



Newsletter

WWW.LAKEFREDERICKTRAVELCLUB.COM

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

2025 Committee

George Darnell
President

Doc Holladay
Vice President

Gary McDowell
Treasurer

Membership Coordinator

Pam Toliver
Communications Coordinator

Dan Mortland
Program Director

Greg Payonk
Cruise & Foreign Travel

Bill Johnson
Domestic & Foreign Travel

MAY 2025 ISSUE

President's Message

Welcome to Spring!!

I hope you had a blessed Easter or Passover and time to celebrate Spring with family and friends. Michelle and I had a pleasant Easter Dinner and visit with our youngest daughter, her husband, and one of her Army veteran sons on her small farm near Fredericksburg. She has done an amazing job of installing raised gardens, fruit trees, and houses for her chickens and ducks.

April Recap

We started the month with a well-attended potluck lunch with John and Heidi Lesinski telling us about their trip to Vietnam and Cambodia this year. They pointed out that the Vietnamese have a great reverence for their deceased relatives, showing us pictures of gravesites in the middle of rice paddies. Few scars of the Vietnamese War remain in what was North or South Vietnam. It was interesting to see how mobile phone cameras and computer displays have replaced film cameras and slides. We thanked John and Heidi for sharing their adventure with us.

We ended the month with an informative tour of the Balls Bluff Battlefield Park, led by Rick Turner, followed by lunch and two vineyard visits. Read the trip report in this issue.

May Club Meeting

Join the Travel Club in Rachel's Kitchen at 11:30 a.m. for a special meeting highlighting Celebrity Cruises. Maria Bailey, the Field Northeast Sales Manager for Celebrity Cruises, will visit the Lake Frederick travel club on May 12th, 2025. She will be providing an update on Celebrity's newest ship, the Celebrity xCel, which begins sailing from the USA later this year. Additionally, she will discuss other new itineraries that are being offered by Celebrity cruises. There will be some gift from Celebrity raffled for those attending. In lieu of the normal "potluck lunch," complimentary cookies and coffee will be provided.

Please register on MTL Events so we will know how many are attending,

The May 12th meeting is from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in Rachel's Kitchen.

May Trip

Because we ended April with Balls Bluff and are starting June with Monticello, we only have one trip in May, the Caverns Trip on May 19. We have a few seats left on this trip.

June Trips

We have two exciting trips planned for June: the first to Monticello on June 2; and the second to Fredericksburg Battlefields on June 13. Read the trip announcements in this issue and register on MTL. They will fill up fast.

Schedule of Trips Updated

I regret to report that we had to cancel our Christmas Trip to Williamsburg. We could not make satisfactory arrangements for an overnight trip on the dates we planned. Maybe next year. See the list of trips planned for 2025 (V9). This may change again during the year, and more details will be added as we get closer to each trip. We usually post our trips on MTL Events at least a month before the trip for registration. Sam Kerns is finalizing plans for an overnight trip to Pennsylvania for Railroads and Disasters on October 15-16. Registration should be opened in June. And Bill Johnson is working on a tour of Fauquier County Vineyards on July 14. Mark your calendars and stay tuned to MTL Events.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Next Meeting
Monday, May 12, 2025
Rachel's Kitchen
11:30 a.m.
Cookies & Coffee provided

Foreign Travel 2025

We had to cancel our trip to Ireland, but MTL has one scheduled for September if you are interested.

Check out the cruises and land tours that Greg Payonk has scheduled for 2025 and contact him if you need more information. You can find copies in our August Newsletter. You can find our newsletters on our website <https://lakefredericktravelclub.com/newsletter>.

Registering for Travel Club Trips

If you have any trouble registering for our trips, the Lodge Concierge should be able to help you.

I hope to see you on the reopened Lodge Verandah, around campus, and at our May 12 meeting.

