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Treasurer's Report

On September 30, 2024, the Blue Ridge Torch Club had \$3,810 for Torch operations.

Happy Holidays
Bless us one and all!



Next Month: *Lansdowne Woods: Backyard Stories* by **Dave Thomas**

Members Only Holiday Party, December 10, 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm Open to Members and Spouses (or significant others)

This is our traditional gathering where we don't have a Torch Talk but instead enjoy a nice meal and the cash bar, and swap mystery books with our friends.

Each household is encouraged to bring one wrapped book to exchange though a drawing, Please bring a book you already own that you have read and would recommend to others. It does not need to be a new book, but can be found in your home or easily purchased used (in good condition) from Amazon.

Please wrap it but do not place a name tag on it. We are changing the book swap a little this year. Instead of each member standing and telling the group all about the book (including spoilers) and why you liked it, we would like you to prepare an index card and type or print no more than 75 words about the book. Do not attach the card to the book, but bring the card with you separately, to read yourself or have read by one of our two party coordinators – **Anne A Thomas or Nancy Downey**. This will save us lot of time as we work our way through 30 or 35 books.

Draft the short statement, insert in an envelope, and print the name of the book and your name on the outside of the envelope so that we can match the write up with the book when it is unwrapped. Be succinct! Bring a book most people will enjoy. It's more fun when many books are "stolen" (no more than 3 steals per book). We will collect the envelopes at the door. You can read your own statement, but please be brief!

Menu for the dinner: Grilled Peach Salad, Choice of Filet Au Poivre or Mediterranean Sea Bass or Vegetarian; Green Beans Almandine, Twice Baked Potatoes, Apple Cranberry Pie with Ice Cream, Coffee and a Cash Bar.

Dinner costs are \$35 for members and significant others. No other guests are invited. Reservations – and cancellations - must be made by Thursday, December 5. Failure to cancel by that date will result in the member being charged for dinner. Please use the website: blueridgetorchclub.org to make your reservation. If you have difficulty using the form from the website, please let **Anne A. Thomas or Dona Wolf** know. Contact info for Anne and Dona are provided in this newsletter.

November Torch Talk: The Battle for Women's Suffrage and the League of Women Voters

Ann Schmitt and Kathleen Hughes gave a wonderful Torch Talk in November, recounting the 72-year crusade to secure the rights of American women to vote in national elections. The movement began in 1848 with the Seneca Falls Convention in upstate New York and culminated in the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution on August 18, 1920.

Included in their presentation were brief sketches of several women who played prominent roles in launching the women's movement: **Elizabeth Cady Stanton** and **Lucretia Mott** who drafted the Declaration of Sentiments (social and civil rights for women) and organized the first meeting of more than 300 women and men in Seneca Falls to discuss and endorse the proclamation; **Susan B. Anthony**, an activist and firebrand orator who advanced the movement through her speeches and writings around the country; **Alice Paul**, the drafter of the Equal Rights Amendment but better known for leading a group of militant women to picket the White House in 1917 when they were arrested and imprisoned in the Occoquan Workhouse (Virginia) where they were tortured and force fed for several weeks; **Mary Church Terrell**, one of the first African American women to earn a college degree who became a fearless advocate for higher education and suffrage for Black women, leading desegregation efforts throughout the South; and **Carrie Chapman Catt** who organized women's civil rights groups nationwide and successfully lobbied enough states to secure the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920.

Our speakers concluded their presentation with a brief overview of the League of Women Voters (established by Carrie Chapman Catt in 1920) to protect and expand voter rights for all Americans through advocacy, education, and litigation.

President's Column

I can't believe that we are just a few days away from the beginning of our annual holiday season with lots of LWVA, HOA and family events scheduled over the next five weeks. Where has the time gone? We hope you will join us for the Torch Club festivities on December 10 for a luscious dinner and fun book swap. Holiday party coordinators **Nancy Downey** and **Anne A Thomas** may have more surprises in store but they won't tell me. We hope to see you there and don't forget to bring a book!

Because 2025 is looming large, we'd like you to know that we have a full schedule of Torch Talks between now and next May. In January, **Dave Thomas** will share his marvelous photography from throughout Lansdowne Woods during the past 25 years in *Backyard Stories*. February will bring us **Steve Creskoff** and his personal experiences living in and working with the World Bank in Moscow in *Integrating Russia into the Western World*. In March we will hear Torch Talk veteran **Mike Leavitt** discuss *The History of Zionism*. April will bring us Torch Club relative newcomer **Hosny El Khordagui** with his second talk, *Plastics - From Crude Oil to Nano Particles*. New member **Joline Matheson** will conclude our scheduled Torch talks in May with *Hypnotism and the Power of Suggestion*. And finally, capping our 2024-2025 program year will be our annual picnic, hopefully hosted by Marie's on the patio with glorious summer weather.

