

HOLIDAY LUNCHEON DECEMBER 2 at 1 PM

DAMASCUS TRAVEL CLUB

MEETINGS HELD AT American Legion Hall, 10201 Lewis Drive, Damascus, MD

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 304, DAMASCUS MD 20872

2025-2026 Officers

President	Sue Wogatske	301-980-6186	Treasurer	Tammy Monarch	301-253-0044
1 st Vice President	Cathy Burke	202-302-4941	Tour Treasurer	Nancy Sutherland	301-788-8008
2 nd Vice President	Diane Dantagnan	301-428-0144	Historian	Barbara Morten	301-253-5824
Recording Secretary	Teresa Brown	240-375-0387	Membership Chair	Barbara Walker	301-253-1519
Corresponding Secretary	Judy Cullen	301-972-0137			

Refreshments: Cheryl Shores: 240-605-6255



DECEMBER 2025

from Sue Wogatske, DTC Club President

A Year of Achievements and Gratitude



As we approach the end of the calendar year, it is important to reflect on all we have accomplished together as a community. Although the Damascus Travel Club follows a July-to-June schedule, December is still a meaningful moment for us to pause, appreciate, and celebrate. This past year has truly been remarkable, marked by memorable trips and the strengthening of connections among our members. Despite facing challenges such as illnesses and the changes in our country, our travel club has continued to flourish.

Our success is rooted in the strength of our community. We have built lasting relationships, shared laughter, and created countless memories. The dedication of our club members, hardworking volunteers, our dedicated newsletter editor, and, above all, our passionate Tour Leaders, have been the backbone of every event and gathering. Each person’s energy and enthusiasm has helped make the Damascus Travel Club a welcoming and vibrant group, and we are grateful for everyone’s contributions.

November General Meeting and Memorial Service

We extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who attended the November General Meeting and Annual Memorial Service, where 83 members gathered for a meaningful and heartfelt occasion. During this gathering, we honored and remembered travel club members who passed away during the past club year: Fay Schilling, Bob Peterson, Emily Chiswell, George Beall, Claudia Dutrow, Meryl Dutrow, Louise Etchison, BG Fitzgerald, Barbara Gilbertson, Margaret Hough, Paul Picatta, Everaldo Richards, Gloria Warfield, Alberta Weldon, and Rosemarie Wilson. Special thanks go to Sally Tear, our Chaplain, who led a prayer for the military and all veterans, and to Tammy Monarch, who offered a prayer in remembrance of our departed members.

Planning Ahead: Looking Toward 2026

In September, the Board and Tour Leaders convened for our Annual Calendar Meeting, where meetings, luncheons, and our annual picnic were scheduled for the coming year. Our Tour Leaders are currently working hard to finalize dates and details for the exciting trips planned for 2026. All relevant information will be shared in our January 2026 newsletter. Members are encouraged to stay tuned for updates and to look forward to wonderful travel opportunities in the year ahead.

Travel Insurance and Reservation Reminders

Members planning trips with Collette Travel are reminded that a recommended insurance option is available. For any travel—whether with our club or independently—please consider reviewing insurance providers such as Allianz Travel (866-884-3556) and Travel Guard (844-970-0117). Remember, once a trip reservation with payment has been made, cancelations will only be eligible for a refund if the club has a waiting list and someone is able to take your place.

Continued on next page

Upcoming Events: Holiday Luncheon and Basket Raffle

We hope that everyone has made their reservation and submitted payment for our December 2 Holiday Luncheon and Basket Raffle at the Mt. Airy Volunteer Fire Company Reception Hall. The event will feature a traditional holiday meal and the excitement of our basket raffle. The more baskets contributed, the more thrilling the raffle will be! Members are encouraged to share their talents by bringing basket contributions early (12:30 PM) to help enhance the festive atmosphere. The luncheon will start at 1 PM.

January General Meeting Details

We look forward to welcoming all members to our next General Meeting, which will take place on January 6 at 1 PM at the Damascus American Legion. This gathering will focus on sharing travel tips. Please be prepared to offer your own helpful strategies and insights that make your journeys smoother and more enjoyable. Your participation will help benefit all attendees as we continue to learn from one another. Remember our bad weather policy: IF MONTGOMERY COUNTY SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED, WE WILL NOT HAVE A MEETING.

