



BLUE RIDGE TORCH CLUB OF LEESBURG VIRGINIA

Celebrating 18 Years in Lansdowne

January 2025

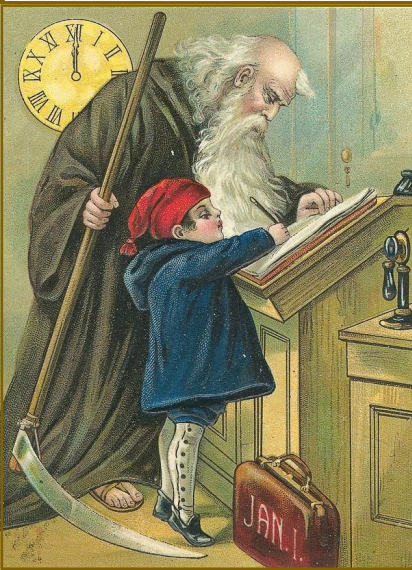
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Treasurer's Report

On December 01, 2024, the Blue Ridge Torch Club had \$4,236 for Torch operations.

*Happy New Year
to friends & families*



Next Month: Steve Creskoff, "Integrating Russia into the Western World."

January Torch Talk and Dinner, 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Clubhouse Auditorium

"Lansdowne Woods: Backyard Stories" by Dave Thomas

For 24 years at Lansdowne Woods of Virginia, Dave has experienced the backyards, gardens, woods, and life (wild and otherwise) surrounding our condo buildings. He has taken hundreds of photos and collected many (very short) stories. He promises to select some of the most interesting to prove the old adage that there is "more-than-meets-the-eye" along the perimeter trail of our 46-acre tract.

You will also get a glimpse of our transition to Lansdowne Woods in 2016. As many know, we started as Leisure World long before that, in 1997.

David Alden Thomas, one of the legions of descendants of the Mayflower pilgrims, John Alden and Priscilla Mullins, grew up in Indianapolis, studied metallurgical engineering at Cornell University, and then earned an Sc.D. from MIT. His career was mainly in teaching and research at Lehigh University, after five years at MIT and five years in industrial research.

Dave learned photography in the darkrooms of microscopy laboratories in academia and is now an enthusiastic, albeit low-tech, digital photographer.

Dave has been married 68 years to Anne H. They have 3 children, 6 grandchildren, and their first great-grandchild in 2024.

Dinner Costs and Menu

Marie's began catering our Torch Club dinners in December 2023 for \$40/\$45 for members and guests, respectively. Last summer the Torch Executive Board negotiated dinner prices down to \$35/\$40 beginning in the fall. Unfortunately, the increased cost of food and staff have forced Marie's to return to our original costs \$40/\$45 effective for the January dinner.

Menu: Our January dinner will include: Complimentary Signature Cocktails; Traditional Caesar Salad; Entrée choice of Creamy Tuscan Salmon or Grilled Chicken Parmesan served with Penne Pasta and Steamed Broccoli; or a Vegetarian dish; Dessert: Apple Pie ala Mode and Coffee.

Firm reservations or cancellations must be made by Thursday, January 9 or the individual will be responsible for payment. Please use the website: BlueRidgeTorchClub.org (Register for Jan 14 Meeting). If you have difficulty using the form, contact **Anne A. Thomas** or **Dona Wolf**; contact info is in the newsletter.

December Holiday Party

Our biggest activity at the Torch Holiday Party is always the book exchange. We had a very interesting range of books at our this year: autobiographies, historical novels, detective mysteries, and philosophy and religion.

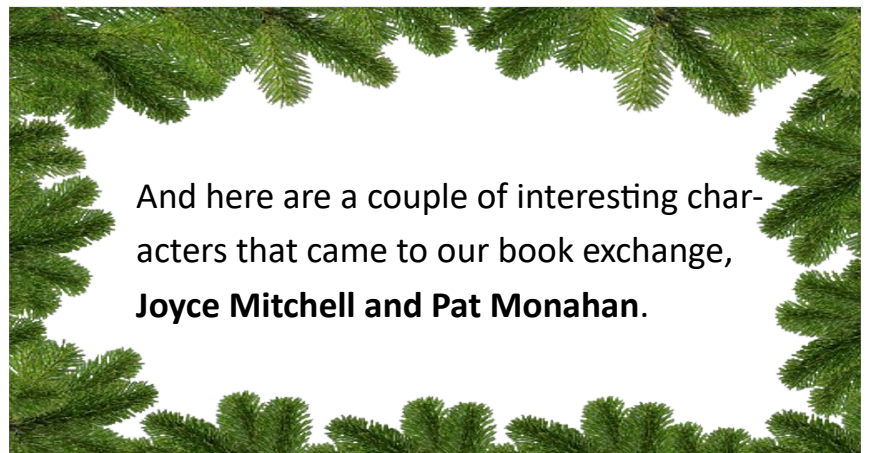
The most popular book was "The Women" by Kristin Hannah, a novel based upon dozens of first person interviews of Army nurses on the battlefield of Vietnam.

