



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TORCH CLUBS INCORPORATED

Flickerings of the Torch

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER

September 29, 1991

Women in Torch?

In his report to the group on the highlights of the National Convention, which he attended as our representative, Deno Thevaos noted that mandatory admission of women to individual chapters was among the topics addressed but not resolved at the Buffalo meeting. At present, there is no requirement that local chapters admit women, although the national organization does so, and indeed there are women among the national officers and regional directors.

Deno's report sparked a discussion on whether women were eligible for membership in the Central Pennsylvania chapter. Several of us thought that the issue had been decided several years ago, when Peter Everett was president. Others recalled that the matter had been discussed, but that no action had been taken.

Because it is a matter of considerable importance to the club, especially in terms of membership development, I put a motion on the floor that women be eligible for membership in the Central Pennsylvania Chapter of Torch International. The motion was seconded and passed with three members present opposed.

A check to be sure that our vote was legal proved not only that it was taken in accordance with the current by-laws, but that the history of the question of women in the Central Pennsylvania Chapter was longer than most of us had realized. The by-laws of the club dating from 1973 were revised in 1982, and after a good deal of discussion, accepted in revised form in January 1983. Among the revisions was the removal of references to "man" or "men," replacing these nouns with terms such as "individual." Thus, the current by-laws, while making no specific provision for the inclusion of women, do not preclude them. Evidently, the by-laws committee at that time foresaw what the future might hold.

Don Crider, using the records carefully kept over the years by Ralph McComb, not only found the by-laws revisions but also the record of an "informal vote" on the admission of women taken at the meeting in April, 1987. This vote was affirmative, but was not recorded as club policy, which explains why several of us had conflicting recollections of the event.

Now that we have the formal vote in accordance with our current by-laws, we must proceed in a constructive way toward the time when we may have female members. While most of us believe this is a positive step that will ultimately be beneficial to the club, we are also aware that this feeling is not unanimous, and that the opposing view is held by some of our most faithful and supportive members.