



Newsletter

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MEETS THE 2ND MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH FROM 11:30 A.M. – 1:00 P.M. IN RACHEL'S KITCHEN

2026 Committee

George Darnell
President

Doc Holladay
Vice President

Nanci Bowers
Treasurer

Cindy Holmes
Membership Coordinator

Nanci Bowers
Newsletter Coordinator

Pam Toliver
Website Coordinator

Dan Mortland
Program Director

Greg Payonk
Cruise & Foreign Travel

APRIL 2026 ISSUE

President's Message

Happy Easter and Passover

I hope you celebrate these spring commemorations of the joy of life with your family, friends, and faith community. Michelle and I plan to attend Easter Mass at St. Bridget of Ireland in Berryville and have Easter Brunch at the Lodge. Family gatherings are planned for later this spring.

Gary McDowell Update

Gary McDowell will begin chemotherapy treatments for his cancer this month. His wife, Janet, says he is in good spirits, but sleeps a lot. I told her his friends in the Travel Club wish him well and have him in our prayers. We are grateful to Gary for his service to us as our treasurer.

New Treasurer

Nanci Bowers volunteered to be our new treasurer in addition to being our Newsletter Editor. She is already picking up your checks and confirming your registration for trips. Thanks, Nanci, for keeping our club running.

March Trip

We had a small group on a cold day for our St. Patrick's Day Mystery Brewery Tour. Read the trip report in this issue to find out where we went. Brian Kelly led a tour of the Dead Sea Scrolls at the Museum of the Bible on March 30. We were hoping for a larger group, but we did not want to disappoint the 13 who registered. Read Brian's trip report in our May Newsletter.

April Trips

Our Spring Wine Tour on April 17 is almost full and our Blue Ridge Spring Odyssey on April 30 – May 1 is sold out. Don't forget to drop off your check with the concierge to confirm your reservation.

May Trip

Sam Kern and Rick Turner will be leading a tour of Fisher's Hill and Cedar Creek Battlefields on May 15, 2026. See the flyer in this newsletter and register on MTL Events.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Next Meeting
April 13, 2026
Rachel's Kitchen
11:30 a.m.

June Trips

Bill Johnson will be leading a trip to Monticello, Michie Tavern, and Blue Quartz Winery on June 4, 2026. See the flyer in this newsletter and register on MTL Events. Bill is also working on a repeat of our pre-Covid Frontier Heritage Tour in June. See the announcement in our May Newsletter.

Trip Ideas for 2026 Updated

We try to project our trips for the year on our Trip Ideas page to help you plan. Trip details or cancellations will be included in newsletters throughout the year. See our Trip Ideas for 2026 in this issue. If you have any suggestions, especially if you can help in the planning, please send them to me with as much information as you can. We will include Sam Kerns' Pennsylvania Disasters and Railroads overnight trip on October 13 and 14 using a Varsity motor coach. Watch for future details.

Shenandoah Tours

We will return to using Shenandoah Tours for some of our trips. See the selection of trips that Doc Holiday made in this issue.

Registering for Travel Club Trips

If you have any trouble registering for our trips the Lodge Concierge should be able to help you. This includes club members who are not MTL members and family and friends travelling with an club member. Or send me an email with questions. We don't post our trips on MTL Events for registration until they have been announced in our newsletter. Your registration is not confirmed until our treasurer has your check.

Website Manager Needed

Pam Toliver has done an amazing job of designing and maintaining our club website since our foundation by Judy Bogner. It contains all our newsletters and serves as our club's historical archive. Pam's family obligations prevent her from continuing in this role. If you have basic computer skills Pam can train you to take over our website. Please contact Pam or me if you can help.

April 13 Meeting

Join us for our April 13 potluck lunch meeting in Rachel's Kitchen from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. No agenda; just good food and conversation. Don't forget your dish to share.

