



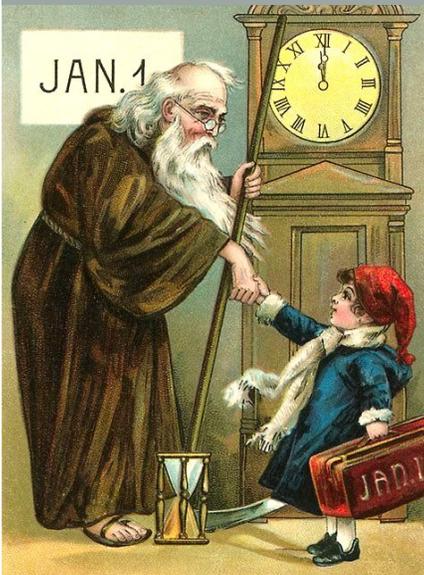
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**Treasurer’s Report**

On December 5, 2025, the Blue Ridge Torch Club had an operating balance of \$5,358.

We wish you a very  
**Happy New Year**



**Coming February 10:**  
**Page Bradley: “What My Father Saw in World War II”**

**BLUE RIDGE TORCH CLUB Dinner, Tuesday, January 13, 2026**

**Ambiance Banquet Restaurant Doors open at 5:30. Dinner at 6:00.**

**Syed Ahmed: “FDR to Bill Clinton: 50 Years of Revolution in Cardiology”**

At the end of World War II, or more precisely at the time of the death of FDR in February 1945, we did not even have a single medicine to control high blood pressure.

Today, though, we have at our disposal, many effective treatments to control high blood pressure, to lower cholesterol, to diagnose coronary artery disease, as well as medicines and surgical interventions to prevent heart attacks and death.

How did the knowledge in cardiology advance so much and so rapidly, especially during those 50 years? Dr. Ahmad will present a story of the struggle to detect and defeat the greatest disease to threaten the human race. It was a medical revolution in cardiology.

Dr. Ahmed is a Cardiologist, certified by the American Board of Cardiology since 1976. He and his wife, Charlene, moved to Blue Ridge in May 2025.

**Menu for January Dinner.** Dinner begins with a Caesar Salad; Entrees are Chicken Marsala with shallots, mushrooms, in a creamy Marsala wine sauce, or Roasted Salmon with tomatoes, garlic, basil lemon sauce; mashed potatoes, grilled asparagus. A vegetarian dish with protein is available. Dessert will be served.

**Price** is \$45 for members and \$50 for guests. Please leave a check with your building representative, or a check or cash at the door. For reservations go to [blueridgetorchclub.org](http://blueridgetorchclub.org). Click on the red icon “January 13th Meeting.” The deadline for RSVP or cancellation is Thursday, January 9. Those who cancel after the deadline will be responsible for payment.

**Torch Speakers for Winter and Spring 2026**

Here are the Torch talks for the rest of Winter and Spring:

February: Page Bradley, “What My Father Saw in World War II”

March: Hugh Sockett, “Analysis of *The Way We Live Now*” 1975 and 2025”

April: Mike Leavitt, “Climate Change Skepticism”

May: Joe Dockery, “The Evolution of Chiropractic Treatment”

## President's Column

Our December Holiday Party was a big success. A huge thank you to Dona Wolf and Nancy Downey for making it so memorable! The food and service provided by Joe Laura's La Villa Roma of Leesburg was fantastic. The annual book exchange was well engaged with over two dozen exciting books contributed by our well-read, well-educated, and intellectually curious membership. It was great getting back to our Lansdowne Woods auditorium once again.

I am looking forward to what 2026 holds in store for us. We have very interesting speakers and topics lined up, beginning with Dr. Syed Ahmed's January talk on the technology in cardiology. His presentation will again be held at the Ambiance Restaurant and Banquet Hall. A delicious meal will be served buffet style, which seemed to work famously last time in November. The Ambiance has served us well while we wait for our new restaurant to open, hopefully sometime soon.

