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Club's board postpones in-person meetings until January

The Columbus Torch Club's Board of Directors met remotely June 24 using Zoom software to discuss the return of the club's monthly meetings for the 2020-21 program year and the need for continuing communication among the club's members. The greatest concerns during the discussion were the safety and health of the club's members, the vast majority of whom are in a high-risk group for COVID-19.

After the discussion, the board decided to postpone the club's monthly in-person meetings at the Faculty Club until January 2021. The board will revisit the issue later this fall to insure a resumption of the meetings in January is appropriate.

Board members also agreed to explore the possibility of using Zoom to present Torch papers in October and November. That could permit Torch members to see and hear the presentation and ask questions. Torch members also could invite guests and potential members to join the Zoom sessions and to experience the presentation of a Torch paper without the cost or time for a dinner.

The board authorized the potential purchase of Zoom services and made a \$1,500 contribution to the Faculty Club to offset its losses during the pandemic. Club President Violet Meek reported the pandemic slowed progress on a club website, but she is hopeful one will be in place this fall.

Newly elected board will consider questions regarding dues

At its meeting June 24, the Columbus Torch Club's Board of Directors acknowledged the cancellation of the in-person monthly meetings last April and May and the postponement of further meetings until at least January 2021 raises appropriate questions about the amount of dues collected for 2019-20 and the level of dues for 2020-21. The largest expense in the club's budget is for the dinners at the monthly meetings.

Board members concluded, however, that questions regarding the dues should be answered by the newly elected board. The new officers and board members will meet in late July or early August. The questions regarding dues will be on the agenda.

Nancy Wardwell chosen as club's president-elect

Club members voted by electronic mail in June to elect Nancy S. Wardwell as president-elect for 2020-21 and David Lenz and Diane Selby as directors-at-large for two-year terms to mid-2022. Nancy is a professor emeritus of education at The Ohio State University. She has been a Torch member since 2009. David is a retired chemist from the U.S. Army and a Torch member since 2016. Diane is retired from her position as executive director of the National Mortar Board honorary society. She joined Torch in 2015.

Columbus Torch members help to lead IATC

The International Association of Torch Clubs announced in mid-June that Dorothy Driskell was elected president for a two-year term from mid-2020 to mid-2022. Dorothy is a former president of the Columbus Torch Club and is the club's current membership chair. In May, Rich Davis, also a former president of the Columbus club, was appointed IATC treasurer. He will continue his duties as IATC convention coordinator. Meanwhile, Elizabeth Short, a director-at-large on the Columbus club's board, remains IATC Region 5 director.

IATC has selected a new firm to manage the organization's office and business matters. The firm, Outside the Cube, LLC, is based in Columbus. Cecelia Barbieri is a principal with the firm and will be the primary contact on the IATC account. She has been a member of the Columbus Torch Club since 2018.

President's Message: Working on optimism

Our Torch Club is just finishing its 94th year. A little older, a little wiser, but here. That made me think about those first founding members of Torch in the middle of the 1920s – coming together, planning, and finally deciding to formally start their Torch Club. All of them must have been survivors of the 1918 flu epidemic; everyone was touched by the disease in one way or another. Yet they retained enough optimism to start something new and expect it to thrive. Did they expect that we would be here nearly a century later still planning for the future of the Torch Club here in Columbus? Most of us don't think in centuries. I don't suppose they did either, but here we are in the midst of another pandemic, enjoying the fellowship and intellectual stimulation we find in Torch and wondering about the future.



Violet Meek

They were optimistic. I've been working on optimism. Some days I manage better than others. On the good days I think that we have been handed an opportunity. The Torch we know isn't the same as the one they started; we will need to change with the times, too. Ready or not, this forced change in the way we meet gives us an opportunity to try new ways of fostering fellowship and intellectual stimulation.

So, what are we going to do? The board would like to try using a virtual meeting platform like Zoom. Working it out will be the issue. For those of you who haven't tried this yet, here is a quick description. Members use their computers or smart phones to sign in to the virtual meeting using a code the club

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sends to them by email. When the meeting opens, members are visible to each other. The number visible to any member at one time depends on the device used to sign in. From their computers, our Torch speakers can display their normal PowerPoint slides so everyone can see the slides. There are other neat tricks we can use, too, but that is enough for now. If your eyes are glazing over do not fear. We would probably run a practice session. (Or two.)

Some of us have had experience with virtual meetings. Do you have ideas you would like to share? Just let us know. This is an opportunity to look at new options for Torch. It could be a way for members to stay in touch in the winter months or when leaving home becomes a burden. It might be a low-cost way to let potential members visit a meeting. It might be a way to share meetings and ideas with other Torch clubs. Or it might lead us to something else entirely. This is a club with a lot of members who are used to finding innovative solutions to problems. Let's have some fun and see what we can find.

A few fun facts about our early Torch years

The International Association of Torch Clubs was founded in Minneapolis, Minn., with the organization of the first club on July 10, 1924. The Torch Club of Columbus, Ohio, was the 10th club to be organized, receiving its charter on December 16, 1926. Clubs in Akron, Canton and Dayton also received charters in 1926.

The first Torch convention was held in Buffalo, N.Y., in October 1927. Columbus had the honor of hosting the second Torch convention on October 26 and 27, 1928, at the Hotel Deshler-Wallick. The convention program listed 61 convention delegates and alternates from 22 clubs.

Thomas L. Carroll's history of IATC's first 50 years notes that one important topic of discussion at the 1928 convention was "the need to recruit more young members." Some things don't seem to change.



The Ohio State University Faculty Club

Board of Directors for Torch Club of Columbus, Ohio, for 2020-21

President – Susan Warrener Smith
President-elect – Nancy S. Wardwell
Immediate Past President – Violet I. Meek
Secretary – Thom Seelbach
Assistant Secretary – Deborah K. Stevens
Treasurer – Howard Gauthier
Assistant Treasurer – Susan Tilgner
Fellowship Chair – Nancy Wardwell

Membership Chair – Dorothy Driskell
Nominating Chair – Violet I. Meek
Newsletter Editor – Steve Sterrett
Director-at-Large Dorothy Driskell (2021)
Director-at-Large Elizabeth Short (2021)
Director-at-Large David Lenz (2022)
Director-at-Large Diane Selby (2022)
Region 5 Director Elizabeth Short