George Darnell, President

703-850-2132

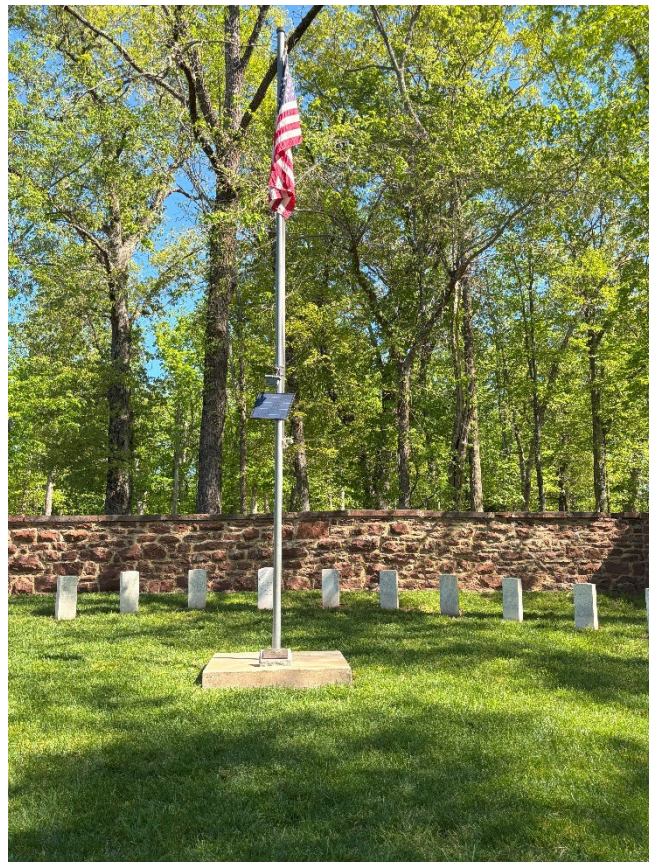
darnellgd@hotmail.com

Balls Bluff Battlefield Park Tour

by George Darnell

April 28, 2025

Twelve adventurous travelers left the lodge at 8:30 a.m. in a Shenandoah Shuttle, driven by Julie, and headed for Loudoun County. As we passed through Berryville, a fortuitous detour on Main Street took us past an historic hitching post that Rick Turner, our guide for the day, pointed out as the place where General Lee tied his horse, Traveler, on his way to Gettysburg. As we drove on Route 7 passed Leesburg, Rick said Arthur Godfrey, of 1960's radio and TV fame, had his farm and private airport nearby. We skirted Leesburg on Route 15 and turned into an upscale residential neighborhood that borders the Potomac River and Balls Bluff Regional Park.



Julie let us off in a gravel parking lot and we walked a short way to a shaded briefing area with benches and displays covering the Battle of Ball's Bluff that occurred Oct. 21, 1861, on the banks of the Potomac

River. Rick gave us an overview of the battle that started as a reconnaissance mission by Federal troops to determine the strength of Confederate troops in the Leesburg area. The battle took place early in the Civil War, three months after the major engagement of First Manassas. The conflict between Union and Confederate forces is unique, in part because the battlefield and number of troops involved is quite small compared to other major engagements. Each side had approximately 1700 troops, and the primary field of battle is very constricted.



Rick gave us the background and overview of the battle and then led us down a gravel road to the actual battle site, a small open area about the size of four football fields. The Federals dismantled two cannons and dragged them up the bluff to use against the Confederates, but they did not bring the correct shot, making them less effective. The Confederates were dug in in a semi-circle below the Federals' field of vision. The Federals were forced to retreat, but the steep bluff made it difficult to escape across the Potomac. Their commander, a US Senator with no military experience, who was commissioned because he was a close friend of President Lincoln, was killed on the battlefield. A memorial marks the spot where he fell.

During a truce after the battle, Union troops returned to bury their dead, but the remains were hard to identify. They are buried in a semi-circle in the third smallest National Cemetery next to the battleground. Today, the battlefield and the forest trails that surround it are used by locals for runs and walks, some with their dogs. Rick led us back to the bus and some of us took advantage of the porta-potty in the parking lot before boarding.

Julie dropped us off at Tuscarora Mill Restaurant in the heart of Leesburg. It is an up-scale restaurant in a historic grist mill. They were expecting us and seated us at a long table in the atrium dining room. After serving our drinks, the servers took our orders for lunch, which included a special salad that some of us ordered. After enjoying lunch and conversation, we paid for our checks and reboarded our bus for our first winery.



Stone Tower is a large winery with plenty of seating and terrific views in the middle of nowhere, south of Leesburg. You would never find it by accident, but Julie's GPS had no trouble. We soon had our wine selections and gathered in small groups to enjoy our wine and conversation. Before leaving, we took a group photo in front of the wart-hog statue in the courtyard.