A Happy and Healthy New Year to you all!

Wayne

## Our Newest Members

**Christine Caldwell** was born and raised in Worcester, Massachusetts. Her life path was set when she started flying airplanes at the age of 15. She went on to obtain degrees in Aeronautics. She worked as an instructor pilot for several years, but airlines weren't hiring. So, she applied to the Federal Aviation Administration for Air Traffic Control.

Christine had a successful 32-year career with the FAA-Air Traffic Service, first at the radar center here in Leesburg, followed by Headquarters where she worked in accident investigation and as an evaluation-pilot. The last 15 years of her career she was the National Operations Manager at the Air Traffic Control System Command Center.

Following retirement in 2013, Christine pursued music and travel and has visited all seven continents. She has one daughter in Mobile, Alabama. Christine moved to Lansdowne Woods in January 2025 and looks forward to being involved in Torch and other activities.

**Marilyn (Lyn) Green** was born in Ontario, Canada. She still has a house there and several close family members to visit when she returns home each year.

Lyn graduated from the University of Windsor with a BA in Social Sciences and London Teachers' College. She subsequently taught special education in Canada. She and her late physician husband moved to Fort Worth, Texas in 1994 where he was in private practice as a general practitioner. They lived there until 2013.

Lyn moved into Riverview in 2016 to be close to her daughter and grandchild. She is very active in a number of building activities. She is particularly interested in international travel. She and her husband traveled frequently to Europe, and she continues her travel by cruising.

Lyn recently joined Torch when she realized there were a lot of very interesting talks, some exciting new members, and she didn't want to miss out on all the fun.



Christine Caldwell and Joline Matheson at the Torch Club Holiday party

## Books Exchanged at the Torch Club December Holiday Party

The annual book exchange at our Holiday Party was a great success with 28 books being exchanged for new "reads" for 2026. The diversity in our membership was nicely reflected in the equally diverse themes in the books selected to be shared with others. One note of special interest: of the 28 books traded, seven of them (25%) involved health and medical themes (#1, 6, 8, 11, 16, 17 and 18 on the list below) which is a nice segue to the subject of our January Torch Talk - Cardiology.

	<u>Donated Book</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Short Summary</u>
1	<i>A Stroke of Insight</i>	Jill Bolte Taylor	This NYT bestseller chronicles how a brain scientist's own stroke led to enlightenment.
2	<i>Annie Between the States</i>	L. M. Elliott	A Young Adult novel of Civil War romance, forbidden love, and choosing sides.
3	<i>Cahill's Journal</i>	Jack Kelly	A midnight phone call, a lost journal and a 40-year old murder mystery (our own LWVA president Jack Kelly)
4	<i>The Edge</i>	David Baldacci	The 6:20 Man is dropped by his handlers into a small coastal town in Maine to solve the murder of a CIA agent.
5	<i>Empress of the Nile</i>	Lynne Olson	Non-Fiction - French archaeologist led int'l effort to save ancient temples from Nile floodwaters.
6	<i>Frozen River</i>	Ariel Lawhon	Gripping historical novel based upon life and diary of 18th Century midwife Martha Ballard.
7	<i>Galileo's Daughter</i>	Dava Sobel	Biography based upon letters from Galileo's daughter to her father, the 16th Century "Father of Science".
8	<i>The Great Influenza</i>	John M. Barry	The story of the deadliest pandemic in history, the Pandemic of 1918.
9	<i>I Heard You Paint Houses</i>	Charles Brandt	Closing the case on Jimmy Hoffa.
10	<i>Incredibly Bright Creature</i>	Shelby Van Pelt	Charming exploration of the friendship between a widow and a giant Pacific octopus in a marine aquarium.
11	<i>Lady Tan's Circle of Women</i>	Lisa See	Historical novel inspired by the true story of a woman physician in 15th Century China.
12	<i>Life on the Mississippi</i>	Rinker Buck	Mix of history, news reporting, travelogue, and introspection by the author who built an 1800 wooden flatboat.
13	<i>Making of the Atomic Bomb</i>	Richard Rhodes	The definitive history of nuclear weapons, from the discovery of nuclear energy to the Manhattan Project.
14	<i>The Mathematical Corporation</i>	Josh Sullivan	Business Model of the Future: alliance between machine mathematics and human imagination and intellect.
15	<i>Mexico</i>	Paul Gillingham	Over five centuries, Mexicans have prefigured and shaped the course human lives across the globe.

