



BLUE RIDGE TORCH CLUB OF LEESBURG VIRGINIA

Celebrating 18 Years in Lansdowne

April 2025

In the Newsletter

President's Column	Page 2
Early Torch Papers	Page 2
New Member Bargain	Page 3
April Holidays	Page 3
Website News	Page 4
Future Torch Talks	Page 4
Torch Officers	Page 4
Torch Membership	Page 5

Treasurer's Report

As of February 28, 2025, the Blue Ridge Torch Club had a balance of \$4,287.

Happy Administrative Professionals Day



**Coming in May: Hosny
Khordagui: "Plastic Journey,
Crude Oil to Nano Particles"**

Blue Ridge Torch Club Dinner April 8, Clubhouse Auditorium.

BYOB Happy Hour 5:30 and Dinner at 6:00

Speaker, Michael Leavitt: "History of Zionism"

The history of Zionism spans thousands of years, from its roots in ancient biblical texts through its continuous appearance in Jewish prayer books to its modern manifestation as a political movement in the late 19th Century and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

Mike's talk will trace the development of Zionist ideas and aspirations from biblical times through key historical periods, culminating in the creation of Israel and ongoing debates surrounding Zionism today.

Mike has a Ph.D. in Political Science from Northwestern University and a Master's Degree in Jewish Studies from Baltimore Hebrew University. He has taught Jewish history, philosophy, and mysticism in adult education programs at a variety of locations in the Baltimore and Washington, DC area.



Mike is a very popular speaker within LWVA, and has conducted several lectures on a broad array of topics.

Menu for Dinner: Dinner begins with a Caesar Salad. Entrée choices are Beef Fajitas, Glazed Salmon w/ Creamed Spinach, or a Vegan Option. For dessert we have Apple Strudel.

The price is \$40 members and \$45 guests. Pay cash or check at the door.

To make a reservation, use our website www.blueridgetorchclub.org, click on the icon "Reservation for April" or call Anne Thomas at 571-291-3206 or Dona Wolf at 571-333-2500.

Cancellations must be made by Thursday, April 3 or individuals will be responsible for payment.

Good Deal for new Blue Ridge Torch Club members:

See page 3, "Special Offer"

President's Column

By the time of our dinner meeting on April 8, we probably will have seen the end of winter and should be able to enjoy the next few months of warming spring weather before summer's heat descends upon us.

This dinner meeting is especially important for members as Nominating Committee Chair Brenda Brohard will present the slate of Torch Club officers for 2025–2027. There will be candidates nominated for President, Vice President, Secretary/Newsletter Editor, and Treasurer (or two co-treasurers). Once the slate is announced, additional candidates may be nominated from the floor. If any club members wish to receive a description of these officers' duties, they should contact Brenda at brendabrohard@gmail.com. The election will be held at our Annual Dinner Meeting on May 13 by those members in attendance.

The last two Torch Talks for this program year will help inform us about current international issues. On April 8, Mike Leavitt will discuss the "History and Culture of Zionism" and how the recent unrest in the Middle East stems from those historical roots. In May, Hosny Khordagui, Ph.D. and former Director of the Arab Water Governance Program at the United Nations will discuss the rapid evolution of plastic from its genesis in crude oil to the invasion of nano particles in our bodies and the resultant damage to our health. Both of these are serious issues on a global level and neither program should be missed.

We hope to see you there.

Early Blue Ridge Torch Club Presented Papers by Anne A Thomas

When our Club was first chartered in 2007, members from other Torch Clubs served as club speakers until our members had time to prepare their own Torch Talks. These guest speakers left written copies of their talks for our records. When our own members began doing their own Torch Talks, several of them contributed their Torch papers as well. Some might write their talks in advance to help with their delivery, though it was never required, and we discouraged members from reading their talks to us. (That would be boring).

After presenting, any interested Torch member can reformat their talk and submit it to the Torch magazine for national publication. Standards for The Torch have stricter editorial requirements and peer review, but several of our members have been published and two currently sit on the magazine's Editorial Board.

