever give me was my great-great niece and nephew and my great-niece came home for Christmas from New Hampshire and didn’t tell me they were coming...”

-Carrie Chittum

to the Murdock’s front door. “I named him Idyllwood,” Jennie Sue said, explaining that the reindeer remains after Christmas and gets decorated with different ribbons for other seasons.

Surprise visit makes this Christmas Carrie Chittum’s favorite

Carrie Chittum’s favorite Christmas was this year.

“The greatest Christmas present anyone could ever give me was my great-great niece and nephew and my great-niece came home for Christmas from New Hampshire and didn’t tell me they were coming,” said Carrie, who lives in Ridgecrest Apartments. “Emma Rae, who is 8, jumped up from behind the sofa and yelled ‘Surprise!’ when I went to my niece’s home for brunch on Christmas morning,” she explained.

Emma Rae was with her brother Ethan, 5, and mom Jessica, who had driven 13 hours to be here. “I was a nanny to Jessica when she was little. We played during the day,” continued Carrie, who never married but who said she loves children.





Carrie Chittum got Nancy, the baby doll she always wanted, as a gift from her friend Elva Miller.

Although she begged for a real baby doll when she was a little girl, it wasn't until recently she got what she wanted, Carrie said, hugging real-looking doll Nancy. Her friend Elva gave Nancy to her three years ago. It reminds Carrie of the special needs babies she volunteered to change diapers for when she was a teacher's aide for nine years in Roanoke City Schools after a 34-year- career with Shenandoah Life Insurance. "Those children were the love of my life," Carrie said.

Andy Bryant is known as The Oaks ambassador (continued from cover)

The party was to celebrate him being chosen "Mr. June" in the 2016 state calendar published by the Virginia Health Care Association.

Andy even pitched in to help Life Enrichment Coordinator Debbie Tingler decorate the Alleghany Room that morning without knowing he was going to be the guest of honor later. The first moment he realized something was up was when he saw a huge photograph of him on the big screen later that afternoon.

"He just helps do all kinds of things around here," Debbie said. Each month he helps create the new calendar bulletin board with seasonal decorations, she pointed out in his nomination letter for the calendar, and loves decorating the dining room windows for residents to enjoy as they have their meals.

Andy also delivers flyers to rooms and reminds everyone of activity times. He visits fellow residents at the hospital or Richfield's Rehab Center, and lets them know that they are loved and missed until they can return.

The "Southern gentleman" is known for his kindness and giving spirit. He uses his winnings

at Bingo games to get small items which he gives to other residents, and always has a collection of stuffed animals waiting to go home with children who come to visit at The Oaks.

Those visitors include seven grandchildren, four great-grandchildren and a great-great grandchild! They and daughters Nancy Robbins and Debby Patsel spend time with Andy taking him shopping for adult coloring books that he loves to color, and "reminiscing about the past and planning the future," Debbie Tingler's nomination letter pointed out.

Andy is also recognizable by his big, 18-wheeler belt buckle that is a tribute to his years of driving a tractor trailer for Rowe Furniture where he worked for 40 years.

Physical Therapist Emma Hartman played the guitar for several favorite songs which Andy and other residents sang along to at the reception, including "You Are My Sunshine" and "I'll Fly Away."

"This is great," said Andy, who has lived at The Oaks for three years. "I didn't expect anything like this."

Richfield people celebrate the beginning of 2016 with noisemakers, mocktails and merriment.



Lillian Amos gets into the spirit of celebration.



Dorothy Woodson created this penguin painting during Paint Day at JCT



Youth volunteer London Hughes stuffs 31 brand gift bags donated by the mother of a piano student of Life Enrichment Coordinator Beverly Adams. Other volunteers – and Santa Claus – prepare to give out gift sacks filled with candy, puzzle books, pens, gripper socks and more to resident Lillian Amos and others.



Russell Walker tries on a mustache for size at JCT's New Year's Eve party.



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