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Schedule of Torch Club speakers and their papers for 2023-24

The 98th year of the Torch Club of Columbus, Ohio, will get underway on Thursday, October 5, at The Ohio State University Faculty Club, 181 S. Oval Drive. Look for these Torch papers:

- October 5, 2023: **"Morocco: Expectations and Surprises"** by Mary Beth Wise, associate professor emeritus, Department of Internal Medicine, Ohio State
- November 2, 2023: **"Land Grant Contributions to Foreign Policy"** by David Hansen, professor emeritus, International Program in Agriculture, Ohio State
- December 7, 2023: **Holiday Music** with the Grandview High School Chorus
- January 4, 2024: **"Cemeteries, Genealogy...Gone but not Forgotten"** by Kent Bermingham, CPA
- February 1, 2024: **"Recent Advances in Medicine Part II - Focused on selected specific disease treatments"** by Gary Hinzman, M.D.
- March 7, 2024: **"Buckeye Tailgate Party"** by Trevor Zahara, author of *Buckeye Tailgate* and *Confessions of an OSU Usher*
- April 4, 2024: **"Walking Each Other Home: Ram Dass, Psychedelics and the Trip of a Lifetime"** by the Rev. Dr. Susan Warren Smith, PCUSA clergy (retired), and Ann Wallingford
- May 2, 2024: **"How does Psychotherapy Work? Clearing the Way for Success"** by Anne Croskey, psychologist

Board sets club's dues for 2023-24 program year

At its meeting in August, the club's Board of Directors set the dues for the 2023-24 program year. Dues for one person are \$360 if paid by November 2. After that date, the dues are \$375. Dues for two persons in a household are \$670. If paid after November 2, household dues are \$700. The charge to bring a guest to the club's meetings is \$35. To pay your dues, please bring a check written to "Torch Club of Columbus" to the first Torch Club meeting on October 5. If you are unable to make payment at that time, you may mail your check after October 13 to the club's treasurer, David Lenz, at 1926 Lake Shore Drive, Columbus, OH 43204. You also may bring your check to the Torch meeting on November 2.

President's message: Explanation of the club's dues for 2023-24

Summer is ending soon, and I hope to see you in a few weeks. The new year for Torch Columbus will commence on October 5. If you have been traveling or thinking about travel, then you will appreciate Mary Beth Wise and her presentation about Morocco.

As in previous years, the board had a summer meeting in August. This was a two-hour retreat at which the board not only heard reports but discussed issues and made decisions for the next year. One issue was to honor Dick Hill, who passed away in June. All agreed that we need to do something special for someone who did so much for Torch. Dick was a frequent and entertaining speaker, served on the board and as your president, recruited new members and made everyone feel welcome with his smile and sense of humor. Count on some special memorials to Dick Hill.



Rai Goerler

Another issue was dues. This club has not raised the dues for membership since 2011. Now, circumstances force us to do what we have avoided for more than a decade.

The International Association of Torch Clubs (IATC) has not raised its dues levied on clubs in the last 15 years. At the annual meeting in Baltimore in June, we heard our Rich Davis give an informative presentation about the finances of IATC, past efforts at cutting costs, and the financial peril it faces. IATC provides our club with numerous services, including the magazine, web services, membership registration, a Zoom license, and handbooks on recruiting and best practices for clubs to be successful. All clubs, including Columbus, voted to approve an increase of \$15 per member of each club. So, our dues, paid by Torch Columbus to the international association will increase.

Our club has a declining financial reserve. It cannot absorb additional costs from IATC or elsewhere without increasing dues. For several years, the club had a healthy financial balance sheet, from the time when it had more than 90 members. That enabled us to maintain membership costs at the level of 12 years ago. However, as our membership declined to fewer than 60 members (credit COVID and the aging process), our revenue from dues declined, costs rose due to inflation, and the financial reserve shrank. Last year, the board discussed raising dues, but chose to reduce costs by ending the cheese and vegetable trays during the social hour. No one complained. Still, the club drained its financial reserves by \$5,600 in the last year alone. This cannot continue without erasing the financial reserves and potentially bankrupting the club within a year or two.