Here is a selection of those early Torch papers:

- "What Are The French Thinking and What Should Americans Think About it?"
by N. Hartley Schearer, Jr. (Member, Hagerstown Torch Club) 2007
- "Confucius and Ancient History's Impact on the Modern Age" by George DuBois (Member, Frederick Club of Maryland and Founder, Blue Ridge Torch Club) 2007
- "Why is Loudoun County Named for John Campbell of Scotland" by Douglas Foard 2007
- "Which Way to the Environmental Revolution" by Noel Grove (founding member) 2007
- "The Pursuit of Happiness" by Ann Foard (founding member) Oct. 2007
- "Galileo, Scientific Trailblazer" by David Thomas (founding member) Nov. 2007
- "The Power of Place" by Deborah A Lee, PhD Feb. 2008
- "From the Right to Vote to the Power to Lead" by Anne H. Thomas March 2008

Special Offer for New Members

Regular membership in the Torch Club is \$80 per year for the first member and \$40 for the second person in the same household. Membership benefits include lower dinner prices, invitation to our 'members-only' Annual Picnic in June and Holiday Dinner in December (with spouses / significant others), and a subscription to our Torch Magazine, a three-times a year publication with a collection of selected Torch Talks. Annual member renewal is September.

As a special offer, the Torch Club is promoting "early" club memberships for the period April 2025 thru June 2026 (15 months) to prospective new members if they join by June 4 this year. For an application form, contact Membership Chair Joline Matheson at jnjmat@gmail.com or Dona Wolf at donawolf@aol.com.

National Celebrations in April

April has no official U.S. national holidays well, none that get us a day off from work. But the month is not without its celebrations. Here are just a few notable ones just for fun.

Administrative Professionals Week, April 21-25: The holiday shows our appreciation for the hard work our administrators perform. Originally formed as National Secretary's Week in 1952, it was changed in 1981 to National Administrative Professional's Week to incorporate all the types of duties they currently do.

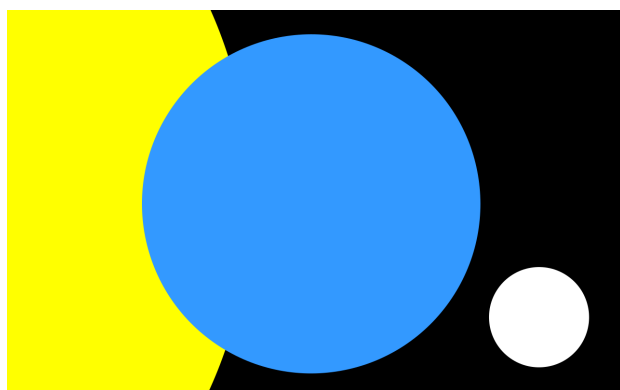
Earth Day April 22: A worldwide holiday to demonstrate and encourage thought and action on the environment, Earth Day received international sanction in 1970 in a proclamation written by peace activist John McConnell and signed by Secretary General U. Thant of the United Nations.

National Find a Rainbow Day: April 25: "There are people that see rainbows as an artistic masterpiece in the sky, to others it is a sign of hope and to many a sign of promise."

Jill Magnus

St. Stupid Day April 1: Started in 1979 by Bishop Joey of the First Church of the Last Laughter, St. Stupid Day celebrates the belief that a unifying characteristic of society is stupidity. A St. Stupid Day parade, in which participants are encouraged to dress silly and act foolish, is held annually in San Francisco.

Śmigus-Dyngus April 21: Celebrated Easter Monday in Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe, it is tradition for boys and young men to chase and throw water over girls and young women they like and vice-versa. Traced back to the 14th century, the water is thought to represent the Sacrament of Baptism.



Candidate for Earth Day Flag
Artwork by James W. Cadle

Blue Ridge Torch Club Website News

The Blue Ridge Torch Club website, blueridgetorchclub.org, is being viewed and used by guests. As of March 23rd, even before our newsletter has been sent out or The Connector distributed, three guests signed up for our April 8th dinner meeting and talk, “The Culture and History of Zionism.”

Also, there have been 15 views of Steve Creskoff’s talk, “Our Man in Moscow” which is ready for view in the “Videos—Past Talks” page of the website. We hope to record more videos of future talks.

Soon we will also publish written papers from the early days of our club. Happy reading!