Looking Forward to the New Year

Thank you all for your continued patience and support as I serve as your new president. I continue to learn from everyone and greatly appreciate your suggestions and thoughts. We all have so much to look forward to in 2026, with many more adventures ahead. Wishing everyone a joyful and blessed holiday season and a **Happy New Year**.

Continue traveling! Sue

A QUICK GLANCE AT OUR UPCOMING TRIPS AND LUNCHEON

Details of these trips and the luncheon will be printed in this and upcoming newsletters.

If you have any questions, please call the tour guide listed with each trip.

Helen Aument: 240-793-6820 Rusty Embrey: 301-871-7069

Joanne Kessler: 301-253-0335 Casey Koontz: 301-831-6746

December 2, 2025 HOLIDAY LUNCHEON and Basket Raffle

December 16, 2025 Lititz and Stone Gables Estate, PA (Casey)

April 19-21, 2026 Virginia Beach (Casey)

NEW! May 13, 2026 Mystery Spring Trip (Joanne)

NEW! May 18-22, 2026 Spring in North Carolina (Casey)

NEW! June 21-23, 2026 Celebrate America / Sail250® Virginia (Helen)

August 8-18, 2026 Nova Scotia (Helen)



JOYS & CONCERNS



- *Happy Birthday* to all members born in December.
- *Happy Anniversary* to members celebrating their wedding anniversary in December.
- If any of the club members have a special birthday, anniversary, or a special event to report, we would be happy to publish the news. Just give me, Ann Gray, a call or send me an email (see below).
- We will be happy to recognize a former member's passing in the newsletter, but you will need to give me an address when requesting that a card be sent to the family.
- We sent condolences to Barbara Beall. Her husband **George Beall** passed away on September 17. They have been members for several years. We also sent condolences to Carroll Sherman, the daughter of long-time member **Emily Chiswell**, who passed away October 18. Her funeral was held October 24. After many hospital and rehab stays, **Sue Greenberg** passed away on November 1. Services were held in Baltimore. Sue loved animals and the Greenberg family asked that any contributions be sent to the ASPCA in Sue's name.
- Prayers are also sent to **Lois Kemp** for her hip replacement surgery scheduled for November 21. We wish her a speedy recovery!

Help keep us current on the status of our DTC members by contacting me, **Ann Gray**, at 301-758-5350 (just leave a message and I will return your call) or email me at anngray1@gmail.com.

UPCOMING TRIP

A Magical December Getaway to LITITZ & STONE GABLES ESTATE

Tour Leader – Casey Koontz – December 16, 2025

This trip is FULLY BOOKED and is a GO. If you're on the waiting list, be ready to go should we have a last-minute cancellation. We will leave Weis Market in Damascus at 8 AM and return approximately 10 PM. Be sure to account for morning traffic and plan to arrive by 7:45 AM to allow time to get checked in and find a seat on the bus. **Please note that since this trip is full, there will NOT be an opportunity to spread out. So please DO NOT put your belongings on the seat beside you or expect to have an empty seat next to you. Questions? Contact Casey Koontz 301-831-6746 or liontonyjames@comcast.net**

NEW TRIPS TO CONSIDER

NEW!

MYSTERY SPRING TRIP

Tour Leader – Joanne Kessler – May 13, 2026

I am presenting our annual Mystery Trip for May 2026. Although I reserved time and place in July, I just received the contract in November. Therefore, I need to present this trip now because they want a \$30 pp deposit by **DECEMBER 10, 2025.**

If you would like to go on this trip (always our very popular trip to who-knows-where) please send in your deposit now so your registration will be on file. The destination site will cancel the trip if the deposits are not received by December 10. How times are changing!

The schedule is to leave Damascus at 8:30 AM on May 13, 2026. We will return by 5:30 PM. I can tell you there is not a lot of walking, you will have a wonderful lunch, and experience something to make you smile! Our fee includes motorcoach, lunch, activity, taxes and tips for the meal, and driver's tip.