To improve the financial well-being of Columbus Torch, the board voted unanimously to raise the dues by \$45 per year, in addition to the \$15 mandated by IATC, for a total of \$360 (\$375 if paid after November 2). This \$45 is an increase of less than \$4 per month, and only \$5 per month if one adds the additional dues required by IATC. All of us have seen costs rise and memberships become more expensive. Sadly, after twelve years of keeping the dues at \$300, the time has come for us to raise them to \$360.

Your board did not take this step without much consideration and discussion. It will continue to seek ways of reducing costs and avoiding another increase. One idea is to have a Zoom meeting instead of

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President's message

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one of the in-person dinners in the winter months. You may have other ideas. If so, please share them with me at goerler.1@osu.edu.

I look forward to serving as your president.

Members will vote on club's candidates at October meeting

The club's Nominating Committee has nominated Donald W. Larson, a Torch Club member since 2012, for the position of president-elect for the 2023-24 program year. Don is a professor emeritus of agricultural, environment and development economics at Ohio State. If elected, he will serve one year as president-elect and then become president for the 2024-25 program year.

The committee also is nominating Paul Niswander and Dorothy E. Driskell for additional two-year terms as directors-at-large. If elected, their new terms would end in mid-2025.

The club's membership will vote to fill these three offices at the meeting on October 5. President Rai Goerler will accept additional nominations from the floor at that time. The offices of secretary, assistant secretary, treasurer and assistant treasurer serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors.

Club inducts Paul Beck as new member at the May meeting



Paul Beck with our club's membership chair Dorothy Driskell.

Paul A. Beck, professor emeritus of political science at The Ohio State University, was formally accepted into the membership of the Columbus Torch Club at the meeting on May 4. He retired from his faculty position in 2012 after a long and distinguished career in higher education.

Paul earned his bachelor's degree in 1966 from Indiana University. He graduated from the University of Michigan with his master's degree in 1968 and his Ph.D. in 1971. He served as a faculty member at the University of Pittsburgh and Florida State University before joining Ohio State in 1987. He was chair of the Department of Political Science from 1991 to 2004 and dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences from 2004 to 2008.

Ohio State presented him with the Distinguished Scholar Award in 2004 and the Distinguished Service Award in 2022. He has been honored by the American Political Science Association. His research has been supported by five grants from the National Science Foundation and one grant from the U.S. Department of Energy. He currently continues to serve as

international co-coordinator of the Comparative National Election Project, which has been in place since 1989.

Member's Moment: Warren E. Langdon

Two of Warren's grown children, Jason Langdon and Jamie Langdon Babione, presented him for the Member's Moment on May 4. Jason offered the following commentary about his father:

Good evening, Honorable Torch Members.

It is an honor to be able to recognize Warren Langdon in front of others. He has had an extensive career in the telecommunications carrier industry driving change and growth by being a visionary. He was a software engineer in the world of telecommunications. I remember as a child, he brought me to a large working switch for one of the phone carriers, and it was a magical place with all the relays firing and buzzing as people called and connected with their love ones. I was hooked and went into the business as well.

I understand the contribution to the foundation my father made to the industry. How vital his work was to make communications faster, reliable and clearer. How he led in moving communications to the current IP protocol. How visionary it was to foresee the idea of streaming music and the idea that we would have media portable within our pockets. To the point of having a patent placed on it, and it still is used by Microsoft, Apple and Google as a basis for other patents to this day.



Warren Langdon is flanked by his daughter, Jamie Langdon Babione, and his son, Jason Langdon, at the Torch meeting on May 4.

I am most proud to be called his son because he leads with a servant's heart. When the Vietnam War happened, coming from a family of Quakers where peace is the above all, he performed his alternative service in Brooklyn, New York, at Brooklyn Hospital.

He raised and was an active participant in the care of four children through adulthood. He sacrificed to get us in the best school system at the time because my parents believed in education.

When his wife Pauline became ill, he dedicated his life to caring for her. It was a long-term illness where he took care of her lovingly for over a decade without complaint or care until she passed.

Warren Langdon has led his life with love, grace and quiet dignity. His life is a testament to keeping an open mind, an open heart, cultivating your gifts to serve others, and to lead with love.

Thank you, honorable Torch members, for giving me the chance to thank him openly for being a constant example of what an honorable life should be. Thank you, Dad. I love you with all of my heart.

