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Presentation by Robert Stevenson on February 6 **“Milton A. Caniff Seen in the Magic Mirror”**

Cartoonist Milton Caniff, Class of 1930, is among Ohio State University's best-known graduates. His daily comic strips were carried in newspapers around the world for nearly 60 years. “Terry and the Pirates” and “Steve Canyon” were among the most popular.

In his Torch paper on February 6, Robert Stevenson will recount Caniff’s five formative years at Ohio State that helped shape his famous career. Bob will use Caniff’s illustrations from the university’s *Makio* yearbooks, as well as other college drawings, to highlight the cartoonist’s early work. The name of the yearbook, *Makio*, comes from a Japanese word for “magic mirror.”

“Caniff drew comics and artwork for the Stivers High School newspaper in Dayton, then worked his way through college drawing for the *Columbus Dispatch* and campus publications like football game day programs and the yearbooks,” Bob says. “He also found time to act in Scarlet Mask, a student musical comedy performance group, and other theater groups, both on and off campus. When a travelling theater group invited him to join the company, he almost quit college to go with them. His supervisor at the *Dispatch*, long-time cartoonist Billy Ireland, persuaded him to stay.”



Bob Stevenson

Bob’s Torch paper will include highlights of Caniff’s cartoons and citations from *Meanwhile...*, a 950-page biography of Caniff published in 2007. Prior to his death in 1988, Caniff donated his papers to Ohio State, which launched what has grown into the Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum, the world’s largest collection of materials related to cartoons and comics.

Biography of Robert B. Stevenson

Robert Stevenson, a member of the Columbus Torch Club since 2014, is a graduate of Upper Arlington High School. He traveled to Florida to earn his Bachelor of Science degree in biology and chemistry from the University of Miami, but he returned to Columbus for his dental education. He earned his D.D.S. degree in 1975 from The Ohio State University. In 1980, Ohio State awarded Bob the certificate of

training in prosthodontics, the M.S. degree in dental surgery, and the M.A. degree in journalism. He served as captain in the U.S. Air Force Dental Corps in Greece from 1975-78.

Since 1981, Bob has had a private practice in prosthodontics. He was a clinical assistant professor of dentistry at Ohio State from 1981-87 and 1998-2018. He has served in a large number of committee assignments and editorial positions with local, state and national dental organizations, the Franklin County Unit of the American Cancer Society, and Ohio State's College of Dentistry. He also has published numerous articles on scientific, historical and popular topics. Bob and his wife Barbara have two grown children.

President's Message: Times like this

"Mother always said there'd be times like this but she never told me what to do about them." I remember muttering this a time or two. Then one day I realized that she had actually told me what to do many times. Roughly translated, the answer was "Keep busy." Distract yourself with all the other important things of life.

We certainly are living in one of *those* times. It lifts my spirits when I find a place where people talk about topics they find interesting or even topics they are passionately interested in. You knew I'd find a way to bring Torch in, didn't you? These days I find myself grateful that, for at least one evening, I can immerse myself in someone else's interest. Or when I can describe an overly enthusiastic group at some event as "groundlings" with a better-than-even chance that my conversational partners will recognize the Shakespearean reference — and will let me get away with a little harmless showing off. Groups like Torch are important for us all, especially in these times, so bring your friends to meetings and ask them to join us. It matters.

Another word for the habits of mind and heart that allow us to deal with difficult times is "morale." That brings us to the topic for our February meeting, "Milton A. Caniff Seen in the Magic Mirror." Milt Caniff, a dedicated Buckeye, was very much involved in supporting morale both for those at home and those in uniform during World War II. That morale was and is crucial to success for democracies in any armed conflict. I am looking forward to hearing the whole talk next Thursday.

Oddly, that focus on morale brings us to the February Drink-of-the-Month, the Sidecar. Parenthetically, I seem to have become the Drink Maven for Torch, which feels a bit incongruous for someone who had an M.S. before she had her first drink. But Duty's Call is Duty's Call.

The Sidecar is a cocktail that usually contains cognac (or any brandy), an orange liqueur, and lemon juice. Actual ingredients and proportions vary of course. Its origin is in some dispute, but it seems to have appeared near the end of WWI in either London or Paris. The story I find compelling is that it was invented by an American Army captain who named it for the sidecar of his motorcycle. The inference was that imbibing too many Sidecars would result in being ferried to one's billet in the sidecar. The army connection would explain the near simultaneous appearance of the cocktail in both London and Paris. Its connection to morale fits, too. If the captain had been drinking only to forget the horrors of trench warfare, then the cognac — or any brandy — would have worked and been simpler. It would be hard to fault him or any of the men and women who endured the trenches or the battle aid stations or hospitals for finding respite however they could. Inventing a cocktail by tinkering with the ingredients — "Shall we



Violet Meek

try Cointreau or Grand Marnier today?” — is a distraction for the mind. It is a low-risk chemistry experiment that keeps the mind busy so that the spirit can find a moment of rest.