## More Books Exchanged in Our December Holiday Party

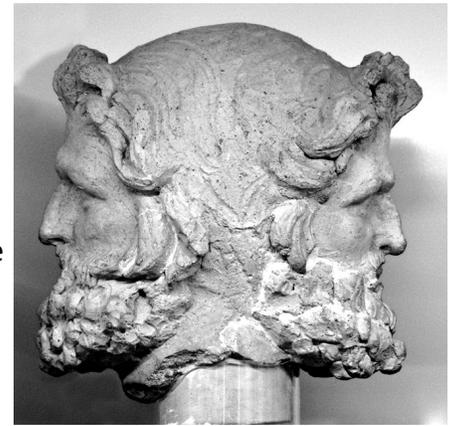
	<u>Donated Book</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Genre</u>
16	<i>Miracles Among Us</i>	Marc Siegel	A collection of powerful, true-life stories of healing, faith, and surprise, with a beautiful prayer guide inside.
17	<i>My Stoke of Luck</i>	Chanell Joan Havenga	Tell-all recounting of significant events stemming from ischemic stroke.
18	<i>Napoleon's Buttons</i>	Penny Le Cou-teur	An account of 17 groups of molecules that have greatly influenced the course of history.
19	<i>Not My Type: One Woman vs President</i>	E. Jean Carroll	Assault in a Dressing Room and subsequent legal battles in the courtroom.
20	<i>100 Rules for Living to 100</i>	Dick Van Dyke	An optimist's guide to a long, happy life and living to 100. His DOB - 12/13/1925
21	<i>Playground</i>	Richard Powers	This novel explores the last wild place we have yet to colonize in a still unfolding oceanic game.
22	<i>Rooster Bar</i>	John Grisham	Legal thriller concerning fraud in student loan programs and for-profit universities.
23	<i>Scientific Progress Goes Boink</i>	Bill Watterson	Calvin's inventions backfire: a collection of duplicator mishaps, adventures and classic Calvin and Hobbs chaos.
24	<i>Snowstorm in August</i>	Marshall Karp	Riveting new thriller about the world's most powerful drug lord who takes aim at New York City.
25	<i>Strangers in Time</i>	David Baldacci	Set in 1944 London, a bereaved bookshop owner and two teenagers scarred by WW II seeking healing and hope.
26	<i>This is Happiness</i>	Niall Willams	Enchanting novel set in the rural Irish village of Faha about the loves of our lives and the job of reminiscing.
27	<i>The Wager</i>	David Grann	True story of 1742 British galleon shipwrecked in Brazil with resulting survival, savagery and court marshalls.
28	<i>The Widow</i>	John Grisham	Novel - A small time lawyer accused of murder races to find the real killer to clear his name.

**Many thanks to Dona Wolf, Past President of the Blue Ridge Torch Club, for her efforts in gathering titles and authors, and writing book summaries to put this list together for us.**

## January 1 Holidays

By Jim Grefer

**New Year's Day, January 1:** Prior to the reign of Julius Ceasar in Rome, calendars were based on lunar phases rather than the revolution of the earth around the sun. But because lunar phases do not align with Solar cycles, calendars went frequently out of whack. Adjustments were primarily political and strategic, not scientific. Around 45 BC, *Julius Ceasar* reformed the calendar, moved it to the Solar cycle, and began the year on January 1. Why January? Probably because of *Roman god Janus* (pictured here), the double-headed god of entrances, transitions, beginnings, and endings. The expanding Roman Empire spread the Solar calendar throughout Europe. After a few leap-year corrections, *Pope Gregory XIII* replaced the "Julian" calendar with the "Gregorian" calendar, which eventually became the worldwide calendar. And speaking of Roman gods and goddesses, the *Roman goddess* of the New Year is the *Strenua*, goddess of strength and vigor (pictured here).

