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Presentation by Christina M. Atzberger on January 4 **“Sicily: So Much More”**

For most Americans, the mention of Sicily brings to mind the stereotypes associated with the Mafia. Christina M. Atzberger will present a more balanced and interesting picture of the island in her Torch paper at the club’s first meeting of the new year on Thursday, January 4.

“Sicily is the largest island in the Mediterranean and an autonomous region of Italy,” Chris says. “It has a unique history and culture, going beyond the stereotypical view of the island as the original home of the Mafia. This paper will dispel myths and present some interesting and perhaps little-known facts regarding the culture of the island.”

Chris will touch on the geography, climate and history of Sicily, including the Phoenician, Greek, Roman and Byzantine influences. The island was conquered by Barbarians, Muslims and Normans. Later, France and Spain vied for control. She also will review Sicily’s modern history and current culture and challenges, including waves of immigrants fleeing violence and uncertainty.



Chris Atzberger

Biography of Christina Atzberger

Christina M. Atzberger was born in Cleveland, Ohio, and attended grade and high school there. She graduated magna cum laude from John Carroll University and received her Master of Science in Library Science degree from Case Western Reserve University School of Library Science.

Chris started her career at Lakewood Public Library and soon rose to the position of branch manager of the Madison Branch Library. She stepped down to raise her three children, and during that time, she provided genealogical research for clients in the U.S. and abroad.

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Biography of Christina Atzberger

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She began work at the Bexley Public Library starting in 1995, serving as reference librarian, head of reference, adult services manager, and adult services librarian before retiring in 2014. She is a member of the Ohioana Library and the Ohio History Connection.

Chris is a proud Buckeye, having completed the Ohio State University Extension Service Master Gardener course in 2016. Since then, she has happily worked in many gardens around the area, including the Heritage Garden at the Ohio governor's residence and Ohio State's own Master Gardening plot at Waterman Farm. She enjoys traveling, gardening and cooking. She volunteers with church and community groups. She and her husband both tutor English as a second language students at the Dominican Learning Center in Columbus. She is married to Torch Club member and attorney Thomas Atzberger. They reside in Clintonville.

President's Message: New menus for Torch dinners

Plan to come to the January meeting REALLY hungry! (I admit I'm always famished after fasting though social hour, meeting, and the presentation.) Thanks to the Gauthiers, we will be enjoying upgraded menus for the rest of the year.

Ginny, who works with the Faculty Club chef to plan our menus, has found the cost allocation for meals was very limiting in the menu choices. Meals are the primary expense funded by our dues, and controlling the annual dues has been primary for our club leadership. Howard, in his role as club treasurer, in addition to frugal management of club funds, recognized that as a not-for-profit organization, we were eligible to be sales tax exempt as well. He obtained the tax exemption, generating budget savings. The budget will support an increased meal allocation, which Howard proposed, and our club's board approved in time for the January menu. Thank you Ginny and Howard!



Rich Davis

There have been several crises in the leadership of the International Association of Torch Clubs, our parent organization. The first occurred at the convention in Kalamazoo with the election of the new president. Preceded by several months of unprecedented negative communications by the supporters of the two candidates, the election itself also was acrimonious among the convention participants, with multiple challenges over who is allowed to vote. The result of the close vote was the election of George Conklin, whom the Columbus Torch supported, and I personally believe will be a traditional, effective leader.

The executive director of IATC and Kalamazoo Torch member, Jim Coppinger, who has managed the administrative aspects of IATC, resigned. He was replaced by a professional management group, OMG, which has done a stellar job of updating the processes behind tracking the members and officers of our collective clubs. Lastly, at the end of a teleconference of the IATC Board this fall, four regional directors resigned with no recommendations for replacements. All supported the alternate presidential candidate. Fortunately, through the efforts of Dr. Conklin, all have been replaced, stabilizing the board. We hope and believe these highly atypical circumstances are behind us!

Former club member Melvin Richardson died December 18

The Rev. Dr. Melvin V. Richardson, a Torch Club member from 2000 to 2015, died December 18 at the age of 74. He was a graduate of East High School in Columbus, The Ohio State University, and Georgetown University Law Center. He had an extensive career as a counselor, teacher, administrator, lawyer, writer, television host and minister. A celebration of life service for Dr. Richardson will be December 28 at 11 a.m. at Shiloh Baptist Church, 720 Mt. Vernon Ave. His family will receive friends at the church beginning at 10 a.m.

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 January 4. 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 cost for a guest to attend the meeting and dinner is \$30.

Schedule of Torch Club speakers and their papers for 2017-18

Thursday, October 5, 2017

“History of the OSU College of Optometry” by Robert Newcomb

Thursday, November 2, 2017

“Cuba Then and Now: A Contemporary Perspective” by Tricia Herban

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Chamber Music Connection String Quartet

Thursday, January 4, 2018

“Sicily: So Much More” by Christina Atzberger

Thursday, February 1, 2018

“The History and Current State of Antarctica”
by Thomas Baughman

Thursday, March 1, 2018

“Identifying Bottlenecks in Manufacturing Systems and Emergency Departments to Reduce Waiting Times” by Gordon Clark

Thursday, April 5, 2018

“The Evolution of Italian and English Gardens”
by Nancy Verber

Thursday, May 3, 2018

“A Few of My Favorite Things: A Piano Recital”
by Thomas Seelbach and the Faculty Club’s Steinway

Board of Directors of Torch Club of Columbus, Ohio, for 2017-18

President – Rich Davis

President-elect – Tom Costantiello

Immediate Past President – Jeff Caswell

Secretary – Thom Seelbach

Assistant Secretary – Susan W. Smith

Treasurer – Howard Gauthier

Assistant Treasurer – Susan Tilgner

Fellowship Chair – Violet Meek

Membership Chair – Dorothy Driskell

Nominating Chair – Jeff Caswell

Newsletter Editor – Steve Sterrett

Director-at-Large Violet Meek (2018)

Director-at-Large Deborah Stevens (2018)

Director-at-Large Dorothy Driskell (2019)

Director-at-Large Richard Meyer (2019)