Cost is \$170 total. \$30 pp deposit due December 10, 2025. Balance of \$140 pp due April 7, 2026.

OR you can pay the full price of \$170 pp for this Mystery Trip by December 10.

**PLEASE SEND IN YOUR RESERVATION FORM (ON PAGE 7)
AND YOUR CHECK NOW IF YOU WANT TO JOIN US!**



NEW TRIPS TO CONSIDER

NEW!

SPRING IN NORTH CAROLINA – ASHEVILLE & CHEROKEE

Tour Leader – Casey Koontz – May 18-22, 2026

Nestled in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains, a journey to Cherokee and Asheville, North Carolina, offers a rich blend of natural beauty, cultural heritage, and mountain-town charm. Highlights of this trip include a visit to the Oconaluftee Indian Village, and the Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual Co-Op in Cherokee, NC, and a stay at Harrah's Cherokee Hotel & Casino Resort where you'll have dinner with time to take in the casino, entertainment, and amenities it offers. Enjoy two nights in Asheville where we will experience a guided tour of Asheville, with time to tour and shop the downtown area, tour the Biltmore Estate, and visit the Southern Highland Craft Guild, Folk Art Center.

On our first day we will stop in Lexington, Virginia, and enjoy a charming carriage ride through historic Lexington with time on your own for lunch. Enjoy dinner at Cracker Barrel (included) and our hotel in Johnson City, Tennessee.



The following day, after breakfast at the hotel, we will travel to Cherokee, North Carolina, where we will visit the 18th century Indian village and living history museum at Oconaluftee Indian Village. We will see live demonstrations and an immersive experience into the culture and daily life of the Cherokee people. Lunch will be on your own at the nearby Teepee Village then stop at the Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual Co-Op on the Cherokee Indian Reservation. After checking in at Harrah's Cherokee Hotel & Casino Resort use your dinner voucher to choose from five restaurants, then you have the evening to enjoy the casino, shows or other amenities the resort offers.

On Day 3 after breakfast near the resort we depart for Asheville. Upon arriving we will receive a guided tour of Asheville, have time at the Grove Arcade (a vibrant hub of local culture, shopping, and dining) with lunch on your own, then visit the Southern Highland Craft Guild, Folk Art Center that features exhibits dating from 1855 to now. After checking into your Asheville hotel, you will have time to relax and refresh before dinner (included) at Tupelo Honey Café.

Day 4 after breakfast at the hotel step into the grandeur of America's largest home at the Biltmore Estate where we will take a self-guided tour with an audio guide (headphones) while we wander the 250-room chateau at our leisure taking in the opulence and grandeur of the Vanderbilt's Gilded Age home. Then you can unwind with a tasting at the Biltmore Winery at Antler Hill Village. After leaving the Biltmore Estate explore one of the Art Districts in downtown Asheville, then dinner (included) at the Outback Steakhouse.



Day 5 begin your journey home following breakfast at the hotel. We will stop for lunch and explore the historic town of Staunton, Virginia, before arriving back home in the evening.

The trip price includes bus transportation, four nights lodging, three breakfasts and four dinners, carriage ride, admission to Oconaluftee Indian Village, tours of the Biltmore Estate, Teepee Village and Arts & Crafts Co-Op, taxes and tips on all inclusions.

Cost of Package – based on 35 paid reservations:

\$1,083 pp double / \$1,312 pp single / \$1,030 pp triple / \$1,008 pp quad

Deposit of \$400 due by February 3, 2026. Final payment due by April 7, 2026.

Contact Casey Koontz (301) 831-6746 or liontonyjames@comcast.net

CELEBRATE THE 250TH BIRTHDAY OF OUR NATION

NEW!

Norfolk, Hampton Roads, and Virginia's Chesapeake Bay Region

Tour Leader – Helen Aument – June 21-23, 2026

In June 2026, Norfolk, Hampton Roads, and Virginia's Chesapeake Bay region will welcome an international fleet of tall ships, military vessels, and character ships to commemorate the U.S.'s 250th anniversary. This milestone maritime festival – Sail250[®] Virginia – will include more than 60 ships from 20 countries, bringing 7,000 visiting sailors, officers, and dignitaries to Virginia's shores.



This festival is not to be missed! SailFest Cape Charles will feature free ship tours of our visiting historic sailing vessels, period re-enactors, presentations by local historians, hands-on activities for kids, plus fife and drum corps.

We will stay at the Sheraton Waterside Hotel, located along the river in the midst of the festival. Whether you are a history lover or just looking for a unique experience, this festival will be unique. Tour the Battleship Wisconsin, commissioned 75 years ago and which reached its final assignment on December 7, 2000, when it docked in Norfolk to become a floating museum. We will visit the Hampton Roads Naval Museum which is an official museum of the United States Navy. Spend the afternoon at Sail250[®] Virginia. Ships will be open for touring after docking in downtown Norfolk. Enjoy exploring the waterfront with Navy exhibits and demonstrations, artisan foods and beverages, national and regional live entertainment, and more.

We will wrap up our adventure where our country began in Yorktown with a guided tour. This marks the end of British rule in the colonies, and the birth of a new nation – the United States of America.

Cost of Package: \$762 pp double / \$980 pp single / \$723 pp triple / \$703 pp quad

Deposit of \$200 due by February 3, 2026. Final payment due April 7, 2026.

Questions: Contact Helen Aument at 240-793-6820

Complete additional details regarding this trip were emailed to club members on November 18, 2025.

TRIPS TO REVIEW

NOVA SCOTIA, NEW BRUNSWICK, BAY OF FUNDY, AND PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Tour Leader – Helen Aument – August 8-18, 2026

10 days of travel in beautiful Nova Scotia from Halifax to Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and more. See more details in the **June and July newsletters**, available on our website (damascustravelclub.org) or on the gateway link (see below).

Pricing for package is: \$6,399 pp single / \$5,299 pp double / \$5,199 pp triple
Deposit of \$698 pp is due with your reservation form.



Included in Price: Round Trip Air from Baltimore/Washington International Airport, Air Taxes and Fees/Surcharges, Hotel Transfers. **Not Included:** Cancellation Waiver and insurance of \$429 per person. **For more information visit <https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1349802>** PLEASE SEE FULL DETAILS IN THE JUNE EDITION OF THIS NEWSLETTER ONLINE AT www.damascustravelclub.org

For more information visit <https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1349802>

TRIPS TO REVIEW

VIRGINIA BEACH

featuring Patriotic Performances and Azalea Festival

Tour Leader – Casey Koontz – April 19-21, 2026



Join us as we travel south to Virginia Beach to view the Virginia International Tattoo, an exhibition of marching bands, massed pipes and drums, drill teams, Scottish dancers, choirs and more. Your trip also includes tours of the Cape Henry Lighthouse, Old Coast Guard Station, Military Aviation Museum, a demonstration of a WWII flying plane and admission to the Norfolk Botanical Gardens where the azaleas should be in full bloom.

Upon arrival, a boxed lunch will be provided along with reserve seating for the **Tattoo Hullabaloo**, a preshow event where performers come out and do mini performances with music, dancing, drill routines, and drumming exhibitions. Very festive and fun! There is also a beer garden and vendors of products and food. In the afternoon you will attend the **International Tattoo – A Salute to 250 years of American Independence**, which welcomes over 800 performers from all over the world where you will witness pageantry and patriotism, spirit and spectacle, talent teamwork and precision personified. At the conclusion of the Tattoo we will check into your Virginia Beach oceanfront hotel, your home for the next two nights.

On the second day we will tour the **Cape Henry Lighthouse**, and **The Virginia Beach Surf and Rescue Museum**. Our final stop for the day will be the **Military Aviation Museum** that houses one of the largest collections of WWI and WWII military aircraft. The museum will be the backdrop for a typical **southern BBQ dinner**. After dinner we will be treated to a **WWII flying plane demonstration** (weather permitting).

Our final day we will tour the **Norfolk Botanical Garden**, 175 acres, with more than 60 themed gardens that can be viewed by tram, boat or on foot. On our way home we'll make a stop for lunch (on your own), then depart for **Shirley Plantation** where you can tour the oldest and most intact colonial plantation in Virginia, established in 1613 and still family-owned today.

This trip is a perfect salute to 250 years of America! We depart Damascus at 7 AM on April 19 with an estimated return time of 8:30 PM on April 21.



The trip price includes bus transportation, two nights of oceanfront lodging, two breakfasts, one boxed lunch, one dinner at the Military Aviation Museum, and tours of the Aviation Museum, Cape Henry Lighthouse, Old Coast Guard Station, and Shirley Plantation. Admissions to Norfolk Botanical Gardens, the Hullabaloo and tickets to the International Tattoo. Taxes and tips on all inclusions.

Cost of Package – based on 35 paid reservations: \$792 pp double / \$962 pp single / \$752 pp triple / \$712 pp quad

Deposit of \$100 due by December 30, 2025. Final payment due January 23, 2026.

Questions? Contact Casey Koontz at (301) 831-6746 or liontonyjames@comcast.net

RESERVATIONS

Please remember: SEND ONE CHECK FOR EACH TRIP

Mail to: Damascus Travel Club * P.O. Box 304 * Damascus, MD 20872

Note: Please bring your choice of beverage to keep you hydrated on our bus trips.
We do have cups and limited water if someone needs water for medicine.

Virginia Beach, Virginia – April 19-21, 2026

Deposit of \$100 due by December 30, 2025

\$792 pp double / \$962 pp single / \$752 pp triple / \$712 pp quad

Final payment due January 23, 2026

Name _____ Phone _____ Encl. \$ _____

REQUESTED ROOM MATE:

Name _____ Phone _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT:

Name _____ Phone _____

ARE YOU A DTC MEMBER Y ___ N ___

Mystery Trip – May 13, 2026

Payment of \$170 pp due by DECEMBER 10, 2026

___ OR deposit of \$30 pp

Name _____ Phone _____ Encl. \$ _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT:

Name _____ Phone _____

ARE YOU A DTC MEMBER Y ___ N ___

Asheville and Cherokee, North Carolina – May 18-22, 2026

Deposit of \$400 due by February 3, 2026

\$1,083 pp double / \$1,312 pp single / \$1,030 pp triple / \$1,008 pp quad

Final payment due April 7, 2026

Name _____ Phone _____ Encl. \$ _____

REQUESTED ROOM MATE:

Name _____ Phone _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT:

Name _____ Phone _____

ARE YOU A DTC MEMBER Y ___ N ___

Celebrate America/Sail 250/Yorktown, Virginia – June 21-23, 2026

Deposit of \$200 due by February 3, 2026

\$762 pp double / \$980 pp single / \$723 pp triple / \$703 pp quad

Final payment due April 7, 2026

Name _____ Phone _____ Encl. \$ _____

REQUESTED ROOM MATE:

Name _____ Phone _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT:

Name _____ Phone _____

ARE YOU A DTC MEMBER Y ___ N ___

**FOR THE TRIP TO NOVA SCOTIA, PLEASE REGISTER ONLINE with Collette at
<https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1349802>**

**Then send us the reservation form which was in the July and August 2025 newsletters,
available on our website (damascustravelclub.org)**

DAMASCUS TRAVEL CLUB
P.O. BOX 304
DAMASCUS, MD 20872

December 2025

Happy Holidays to all!

Happy New Year!



Keep these newsletters for future reference!



Join us for our December Holiday Party!

Tuesday, December 2, at 1 PM / \$25 pp for a delicious holiday luncheon!

Mt. Airy Volunteer Fire Company Reception Hall, 1008 Twin Arch Road, Mt. Airy

Enjoy fun and games and a delicious holiday meal which will include turkey and ham as well as some great side dishes.

Please bring a raffle basket with you to our December gathering, if you're able.

We will have raffle items and gift baskets to bid on for a memorable afternoon.

Reservation form was due November 21.