Is that what really happened? Who knows. But it does beat my mother’s version of keeping busy which so often involved shoveling out the hen house. *À votre santé!*

Member’s Moment: Dianne McKenzie

Presented by Constance-Alexa Oulanoff on January 9, 2020

Dianne Hohmann McKenzie is a descendant of the well-known and influential lawyer George Dempster, a member of the British Parliament who owned the absolutely beautiful Scottish castle Scibo, and a descendant of Florence Nightingale. Dianne was born in Boston and raised in Canada.

When her young father passed away due a heart attack, it catapulted Dianne into a grown-up position. She helped her mother raise her younger brother and later run a guest house mostly for college students. As a young adult, Dianne became a teacher, taught second and third grades in London, Ontario. Besides that, she worked at Simpson’s department store on the weekends and for seven years filled a supervisory teaching position for Parks and Recreation in Ontario in the summers.

In 1965 she married this young geologist who lived just three houses down from hers. You may or may not know that the wife of a geologist is a lonely wife. Geologists always chase glaciers or rock formations around the world. Lonely, not in Dianne’s vocabulary. This young resourceful lady, who by the way became a true Buckeye, occupied herself teaching yoga and worked for a naturopath which required her to teach patients at the Beechwold Clinic to develop a healthy lifestyle. Later on, she and her young son accompanied her husband to many geological sites around the country.



Dianne McKenzie (left) was presented for her Member’s Moment by Constance-Alexa Oulanoff.

Here is more: Dianne had become an influential person at the popular *Highlights for Children* magazine.

Retirement in 1996? What an unknown word! Since then, Dianne devoted her time to The Ohio State University Women’s Club, filling many leadership positions.

What are Dianne’s attributes? Creativity, responsibility, learning, service and helpfulness.

Would you like a ride to the Torch Club meeting?

The club’s Fellowship Committee will assist members who need a ride to a Torch meeting by matching drivers with members from their own neighborhoods. If you need a ride, please indicate that when you RSVP for the monthly meeting. If you have a late request for a ride, call Tom Davison at (614) 581-4341. If you’re willing to be a volunteer driver, contact Tom at tcbdavison@gmail.com or Fellowship Committee Chair Nancy Wardwell at wardwell.2@osu.edu.

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 February 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) 499-3090.

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. A potential member may attend one meeting without charge.

Schedule of Torch Club speakers and their papers for 2019-20

October 3, 2019: **“Drug Development to Counter Nerve Agent and Pesticide Poisoning”** by Christopher M. Hadad

November 7, 2019: **“Bernini At St. Peter’s: A 54-Year Collaboration”** by Susan Warrenner Smith

December 5, 2019: **Music for a Midwinter Night** with the Synchronicity Trio

January 9, 2020: **“Places to Go Around the World”** by David A. Hammond

February 6, 2020: **“Milton A. Caniff Seen in the Magic Mirror”** by Robert H. Stevenson

March 5, 2020: Constance-Alexa Oulanoff shares **“Russia’s Cultural Revival of National Traditions”** by Helena Gosilo

April 2, 2020: **“Lofty Aspirations, Humble**

Beginnings: The Early Years of OSU” by Raimund E. Goerler

May 7, 2020: **“What Columbus Invented – And What It Didn’t”** by Joe Blundo

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
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 for Torch Club of Columbus, Ohio, for 2019-20

President – Violet Meek

President-elect – Susan Warrenner Smith

Immediate Past President – Tom Costantiello

Secretary – Thom Seelbach

Assistant Secretary – Susan Tilgner

Treasurer – Howard Gauthier

Assistant Treasurer – Susan Tilgner

Fellowship Chair – Nancy Wardwell

Membership Chair – Dorothy Driskell

Nominating Chair – Tom Costantiello

Newsletter Editor – Steve Sterrett

Director-at-Large Nancy Wardwell (2020)

Director-at-Large Deborah Stevens (2020)

Director-at-Large Dorothy Driskell (2021)

Director-at-Large Elizabeth Short (2021)