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TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's message: The birth of the Moscow Mule.....	2
Member's Moment: Christine Atzberger.....	3
Enjoy the Torch convention in the North Carolina mountains in June.....	3
Responding to the Evite from Secretary Seelbach.....	4
Schedule of Torch Club speakers and their papers for 2019-20.....	4
Board of Directors for Torch Club of Columbus, Ohio, for 2019-20.....	4

Presentation by Helena Goscilo on March 5 **“Russia’s Cultural Revival of National Traditions”**

At the close of the 19th century, Russia had achieved international fame for its music, art and ballet, all of which found inspiration in early native traditions, folklore and myths. Helena Goscilo, professor of Slavic and East European languages and cultures at The Ohio State University, will illustrate the cultural riches of this period in Russian history in her Torch paper on Thursday, March 5. Constance Oulanoff will introduce Helena and assist in the presentation.

According to Helena, painting, opera and ballet flourished to an unprecedented degree, rendering Petr Tchaikovsky, Sergei Diaghilev, Fyodor Chaliapin, Ivan Bilibin, Victor Vasnetsov, Leon Bakst, Anna Pavlova, and Vaslav Nijinsky as international icons of a vibrant Russian culture steeped in its colorful heritage.

These talented musicians, artists and performers were aided by the rise of Russian industrialists who not only sponsored risky new endeavors, but also created venues for their premieres. Abramtsevo, the estate of merchant Savva Mamontov outside Moscow, was dedicated to folklore and the arts. The estate provided optimal conditions for numerous creative personalities, established a private opera, and became home to the era’s foremost painters, architects, sculptors, and stage designers.



Abramtsevo is now a Russian state historical, artistic and literary museum.

Biography of Helena Goscilo

Helena Goscilo, professor of Slavic and East European languages and cultures at Ohio State, received her early education at Rugby Grammar School in the United Kingdom, her bachelor’s degree from Queens College in New York, and her graduate degrees from Indiana University. Before joining the Ohio State faculty, Helena was on the faculty at the University of Pittsburgh. At both institutions, she has chaired

the Slavic department. She also has had brief teaching assignments at Kiev State Foreign Language Institute, St. Lawrence University, Indiana University, University of Oregon, and Leeds University.

Helena has written extensively on gender and culture in Russia with an emphasis on the contemporary period. Her publications, however, encompass 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st century culture with the topics ranging across art, music, film, folklore, graphics, gesture, gender politics, and celebrity studies. She has published more than 20 books. The most recent are *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon* (2012), *Fade from Red: Screening the Cold War Ex-enemy 1990-2005* (2014), and *Russian Aviation, Space Flight, and Visual Culture* (2017).

Constance Oulanoff, a member of the Torch Club since 2018, will introduce Helena at the meeting and will assist with the presentation. Constance is retired from Columbus City Schools where she taught Russian and German. She and her students earned numerous awards for their achievements in those two languages.

President's Message: The birth of the Moscow Mule

Why has this column become the story of the drink of the month? I've wondered about that myself. (Dark February days in Ohio tend to lead to introspection.) The short answer is because it is fun to track down connections to the speaker's topic or to the twists and turns of the history of food and drink preferences. The March drink of the month, the Moscow Mule, is a case in point.



Violet Meek

A Moscow Mule contains vodka, lime juice, and ginger beer or sometimes ginger ale. It is currently somewhat trendy. Now, Torch members may be trend-setters in our professional endeavors, but seldom in our personal lives, so enjoy the novelty.

As with most cocktails, the birth narrative of the Moscow Mule is shrouded in myth or at least is not entirely clear. It appeared in the early 1940s in Manhattan, but was first popular on the West Coast. There are also international overtones to the story. In those days vodka, with its Russian association, was not a particularly common spirit in America. Ginger beer was identified with England. During the 1930s there were segments of American society that were not particularly friendly toward either nation. But by 1942 and 1943 England was our close ally, and American merchant marine convoys were bringing supplies to Russia through the difficult and dangerous run to Murmansk and Archangel. Public opinion was ready to change. Could it have been that drinking a Moscow Mule was a patriotic act? It is possible to get too deep into conspiracy theories here. The change was probably more related to homegrown capitalism.

According to Wikipedia, three friends were in the Chatham Hotel bar in New York. One was John A. Morgan, known as Jack, president of Cock 'n' Bull Products and owner of the Hollywood Cock 'n' Bull Restaurant. The second was John G. Martin, president of G.F. Heublein Brothers Inc. of Hartford, Conn. The third was Rudolph Kunett, president of Pierre Smirnoff, Heublein's vodka division. There were stocks of Smirnoff vodka that weren't moving, a shipment of ginger beer from Cock 'n' Bull to New York that needed to be popularized, and three men sitting in a bar. Evidently, synergy happened. The tough-guy movie star Broderick Crawford was the first public adopter. The rest is either myth or history, but it makes a good story. Or to quote Humphrey Bogart, "Here's lookin' at you!"

Member's Moment: Christine Atzberger

Presented by Sally Willson on February 6, 2020

Christine Atzberger, who goes by the nickname Chris, has been a member of Torch for three years and has lived in Columbus for 42 years. When asked about her family and where she grew up, she said, "I have one brother and a million cousins." So, take a guess! Where did her family come from? From Sicily!

Her grandfather and his brothers came through Ellis Island in the early 1900s to Cleveland to work. Where was the rest of his family? Back in Sicily, waiting to join them. When his mother came traveling alone to Ellis Island four years later, she intended to take the train to Cleveland, Ohio, to join her family there. But at Ellis Island, she was put on a train to Cleveland, Tennessee. Can you imagine? If you didn't speak English and ended up in the wrong Cleveland? Well, she made it to Cleveland, Ohio, three days later, and Chris is here to prove it!

Chris is the first in her large family to get an education, which she explained was a big adjustment for her, and her family, whose grandparents were illiterate. She was a *magna cum laude* graduate from John Carroll University with a major in English and Spanish. She earned a master's degree in library science at Case Western Reserve. When she moved to Columbus, she said, "From my family's point of view, you'd think I moved to Outer Mongolia!"

Chris is married to Tom Atzberger, a corporate lawyer specializing in compliance. They met at John Carroll University. Tom has an interesting family background, too. In 1858, his great-great-grandfather left Bavaria to avoid the draft into the Kaiser's army. He was the first in a family of tailors to immigrate and eventually settle in Cleveland. When asked about special interests or awards, Chris recalled singing the Mickey Mouse theme song in second grade! But on a more serious side, she used her education to be a librarian at Bexley Public Library where she loved helping students do research for papers and she continues to this day tutoring a woman from Mauritania.

Since retiring, Chris is a Master Gardner Volunteer through OSU's Extension Service. Chris and Tom have three adult children, two sons and one daughter. They are active in their church, and they love to travel. This year they will explore Sicily and Southern Italy with their church pastor.

Enjoy the Torch convention in the North Carolina mountains in June

The International Association of Torch Clubs will hold its 2020 convention from June 18-21 in the High Country of North Carolina. The High Country Torch Club in Boone, N.C., is hosting the convention. Convention go-ers will stay in The Meadow Brook Inn, a boutique hotel in the nearby town of Blowing Rock. Dorothy Driskell, membership chair of the Columbus Torch Club, will assume the presidency of IATC at the convention. Registration is \$350 before May 14 and \$450 after that date. For more information, click on this link: <http://torch20.org/>.



Sally Willson (left) presented Chris Atzberger for the Member's Moment.

Responding to the Evite from Secretary Seelbach

Club secretary Thom Seelbach has sent you via electronic mail an Evite to attend the Torch Club meeting on March 5. 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)