

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA TORCH CLUB MINUTES (13 Jan 2021)

President Ming Tien opened the meeting at 7 p.m., following 15 minutes of socializing among members on Zoom. According to the Zoom count, 32 attended. There were no guest introductions.

Bob Carline was the evening's speaker, presenting on "Creating Wood Sculptures." One casualty of the Zoom meeting: Bob said he had planned to put one of his sculptures on each table at our Ramada meeting room for members to examine and enjoy. Instead, he had photos in his presentation.

Bob began with a salute to his mentor, Bob Butler, who introduced him to carving hardwoods. Bob Butler died in 2004.

Highlights of Bob's presentation:

Carvers use either softwoods – basswood is the most popular – or hardwoods. Pennsylvania has a good supply of both. The type of wood dictates the tools a carver uses. First steps include preparing the wood: taking out the core to prevent cracking, coating the wood so it dries slowly, and allowing three to four years of drying before using.

Two templates – side and top views – are cut from the log with a bandsaw to get the rough form that will then be carved with gouges. Files get rid of gouge marks, then sandpapers smooth the piece. Finishing is done with finishing oil, very fine sandpaper, pumice, and a coat of fine wax or furniture oil.

Wood sculpting involves craftsmanship, as described above, and design, which can range from realistic to fully abstract. Bob said he began his hobby doing exact, realistic sculptures in softwood that he painted. When he moved to hardwood, he evolved to more abstract work, with design goals of either showing motion or emotion. With fish and bird subjects he found motion not hard to show. Showing emotion in animals proved harder, but Bob offered photos of his work that achieved that. These included two cranes with their necks entwined, and a woodcock hiding her chick.

Bob said his sculptures take between 15 and 40 hours to complete; he showed a barn owl sculpture that took about 40 hours. Factors that affect the time to do a sculpture include whether the design is new, the availability of a model, and whether he can find a good set of photos of his subject that includes side, top, front and back. Bob often creates a clay model before beginning to sculpt the wood. He once used a frozen fish as a model, returning it to the freezer after each modeling session.

Responding to members' questions, Bob said:

- He uses clay models to experiment with and decide on what he wants to carve
- He likes cherry and walnut woods best because of their very nice finishes.
- He started his hobby in the early 1980s with softwoods and moved to hardwoods in 1990. He found the hobby does not have a steep learning curve.

The meeting ended at 8 p.m.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday, Feb. 10 at 7 p.m. Rob Hendrickson will speak on "the conflict between political correctness, First Amendment speech and academic freedom."

Respectfully submitted by John Dillon, recording secretary

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA TORCH CLUB MINUTES (10 Feb. 2021)

Held on Zoom, 7 p.m., with 27 attending

President Ming Tien opened the meeting at 7 p.m. following 15 minutes of Zoom socializing. Guests attending were Linda Hendrickson, wife of the evening's speaker, Bob Hendrickson, their son Michael and his wife, Jen.

Bob's topic was "Politically Correct Speech versus Free Speech and Academic Freedom." Bob retired from Penn State in 2013 as a professor emeritus after a career in higher education that saw stops at a number of universities around the country. His career included administrative positions and faculty work in higher education programs and policy studies. His hobbies include wine making and building models of historical ships. Bob compared free speech rights as protected under the Constitution with academic freedom, a contractual right defined as the freedom to inquire or teach "in the pursuit of truth wherever that may lead without interference from religious and political ideology or administration." It applies to faculty and students. Public institutions come under First Amendment protection requirements, as well, and many private institutions have embraced those protections in employment contracts.

Bob highlighted a number of famous cases, including that of Arthur Butz, a professor at Northwestern University. Butz was a Holocaust denier who made his claims in a 1977 nationally televised debate. Northwestern endured pressure to end his tenure, but he remains on the faculty. The first hate speech case was *Doe v University of Michigan* in 1989. Bob discussed the history of hate speech codes and numerous court decisions, all finding such codes vague and having a chilling effect on inquiry, free speech and academic freedom. Still, hate speech codes continue at higher education institutions, with counseling and reeducation as enforcement tools. Bob offered examples of current hate speech issues, including at Michigan State, UCLA and USC. Banning speakers on campus also is an issue, including recently at Penn State. There are parameters for institutions to deny speakers access to university facilities, with the substantiated risk of violence being paramount. A 2014 report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression at the University of Chicago listed five principles the university would adhere to in maintaining free speech and academic freedom. These principles can serve as a guide for other institutions:

1. It is NOT the proper role of the University to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable or even offensive.
2. Maintaining a climate of civility and mutual respect cannot be used to stifle free speech.
3. Universities may regulate time, place, and manner of speech so it doesn't disrupt the activities of the University.
4. Deliberations cannot be prevented because some or most of the community members find it offensive, immoral or wrong-headed.
5. Those who object to a speaker may not obstruct or interfere with the rights of others to listen and participate.

