

Blue Ridge Torch Club of Leesburg
February 7, 2017
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Presentation for February 21, 2017

Speaker: Susan Merk, “Become a Nature Enthusiast in Your Own Back Yard”

Did you know: The lovely wooded area behind Riverbend is not just ordinary woodlands, but rather an official Audubon Bird Sanctuary which was created in 2000. To uphold the sanctuary requirements, fallen trees must not be removed, the underbrush must be preserved for ground-feeding birds and bird-feeding stations must be maintained year-round. More than 100 species of birds have been sighted by the avid bird watchers who live in Lansdowne Woods. In addition, almost 50 varieties of wildflowers and trees have been identified along its paths. Come and see the wealth of birds and flowers we have right in our backyard, and learn how you can be a nature enthusiast not only within Lansdowne Woods' grounds but in the surrounding areas in Northern Virginia.

Torch Club’s First President’s Notes

BLUE RIDGE TORCH CLUB CELEBRATES A TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY

In late 2006 and early 2007, George Du Bois, a long-term member of the Frederick Torch Club in Maryland, with help from other Frederick Torch Club members Anne and Dave Thomas, began sowing the seeds for a new Torch Club in Loudoun County. Working with staff at the George C. Marshall International Center (Dodona Manor) and the Balch Library, George identified a group of historians, docents, scientists and others he thought might be interested in forming their own local dinner club to share ideas and thoughts through member talks. Lunch meetings were held at the Tuscarora Mill in Leesburg to explain the history, organization and goals of the International Association of Torch Clubs (IATC), then numbering about 70 clubs scattered around the country.

As a growing number of people expressed interest in forming a new club, dinner meetings were held in January and February at the Magnolias in Purcellville. To help launch this new effort, Torch Club members came from Frederick and Hagerstown, Maryland to give talks previously made to their own clubs. In March, sufficient member interest indicated that officers were needed to organize the new group. Anne Thomas nominated Dona Wolf to be the new president, just seconds before Dona would have nominated Anne for the same job. Several others quickly volunteered to serve in other administrative capacities, and the new Blue Ridge Torch Club of Virginia was on its way to being born.

The new officers decided that a more suitable dinner location with larger, well-lit space and lower cost meals was needed. After sampling several local restaurants, La Pergola in Leisure World was chosen as the ideal venue. On May 8, 2007, national IATC president Anne Sterling chartered our Torch Club with 23 members, and we became official. Charter members still active include Ray Beery, Murray and Page Bradley, Anne and Dave Thomas, and Dona Wolf, with George DuBois as our Honorary Founding Father.

In the 10 years since chartering, our Torch Club has grown to 44 members, even as membership has changed significantly. Club members participate actively in regional and national levels of IATC, have hosted the Region 3 annual meeting, published several papers in the Torch Club magazine, had two finalists for the prestigious Paxton Award, and each year send delegates to the IATC convention.

The club is still committed to pursuing its primary goal of “providing a place where ideas flow together, sometimes clash, and often explode into new patterns of thought; where varied disciplines meet face-to-face and share social and intellectual adventure . . . in a place where active minds become more active and personal growth emerges for those who participate.”

We look forward to the next 10 years of our Blue Ridge Torch Club as we interact with a wonderful assembly of thoughtful and interesting members.

Dona Wolf, Blue Ridge Torch Club’s First President

Vice President's Notes

Our program for this year is as follows. (It is, of course, subject to change.)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Title</u>
March 21, 2017	Tehmi Jamaspian	Spring Equinox Celebrations
April 18, 2017	George Viener	The Art of Cigar Store Figures
May 16, 2017	Irene Kelner	The Voice of America
June 20, 2017	Summer Party	

Reservations and Cancellations

Gini Laughlin receives reservations by phone or email: 703-729-2647 or giniix.laughlin@gmail.com. If you want a change in the listed entrée, you should let Gini know when you make your reservation. If you need to cancel your reservation, please call Gini at least a day in advance of the scheduled event. Please do not call the restaurant to cancel.

Reservations for this month should be made not later than Friday, February 17.

Blue Ridge Torch Club Officers for 2016-2017

President, Mike Leavitt, michael.leavitt@gmail.com

Vice President, Eva Leavitt, eml@rocketmail.com

Secretary/Newsletter Editor, Beth Schlabach,
bethkschlabach@gmail.com

Treasurer, Dave Thomas, datmatdat@gmail.com

Reservations Chair, Gini Laughlin, giniix.laughlin@gmail.com

Blue Ridge Torch Club Members

Rose-Joan Barron, Ray Beery, Murray & Page Bradley, Brenda Brohard, Joe Comtois, Kay Curley, Marge DeSimone, Nancy Downey, Audrey Emley, Helen Falkenmeyer, Ann Gratz, Dolores Heck, Shirley Laing, Gini Laughlin, Mike & Eva Leavitt, Dianne Lebonville, Dan Lyons, Jackie Meeks, Susan Merk, Anne Miller, Jack Miller, Bill Muncy, Peg Neustadt, Bonnie & Stan Olenn, Memory Porter, Ann Robinson, Bert & Beth Schlabach, Marilyn Schwing, Marbeth Spreyer, Cosima Stankaitis, Gail Stanley, Janet Taliaferro, Anne A. Thomas, Anne H. & Dave Thomas, George Viener, Ursula Wagman, Bonnie Wohlford, Britt Wilford, Dona Wolf, and Anita Zatz

Region 3 New Opportunities - SAVE THE DATES:

Come meet your fellow Torchers! All Welcome!

Monday, April 24, Ceresville Mansion, Frederick, MD

3:00 - leadership workshop, all invited. Jim Coppinger, Executive Secretary, IATC, special guest. We did this last year in Chambersburg, and we learned a lot from each other.

6:00 cocktails, delicious buffet dinner

7:30 speaker - "Cuba" by Anne and Dave Thomas - sorry if you have heard this before, but we will bring the saga up to date.

9:00 adjourn

Reservation details TBA

International Association of Torch Clubs Convention, June 16-18, Kalamazoo, MI

A great time and great opportunity to see this fabulous country of ours and meet interesting people. Page and Murray Bradley will be delegates from our club. All welcome. More details TBA.

“Rainforest to Canal” March 9-21, Costa Rica and the Panama Canal

This is an exclusive travel and learning experience for Torch members, family and friends.

Anne H. Thomas, IATC, Director Region 3