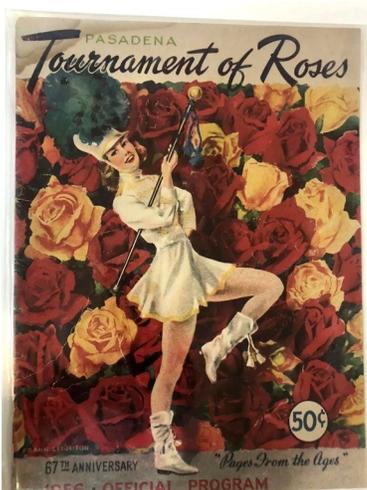


**National Hangover Day, January 1:** After celebrating the entrance of the new year, we can partake of a truly international tradition, the hangover. Caused by dehydration, metabolic disruption, and an inflammatory response to alcohol toxicity, hangovers are an all-too-common outcome of the New Year's Eve celebration. Made official in 2015 by two guys in *Bentonville, AR*, National Hangover Day is a humorous response to this common annual affliction.



**National Bloody Mary Day, January 1:** Once thought to be a terrific hangover cure, this concoction of vodka, tomato juice, Worcestershire sauce, and spices is thought to have been invented in 1921 by a French bar owner named *Fernand Petiot*. Or maybe it was an American bartender named *Henry Zbikievicz*. Whatever, it's a tasty drink. If you want to cure your hangover, though, it would be better to have a *Virgin Mary*, a Bloody Mary without the vodka.

**Tournament of Roses Parade and Rose Bowl Football Game, January 1:** Of course, no New Year's Day would be complete without the annual Rose Parade along Colorado Blvd. in Pasadena, CA. Founded in 1890 by *Professor Charles F. Holder*, mainly to show off to his friends in New York the beautiful California Winter, the parade is an extravaganza of flowers, floats, marching bands, and horse drawn chariots. The Parade of Roses is followed by the Rose Bowl Football Game. Begun in 1902, to generate revenue to pay for the parade, the Rose Bowl game has been played in Pasadena every year since 1917 (except for the 1941 game, played in N. Carolina). The game hosted the Pac-12 and Big-10 College Football Conferences for many years and is now part of the NCAA College Football Playoff Series. The Rose Parade and Rose Bowl Game is a proud American New Year's Day tradition. **HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE!**



## Martin Luther King Jr.

By Jim Grefer

He was born Michael King Jr. in Atlanta, GA on January 15, 1929. His father, the Reverend Michael King Sr, was pastor of the Ebenezer Baptist Church of Atlanta. In 1934 the Reverend Michael King Sr. was invited to attend the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) Conference in Berlin, Germany.

While there, Rev King Sr. visited the sites that celebrated Martin Luther, the leader of the Protestant Reformation. You may recall that in the year 1517 Martin Luther's 95 Theses criticized the actions of the Catholic Church that hurt its followers, and not only started the Protestant Reformation, but influenced the Catholic Church to reform itself.

In the years before the 1934 BWA conference, the Nazi Party had taken over the German government. Their actions led the BWA to adopt its *Resolution on Racialism* which condemned the "racial animosity, repression, and unfair discrimination toward Jews, toward colored people, and toward subject races all over the world. . ."