A robust discussion among members followed Bob's presentation, hitting on subjects including safe spaces on campus, trigger warning in classes, the ability of those in power to censor others, pros and cons of speech on social media, and censorship by social media companies.

Our next meeting is March 10, 7 p.m., on Zoom. The speaker will be Charles Maxin on "Cholesterol, Hyperlipidemia and Treatments – a Physician's View."

Respectfully submitted, John Dillon, recording secretary

Hendrickson Torch Free Speech Talk Bibliography

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First Amendment Court Cases:

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- Healy v. James, 408 U.S. 169 (1972).
- Perry Educ. Ass'n v. Perry Local Educ. Ass'n, 406 U.S. 37 (1983)
- Grayned v. City of Rockford, 408 U.S. 104 (1972) time place & manner restrictions on speech.
- Keyishian v Board of Regents. 385 U.S. 589 (1967)

For a discussion of First Amendment speech rights see: Hendrickson. The Colleges,.... p.184 (see citation above)

Speaker Ban Court cases and articles:

- Pulcini, Brad. Free Speech and Controversial Speakers: Public Institutions' Legal responsibility and Recommendations for Response. 93no.4 College and University p 25. 2018.
- Smith v. Collins. 439 US 916. 1978. Skokie, Ill. Case
- Texas v. Johnson. 491 US 397. 1989. • Padgett v. Auburn University. <https://campus-speech.law.duke.edu/campus-speech-incidents/padgett-v-auburn-university/>
- Harvard calls off Course amid petition campaign.
<https://www.insidehighered.com/print/news/2021/01/27/harvard-calls-course-amid-petition-campaign>

Penn State article. <https://www.centredaily.com/news/local/education/penn-state/article236559998.html>

Some Hate Speech code cases invalidated by the Courts as vague:

DeJohn v Temple Univ. 537 F. 3d 301 (3d Cir. 2008)
Doe v. University of Michigan. 721 F. Supp. 852. (E.D. Mich. 1989)
Broadrick v. Oklahoma. 413 U.S. 601. 1973 (vague language in Statute)
Dambrot v. Central Michigan University. 55 F. 3d 1177 (6th Cir. 1995)
Bair v. Shippensburg Univ. 280 F. Supp 2d 357 (M.D. Pa 2003)
College Republican v. Reed. 523 F. Supp. 2d 1005 (N.D.Cal.2007)

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA TORCH CLUB MINUTES (10 March 2021)

Technical difficulties delayed the start of the meeting on Zoom until 7:25 p.m. Twenty-seven members attended.

Dr. Charles Maxin spoke on “Cholesterol and blood pressure – treat or not to treat.” Charles graduated from Penn State in 1970 with a degree in chemical engineering and was accepted to Jefferson Medical College. After a residency in Wilmington, Delaware, he and his wife, Tuffy, moved to State College in 1977. In 1972 he did a cardiology rotation in Glasgow, Scotland, an industrial city where many suffered from rheumatic heart disease. Charles explained the famous Framingham, Massachusetts, study that identified factors predisposing people to cardiovascular diseases, strokes and heart attacks. The study was begun in 1948 (in the 1940s one in two Americans died from cardiovascular diseases) and continues. Framingham had a population representative of the U.S., and Harvard cardiologists were nearby.

In 1957 hypertension was defined as a blood pressure reading of 160 over 95. The study found a nearly fourfold increase in coronary heart disease per 1,000 patients with hypertension. Normal blood pressure was later defined as 120/80. The study also found that treatment reduces the risk of heart attacks and stroke. Charles explained the details of the Framingham risk score that calculates the risk for heart disease, stroke or TIA, arterial aneurysm, and peripheral vascular disease over 10 years. It applies to patients between 20 and 79 with no history of cardiovascular disease. Treatment options include diet, weight control, exercise and statins. And, he added, don’t forget your immunizations. He also pointed to the ASCVD Plus Risk Calculator app for smart phones.