See you around campus and at our monthly meeting,

George Darnell, President

703-850-2132

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St. Patrick's Day Mystery Brewery Tour Trip Report

March 17, 2026

By George Darnell

Thirteen adventurous travelers left the Lodge on St. Patrick's Day to see where Shenandoah Shuttle would take us. Julie, our driver, passed out a sheet of clues that Jason, the owner, had prepared. As we headed toward Berryville on Route 340, folks started making their guesses. It was a chilly day, and we noticed a light covering of snow from the day before along the roadside, on the lawns in Berryville, and along Route 7 as we climbed Snickers Gap. When we turned onto Mount Weather Road at the Appalachian Trail parking lot, our guesses that our first stop would be Bear Chase Brewery were confirmed.



Julie dropped us off at the entrance to this popular mountainside brewery in Loudoun County. There was a small crowd getting a headstart on celebrating St. Patrick's Day. We joined them and soon enjoyed our selection of beer with some pretzels and pizza. There was still a light covering of snow on the mountainside lawn below the brewery. In the distance, the skyline of Tysons Corner was barely visible. We were glad we were warm inside at high top tables where we could enjoy our beer and conversations with our neighbors.



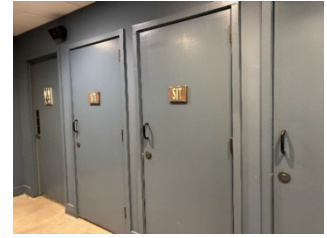
Refreshed, we reboarded the bus after restroom breaks, to continue our adventure. Julie said the next stop was about 30 minutes away, which ruled out any other breweries in the Bluemont area. We drove along Snickersville Turnpike which runs from Aldie Gap in the Bull Run Mountains to Snickers Gap in the Blue Ridge. The original name of Bluemont was Snickersville. The turnpike is a scenic road that runs diagonally across Loudoun County to Aldie, with its historic mill and houses. John Mosby frequented this area, as Rick Turner, our Civil War buff, told us on a tour of the area a few years ago. It is a scenic road through the horse country of Loudoun County.

When Julie turned south on Route 15, we guessed we were headed to Haymarket, which in the colonial era would have been a day's ride between taverns or ordinaries on the Old Carolina Road from Pennsylvania to the Carolinas. Route 15 generally follows that route and marks the dividing line between urban areas to the east and rural areas to the west.

We were expecting to visit one of the breweries in the Haymarket area when Julie pulled into the parking lot of the Lark Brewery. It is a large, modern establishment, which we learned has only been open for two years. It had a long serving bar and ample seating inside and outside. An interesting feature were clear plastic "space bubbles" over picnic tables on the lawn outside. None of them were occupied. Inside, the brewery has a balcony level, which many customers have chosen to enjoy their beer and food.



Our groups settled in at tables on the main floor with our drinks. Food orders were delivered to our tables. We were amused to see that the restroom area had doors labeled "SIT," and "STAND". If it were not so far away (over one hour) it could easily become a favorite for the Lake Frederick crowd.



Our last stop was Two Silos Brewing Company. It is located on what was a farm with a large barn and two silos south of the city of Manassas. The area is now a modern industrial/commercial area near the intersection of Route 28 and 234. Michelle took our children there to see the farm animals years ago. Fortunately, the brewing company preserves the barn and silos as landmarks. Inside, the evening crowd was beginning to arrive and table space was scarce. But we managed to get our drinks and food and sit together at a long picnic-style table. The band for the evening was just tuning up on a small bandstand near us, making conversation a little difficult.



Two of our travelers had reservations for the St. Patrick's Day Dinner at the Lodge. So, they stayed on the bus with Julie to save time. We soon joined them to make sure they were not late for their dinner. Julie maneuvered our bus through the Prince William rush hour traffic in the area, and we were soon on our way west on I-66. Here and there, along the highway we could see daffodils starting to blossom, a sure sign of spring. As we passed over the Blue Ridge, I was reminded of what a good choice we made to move to Lake Frederick in the Shenandoah Valley. Julie got us to the Lodge in time for dinner and we thanked her and tipped her before going our separate ways. Another adventure to remember!