Future Torch Talks – 2026 and Beyond

While one or two members have already volunteered to present a Torch Talk in September or October, it is not too soon for other members to consider what Torch Talk they might make next year. Of our 56 members, 26 have given at least one Torch Talk and one member has given nine talks (9? Yep, that’s right! Anyone guess who?)

Use your imagination and come up with an interesting topic. Your talk does not have to be publication-ready (like articles submitted by Torch clubs from around the country to be published in the thrice yearly Torch Magazine), nor does it have to be scholarly. It can be serious or light-hearted, related to your professional work experience, or a reflection of your most passionate hobbies. At our April dinner, I will provide a list of Torch Talks presented by current members during the past 18 years showcase the wide diversity of subjects covered. Surely you could come up with one of your own!

The Blue Ridge Torch Officers Wish You Happy Find a Rainbow Day!

- Dona Wolf (RV), President, donawolf@aol.com; 571-333-2500
- Anne A. Thomas (PR), Vice President, anneathomas@gmail.com: 571-291-3206
- Jim Grefer (PR), Secretary & Newsletter Editor, greferjames@gmail.com: 571-215-5053
- Judy Kory (RB), Co-Treasurer, jjkory@comcast.com: 703-858-2448
- Kent Hamaker (RV), Co-Treasurer, kdhamakerjr@gmail.com: 703-237-9371
- Brenda Brohard (PR), Past President, brendabroad@gmail.com: 703-409-2944
- Dave Thomas, Photographer, datmat@aol.com
- Joline Matheson, Membership Chair, jnjmat@gmail.com

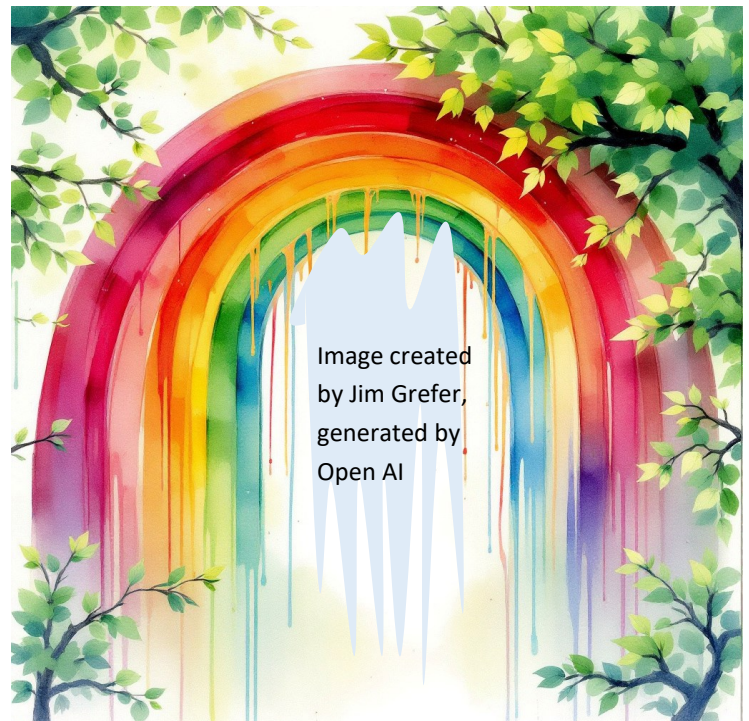


Image created
by Jim Grefer,
generated by
Open AI

Current Members

Ray Beery
Barry Berger
Fred Bishopp, Jr
Murray Bradley
Page Bradley
Brenda Brohard
Steve Creskoff
Kay Curley
John Downey
Nancy Downey
Hosny El-Khordagui
Jerry Frola
Joe Gibson
Rosa Gibson
Jim Grefer
Steve Gross
Trudy Gross
Carol Hall-Veit

Kenton Hamaker
Peggy Hamaker
Neelam Henderson
Wes Henderson
Kathleen Hughes
Fran Hurley
Wayne Kaiser
Peggy King
Ken “Crash” 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
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
Terry Wilford
Dona Wolf

“A team that trusts its leader—and each other—is more likely to be successful.”

Mike Krzyzewski

Head coach, Duke University Blue Devils, 1980-2022

Winner of five NCAA Div. 1 Men’s Basketball Championships