Numerous questions followed Charles’s presentation. Among the topics discussed were the use of aspirin, blood thinners and anticoagulants; reliable blood pressure cuffs (Rely-on sold at Walmart was recommended); statins and their side effects; and the correct frequency for cholesterol and other checks. Following the presentations and discussion, president Ming Tien said he wanted to look into having the June meeting in person at the Ramada for those who have been vaccinated, with the meeting streamed to those who could not or did not want to attend in person. Ming said he would send out a Doodle poll to find out who has been vaccinated as a way of indicating how many in the club might be able to attend in person.

The meeting ended at 8:16 p.m.

Our next meeting, via Zoom, is on April 14. Jim Ultman will speak on “Pandemics Past and Present – What We have Learned.”

Respectfully submitted, John Dillon, recording secretary

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA TORCH CLUB MINUTES (14 April 14, 2021)

Meeting on Zoom

Speaker: Jim Ultman, "Pandemics Past and Present – what Have We Learned." (The meeting was recorded.)

Vice President John Golbeck opened the meeting at 7 p.m. following 15 minutes of socializing on Zoom. There were 25 participants, by Zoom count. Jim Ultman's wife, Deena, was welcomed as a guest. John said the Doodle poll results showed four members interested in meeting in person at the Ramada for the May meeting, but 12 interested in meeting in person for the June meeting. Art Goldschmidt will get the Ramada's information about a June meeting.

John introduced Jim and provided details from his bio. Jim retired from Penn State in 2006 as a distinguished professor of chemical engineering and bioengineering. For the minutes, Jim provided these highlights of his talk:

- Corona viruses are enveloped by a membrane containing messenger RNA (which provides the code to produce new virus) and covered by spike proteins (that allow the virus to penetrate cell membranes).
- When inhaled, corona virus is predisposed to attacking the lungs, as is the seasonal flu (influenza) virus, which has a similar cellular makeup.
- The COVID-19 virus has no synthesis apparatus to replicate itself. Instead, it must enter a host cell using its spike protein and then utilize the host cell's synthesis apparatus to replicate.
- Only within the past 20 years have pandemics from corona virus occurred. In contrast, seasonal influenza pandemics have been with us for about 130 years. The worst of these was the 1918 Spanish flu that wiped out about 3% of the world's population.
- Comparing the annual mortality in the U.S. of COVID-19 per 100,00 people (as of the beginning of April) to that of the 1918 Spanish Flu and the seasonal flu:

Seasonal Flu 10; Spanish Flu 660; COVID-19 160

Comparing the case mortality in the U.S. of COVID-19 per 100,00 people (as of the beginning of April) to that of the 1918 Spanish Flu and the seasonal flu:

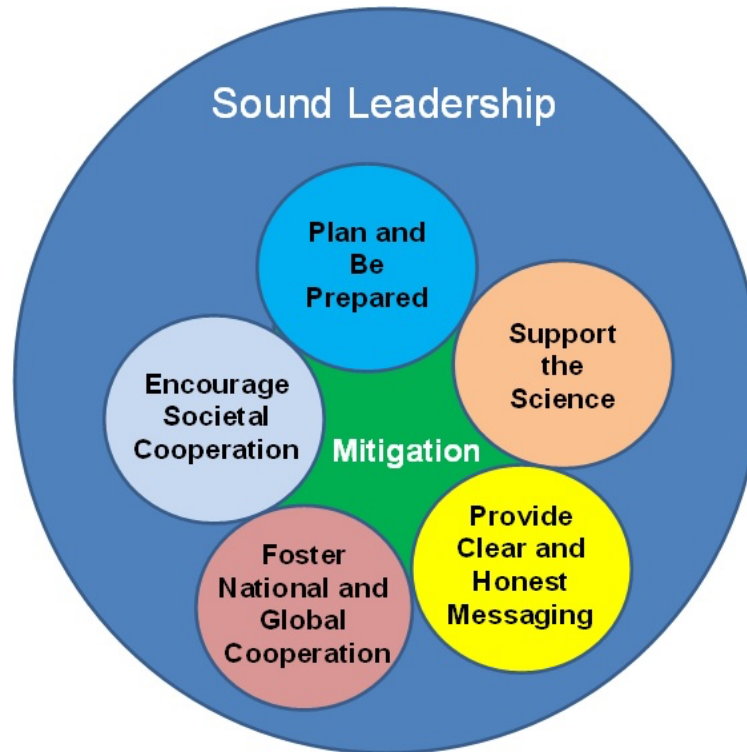
Seasonal Flu 0.1%; Spanish Flu 2.5%; COVID-19 1.8%