Spring Wine Tour

April 17, 2026

For this tour we will visit three wineries in three different counties east of us. Our first stop will be [Potomac Point Winery](#), where Tuscany meets Virginia's finest wines. As Northern Virginia's premier winery, their European estate transports you to the enchanting ambiance of Tuscany, where you can indulge in their award-winning wines and savor delectable cuisine. This winery and vineyard is near the Potomac River in Stafford County.



Our second stop will be [Effingham Manor](#) a colonial estate winery in Prince William County. We visited them before Covid and were pleased with their wines and hospitality. They are open 7 days a week from 11AM – 6PM for their friends to enjoy their pastoral setting, and their award-winning wines and take some Effingham history home.

Our last stop will be [Morais Vineyards and Winery](#) in Fauquier County. They are only open Friday to Sunday. So, we scheduled this trip for Friday. The owners are Portuguese and their estate and grounds exude old world charm. Their romantic setting is a popular venue for weddings and receptions.



Schedule:

9:15 a.m.	Gather in Lodge
9:30	Leave Lodge
11:00	Arrive Potomac Point
12:30 p.m.	Leave
1:30	Arrive Effingham Manor
3:00	Leave
3:45	Arrive Morais Vineyard and Winery
5:15	Leave
6:30	Arrive Lodge

The minimum for this trip is 12 and maximum is 18.

Registration is \$60 for transportation. Food, tastings, and driver's tip are not included.

Please register on MTL Events and drop off your registration check, payable to "Lake Frederick Travel Club," with your contact information and the date of the trip, with the lodge concierge no later than **April 10, 2026.**

Blue Ridge Spring Odyssey, April 30 – May 1, 2026



Travelers from around the world visit the Blue Ridge area of America. There is even a quarterly magazine, “Blue Ridge,” that features the attractions of this area. And here it is, right in our own backyard. Fall is a popular time to visit because of the Autumn colors that cover the mountains. But Spring, with Redbuds, Dogwoods, and Mountain Laurel in bloom is a wonderful time for a Blue Ridge adventure.



For this trip we will start with a visit to Natural Bridge, where we can join George Washington and Thomas Jefferson in exploring its majesty. Buchanan, with its small-town charm and famous swinging pedestrian footbridge over the James River will be our next stop. There, we can play Indiana Jones by walking on the bridge and strolling down charming Main Street before having lunch in a local restaurant.



Refreshed, we will head over the mountain to the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford for a guided tour of this amazing site commemorating the Normandy Invasion in WWII. On the way, we will stop at the Peaks of Otter Visitor Center on the Blue Ridge Parkway for some spectacular views. Finally, we will backtrack to the Hotel Roanoke, where we will check in for dinner and lodging. There will be ample time to explore the hotel and area before retiring for the night.



We will have breakfast and checkout on day two before heading to the Roanoke Star for a bird's eye view of the city. Our next adventure is taking a narrated lunch cruise of Smith Mountain Lake on the Virginia Dare. A tour of Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest near Lynchburg will be our next destination. On the way home we will stop at Devils Backbone Basecamp, where Appalachian Trail hikers are welcome to spend the night. There we will have dinner in the shadow of the Blue Ridge “Devils Backbone. Finally, we will wind our way back to I-81 and Lake Frederick.

Schedule:

Day 1: April 30	Day 2: May 1
7:30 a.m. Bus departs Lodge	9:00 a.m. Depart after Breakfast & Check Out
9:30 a.m. Explore Natural Bridge	9:30 Roanoke Star Overlook
12:00 N Lunch in Buchanan	11:45 Arrive Smith Mountain Lake
2:30 p.m. Peaks of Otter Visitor Center	3:00 p.m. Tour Poplar Fores
3:30 Bedford D-Day Memorial	6:00 Dinner at Devils Backbone
6:00 Hotel Roanoke	10:00 Arrive Lodge

The minimum for this trip is 18 and maximum is 28.