For those 15 new Torch Club members who have joined us during the past year, it is not too soon to think about doing a Torch Talk in our 2025 – 26 program year. We already have one tentative subject scheduled for next fall on *The Mountain Gorillas of Rwanda*.

Happy holidays to all of you, and enjoy your Thanksgiving later this week.

Jack Miller, In Memoriam

It is with heavy heart that we inform Torch Club members of Jack Miller's passing on November 3. He and Anne had moved out of Lansdowne Woods just a few months ago and into an assisted living community in Great Falls. Jack and Anne were members of the Torch Club for more than 15 years, since at least 2009. He served as Torch Club president from 2011 to 2013.

Before moving to Lansdowne Woods, Jack had an extraordinary career as a nationally known medical doctor, geneticist, professor and university administrator. Most of us knew Jack only as a kind, gentle soul, very modest, and a good friend.

A memorial service will be held for him on December 3 at 2 p.m. in the LWVA clubhouse. If anyone wishes to speak at the service, please contact Mike Leavitt who is coordinating the arrangements.

New Members Column

Carol Hall-Veit - Potomac Ridge. Born and raised near Pittsburg, PA, Carol received her MA in Education from the University of Virginia. She taught Biology and AP Biology at Loudoun County High School here in Leesburg for 20 years. With a broad range of interests, Carol pursued other careers as a licensed health insurance agent and later as a stock broker after earning her Certificate of Financial Planning. Carol moved into Potomac Ridge in 2010. She is a Reiki Master and very involved with alternate healing methods.

Fran Hurley – Riverbend. Texan born and bred, Fran received her MS degree in mathematics from Stephen F. Austin State University in Ft Worth before working as a metallurgist for 19 years in her family's steel foundry. Later Fran worked as an office manager in fields as diverse as the oil industry and an OB/GYN clinic. She moved to Lansdowne Woods in January of this year to be closer to her daughter's family. Family connections are what have brought so many residents to LWVA.

Doug McCollum - Blue Ridge. Doug was born in the Washington DC area and attended schools here through high school. He earned his BA degree at Duke University, returning to the DC area for law school at George Washington University. After clerking for a Federal judge and a brief time with the U.S. Attorney's office in DC working in criminal law, Doug transitioned into corporate law, spending much of his legal career there. He likes to sketch and is an avid reader, preferring detective stories, mysteries, and action novels.

Sue McCollum - Blue Ridge. Sue was born in Chicago but came to Virginia as a child. She attended Ohio University and received a degree in journalism, and later taught writing and journalism for many years in the Fairfax County school system. Sue returned to school at Loyola University in Maryland to earn a Master's in Pastoral Counseling. She facilitated writing groups, authored essays and books, and worked as a counselor/writer with non-profit organizations to help women and children needing mental health support.



The Blue Ridge Torch Club officers wish all of you a happy holiday season

- 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, jkkory@comcast.com
- Kent Hamaker (RV), Co-Treasurer, kdhamakerjr@gmail.com
- Brenda Brohard (PR), Past President, brendabrohard@gmail.com
- Dave Thomas, Photographer, datmat@aol.com
- Joline Matheson, Membership Chair jnjmat@gmail.com

Current Membership Roll

Ray Beery
Barry Berger
Fred Bishopp, Jr
Murray Bradley
Page Bradley
Brenda Brohard
Steve Creskoff
Kay Curley
John Downey
Nancy Downey
Jerry Frola
Joe Gibson
Rosa Gibson
Steve Gross
Trudy Gross
Kenton Hamaker
Peggy Hamaker
Jim Grefer

Carol Hall-Veit
Neelan Henderson
Wes Henderson
Kathleen Hughes
Fran Hurley
Wayne Kaiser
Hosny Khordagui
Peggy King
Ken Konwin
Judith Kory
Eva Leavitt
Michael Leavitt
Barbara Leone
Joline Matheson
Doug McCollum
Sue McCollum
Sue Merk
Joyce Mitchell
Pat Monahan

Elsa Moustafa
Andrew Norton
Memory Porter
Jeannie Raddatz
Michael Raddatz
Elizabeth Rubio
Travis Sample
Ann Schmitt
Catherine Shepard
Hugh Sockett
Dennis Spriggs
Janet Taliaferro
Anne A Thomas
Anne H Thomas
Bill Thomas
Dave Thomas
George Viener
Britt Wilford
Dona Wolf

When I get on stage, my first goal is not to show my expertise, but to give a bit of happiness, of joy, of cheerfulness. I am firmly convinced that in order to sing well, you must love your neighbor...

Andrea Bocelli