Dick Hill, former Torch Club president, died in June

Richard M. “Dick” Hill, 88, died June 20 from complications related to Parkinson’s disease. He is survived by his wife, Leonora, and their daughter, Cindi. At Dick’s request, no memorial service was held.

Dick joined the Torch Club in 2002 and served as president in 2006-07. Over the years, he presented several popular Torch papers, always laced with humor, on vision, history and travel. Lee, his wife of 65 years, was a regular guest at Torch Club meetings, usually greeting members at the welcome table.

Born in San Francisco, Dick pursued a distinguished career in teaching and research in optometry with a focus on contact lenses. He earned his optometry degree and Ph.D. degree in physiological optics from the University of California at Berkeley. He received the Sc.D. (honoris causa) from the State University of New York.

Over a 31-year career at Ohio State, he became a citizen of the university. He was professor of physiological optics and optometry, associate dean and dean of the College of Optometry. He retired in 1995 as dean and professor emeritus. He received numerous national and international awards for his research in physiological optics and optometry and was a life fellow of the American Academy of Optometry. He was president of the International Society for Contact Lens Research from 1988 to 1990 and was inducted into the National Optometry Hall of Fame in 2005.

Dick was co-chair of Ohio State’s Campus Campaign Council in 1998-99 and president of Ohio State’s Retiree Association in 1999-00. The university conferred its Distinguished Service Award on Dick in 2002.



Dick Hill

Vocational educator A.J. Miller passed away last May

Aaron J. “A.J.” Miller, 93, a member of the Torch Club since 2002, died in his sleep on May 19. He was preceded in death by his wife Helen and is survived by his sons David and Paul and their families. Paul is a member of the Torch Club. A.J.’s memorial service was held June 3.

A.J. was born in Kansas City, Mo., grew up in Ardmore, Okla., and married his high school sweetheart Helen in 1947. He served in the Air Force during the Korean War. After the war, he prepared for a career in vocational and technical education. He earned bachelor’s, master’s and doctorate degrees in trade and industrial education from Oklahoma State University.

After serving as director of vocational education for the Oklahoma City Public Schools, he became coordinator of training and development at the National Center for Research in Vocational Education at Ohio State in 1966. He became a full professor in Ohio State’s Department of Vocational and Technical Education in 1982. He also served as department chair and acting associate dean for academic affairs in the College of Education before retiring in 1993 as professor emeritus.

A.J. was an avid reader and enjoyed music. He played the guitar, organ, harmonica and ukulele and was a church choir director. He was known for his colloquial Oklahoma humor and quick wit. A friend referred to A.J. as one who does not parade pretense – a man of wit, quiet wisdom and zest for life.



A.J. Miller



Columbus Torch members attend IATC convention

Columbus was well-represented at the annual convention of the International Association of Torch Clubs in Baltimore June 21-25. Seated are (l. to r.) Dorothy Driskell, Liz Short, and Susan Tilgner. Standing are (l. to r.) Rich Davis, Gary Hinzman, Rai Goerler, Heber Short, Thom Seelbach, and Nancy Wardwell.

Responding to the Evite from Secretary Seelbach

Club secretary Thom Seelbach will send you via electronic mail an Evite in late September 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) 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 is \$35. A potential member may attend one dinner meeting without charge.

If you need a ride to a Torch meeting or are willing to provide transportation, please contact the club's Fellowship Committee through its chair, Diane Selby, at (614) 571-4226 and Dianeselby@gmail.com.

Board of Directors for Torch Club of Columbus, Ohio, for 2023-24

President – Rai Goerler

President-elect – vacant

Immediate Past President – Susan Tilgner

Secretary – Thom Seelbach

Assistant Secretary – Diane Selby

Treasurer – David Lenz

Assistant Treasurer – vacant

Fellowship Chair – Diane Selby

Membership Chair – Dorothy Driskell

Nominating Chair – Susan Tilgner

Region 5 Director – Nancy Wardwell

Newsletter Editor – Steve Sterrett

Website Editor – Rai Goerler

Director-at-Large – Christina Atzberger (2024)

Director-at-Large – David Hansen (2024)

Director-at-Large – Paul Niswander (2023)

Director-at-Large – Dorothy Driskell (2023)