



BLUE RIDGE TORCH CLUB OF LEESBURG VIRGINIA

Celebrating 18 Years in Lansdowne

June 2025

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Treasurer's Report

As of May 15, 2025, the Blue Ridge Torch Club had a balance of \$5,144.

*Happy Fathers'
Day
June 16*



Coming next Fall

Dennis Spriggs, "The Mountain Gorillas of Rwanda"

Torch Club Picnic June 10, Clubhouse Auditorium, BYOB

Doors open 5:30 and dinner at 6:00

Menu for Picnic: The restaurant will be cooking up hamburgers, hotdogs, and veggie burgers, and an assortment of picnic style salads and deserts. The price is \$30 for members and spouses or significant others. Please pay cash or check at the door.

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

Cancellations must be made by **Thursday, June 5** or individuals will be responsible for payment.

President's Column

Club Elections: Let me begin by congratulating new Torch Club officers for 2025—2027:

- President Wayne Kaiser, Potomac Ridge
- Vice President Ken "Crash" Konwin, Riverview
- Secretary / Newsletter Editor Jim Grefer, Potomac Ridge
- Treasurer Fred Bishopp, Riverbend
- Vice Treasurer Joline Matheson, Riverbend

Our club is fortunate to have a group of such experienced managers who are committed to Torch Club goals of promoting learning and discussion from Torch Talks and sharing ideas in a collegial dinner setting. We look forward to their efforts to offer interesting and informative dinner programs in the future.

During the next few weeks, current and future officers will be working to transition their respective duties and to make plans for the Fall. We already have speakers scheduled for Torch Talks in September and October, while other members have indicated an interest in giving a talk in November or between January and May 2026.

(President's Column continues on page 3)

Summary of May Torch Talk: Plastic Journey from Crude Oil to Nano Particles in Our Bodies

Dr. Hosny Khordagui started his presentation by briefly explaining how plastic is manufactured through polymerization and cracking light fractions of oil. He identified the largest world plastic producers, their current and future production plans. He also named the world's largest plastic polluters, their per-capita consumption, the extent of marine plastic pollution and the serious ecological consequences.



Dr. Khordagui talked about how plastic accumulates and disintegrates in the environment, listing the main sources of Nano plastic (synthetic textile, tires, city dust, road markings, marine coating and personal care products). He discussed the routes of human exposure through drinking water, food, respiration, tea bags, chewing gum, etc., whereby micro and nano plastics accumulate at alarming levels in human kidneys, liver and brains.

Dr. Hosny offered some ideas how we can minimize MNPs at home, alongside his judgement on how feasible such actions would be.

1. Don't heat food in plastic containers. This is highly feasible, and helpful for individual health.
2. Avoid using the plastic water bottles. This is somewhat feasible, and would help the environment immensely.
3. Minimize synthetic fibers, that is, use 100% linen, cotton, wool, silk, angora, etc. These can be called the Elon Musk or Bill Gates options because of the expense, and are not really feasible in modern society.
4. Avoid foods with plastic packaging and wrapping. This is not feasible in the modern market system.

The audience went home, appropriately alarmed, but also substantially educated about one of the world's

Plastic Birds by Dona Wolf

If anyone thinks that that our recent talk on Plastics is alarmist or hyperbolic, let us cite an article in the Washington Post on May 16, 2025:

"On a remote Australian island, the birds are so full of plastic they crunch. On Lord Howe Island, 360 miles off Australia's east coast, marine ecologist Alex Bond discovered a dead bird with 778 individual pieces of plastic packed into its stomach 'like a brick'. It beat last year's grim record in which a bird was found to contain about 400 pieces.

Researchers think the seabirds, sable shearwaters, have been fishing pieces of plastic from the ocean and feeding them to their chicks. "This isn't microplastics," said Bond. "We are talking about items up to and including the size of bottle caps, cutlery, clothes peg, take away soy sauce fish bottles from restaurants." That's the sort of thing we're finding in the stomachs of 80-day old chicks."

President's Column (continued from page 1)

May 13th Torch Dinner – Our last Torch Talk for this program year coincided with our Annual Meeting and the 18th anniversary of our club chartered in 2007. As we begin our 19th year, Treasurer Kent Hamaker reported that we have a robust treasury of over \$5,000.

Membership Chair Joline Matheson inducted our newest Torch member **Madelon Eisenberg** from Riverview, bringing our total membership to a new high record of 62. The Nominating Committee of Brenda Brohard, Nancy Downey and Mike Leavitt presented a slate of well-qualified candidates who were elected by unanimous acclaim.

Torch Talk- Hosny EL-Khordagui gave a powerful presentation on Plastics and the horrendous damage plastic micro and nano particles are inflicting on our environment and people all over the world. It was a very sobering subject and one that we must take seriously.



Madelon Eisenberg and Joline Matheson

Annual Picnic - As we prepare for our Annual Picnic on June 10, with a buffet of grilled hamburgers and hot dogs, I want to encourage as many of our members as possible to come. We've had a great couple of years and strengthened our club considerably. My deepest appreciation goes to our team of wonderful officers who worked hard to make our dinners and talks go smoothly and to all those who volunteered to help out, from greeters, to our technical/ video crew, and especially to our speakers who are the heart of the Torch Club.

Thank you all.

Dona Wolf

World Oceans Day June 8, 2025:

World Oceans Day is the brainchild of Canada's International Centre for Ocean Development (ICOD) and the Ocean Institute of Canada (OIC).

Proposed by the ICOD and OIC in 2002 and officially recognized by the United Nations in 2008, its purpose is to "catalyze collective action for a healthy ocean and a stable climate, working together with youth leaders and a wide range of organizations and help create a better future with an abundant ocean and a stable climate, by working together." WorldOceanDay.org



Presenting 2025-2027 Torch Officers Elect



From left: Joline Matheson, Crash Konwin, Fred Bishopp, Jim Grefer, Wayne Kaiser, and Dona Wolf

Blue Ridge Torch Officers and Officers Elect wish all of you a Happy Fathers' Day

- Dona Wolf (RV), President, donawolf@aol.com
- Anne A. Thomas (PR), Vice President, anneathomas@gmail.com
- Jim Grefer (PR), Secretary & 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, brendabroad@gmail.com
- Wayne Kaiser, President Elect: wkaiser2367@gmail.com
- Ken "Crash" Konwin, Vice President Elect: kkonwin@aol.com
- Jim Grefer, Secretary/Newsletter Editor Elect: greferjames@gmail.com
- Fred Bishopp, Treasurer Elect fredbishopp@hotmail.com
- Joline Matheson, Vice Treasurer Elect: jnjmat@gmail.com
- Dona Wolf (RV), Past President, donawolf@aol.com



Current Members

Charlene Ahmed

Syed Ahmed

Ray Beery

Barry Berger

Fred Bishopp, Jr

Murray Bradley

Page Bradley

Brenda Brohard

Steve Creskoff

Kay Curley

John Downey

Nancy Downey

Madelon Eisenberg

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

Maria Kelly

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

Bill Phillips

Pat Phillips

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

"Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves."

Carl Sagan, "Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space"

We hope you are looking at this in color.