



BLUE RIDGE TORCH CLUB OF LEESBURG VIRGINIA

Celebrating 20 Years in Lansdowne

September 2026

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Treasurer's Report

On August 2026, the Blue Ridge Torch Club had an operating balance of \$5,190.

**SOLEMN PATRIOT
DAY
SEPT 11**



Future Torch Talk:

**Joyce Mitchell,
"Genes and Diseases "
October 13, 2026:**

Torch Dinner September 8, LWVA Clubhouse Auditorium Doors open at 5:30, Dinner starts at 6:00

Christine Caldwell: "Sept. 11, 2001: Reflections After 25 Years"

Who hasn't been impacted by the events of 9/11 in one way or another? That's the question Christine Caldwell will address in our September Torch Talk. With over 40 years of extensive aviation experience, she will speak from her time at the FAA Air Traffic Control System Command Center and the crucial role they played during the events of 9/11, and its aftermath.

Christine will contrast this with other aviation disasters and reflect on significant changes over the years that have enhanced aviation safety.

Born and raised in Worcester, MA, Christine began flying at age 15. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in 1978 from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in FL, where she was a professional pilot prior to being hired by the Federal Aviation Administration as an air traffic controller. She held numerous positions throughout her FAA career, including evaluations pilot, aircraft accident investigation and litigation support. Her last position was National Operations Manager at the Command Center where she had operational oversight for the entire National Airspace System. Christine retired from the FAA in 2013 after 32 years in the Air Traffic Service. She moved to Riverview in January 2025.



Menu for September Torch Dinner

Our Torch dinner will be catered by La Villa Roma. They will have several entrees including two pasta dishes, lemon chicken, meatballs with sauce and eggplant parmesan. They will have two salads, rolls, and desserts. Prices are \$45 for members, \$50 for guests. Drinks and wine will be BYOB.

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 "September 8, 2026." The deadline for RSVP or cancellation is Thursday, September 3. Those who cancel after the deadline will be responsible for payment.

President's Message

As we begin a new Torch Club year, I want to encourage each of you to renew your membership, reconnect with fellow members, and become involved in the activities that make our club special. The strength of Torch Club has always been its members. Our meetings, speakers, fellowship, community service, and social activities are successful because members are willing to share their time, talents, ideas, and enthusiasm.

Membership is more than simply paying annual dues—it is an investment in the continued success of our club. By renewing, you help ensure that Torch Club remains a vibrant organization that provides opportunities for fellowship, learning, leadership, and service. If you haven't paid your dues yet, please bring your check for \$80 for regular membership \$40 for the second household member.

I also encourage everyone to consider joining a committee. Even a small contribution of your time can make a meaningful difference. Committees are a great way to meet other members, contribute your ideas, and help shape the programs and activities we offer. At our September dinner we will discuss the many ways club members can volunteer.

Whether you have been a Torch Club member for many years or are relatively new to the organization, there is a place for you and your talents.

Let's make this a year of great enthusiasm and participation. Together, we can strengthen our membership, expand our activities, and continue the traditions that make Torch Club an organization we are proud to be part of.

Please renew your membership—and consider saying “yes” when an opportunity to serve on a committee comes your way. I look forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming meetings and activities.

Yours in Torch Club fellowship,

Wayne Kaiser, President, Blue Ridge Torch Club

In Memorium

We are sad to report that the Blue Ridge Torch Club lost two members last month.

Catherine Shepard moved to Potomac Ridge in 2018 and became a Torch member that same year. She was well known for her eccentric personality and winning laugh. She was a fighter and a friend. We will miss her.

Tina Dickerson, moved to the Magnolias with her husband Beckham and joined the Torch Club in 2025. Because they lived in our community only a short time, we did not have the opportunity to get to know them well. We would like to express our sincere condolences to her family and friends.