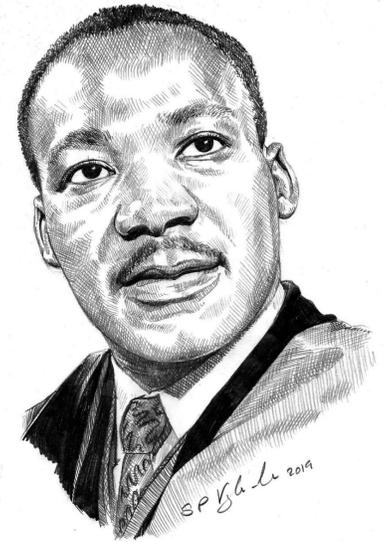
Inspired by the courageous actions of the German Priest Martin Luther, the Rev. Michael King Sr. (the father) changed his name to Martin Luther King, and changed his young son's name to Martin Luther King Jr.

King the father was also inspired by the resolutions of the BWA and became a major figure in the civil rights movement in Atlanta, becoming the director of the Atlanta chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), advocating for non-violent protest against the Jim Crow laws in Georgia, and leading the fight for equal teacher's pay in Atlanta.

Following in his father's footsteps, Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) was instrumental in the advancement of the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964, outlawing discrimination and segregation by race, religion, and sex in all public places, and the U.S. Voting Rights Act of 1965, outlawing discrimination of voting by race, religion, and sex.

Since 1983, the third Monday of every January (this year on January 19), is Martin Luther King Day, when we celebrate the courage, energy, compassion, and leadership in the non-violent protest by the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.

Each year, MLK Day shows us that America really is exceptional, not because we have always been moral and just, but because we have historically strived for positive progress in the direction of justice, morality, democracy, and freedom.



**“Injustice anywhere  
is a threat to justice  
everywhere”**

Martin Luther King Jr.  
*Letter from the Birmingham Jail, 1963*



## Current Members: January 2026

Charlene Ahmed	Lyn Green	Joyce Mitchell
Syed Ahmed	Jim Grefer	Pat Monahan
Barry Berger	Carol Hall-Veit	Elsa Moustafa
Fred Bishopp, Jr	Kenton Hamaker	Andrew Norton
Murray Bradley	Peggy Hamaker	Bill Phillips
Page Bradley	Neelam Henderson	Pat Phillips
Brenda Brohard	Wes Henderson	Memory Porter
Christine Caldwell	Kathleen Hughes	Ann Schmitt
Sheila Cramer	Fran Hurley	Catherine Shepard
Steve Creskoff	Wayne Kaiser	Hugh Sockett
Kay Curley	Maria Kelly	Dennis Spriggs
Tom Devaney	Peggy King	Anne A Thomas
Beckham Dickerson	Ken "Crash" Konwin	Anne H Thomas
Tina Dickerson	Judith Kory	Bill Thomas
Joe Dockery	Eva Leavitt	Dave Thomas
Marylyne Dockery	Michael Leavitt	George Viener
Nancy Downey	Barbara Leone	Janet Walker
Madelon Eisenberg	Joline Matheson	William Walker
Hosny El-Khordagui	Jenny Mayberry	Britt Wilford
Jerry Frola	Sam Mayberry	Terry Wilford
Joe Gibson	Doug McCollum	Dona Wolf
Rosa Gibson	Sue McCollum	

### Torch Club Officers wish everyone a Happy New Year and a great 2026

- Wayne Kaiser, President: [wkaiser2367@gmail.com](mailto:wkaiser2367@gmail.com)
- Ken "Crash" Konwin, Vice President: [kkonwin@aol.com](mailto:kkonwin@aol.com)
- Jim Grefer, Secretary/Newsletter Editor: [greferjames@gmail.com](mailto:greferjames@gmail.com)
- Fred Bishopp, Co-Treasurer: [fredbishopp@hotmail.com](mailto:fredbishopp@hotmail.com)
- Joline Matheson, Co-Treasurer: [jnmat@gmail.com](mailto:jnmat@gmail.com)
- Dona Wolf, Past President: [donawolf@aol.com](mailto:donawolf@aol.com)

**Welcome 2026!**