



BLUE RIDGE TORCH CLUB OF LEESBURG VIRGINIA

Celebrating 17 Years in Lansdowne

February 2024

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Treasurer's Report

As of January 15, 2024 the Blue Ridge Torch Club had a balance of \$4,420 in its checking account. Of this amount \$2,827 is held for the payment of IATC year end dues.

Our balance is \$1,593 for BRTC operations.

Happy Valentine's Day



**BLUE RIDGE TORCH CLUB Dinner, Tuesday, February 13, 2024
at 5:30 p.m. (doors open 5:20) Clubhouse Auditorium**

Program: the Life and Music of Tom Lehrer

Speaker: Mike Leavitt and Crew

Tom Lehrer is a talented and funny satirist and commentator of mid-twentieth-century American politics, culture, and social taboos.

He is quoted as saying, "I went from adolescence to senility, trying to bypass maturity." His life's theme seem sometimes to be, "You can't be satirical and not be offensive to someone."

He was pretty hilarious though, so no one minded.

Most of his fame, however, came from his music. He wrote his own music and accompanied himself on the piano. His lyrics and music inspired a generation of musical satirists.



Tom looking like a regular guy...



Mike will talk about the life of Lehrer, and, along with friends John Downey, Dave Thomas, Marianne Tagge, and Jim Grefer will croon a few of his tunes.

A resident of Potomac Ridge, Mike received his Ph.D. in Political Science from Northwestern University, and a Masters in Jewish Studies from the Baltimore Hebrew University. He spent most of his career as a scientist at the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

Mike retired and moved to Lansdowne Woods in 2005 with his wife Eva. He serves as Treasurer of the PR HOA and is a member

of its Budget and Finance committee, sings in the "Notables," the LWVA choir, teaches an adult class in Jewish studies, and is co-chair of the weekly "Great Courses" discussion group. He has been an active member of the Blue Ridge Torch Club since 2008.

President's Column - February 2024

Happy New Year 2024 to my fellow Torch Club members. Jerry Frola and I are just back from Australia and New Zealand where we had been since the last week of December and unable to wish you well for the new year. We had a wonderful vacation and cruise "Down Under" while most of you were vicariously touring Canada's eastern marine province of Newfoundland and Labrador or burrowing down to keep warm during our first real snow in almost four years. Let's hope the new year will bring us all happy trails and adventurous travels.

We were so sorry to miss such a wonderful Torch program this month, especially with an impressive turnout of 15 guests and 46 members attending. My thanks to Anne A. Thomas for coordinating both the overall program as Acting President and the Torch Talk. Anne hopes to share the Torch Talk slides with anyone who is interested. I also thank the other officers and Hospitality Committee greeters who stepped in to help.



Dona and Jerry pal around with one of Australia's residents

We have a couple of very interesting programs coming soon, with Mike Leavitt (and friends) in February for a discussion about Tom Lehrer and his musical and satirical prowess, followed by Judy Kory in March with a retrospective on South Africa over the past 75 years. Our topics and speakers for April and May have not yet been selected, but will be discussed at our Executive Committee meeting on February 2 if anyone wishes

February 2024 Torch Dinner and Menu

Menu: Strawberry and Feta, Salad, Choice of Beef with Chimi Churri or Caribbean Style Chicken with Mango Salsa. For dessert we are having Chocolate lava. Please specify main course when making reservations. Wine will be available.

Dinner is \$40 for members and \$45 for non-members. Reservations and cancellations must be made by Tuesday, February 6th. For more information, contact Anne A Thomas at 703-909-6425 or email at: blueridgetorchclub@gmail.com. For reservations, go to website:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Y7STG_t5VgV0-TXepVyM5UkdRqSUK18UmKIRBLDpEUU/

Our dinner meetings are open to all Lansdowne Woods residents, so please feel free to invite friends and neighbors to come and join us in learning about and discussing a wide range of new topics and ideas.

January Program Summary: A Newfoundland and Labrador Adventure

Joyce Mitchell, Pat Monahan, Anne A Thomas, and Bill Thomas spent eleven days on a Road Scholar trip and each presented part of their experiences. They all shared their experience in this special Torch talk.

Anne Thomas presented her knowledge of the geography and geology of Newfoundland and Labrador. These are the easternmost part of North America and the shortest distance between North America and Europe and, because of this, many Marconi Towers were built to provide early wireless communications to Europe. For the same reason, early transatlantic flights also originated in Newfoundland.

