



BLUE RIDGE TORCH CLUB OF LEESBURG VIRGINIA

Celebrating 20 Years in Lansdowne

October 2026

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Treasurer's Report

On September 2026, the Blue Ridge Torch Club had an operating balance of \$5,757.

The Autumn Soul



November Torch Talk:

Anne Thomas

*"Securing America's
Future: The Critical
Resource Imperative"*

Torch Dinner October 13, LWVA Clubhouse Auditorium

Doors open at 5:30, Dinner starts at 6:00. BYOB

Joyce Mitchell: "Genes, Genomics, and Diseases"

Joyce Mitchell will be giving the October Torch Talk. She will explore the relationship between genes, genomics and diseases to show how your DNA acts as your body's unique instruction manual.

She will guide you through the Blueprints of Life to the Human Genome Project to today's breakthroughs in gene therapy. She will give a firsthand look at a project she developed during a sabbatical year at the National Institutes of Health which connected the massive data from the Human Genome Project directly to real people facing large, complex and unpronounceable inherited conditions.



She earned a PhD from the University of Wisconsin in population genetics and went on to develop further expertise in both medical genetics and biomedical informatics. She is a professor emeritus at the University of Utah, has over 150 scientific publications and served on multiple national and international advisory committees.

Joyce has lived at Potomac Ridge for eight years. She is Past President of the Board of Directors for Potomac Ridge. She sings in the Notables and the Lantones. She likes being retired, gardening, playing bridge and traveling.

Menu for October Torch Dinner

Dinner will be catered by Fountain Grille. Menu will include a Caprese salad and your choice of either (1) Pork Tenderloin or (2) Fried Fish, along with eggrolls, baked potato, and coleslaw. A meatless choice will be available. Prices are \$45 for members, \$50 for guests. We accept credit cards now.

Please leave a check with your building representative, or a bring a check or cash at the door. For reservations go to blueridgetorchclub.org. Click on the red icon that says "October 13, 2026." The deadline for RSVP or cancellation is Thursday, October 8. Those who cancel after the deadline will be responsible for payment.

President's Message for October

As we begin a new Torch Club year, I encourage everyone to renew your membership and continue being an important part of our organization. Our club is built on the participation, friendship, and enthusiasm of its members, and your continued involvement helps keep Torch Club strong and vibrant.

We also have an exciting schedule of outstanding speaker presentations planned for the coming months. These programs are designed to inform, entertain, and encourage thoughtful conversation while providing opportunities for us to learn from one another and our guests.

Please make your membership renewal a priority and mark the upcoming meetings on your calendar. Bring a friend or prospective member to a meeting and introduce them to the fellowship and informative programs that make Torch Club special.

I look forward to seeing you at our meetings and sharing another successful year together.

Thank you for your continued support of Torch Club.

Wayne Kaiser, President, Blue Ridge Torch Club

September Torch Dinner/Speaker

Our Torch Talk season opener was by Riverview resident, Christine Caldwell, entitled "9/11/2001: Reflections After 25 Years."

Christine spoke about her career with the Federal Aviation Administration and specifically her experience at the FAA Air Traffic Control System Command Center and the crucial role this facility played on 9/11/2001.

Christine compared and contrasted this terrorist event with other disasters in history, weaving, for example, the connection between the U.S. response in the great Halifax (Nova Scotia) explosion of 1918 with Canada's tremendous response and support for

the U.S. following 9/11. In the days following the attack, Canadian airports landed nearly 250 large aircraft and cared for over 40,000 passengers when the United States National Airspace shut down on September 11.

She highlighted changes in aviation safety and security, and a new way of life that has evolved in the quarter century since. If you missed this informative and timely presentation, the video is now up and available on our Torch website.



Torch Club Officers wish you all a smiley World Smile Day October 2

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



Autumn: The Season of the Soul by Jim Grefer

“I notice that autumn is more the season of the soul than of nature” Friedrich Nietzsche

Halloween is an spectral holiday, imbued with ghouls and phantoms, spirits and symbols of the world beyond. But, did you ever wonder from where Halloween got its ghostly character?

October is a transition month. The days move from light to dark, the trees from greens to reds and yellows, the weather from warm to cold.

As the seasons moved from Autumn to Winter, life itself moved from harvesting to storing, from abundance to possible scarcity. In days of old, families had to prepare for the long Winter. They sealed their roofs, stored their foods, smoked and salted their meats. Families who neglected this, faced danger, even death.

Perhaps it is not surprising that a season so closely associated with change and uncertainty also became a season of spiritual reflection. In the Gaelic customs, for example, in the October feast of *Samhain*, the autumn was a spiritual transition, a time where the line between the natural world and the spirit world was thought to become permeable, and the spirits could move between worlds. The rituals, feasts, and symbolic gestures were often meant to welcome and appease the visiting spirits who had crossed the threshold.

Christianity gave the season a similar meaning. The Christian *All Saints Day*, honored the saints on November 1, and *All Souls Day*, November 2, memorialized the faithful departed, especially those in purgatory.

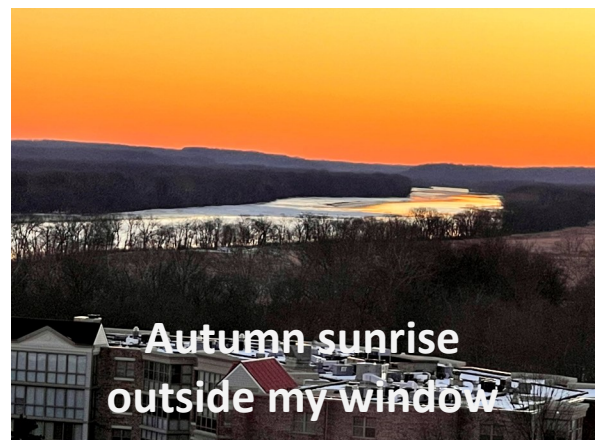


As Gaelic and Christian traditions shared the same calendar, they remained distinct but became culturally intertwined over time. From this combination grew many of the customs associated with Halloween, and the traditions became both a spiritual and joyful celebration.

Of course, with the coming of ghosts and spirits, there came mischief and pranks. Young boys and girls, delighted in these pranks, and any mishap could be blamed on the spirits. Eventually, the children would disguise themselves as spirits, move from house to house demanding treats in exchange for warding off mischievous ghosts, though often the mischief continued anyway.

Today's Halloween celebrations echo ancient symbols and rituals. Though we may no longer face danger in the Winter, and we may not expect spirits to cross the threshold, we still watch the cooling of the weather, the shortening of the days, and the colors of the trees, and it gives us a sense of wonder. The Autumn is still a time for reflection, introspection, and symbolism.

Nietzsche was only partially right. Autumn is a spiritual time. But it is so because of, not despite, nature.



Current Members as of end of September 2026

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

Celebration of Life

Last month, we reported the passing of our Torch member **Catherine Shepard**.

A Celebration of Life will be held at Potomac Ridge this Saturday, October 3 at 2:00 PM in the Potomac Room.

If you'll be coming, contact her friend Joyce Mitchell at joycemitchell0@gmail.com.



**"The seasons change their manners, as the year
had found some months asleep and leapt them
over."**

**Prince Humphrey to King Henry
in *Henry IV* by William Shakespeare**