From these statistics, it is clear that COVID-19 has an impact that is becoming comparable to the Spanish Flu but is by far greater than seasonal flu.

- Examining the global distribution of the impact of COVID-19, it is surprising that highly developed nations are often at greater risk than some underdeveloped nations. A couple of reasons that may contribute to this are: The older populations in underdeveloped countries are less susceptible; populations in countries with poorer public health have been exposed to many more microorganisms and have therefore acquired a greater innate immunity; there is less regional and international mobility in underdeveloped countries so transmission is slower.
- Examining the pandemic treatment and mitigation methods during the Spanish Flu and COVID-19, one finds that it is the application of science and technology that puts us in a much better position today than in 1918. In particular, we now have sophisticated blood tests, antiviral drug candidates, clinical ventilators and CAT/MRI imaging capabilities. Most importantly, we now have six commercially available vaccines with the potential to prevent disease transmission throughout the world.
- Five of the six available vaccines work by relatively new technologies: After they are injected, man-made particles (either mRNA molecules or genetically modified, harmless viruses) migrate into host cells where they orchestrate the synthesis of many copies of the virus spike protein. This, in turn, stimulates

the host immune system to produce immune cells, most importantly antibodies against the spike protein. These antibodies prevent invading COVID-19 viruses from entering host cells, depriving them of the ability to replicate.

- So, what have we learned from pandemics past and present:



Discussion and questions from members followed. Jim made these points in response to members' questions:

-- National and global cooperation on combating pandemics increased in the aftermath of the Spanish Flu epidemic and World War I.

-- Research into universal vaccines is going on now in anticipation of more viruses that could cause future epidemics or pandemics.

-- We need a strong, worldwide monitoring effort looking for future viruses.

In closing, John asked Jim to share something about himself that others may not know and is not on his bio. Jim replied, "I love to tinker. If you've got something that's broken, give me a call."

The meeting ended at 8:30 p.m.

The next meeting will be on Zoom on Wednesday, May 12, at 7 p.m. Scott Flipse will speak on "Indoor Air Quality."

Respectfully submitted, John Dillon, recording secretary

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA TORCH CLUB MINUTES (12 May 2021)

Via Zoom; 21 participants

Speaker: Scott Flipse on “Indoor Air Quality”

Recording secretary Art Goldschmidt said he has signed a contract for the June meeting in the Terrace Room at the Ramada for members who are vaccinated. Vice president John Golbeck welcomed members. President Ming Tien could not attend. John said an effort was being made to make the June meeting hybrid – in-person at the Ramada and live-streamed to other members. The club will sign a contract for meetings beginning in September and going into next year at the Ramada. John called for speakers for the upcoming season, with priority for those who could not get a slot this year. Interested members should contact him at JHG5@psu.edu. He urged members who have not yet stepped up to contact him about speaking.

John introduced our speaker, Scott Flipse, who was attending from the D.C. home of his daughter, Rachel, where Scott had re-tiled the basement. Scott is a 1970 graduate of State College High School. He graduated from Penn State with a BS degree in architectural engineering. After graduating from the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, he worked as an emergency room physician in Punxsutawney and Williamsport before retiring. He has designed and built five high-performance houses. A healthy indoor environment is a priority in high-performance houses, he said.