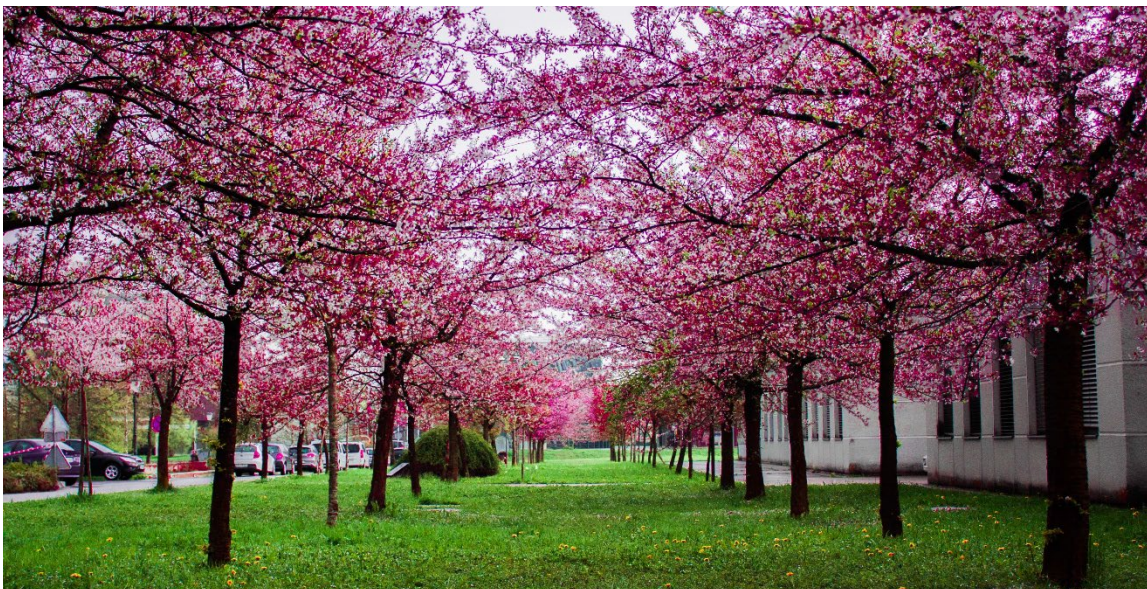
The trip to Bluemont Vineyard, on the other end of the county, took us along scenic back roads to Hamilton, where we turned onto Route 7 toward Bluemont, a small village on the eastern edge of the Blue Ridge. When we arrived at Bluemont Vineyard we were somewhat disappointed to learn that the main building and deck overlooking Loudoun Valley were not open on Mondays. Instead, the serving room was in a converted warehouse next to the parking lot. Nevertheless, we selected our wines and enjoyed them and conversation at seats bordering the vineyard, which was just beginning to sprout new leaves.

Soon it was time to head home. As we drove along Route 340, Rick pointed out the small stone Episcopal Church and graveyard where Mosby's Rangers assembled before a mission. Rick also informed us that Bill Donovan, leader of the OSS during WWII, owned a cattle ranch in the area and was responsible for breeding the black cows with a white stripe down their backs. When we arrived at the lodge, we tipped Julie, said our goodbyes and headed to our homes. Another good trip!

Trip Ideas for 2025, V9

- May 2-11—Globus Land Tour: Budapest to Prague with Greg Payonk
- May 12—Luray & Shenandoah Caverns Tour
- Jun 2—Monticello, Michie Tavern Lunch, & Pippin Hill Vineyard Tour
- Jun 13—Fredericksburg Area Civil War Battlefields Tour w/Lunch
- Jul 14—Fauquier County Wine Tour
- Aug 7-21—Norwegian Fjords & Artic Circle Cruise w/Greg Payonk
- Aug—Wine & Beer Tours
- Sep—Lexington Upper Valey Tour
- Sep 29—Oktoberfest Bridges & Breweries Tour
- Oct 15-16—Pennsylvania Disasters & Trains Tour
- Oct 23—Fall Colors Lunch Cruise on Smith Mountain Lake
- Nov—Outlet Mall Shopping Spree & Wine Tour
- Dec 4-18—Seaboard Antarctica Exploration with Greg Payonk
- Dec 13—Wreaths Across America in Winchester
- Dec 15—Christmas at Mount Vernon

Check out the Shenandoah Tours at
< <https://www.shenandoahtours.com/> >
Early registration is recommended.
They sell out quickly.



Luray and Shenandoah Caverns Trip

May 19, 2025

The Shenandoah Valley is home to many beautiful caverns. For this trip we will visit two of them and top off the day with a trip to a vineyard.

We will explore eastern America's largest and most popular caverns. Luray Caverns is a US Natural Landmark noted for the profuse variety of formation and unsurpassed natural color. From well-lighted, paved walkways, explore cathedral-sized rooms with ceilings 10 stories high, filled with towering stone columns and crystal-clear pools. Also hear the haunting sounds of the world's only Stalactite Organ creating music of symphonic quality from stone formations.



In addition, we can experience the history of America at the Car & Carriage Caravan Museum in an exhibit featuring over 140 items relating to transportation including cars, carriages and coaches dating from 1725, along with the Shenandoah Heritage Village, a collection of restored historic buildings creating a small 19th century farming community including the Luray Valley Museum showcasing artifacts from the 1750's to the 1920's. We can have lunch at the Hard Times Café on site before visiting Shenandoah Caverns.