Interestingly, Newfoundland is where the theory of plate tectonics was proven. The Tablelands in Gros Morne National Park are composed of mantle rock that came from 18,750 feet below the earth surface during the collision of plates. It is one of two places on the earth where you can find mantle rock on the surface.

Pat Monahan talked about local hero Wilfred Grenfell who was sent in 1892 to Newfoundland as a medical missionary. He worked tirelessly to provide medical services to the inhabitants of Newfoundland and Labrador and had a medical ship that could go from location to location. He worked tirelessly to raise money to build hospitals and medical services to improve the lives and health of the local fisherman.

No history of the area is complete without the Vikings. **Bill Thomas** shared with us how the Vikings arrived in Newfoundland at L'Anse aux Meadows around 1000 A.D., establishing a

settlement to acquire resources such as timber and ore and used the settlement for around 10 years. Although local Viking stories had spoken of the settlement, its location was not discovered until the 1960s.

Finally, **Joyce Mitchell** gave us the story of Battle Harbour Historic Trust, Labrador. Battle Harbour is a restored 19th-century fishing village on a small island in the Labrador Sea. Regarded by generations as the unofficial capital of Labrador, it was once the salt fish capital of the world. Dr. Grenfell built the first Labrador hospital and a church on this island in 1893.

All in all, a fascinating set of presentations.



Jellybean Row, Newfoundland

Membership Dues – Introductory Offer

Our Blue Ridge Torch Club is one of more than 50 Torch clubs in the U.S. and Canada belonging to the International Association of Torch Clubs (IATC). Annual dues for Regular Members and Household Members (second member in the same household) are established by the IATC Board each year. Our club combines national dues with our own local dues to help defray the costs of operating club activities. The dues cover our fiscal year which runs from July 1 to June 30 of the following year.

Membership benefits include (1) the three times a year Torch Magazine (comprised of high quality articles developed from Torch Talks covering a wide range of substantive topics); (2) attendance at the Club's annual "Members Only" Holiday Party in December and Picnic in June; (3) reduced registration fees at the annual Torch Convention (in Richmond in June 2024); and (4) and reduced costs for our monthly Torch Club dinners.

For this second half of our Torch Club fiscal year and on a promotional basis, we are offering a one-time opportunity for new members to join our local Torch Club at \$40 for Regular Membership and \$20 for Household (second person) Membership, between February and June of 2024. These special memberships would not receive the Torch Magazine.

We expect that anyone taking advantage of this offer would convert to full annual IATC membership for \$80 and \$40, respectfully, in September with the new fiscal year.

If anyone is interested in this introductory offer, please contact any of our officers (listed in the newsletter) for a membership application, or see our membership application form on page five of this newsletter. Applications will go to the Executive Committee for final approval.

Blue Ridge Torch Officers Wish You a Happy Valentine's Day!

- Dona Wolf (RV), President, donawolf@aol.com
- Anne A. Thomas (PR), Vice President, anneathomas@gmail.com
- Jim Grefer (PR), Secretary and Newsletter Editor, greferjames@gmail.com
- Judy Kory (RB), Co-Treasurer, jjkory@comcast.com
- Kent Hamaker (RV), Co-Treasurer, kdhamakerjr@gmail.com
- Brenda Brohard (PR), Past President, brendabrohard@gmail.com



George and Martha Washington Valentine's Day wishes, c. 1908

BLUE RIDGE TORCH CLUB MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I. Personal Information

<input type="checkbox"/> / <input type="checkbox"/>	Individual Member	\$80	<hr/>	
			First	Last
<input type="checkbox"/> / <input type="checkbox"/>	Household Member	\$40	<hr/>	
	(2 nd member)		First	Last
<hr/>				
Street Address		City	Unit #	
<hr/>		<hr/>		
Preferred Phone Number		Email		

II. Club Information

A. Torch Club Interests

<input type="checkbox"/> / <input type="checkbox"/>	Giving a Torch Talk	<input type="checkbox"/> / <input type="checkbox"/>	Serving as Club Officer
<input type="checkbox"/> / <input type="checkbox"/>	Writing a Torch Paper	<input type="checkbox"/> / <input type="checkbox"/>	Serving as Club Volunteer