Registration is \$250 for transportation, driver's tip, and entrance fees. Meals and room are not included. Make your room reservations at the historic Hotel Roanoke, a Hilton Hotel, before March 29 by calling 540-853-8250 and ask for the Lake Frederick Travel Club group rate, or using our link at <https://book.passkey.com/e/51225377>. Single and double rooms are available for about \$200 plus tax.

Please register on MTL Events and drop off your registration check, made payable to “Lake Frederick Travel Club” with your contact information and the date of the trip at the lodge concierge desk no later than **April 1, 2026**.

Fisher's Hill and Cedar Creek Battlefields Tour

May 15, 2026

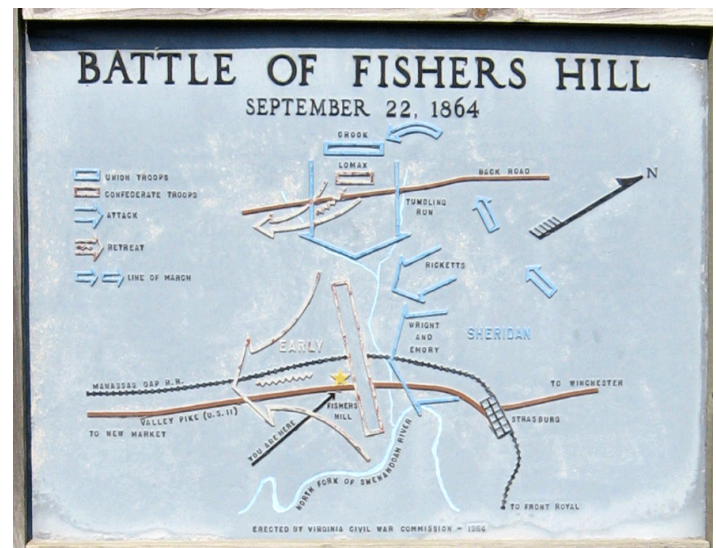
If you are interested in knowing more about two of the battles fought within 30 miles of Lake Frederick, please join our own Civil War enthusiasts, Sam Kerns and Rick Turner, on May 15th as we visit Fisher's Hill and Cedar Creek Battlefields. Both battles were fought in the last fall of the war (1864) and had a significant impact on ending the war and on the valley for many years after the war. These were the last stands of Jubal Early after losing the Battle of Third Winchester, which we toured with Sam and Rick on May 12, 2023

We will leave the Lodge at 9 a.m., visit Hupp Hill Museum in Strasburg, Fisher's Hill Battlefield (where we will take a short walk), have lunch at the Strasburg Diner, tour the Cedar Creek Battlefield, and return home around 4 p.m.

The minimum for this trip is 16 and maximum is 28

Registration is \$60 for transportation. Lunch and driver's tip are not included.

Please register on MTL Events and drop off your registration check made out to "Lake Frederick Travel Club" with your contact information and the date of the trip with the lodge concierge no later than **May 10, 2026**.



Monticello, Lunch & Winery Tour - Thursday, June 4, 2026



Join the Travel Club as we visit Monticello, President Thomas Jefferson's home, enjoy a buffet lunch at nearby historic Michie Tavern, and then visit a Blue Quartz Winery before returning to Lake Frederick. It's a busy day, so we'll depart from the Lodge early in the morning so that we will have time to tour the house and grounds. The Highlights Tour at 10:45 lasts 45 minutes and costs \$42. Tickets may be purchased at Monticello, or you can purchase online: [Monticello | Tickets](#)

Michie Tavern is only a few minutes away and serves a southern-style buffet lunch of fried and baked chicken, pulled pork, mashed potatoes & gravy, stewed tomatoes, black-eyed peas and green beans (both seasoned with country ham), cole slaw, baby beets, vegetable soup, and cornbread & biscuits. Cost is \$26.95 for adults, and \$12.95 for Vegan/Vegetarian.

Our final stop will be at Blue Quartz, a small boutique winery about halfway between Monticello and Lake Frederick. As usual, you can have a tasting, order a glass of wine, or even a bottle to share.