Torch Club Officers wish you all a joyful month of September

- 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



In September We Celebrate Workers, Heroes, and Public Servants, by Jim Grefer

There are two National Days of Observance that define the month of September. The first is Labor Day. Observed on the first Monday of September (the seventh this year), this day celebrates American workers. The second is actually two celebrations, Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance are both on September 11, to memorialize the victims and heroes of 9/11.

Labor Day wasn't started just to celebrate the working class and their efforts. In the 1880s, workers were putting in 60-70 hours in six or seven days a week on their jobs. This meant they spent practically every waking hour working. As everyone does, they wanted to have lives outside of their jobs.

At that time, however, most of the political and economic power lay in the hands of corporate owners and managers. It seemed that the way to get fewer working hours and higher wages was for worker unions to collaborate, and form larger union organizations. But, this was contrary to the wishes of the owner/managers, who used their political influence to prevent unions from organization and to break up workers strikes.

Two important factors changed things. First, Peter J. McGuire, a carpenter and leader of the New York City Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, and Matthew McGuire (not related), a machinist and leader of the Central Labor of New York, suggested that workers take an unscheduled day off with no pay, creating a special day to show solidarity among workers. Second, instead of protests and strikes that could set people against the unions, they suggested a day of picnics and quiet demonstrations portraying the unions positively.

Union membership, which was growing slowing in the decades prior, continued to grow after that 1882 day of celebration. But just as important, Labor Day became a day of picnics and parades, instead of strikes and protests.



First Labor Day demonstration, New York City, September 5, 1882. Wood engraving, Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper. Library of Congress.



Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance. Sept. 11. The attack on 9/11 was an unimaginable horror, with nearly 3,000 people killed in the twin towers of the World Trade, the Pentagon, and Flight 93. But, it was also a time of great heroism and generosity from the fire fighters, police, and other rescue teams, that often gave their own lives, but also saved many potential victims.

From that tragic event, Congress designated Sept. 11 as Patriot Day, a national day of remembrance, that inspired us and helped heal the nation. In 2009, Congress also designated September 11 as National Day of Service and Remembrance recognizing that it was the deep feelings of service and compassion that led the heroes of 9/11 to risk themselves rescuing those victims. It annually reminds us that we can help each other and our country through cooperation, public service, and caring. Americans have often depended upon the cooperation of other Americans to accomplish goals larger than us, whether it be in labor, business, or government.

During a time in which we may have lost some trust in American institutions and perhaps in each other, these National Days of cooperation, remembrance, and public service remind us that we're in this thing together.

Current Members: August 2026

Charlene Ahmed
Syed Ahmed
Brian Allen
Linda Allen
Barry Berger
Fred Bishopp, Jr
Murray Bradley
Page Bradley
Brenda Brohard
Christine Caldwell
Sheila Cramer
Steve Creskoff
Kay Curley
Tom Devaney
Beckham Dickerson
Joe Dockery
Marylynne Dockery
Nancy Downey
Madelon Eisenberg
Hosny El-Khordagui
Jerry Frola

Rosa Gibson
Joe Gibson
Lyn Green
Jim Grefer
Carol Hall-Veit
Kenton Hamaker
Peggy Hamaker
Neelam Henderson
Wes Henderson
Kathleen Hughes
Fran Hurley
Murray Johnston
Wayne Kaiser
Maria Kelly
Peggy King
Ken "Crash" Konwin
Judith Kory
Eva Leavitt
Michael Leavitt
Barbara Leone
Joline Matheson

Jenny Mayberry
Sam Mayberry
Doug McCollum
Sue McCollum
Joyce Mitchell
Pat Monahan
Elsa Moustafa
Andrew Norton
Bill Phillips
Pat Phillips
Memory Porter
Ann Schmitt
Hugh Sockett
Dennis Spriggs
Anne A Thomas
Bill Thomas
George Viener
Janet Walker
William Walker
Britt Wilford
Terry Wilford
Dona Wolf

**"This country cannot afford to be
materially rich and spiritually poor."**

John F. Kennedy

35th President of the United States

His State of the Union delivered to Congress

January 14, 1963