



October 2017
Volume 12, Issue 2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Biography of Robert Newcomb.....	2
President’s Message: Ninety-one and doin’ fine.....	3
Payment may be made for Torch Club dues for 2017-18.....	3
Volunteer needed to create website for Columbus Torch Club.....	3
Responding to the Evite from Secretary Seelbach.....	4
Schedule of Torch Club speakers and their papers for 2017-18.....	4
Board of Directors of the Torch Club of Columbus, Ohio, for 2017-18.....	4

Presentation by Robert D. Newcomb on October 5 **“The History of the OSU College of Optometry”**

The College of Optometry at The Ohio State University celebrated its centennial in 2014. When the optometry program began in 1914 with nine students and a non-optometric program director, there was a debate on whether the first curriculum prepared students for a trade or a profession.



Robert D. Newcomb

The new optometry program also faced questions about the role of its graduates. Were they part of a health-related industry? Or more like jewelers who sold glasses? Within the fledgling profession of the early 1900s, its practitioners differentiated themselves from the medical profession by proclaiming, “A Lens is not a Pill!” But, at the same time, fees were charged for professional services; eye health was assessed; and the recipients of those services were referred to as “patients” and not “customers or clients.”

Robert D. Newcomb will explore the early years of the optometry college in his Torch paper to be presented on Thursday, October 5, at Ohio State’s Faculty Club.

Bob reports that during the first two decades of the optometry program, students were educated to become licensed practitioners of Applied Optics. University officials, however, wanted more than just clinical care taught; they also wanted Ohio State to become a center of research for optometry and vision science.

The origins of the optometry program can be traced to 1909 when a group of Ohio optometrists invited Charles Sheard, professor of physics at Ohio State, to give an optics lecture to the group’s annual meeting in Cleveland. Bob notes that Professor Sheard’s presentation was very well received. Shortly thereafter, he began to work with leaders of the Ohio Optometric Association to begin a program at Ohio State that would teach the art and science of contemporary vision care. It would be called “Applied

(continued on page 2)

Presentation by Robert D. Newcomb on October 5

(continued from page 1)

Optics” and be housed in the OSU College of Engineering’s Department of Physics.

The initial two-year associate degree curriculum quickly evolved into a four-year Bachelor of Science degree program, but not without controversy over what was being taught and who was doing the teaching. The fact that this new program was only the second one in the country to be offered by a major public university (the first and only other one at that time was at Columbia University) also contributed to the debate among members of the OSU Board of Trustees at that time.

As a result, the university in 1935 selected a promising young Ph.D. in psychology from Duke University, who had just completed his post-doctoral training at Washington University in St. Louis, to become the new director of the program. His name was Glenn A. Fry. “Because of his monumental service to the university and to the profession for over forty-five years, today the current optometry building in the health sciences complex on West Tenth Avenue is appropriately named Fry Hall,” Bob says.

Bob’s Torch paper also will discuss the evolution in optometric education, licensure and scope of practice and in optometrists’ responsibility as primary health care providers. He also will report Ohio State’s significant expertise in preparing its optometric and vision science practitioners, educators, researchers, and administrators for leadership roles in the second century of its remarkable history.

Biography of Robert Newcomb

Robert D. Newcomb received his Doctor of Optometry (OD) degree from The Ohio State University in 1971. He then served as an optometry officer in the U.S. Navy for three years in Jacksonville, Fla. In 1974, while pursuing a master's degree in public health at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, he began a 23-year career with the Department of Veterans Affairs where he founded the National Association of VA Optometrists and its newsletter, *Optimum VA*.



Bob retired from federal service in 1997 to accept a faculty position at Ohio State’s College of Optometry, where he first served as the director of clinics and then later as the residency director. He was also the college’s inaugural Vision Service Plan (VSP) Chair for the Advancement of Professional Practice from 1997 until his retirement in 2012.

Bob was president of the American Academy of Optometry in 2001 and 2001. He received the Outstanding Service and Recognition Award from the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States in 1997, the “OD of the Year” Award from the Ohio Optometric Association in 2002, and the Eminent Service Award from the American Academy of Optometry in 2006. He is the author of two history books and co-editor of two public health textbooks, among many other publications and continuing education lectures in his field.

Bob is now professor emeritus of clinical optometry. He resides in Worthington with his wife, Pam. In his retirement, he still serves his alma mater through volunteer contributions to the College of Optometry’s alumni society and its *BuckEYE* alumni magazine – where he is affectionately known as Buckeye Bob.

President's Message: Ninety-one and doin' fine

As I mentioned last month, our club is in its 91st year and is truly healthy. One of the undercurrents of the convention this past summer was the need for an improved member recruitment process. Shrinking numbers of members has been an issue over the past few years in some clubs and is a major concern in the face of the IATC goals to increase membership and the number of clubs by its 100th year.

Columbus Torch is indeed fortunate to continue as the largest club in IATC, but head counts alone are not the measure of a club's success. As I look out over the gathered members during our fellowship time or gathered at our respective tables while dining, I see good friends sharing good conversations.

As I sit during the presentations soaking up the wisdom of that month's presenter, I marvel at the diversity of expertise of our membership. In my mind, these latter measures are much more important measures of success. I also believe that these factors do lead to the greater head count. During my own recruitment experience a few years ago, those were the draws for me to join Columbus Torch.

Thank you all for being a part of Columbus Torch!



Rich Davis

Payment may be made for Torch Club dues for 2017-18

Thom Seelbach, club secretary, distributed an email message in mid-September with a notice for payment of the Torch Club's annual dues for 2017-18.

Individual dues are \$300 if paid by the Torch Club meeting on October 5. Payment may be made at that meeting or may be paid in advance by mailing a check to the club's treasurer, Howard Gauthier, at 2751 Alliston Court, Columbus, OH 43220-4215. The check should be written to "Torch Club of Columbus, Ohio." If individual dues are paid after October 5, the amount due will be \$320.

Households with two members will pay dues of \$575 if paid by October 5. If paid after October 5, the household dues for two members will be \$600. Dues for household members are less because the club is passing along the fee reduction from the International Association of Torch Clubs for the second member from the same address.

If a member would like to be temporarily inactive for the 2017-18 program year, the member should seek approval from the club's board. The member then may pay dues of only \$75, which permits the member's name and contact information to be published in the club's program book and provides a subscription to *The Torch* magazine.

Volunteer needed to create website for Columbus Torch Club

The Columbus Torch Club is interested in having a relatively simple website with information about the club, Torch papers, and monthly newsletters. Steve Sterrett, editor of *The Torch Lighter*, is willing to maintain and update content on the website once it is created. If a club member or other volunteer is willing to create the website, please contact Steve at (614) 262-4586 or sterrett.1@osu.edu.

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 October 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) 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.

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

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 presents Torch paper

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 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)