Scott showed a PowerPoint presentation. The highlights:

- Indoor air quality is a part of indoor environmental quality that also includes light and lighting, views, noise and acoustics, and thermal comfort.
- Outdoor air is monitored by the EPA; common air pollutants have been decreasing since 1980. Indoor air, of course, begins as outdoor air.
- The Corsi Code notes that in an average life expectancy of 79 years, 69 are spent indoors.
- An air barrier in a house has a big impact on indoor air quality. A 1950s house, for example, has a much higher air volume turnover than houses built more recently with air barriers. But there are no residential indoor air standards, only voluntary ones.
- Indoor air pollutants include biologicals (infectious agents and allergens), VOCs, radon, nitrogen dioxide, particulates, water vapor (too much or too little) and carbon dioxide.
- The top indoor air pollutants most associated with decreased longevity are PM 2.5 (small particles closely associated with combustion), second-hand smoke, mold and moisture, radon, formaldehyde, acrolein, ozone and nitrogen dioxide.
- An optimum indoor relative humidity range of 45%-55% keeps much bad stuff – biological and chemical – at bay.
- A 2016 Boston study of two office environments looked at nine cognitive domains of workers and found all were significantly better in green and green-plus office environments – in particular, crisis response, information use, and strategy.
- Scott’s general recommendations for improving indoor air quality include hard surfaces, a HEPA vacuum, using low VOC products, running fans and avoiding combustion. Not having pets and not wearing shoes indoors are on the list but not something everyone would do.
- Scott also discussed the aspects of controlled ventilation systems in high-performance houses.

Questions and discussion followed, including how the optimum humidity range keeps viruses down, the technology or radon mitigation and control, companies that do indoor air quality checks and mitigation, the pros and cons of air flow in old houses, and gas ranges (popular for cooking, bad for indoor pollution).

Scott closed by mentioning the green building mantra: "Build tight, vent right."

The meeting ended at 8:06 p.m.

The next meeting will be at the Ramada on Wednesday, June 9, at 5:30. Dinner in the Terrace Room will be served at 6. Roger Williams will speak on "'Frederick Watts and the Founding of Penn State."

Respectfully submitted, John Dillon, recording secretary

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA TORCH CLUB MINUTES (9 June 2021)

Attending at the Ramada: 20

Attending via Zoom: 11

Speaker: Roger Williams, "Frederick Watts and the Founding of Penn State"

Following dinner, President Ming Tien opened the meeting at 7 p.m., noting that it was the club's first in-person meeting since March 2020 and calling the occasion "a real joy." Ming called for a vote on the slate of officers for the 21-22 meeting year. Incoming president John Golbeck and vice president Larry Ragan each were elected unanimously. The remaining incoming officers were elected by acclamation: recording secretary John Dillon, corresponding secretary Art Goldschmidt, and treasurer Carl Sillman. Art reported that there will be no International Torch Club annual meeting this year. Our next meeting will be on Sept. 8 at the Ramada. Ron Smith will speak on "The Myth of the Women's and Men's College Sport Amateur." Peter Jurs introduced his guest, Lewis Steinberg. Lewis is a State College native and a graduate of Penn State and the University of Pennsylvania law school. He practiced law in Lock Haven for 45 years. Among his activities in State College Lewis has served on the board of trustees of Schlow Library and been involved with the Penn State Global Connections program. Lewis was then voted in as a member.

Here are highlights of Roger's presentation:

-- Frederick Watts's family history in Pennsylvania goes back to 1760 when his grandfather emigrated from Wales and bought a large tract at the confluence of the Juniata and Susquehanna rivers. His father, David, was a prominent lawyer and a trustee of Dickenson College. Frederick Watts was born in 1801.

-- After reading law under his uncle, he returned to Carlisle and built a large practice and strong reputation. He also developed a love of agriculture while living on his uncle's farm. His reputation as a leader grew. He was Dickenson College's secretary and a trustee, 1824-33; president of the Cumberland Valley Railroad, 1841-73; and an agriculture innovator, building a model farm and introducing insect-resistant Mediterranean wheat and the McCormick reaper.

-- Watts's "second act," 1851-89, built on his reputation as a leader in agriculture and his push to establish the Farmers' High School of Pennsylvania. The Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture played a large role in advocating for the school. The Pennsylvania State Agricultural Society, founded in 1851 with Watts as president, quickly became successful and influential, also pushing for the school. Watts drafted the bill and outlined the plans for the school. Its trustees chose Centre County for its site in 1855 and the school opened in 1859 with four instructors and 69 students.

-- Watts became president of the Board of Trustees in 1855, starting a 19-year tenure. Construction began in 1856, with a barn of Watts's design finished late that year and a five-story college building completed in 1859. Watts hired Evan Pugh, a 31-year-old Ph.D., as president in 1859 with the goal of developing "the best ag. College in the world."