B. Areas of Interest (Listening / Speaking)

<input type="checkbox"/> / <input type="checkbox"/>	Biographies	<input type="checkbox"/> / <input type="checkbox"/>	History	<input type="checkbox"/> / <input type="checkbox"/>	Science
<input type="checkbox"/> / <input type="checkbox"/>	Current Events	<input type="checkbox"/> / <input type="checkbox"/>	Sports	<input type="checkbox"/> / <input type="checkbox"/>	Travel
<input type="checkbox"/> / <input type="checkbox"/>	Foreign Affairs	<input type="checkbox"/> / <input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<hr/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> / <input type="checkbox"/>	Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> / <input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<hr/>	

III. Career / Occupation / Education

<hr/>	//	<hr/>
Signature		Date

Past Torch Talks & Speakers – # 3

Here is the 3rd listing of selected Torch talks and speakers from earlier Torch Club meetings:

2007 – The Imperious Laird: John Campbell,
The Lord of Loudoun – **Doug Foard**

2015 Genealogy -
Nancy Downey

2008 - Christopher Columbus –
Murray Bradley

2016 - The Many Faces of Autism –
Dorothy Roswell

2009 - James Abbott McNeill Whistler: Expatriate
Artist and Controversialist - **Dave Thomas**

2017 - The Art of Cigar Store Figures -
George Viener

2010 - Australian Aboriginal Art –
Anne Miller

2018 - Sisters of Grit: Voices of Remarkable
American Women–**Bonnie Wohlford**

2011 - Nuclear Reactors and Earthquakes -
Dwight Ink

2019 - Americans Betrayed – Japanese-
American Internment in WWII -
Robert Nakamura

2012 - Poetry - **Jane Taliaferro**

2020 - The History of Numbers -
Anne H. Thomas

2013 - Battle of Ball's Bluff and Its Influence
on History- **Tom Goggin**

2021 - The Troubles: A Personal Memoir-
5 Years Teaching in Northern Ireland
Hugh Sockett

2014 - Tai Chi in the U.S. –
Mike Leavitt

2022 - Beekeeping in LWVA –
Wes Henderson

As you can see, we have enjoyed a wide variety of interesting speakers and topics. If you enjoy giving talks, and you have an interesting topic, please consider becoming a Torch speaker. Any member who is interested in giving a talk, contact Anne A. Thomas at anneathomas@gmail.com.

The IATC Convention: Centennial Celebration

Richmond, Virginia, June 20-23, 2024

You will not want to miss this annual Torch Club convention. The 2024 convention will be at the Omni Hotel in the heart of downtown Richmond and will feature several great lectures, three dinners, and some fabulous Richmond tours, all included in one great price of \$385 per person.*

Tours offered during the IATC 100th ANNIVERSARY CONVENTION in RICHMOND VA

City of Richmond Tour

See Richmond's important historical sites and architectural gems. A special visit to St. John's Church, the oldest standing church, and the place where Patrick Henry gave his famous speech, "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death" will be included.

Black History and Valentine Museums

Four hundred years of history from various vantage points will be explored during this immersive experience. Expert docents will lead our tours through both museums.

Virginia Museums of Fine Arts and History and Culture:

Explore collections from all over the world within two esteemed institutions.

State Capitol: This curated tour will provide insight into the history and architecture of this classical Roman temple structure.



Detailed information on these tours can be found at www.torch.org/tours.html

An extensive list of Richmond attractions can be found at www.torch.org/richmond-attractions.html

To register for the convention online go to www.torch.org/registration.html

* This price is good to May 20, 2024. After that, the price is \$485.

Current Membership Roll

Ken Aumack	Carol Hall-Veit	Andrew Norton
Shirley Aumack	Kenton Hamaker	Bonnie Olenn
Carolyn Battle	Peggy Hamaker	Memory Porter
Frank Battle	Neelam Henderson	Barry Riordan
Fred Bishop, Jr.	Wes Henderson	Elizabeth Riordan
Chris Blake	Kathleen Hughes	Elizabeth Rubio
Penny Blake	Wayne Kaiser	Travis Sample
Murray Bradley	Peggy King	Catherine Shepard
Page Bradley	Judith Kory	Ann Sockett
Brenda Brohard	Eva Leavitt	Hugh Sockett
Steve Creskoff	Michael Leavitt	Janet Taliaferro
John Downey	Sue Merk	Anne A Thomas
Nancy Downey	Anne Miller	Bill Thomas
Jerry Frola	Jack Miller	Anne H Thomas
Joe Gibson	Joyce Mitchell	Dave Thomas
Rosa Gibson	Pat Monahan	George Viener
Jim Grefer	Chris Nicoll	Britt Wilford
		Dona Wolf

**“Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine”
– William Shakespeare; Midsummer's Night Dream**