Shenandoah Caverns has been thrilling visitors for almost 100 years. Explore a world of breathtaking natural wonders, incredible geology and extraordinary crystalline formations waiting to be admired and photographed. You'll be delighted by soaring rooms like Long View Hall. And you'll be amazed at the variety of unique, intricate and unexpected formations like Capitol Dome, Diamond Cascade & Rainbow Lake. Also see their other attractions: American Celebration on Parade (open seasonally), Main Street of Yesteryear, and the Yellow Barn. Our final stop will be Wolf Gap Vineyard, which we missed on our Fall Colors trip in 2024.

Schedule:

- 0745 Check in at Lodge
- 0800 Depart Lodge
- 0900 Arrive Luray Caverns
- 1200 Lunch
- 1330 Depart
- 1400 Arrive Shenandoah Caverns
- 1530 Depart
- 1600 Arrive Wolf Gap Vineyard
- 1700 Depart
- 1800 Arrive Lodge

Admission to Luray Caverns is \$34 all inclusive. Admission to Shenandoah Caverns is \$29.

All times are approximate and subject to change depending on the conditions of the day of the trip.

\$60 covers round-trip bus transportation. Admissions, lunch, wine tasting, and driver's 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 date of the trip, with the lodge concierge no later than May 12, 2025.

George Darnell

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Membership Coordinator Position Open

The position of Membership Coordinator for the Travel Club is now open. This position requires the person to add new members to our contact list in Google so that they will receive our monthly newsletter. If interested in helping maintain this list, please contact George Darnell, President, at darnellgd@hotmail.com, or Pam Toliver, Communications Coordinator, at ptoliver@soft-spec.com.

Monticello Tour with Lunch and Vineyard Visit June 2, 2025

For this trip, we will travel to Charlottesville for a tour of Monticello, followed by lunch at Michie Tavern and a visit to Pippin Hill Farm and Vineyard. We will check in at the visitor center for an orientation film before taking the Highlights Tour, which includes a guided experience of the first-floor spaces in Thomas Jefferson's home, the West Lawn, and the South Wing. You'll learn about Jefferson and his vision for America, the realities of slavery on the Monticello plantation, and the mountaintop's iconic architecture. This popular pass includes access to the gardens, grounds, walking tours, family-friendly activities, and exhibits.

Schedule:

- 0645 Gather in Lodge
- 0700 Leave Lodge
- 0900 Arrive Visitor Center for orientation film and ticket purchase for tour
- 0930 Begin Highlights Tour
- 1230 Gather in Visitor Center
- 1245 Depart Monticello
- 1300 Arrive Michie Tavern for lunch
- 1430 Depart Michie Tavern
- 1500 Arrive Pippin Hill Farm & Vineyard
- 1630 Depart
- 1830 Arrive Lodge

Minimum for this trip is 12 and maximum is 18. Registration is \$100 for transportation and tour. Food, drinks, wine tastings, and driver tip are not included.

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 **May 19, 2025**.



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Fredericksburg & Chancellorsville Battlefields Tour June 13, 2025.



Canon overlooking Fredericksburg



Jackson's flanking attack at Chancellorsville

Sam Kerns and Rick Turner will lead a Travel Club bus trip to Fredericksburg & Chancellorsville Battlefields. Hear the strategies behind these two huge Confederate victories and see where the fighting took place. Visit the site where Stonewall Jackson was mortally wounded and hear the details of how his own men were responsible.

We will tour the Fredericksburg Battlefield and the famous Sunken Road, eat lunch at Brock's Riverside Grille on the Rappahannock River, then onto the Chancellorsville Battlefield. The last stop at the Wilderness Run Vineyard and Brewery (which is located on another battlefield, the Battle of the Wilderness).

We will visit two National Park Visitor's Centers and view two outstanding 23-minute films explaining the 1862 and 1863 battles. The Sunken Road tour at Fredericksburg will be conducted by a resident park ranger and is a short half mile walking tour with several stops. At Chancellorsville we will view the film at the Visitors Center and drive around the battlefield to various key stops.

Schedule

- 8:00 a.m. Gather in Lodge
- 8:15 Leave Lodge
- 9:30 Arrive Visitor Center for orientation film
- 10:00 Short Ranger-led Walk of Sunken Road
- 11:45 Lunch at Brock's Riverside Grill
- 1:30 Chancellorsville Visitor Center
- 2:15 Stonewall Jackson wounding site
- 2:30 Drive on battlefield
- 3:15 Arrive Wilderness Run Vineyard and Brewery
- 4:30 Depart
- 6:15 Arrive Lodge



Minimum for this trip is 12 and maximum is 18. Registration is \$75 for transportation.

Food, drinks, wine tastings, and driver tip are not included.

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 **June 4, 2025**.

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