Schedule:

7:45 a.m.	Gather at the Lodge
8:00	Leave the Lodge
10:15	Arrive at Monticello (there will be a restroom break south of Harrisonburg)
12:15 p.m.	Depart Monticello
12:30	Arrive at Michie Tavern for lunch
1:30	Depart Michie Tavern
2:30	Arrive at Blue Quartz Winery
4:00	Depart the Winery
5:00	Arrive at Lake Frederick

All times are approximate and subject to changes depending on the conditions of the day of the trip.
\$60 covers roundtrip van transportation. Tour, Lunch, tastings, purchases, and driver tip are not included.

The minimum for the trip is 12 and the maximum is 18.

Register on MTL Events and drop off your registration check, payable to "Lake Frederick Travel Club," with your contact information and the date of the trip, at the Lodge Concierge no later than **May 28, 2026**

TRIP IDEAS 2026, VERSION 9

APRIL

- 17 - Spring Wine Tour
- 30-May 1- Blue Ridge Spring Odyssey (Overnight at Peaks of Otter)

MAY

- 15 - Battles of Fisher's Hill & Cedar Creek

JUNE

- Monticello, Michie Tavern, & Montpelier
- Frontier Heritage Tour

JULY

- Summer Wine Tour
- Trail Ride & Brewery Lunch

AUGUST

- Harpers Ferry Tour

SEPTEMBER

- 16 - Gettysburg Tour

OCTOBER

- 13-14 - PA Disasters & Railroads Overnight Trip
- Sperryville & Little Washington Tour

NOVEMBER

- Fall Wine Tour

DECEMBER

- Wreaths Across America
- Candlelight Christmas at Mount Vernon

Calendar of Shenandoah Tours Trips for 2026, V9



May 5-7 – Celebrate Spring at the Biltmore and Grove Park Inn by motor coach. 3 Days/2 Nights/ 4 Meals; \$775 pp double/\$909 single; Deposit \$100 pp. (Page 6) Contact: Shenandoah Tours.	Nov 18-20 – Magical Smokey Mountain Christmas by motor coach. 3 Days/2 Nights/3 Meals; \$709 pp double/\$879 single; Deposit \$100 pp. (Page 42) Contact: Shenandoah Tours.
June 8-11 – Niagara Falls “Moments to Remember” by motor coach. 4 Days/3 Nights/ 4 Meals; \$1029 pp double/\$1419 single; Deposit \$100 pp. (Page 11) Contact: Shenandoah Tours.	Nov 27-30 – A Country Christmas at Opryland Hotel by motor coach. 4 Days/3 Nights/ 2 Meals; \$1499 pp double/\$1999 single; Deposit \$150 pp. (Page 43) Contact: Shenandoah Tours.
Sep 14-17 – Niagara Falls “Moments to Remember” by motor coach. 4 Days/3 Nights/ 4 Meals; \$1029 pp double/\$1419 single; Deposit \$100 pp. (Page 11) Contact: Shenandoah Tours.	Dec 1-3 – Candlelight Christmas at Biltmore Estate by motor coach. 3 Days/2 Nights/4 Meals; \$979 pp double/\$ 1099 single; Deposit \$100 pp. (Page 44) Contact: Shenandoah Tours.
Sep 23-29 – Iceland “Land of Fire and Ice.” 7 Days/6 Nights/7 Meals; \$4618 double/\$6377 single; Deposit \$699 pp. (Page 33) Contact: Shenandoah Tours.	Dec 8-10 – Virginia’s Festival of Lights by motor coach. 3 Days/2 Nights/4 Meals; \$819 pp double/\$999 single; Deposit \$100 pp. (Page 46) Contact: Shenandoah Tours.

NOTE: For Shenandoah motor coach tours, we need a minimum of 8 people for pick up in Lake Frederick. Otherwise, pick up is at Routes 522 & 50 in the Red Roof Inn parking lot.