After you've read your book, please consider bringing it to a future Torch Club dinner for our Bring One -Take One book trade.

Here is the list books from this year's exchange



<u>Book</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Subject</u>
• Champagne Conspiracy	Ellen Crosby	Wine Country (VA) Mystery
• Stoned	Aja Raden	Non-Fiction – History of Jewels That Changed the World
• The Women (3 copies brought)	Kristen Hannah	U.S. Army Nurses in Vietnam
• Dangerous Minds	Janet Evanovich	Mystery–Popular American Author
• Remarkably Bright Creatures	Shelby Van Pelt	Novel: Octopus and Friend
• 1984	George Orwell	Novel - Dystopian Classic
• 44 Scotland Street	Alexander McCall Smith	Novel - Edinburgh Neighborhood
• The Rose Code	Kate Quinn Historic	Fiction – WW II: (Bletchley Park, UK)
• Nothing to Declare	Mary Morris	Non-Fiction - Woman Traveling Alone
• Pompei	Mary Beard	Historical Fiction
• Kon Tiki: Impossible Voyage	Deborah Kogan Ray	Thor Heyerdahl- Raft to Polynesia
• Knife	Salman Rushdie	Autobiography
• Finding Darwin's God	Kenneth R. Miller	Non-Fiction – Science & Religion
• Interesting Facts for Curious Minds	Jordan Moore	Eclectic - Science, Pop Culture and Everything in Between
• Educated: A Memoir	Tara Westover	Autobiography – Survivalist to Academia
• Brief Answers to Big Questions	Stephen Hawkings	Non-Fiction – Thought-Provoking



And here are a couple of interesting characters that came to our book exchange,
Joyce Mitchell and Pat Monahan.

President's Column

A big 'shout out' goes to **Nancy Downey and Anne A. Thomas** for coordinating our wonderful annual Holiday Party on December 10. We celebrated with 40 members and their significant others in the Clubhouse. Marie's served a nice meal, though we missed our cranberry/apple pie with ice cream. Restaurant manager **Natalie Ramos** has promised that we will get apple pie ala mode at our January dinner although she can't promise that cranberries will still be in season.

Surprise New Member

A surprise at the dinner was the induction of one new member-- **Terry Wilford!** His wife **Britt** had submitted an application for Terry without his knowledge, paid his dues, and wanted him to enjoy all the benefits that she does as a member. Terry was pleased at Britt's gesture, but sorry to lose the proud moniker he has held for years as our club's Permanent Guest.

A Secret Santa

Our traditional book exchange went quite well with 18 books gifted by members. Several of those books were later 'stolen' by other members after the books were unwrapped and revealed. An unexpected twist occurred when **Hugh Sockett**, the last person to choose a book, selected one of two books left on the table. He removed the wrappings to discover it had been left by a Secret Santa and included a \$50 gift certificate to a local restaurant. With one book remaining on the table (apparently Santa didn't take a book), Hugh was able to claim that one as well. His two books were *The Imperious Laird* by John Campbell Fourth Earl of Loudoun, and *The Women* by Kristin Hannah. The Hannah book must be an excellent read as three different members recommended and donated them at our book exchange.

The party ended with singing a few Christmas carols, a nice ending to a festive party.

The Blue Ridge Torch Club officers wish all of you a Happy New Year!

- 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
- Dave Thomas, Photographer, datmat@aol.com
- Joline Matheson, Membership Chair, jnjmat@gmail.com



Current Membership Roll

Ray Beery	Kenton Hamaker	Elsa Moustafa
Barry Berger	Peggy Hamaker	Andrew Norton
Fred Bishopp, Jr	Neelan Henderson	Memory Porter
Murray Bradley	Wes Henderson	Jeannie Raddatz
Page Bradley	Kathleen Hughes	Michael Raddatz
Brenda Brohard	Fran Hurley	Travis Sample
Steve Creskoff	Wayne Kaiser	Ann Schmitt
Kay Curley	Peggy King	Catherine Shepard
John Downey	Ken Konwin	Hugh Sockett
Nancy Downey	Judith Kory	Dennis Spriggs
Hosny El-Khordagui	Eva Leavitt	Janet Taliaferro
Jerry Frola	Michael Leavitt	Anne A Thomas
Joe Gibson	Barbara Leone	Anne H Thomas
Rosa Gibson	Joline Matheson	Bill Thomas
Jim Grefer	Doug McCollum	Dave Thomas
Steve Gross	Sue McCollum	George Viener
Trudy Gross	Sue Merk	Britt Wilford
Carol Hall-Veit	Joyce Mitchell	Terry Wilford
	Pat Monahan	Dona Wolf

“One ought, every day at least, to hear a little song, read a good poem, see a fine picture and, if it were possible, to speak a few reasonable words.”

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe