



April 2017
Volume 11, Issue 8

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Presentation by Diane M. Selby on April 6 **“Is There Honor in Honor Societies?”**

Diane M. Selby will draw on her long experience as executive director of the national office of Mortar Board to consider in her Torch paper whether there continues to be “a place for honor” in American undergraduate education. Diane will present her paper, “Is There Honor in Honor Societies?”, to the Columbus Torch Club on April 6.

“What is honor anyway?” Diane asks. Given the professional accomplishments of so many Torch Club members, she suspects that most were inducted into an honor society in high school or college or have received an “honor” for outstanding service as an adult.

“My personal experience involved over 20 years of working in the collegiate honor society world where I was privileged to serve a term as president of the Association of College Honor Societies,” Diane recounts. “It was in that setting that I asked the question: Is there honor in honor societies? There are many challenges to educational philosophy on this subject with some coming from university administrators and some from students. Which honor society is the best? Which one of many should I join? Why join an honor society – what will I get out of it?”

Diane will explore the history of honor societies in the United States, a rather uniquely American creation. She also will offer some interesting stories of challenges and successes within the community of collegiate honor societies.



Diane M. Selby served as executive director of the national office of the Mortar Board National Honor Society based at The Ohio State University.

Biography of Diane M. Selby

A lifelong resident of central Ohio, Diane M. Selby had a long career in secondary education, journalism and higher education, as well as experience as a parent and civic leader.

Diane graduated from Upper Arlington High School in 1958 and earned a Bachelor of Science degree with majors in English and speech from The Ohio State University. Immediately following graduation, she married David Selby, her high school sweetheart. They raised three daughters, who continue to live in the Columbus area. After a career with Ohio State, the creation and operation of his own company, and a busy civic life, Dave died last October.

After teaching high school English, speech and journalism, Diane worked at the national headquarters of Kappa Kappa Gamma women's fraternity and edited its quarterly magazine for 16 years. She then served for more than 20 years as executive director of the national office of the Mortar Board National College Senior Honor Society based at Ohio State. Mortar Board has 231 chapters and recognizes college seniors for their achievements in scholarship, leadership and service. Her work with Kappa Kappa Gamma and Mortar Board gave her the opportunity to visit hundreds of college campuses.

Diane was president of both the National Panhellenic Editors Conference and the Association of College Honor Societies.

Diane has been an officer of PTA groups and the Columbus Junior League, a Brownie and Girl Scout leader for 15 years, taught Sunday school, and sang in the church choir. One of her most cherished memories is serving with her husband Dave as presidents of the Worthington Band Boosters and as head chaperones for 180 high school students on trips to Disney World and to the Fiesta Bowl.

President's message: Flowers and other uncertainties

Chaucer told us that at this time of year we should anticipate April's sweet showers piercing through the drought of March to bring us flowers. I'm not so sure the March drought appeared on schedule around here, but I'm counting on the flowers.

This year I'm thinking more about other things on the horizon, and the uncertainties that we face. I have a good friend in his mid-90s, who was a college student when he heard of the attack on Pearl Harbor. We asked him how he felt at the time, and his answer was instructive: He had no idea what to think, because it was so far outside his experience, so he just tried to do the best he could day to day.



Jeff Caswell

Not many of our current Torch members have first-hand memories of Pearl Harbor, but I assume all can identify other difficult and uncertain times they've lived through. Indeed, new high school and college graduates today face challenges far beyond anything I could have imagined at that time in my life. And as I think about all this, I'm very grateful for groups like our Torch Club, where we can enjoy fellowship, engage in meaningful discussion and interactions, and just try to do the best we can.

Member's Moment – Joe Blundo

Presented by Violet Meek on March 2, 2017

Our honoree tonight is Joe Blundo, an award-winning columnist for *The Columbus Dispatch*. So, he is one of those who really needs no introduction. But like many an introducer before me, I am willing to rise to the challenge. Possibly in an attempt to head me off, Joe provided me with a short, and remarkably well written, bio-sketch from which I intend to quote liberally. The good stuff is mostly his with a little seasoning from James Thurber.

Joe was born near Pittsburgh in New Castle, Penn. All four of his grandparents were immigrants from southern Italy. His father, Ben, was a WWII veteran who worked in a factory and then the Post Office. His mother, Catherine, worked for the Social Security Administration. It was the 1950s.



Joe Blundo (left) and his presenter Violet Meek.

As a portent of things to come, Joe was an avid reader as a child. When he was in second grade, he found a biography of Al Capone in his parents' bedroom. He didn't know who Al Capone was, he says, but it looked interesting, so he read it. And so, at 8 he started on the road to journalism. He was curious and was willing to follow his instincts to find a good story.

At some point, Joe's brother brought home a copy of James Thurber's autobiography, *My Life and Hard Times*. But he just never got around to taking it back to the library. So Joe read it many times – that probably accounts for his life-long interest in Thurber's work. The book lived for 35 years in his mother's basement as she became

more and more concerned about the library's intentions should they ever discover the identity of the miscreant who had kept the book. Finally, in an act of charity, Joe took the book back to the library and deposited it, suitably clad in brown paper, on the desk with a note attached. "This is your book. It has been in my mother's basement. Please do not put her in jail." No librarian who had read Thurber would have dreamed of it.

The die was cast. First, a short detour as an English major. "I really had no idea how English majors made money," he said. Many have asked that question. He then transferred to Kent State to study journalism. "It seemed like a good fit; it involved words and current events, and newspapers will pay you."

Before graduating from Kent State, Joe met Deborah Robinson at an impromptu party. They have been married since 1975. The kind of story that makes you smile.

Next step: Reporter at the *Parkersburg Sentinel*, a daily in Parkersburg, W.Va. He said it was a great experience. He covered everything from dumpster fires to the state legislature. Interesting combination.

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Member's Moment – Joe Blundo

(Continued from page 3)

Then in 1978 they came to Columbus and the *Dispatch*, with Joe as the night police reporter working 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. To quote: “On my first night on that beat, the police arrested the .22-Caliber Killers, which some longtime residents will remember as being responsible for a string of random murders that terrified central Ohio in the late 1970s. It might be the biggest story I ever covered, and it landed in my lap on my first day.”

There have been all sorts of assignments, with growing responsibilities, at the *Dispatch* over the years, including editor of the Lifestyle section. But his dream job as a columnist began in May 1997. The column, “So To Speak,” may be the first thing many of us turn to each day. He calls it a general interest column that uses humor to make a point.

One way or another, Columbus itself, with all its quirks, has been the genesis of many of those columns. For Joe, the city has felt like home right from the beginning. Maybe that’s because of all he heard about it from Thurber – to paraphrase: *Columbus won out as state capital, by only one vote over Lancaster, and ever since then has had the hallucination that it is being followed.*

So what do you talk to a columnist about – particularly one who has helped CCAD chose a mascot? Well, you could ask about what has changed about journalism over the last 40 years – or 40 days. You could ask him about training with his son for a half marathon. You might ask whether objective reporting is a standard or an historical aberration. Or maybe you might ask about the work trips he takes with his church group. Or if you want to see him smile, you might inquire about his daughter, Celia, the screenwriter, and his son Noah, also a reporter, who with his wife Elizabeth is expecting the first grandchild. Grandchildren are a topic that never ends.

Volunteer needed to create website for Columbus Torch Club

The Columbus Torch Club is interested in having a relatively simple website with information about the club, Torch papers, and monthly newsletters. Steve Sterrett, editor of *The Torch Lighter*, is willing to maintain and update content on the website once it is created. If a club member or other volunteer is willing to create the website, please contact Steve at (614) 262-4586 or sterrett.1@osu.edu.

At last, jokes for blond men

For years, blondes, who are reputed to “have more fun,” have been the subject of jokes. Now, at last, we have jokes about men who are blond. Of course, given the age of most male Torch Club members, we’re grateful to have hair, no matter what its color.

- A blond man is in the bathroom. His wife shouts: “Did you find the shampoo?” He answers: “Yes, but I’m not sure what to do. It’s for dry hair, and I’ve just wet mine.”
- A blond man shouts frantically into the phone: “My wife is pregnant and her contractions are only two minutes apart!” The doctor asks, “Is this her first child?” “No,” the man shouts, “this is her husband!”
- A tourist asks a blond boat captain, “Why do scuba divers always fall backward off their boat?” To which the captain replies, “If they fell forward, they would still be in the boat.”

Responding to the Evite from Secretary Seelbach

Club secretary Thom Seelbach will send you via electronic mail an Evite to attend the Torch Club meeting on April 6. Respond promptly to the Evite so he will have an accurate count of meals needed. You also may respond to him at tseelbach@gmail.com or (614) 457-5103.

The directions for responding to the Evite are:

1. After you click on the email from Evite, it will bring up a new window on the Evite website. You must click your response in this new window for Evite to register your response.
2. The guest count is the actual number of attendees. If only you are attending, the count will be 1. The cost for a guest to attend the meeting and dinner is \$30.

Schedule of Torch Club speakers and their papers for 2016-17

Thursday, October 6, 2016

“The Gifted, Resiliency, and Brain Plasticity” by Bruce Kline and Elizabeth Short

Thursday, November 3, 2016

“Stevenson’s Dentist – Unsung Hero” by Robert Stevenson

Thursday, December 1, 2016

“Seasonal Music from the Old and New Worlds” performed by the Early Interval

Thursday, January 5, 2017

“Marketing Opportunities to Improve Sorghum Farmers’ Incomes in East Africa” by Don Larson

Thursday, February 2, 2017

“Hey, Bernie! No, No!” By Thomas Atzberger

Thursday, March 2, 2017

“The Roots of Audiology” by Paul Niswander

Thursday, April 6, 2017

“Is There Honor in Honor Societies?” by Diane Selby

Thursday, May 4, 2017

“Mr. Lincoln’s News Paper” by Violet Meek

Torch Club’s monthly meeting agenda

4:30-5:30 p.m. Board of Directors meeting

5:30-6:15 p.m. Cocktails and conversation

6:15-6:35 p.m. Business matters

6:35-7:30 p.m. Speaker presents Torch paper

7:30-8:45 p.m. Dinner and table discussion

Meetings are conducted in The Ohio State University Faculty Club, 181 S. Oval Drive; (614) 292-2262.

Board of Directors of Torch Club of Columbus, Ohio, for 2016-17

President – Jeff Caswell

President-Elect – Rich Davis

Past President – Don Dell

Secretary – Thomas M. Seelbach

Assistant Secretary – Susan Warren Smith

Treasurer – Howard Gauthier

Assistant Treasurer – Tom Costantiello

Membership Chair – Dorothy E. Driskell

Fellowship Chair – Violet Meek

Nominating Chair – Don Dell

Newsletter Editor – Stephen A. Sterrett

Director-at-Large – Violet Meek (2018)

Director-at-Large – Pat Smith (2018)

Director-at-Large – Dorothy Driskell (2017)

Director-at-Large – Stephen A. Sterrett (2017)