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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Biography of Susan Warrener Smith.....	2
President’s message: Thankful for peace.....	2
A pre-dinner cocktail with Bess and Harry Truman.....	3
Club inducts new member at its October meeting.....	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 Susan Warrener Smith on November 7 **“Bernini at St. Peter’s: A 54-Year Collaboration”**



A self-portrait by Gian Lorenzo Bernini from the United Kingdom’s Royal Collection Trust.

The Rev. Dr. Susan Warrener Smith will draw upon her expertise in art history and religious studies to present a Torch paper on November 7 that will describe how a brilliant 17th century architect created in Rome a visual interpretation of the Catholic Church in the wake of the Protestant Reformation.

“The decade of the 1620s was an auspicious time for the Roman Catholic Church,” Susan says. “Four of the most influential reformers of the Catholic Church were canonized: Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa of Avila, Filippo Neri, and Francis Xavier. In 1623, Maffeo Barberini became Pope Urban VIII, bringing with him a vast fortune and an artistic appreciation.”

In 1624, Urban VIII appointed the young, precocious and brilliant artist Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680) as the “Architect in St. Peter’s.” That began Bernini’s 54-year collaboration with five different popes. Two years later, the basilica of St. Peter’s was finally consecrated with much ceremony.

“By the late 17th century, one could take a pilgrimage to St. Peter’s through the city of Rome and be led by the vision and influence of Bernini at every step of the way,” Susan says. Her Torch paper will provide some

historical background to discuss the works of Bernini at St. Peter’s. “His work there visually and self-consciously and deliberately interprets what the Roman Catholic Church defined as her triumph in the wake of the Protestant Reformation.”

Susan quotes art historian Heinrich Wolfflin who maintains that Bernini's work at St. Peter's "embodies the spirit of the Catholic Restoration and, implicitly, that of the High Baroque more fully than any other complex of works of art in Rome, Italy, or Europe."

Biography of Susan Warrener Smith

The Rev. Dr. Susan Warrener Smith received her B.A. in art history from Boston University, her M.A. in art history from the University of Michigan, and her Ph.D. in theological and religious studies from Drew University. She is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and served for 13 years as associate pastor at Indianola Presbyterian Church.

In retirement, she convenes a women's Bible study at Indianola, as well as a covenant group for women clergy in the Presbytery of Scioto Valley. She has been a member of Torch since 2003, has delivered papers twice before, has served on the board for a number of years, and currently is president-elect.



Susan Warrener Smith

President's Message: Thankful for peace

This is the time to shift from thoughts of Halloween and visits from small ghosts and goblins to thoughts of Thanksgiving. This is a difficult time for us as a nation and for others around the world. Tempers flare and old friends find that some topics are off limits if friendship is to be preserved. Allies once held dear now split apart. It sometimes seems harder than ever to focus on giving thanks. As I write this, I find that more than ever I am thankful for Torch – thankful that there is a time, that there are people who can still come together for the sheer fun of learning new things. At our best, we are a group who understand the joy of just using our minds in the company of others who feel the same joy – whether we agree with them or not. What makes it all work is mutual respect.



Violet Meek

Somehow that all reminded me of a poem, "This is My Song," written as words to *Finlandia*. The tone poem by Jean Sibelius was written in the years before World War I when Finland still groaned under the yoke of Russian domination. It united the Finnish people to the extent that the Russians forbade its performance. Even now I tear up when I hear it. The words were written by Lloyd Stone in 1935, four years before Russia would invade Finland yet again at the start of World War II.

This is my song, O God of all the nations,
A song of peace, for lands afar and mine.
This is my home, the country where my heart is;
Here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine.
But other hearts in other lands are beating
With hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.

My country's skies are bluer than the ocean,
And sunlight beams on clover leaf and pine.
But other lands have sunlight too and clover,
And skies are everywhere as blue as mine.
So hear my prayer, Thou Lord of all the nations,
A song of peace for their land and for mine.

A pre-dinner cocktail with Bess and Harry Truman

By Violet Meek

Our Cocktail of the Month for November is the “Old Fashioned,” suggested by Howard Gauthier. The first documented mention of the word “cocktail” was in 1806 for a drink of spirits, sugar, bitters, and water which sounds a bit like our modern version.

Not surprisingly, a drink that is more than two centuries old has many possible variations; many of the modern versions have muddled fruit and even soda water or added liqueurs. Even today ordering an “Old Fashioned” in an unfamiliar place can be an adventure. But in keeping with our theme of drinking with characters from the past we will join Bess and Harry Truman in the White House shortly after they moved into the mansion.

David McCullough tells this story in his book, *Truman*. The first time Bess ordered Old Fashioneds, Alonzo Fields, the head butler, a proud and accomplished bartender, made them his usual way with bourbon, orange slices, sugar and a dash of bitters. The next night Bess asked that they be made not quite so sweet. So he tried another recipe.

The next day she complained to J.B. West, then the assistant butler. Those were the worst Old Fashioneds she had ever tasted. She and the president did not like fruit punch. So Fields and West got together and Fields, his pride somewhat hurt, poured a double bourbon on ice and waited while the First Lady took a sip.

“Now, that’s the way we like our Old Fashioneds,” she said with a smile.

Cheers!

Club inducts new member at its October meeting

Warren E. Langdon

Warren is a retired telecommunications software engineer and inventor. He earned a bachelor of science degree in business administration with a major in accounting from The Ohio State University.

He became a project management systems accountant at the Paul Hensen Research Facility for United Telephone near Delaware, Ohio. From that position, he became a software engineer on the first digital switch produced in the United States.

Warren received a patent for a portable wireless player and associated systems that he developed in 1998.



Warren Langdon (right) with Tom Costantiello, the club’s immediate past president.

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 November 7. 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. 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 Warren 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 Warren 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)