-- Watts, Pugh and allies pushed for the federal Morrill Land Grant College Act of 1862, emphasizing the importance of teaching agriculture and the "mechanic arts" (engineering). Pugh's death in 1864 at age 36 was a shocking loss and was followed by three troubled presidencies in seven years. The school struggled with debt, falling enrollment and varying curriculum experiments. Women were admitted in 1871.

-- Watts was appointed U.S. commissioner of agriculture by President Grant in 1871 and left for Washington. The old guard of trustees began to fade. President James Calder renamed the school the Pennsylvania State

College, ignored engineering and downplayed agriculture. Trustees and other ag interests pushed back. The school's troubles continued.

-- In 1882 George Atherton was hired as president, beginning a 24-year run in which the institution was stabilized, engineering and agriculture strengthened, and the school set up for success in the 20th century.

-- Watts's term as U.S. agriculture commissioner, 1871-77, had numerous successes, including developing the department as a scientific agency. His successes were capped at the first U.S. "world's fair" in 1876 in Philadelphia, where American agriculture progress was showcased during a six-month run that drew 10 million visitors.

-- Watts retired in 1877 and died in 1889. A family member wrote, "He was simply worn out and went quietly to sleep without an illness."

Questions, answers and discussion followed the presentation.

The meeting ended at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, John Dillon, recording secretary

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA TORCH CLUB MINUTES (8 September 2021)

Attending at the Ramada – 25

Attending via Zoom – 10

Speaker: Ron Smith, “The Myth of the Amateur – A History of College Athletic Scholarships.”

Following dinner, President John Golbeck opened the meeting at 7 p.m. He thanked past president Ming Tien and the other officers for their efforts in the last, unusual year of Zoom meetings. He also saluted longtime member and past president Ed Buss, who died July 10 just shy of his 100th birthday. Lee Stout introduced his guest, Dave Colton, who lives in Florida but whose years in State College included serving as sports editor of the Daily Collegian and as a development officer at Penn State. John encouraged members who have not done so to be speakers and said other members are available to help with their presentations. He said the club would be seeking new members and encouraging women, minorities and younger people to join. Club officers are thinking about varying the venues and may try to hold the June meeting at a winery or brewery. This season’s speaking lineup include two non-members with particular expertise, Ron Smith and the April 13 speaker, noted fly-fisherman Joe Humphreys. Vice President Larry Ragan encouraged members to begin thinking about participating in the 2022-23 speaker lineup and noted, as did John, that controversial topics are not off-limits.

John introduced speaker Ron Smith, a sports historian and author of 10 books who is professor emeritus in the Penn State Department of Kinesiology. He was an athlete at Northwestern University and had a brief career in professional baseball. He initiated an amicus brief for the recent NCAA v. Shawne Alston U.S. Supreme Court case regarding amateurism and the payment of athletes.

Highlights from Ron’s presentation:

-- It’s a myth that amateurism in athletics came from ancient Greece. It’s a British concept created in the 19th century to separate the elite from competing against manual laborers. Americans copied many British customs and concepts, including British sports and the idea of amateurism. Still, American college athletes were paid in various ways, going back to the mid-1800s, including the first intercollegiate contest, a Harvard v. Yale crew race in 1852 at a New Hampshire resort.

-- Other examples included the tuition, meals and deals for Yale All-American football star James Hogan and the pay schedule for University of Pittsburgh football players in the 1920s and ‘30s.

-- Today, no high-level athletes are truly amateurs; they are paid in one form or another. As an example, swimmer Katie Ledecky was allowed by the NCAA to keep the \$355,000 she won for her 2016 Olympic victories when she joined the Stanford swim team.

-- College basketball star Ed O’Bannon, a member of the UCLA 1995 NCAA championship team, brought the issue of “name, image and likeness” (NIL) to greater public awareness when he sued the NCAA in 2015 and won a \$60 million settlement because it allowed his NIL to be used in video games without his consent.

-- In 2019 California passed a law prohibiting the NCAA from preventing NIL payments to college athletes in the state.

-- The issue was settled with this year’s 9-0 U.S. Supreme Court decision in the Shawne Alston case (2014) against the NCAA. Alston was a West Virginia University football player who asserted that the cap on athletic scholarships violated the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890. He wanted all his educational expenses paid. The Supreme Court said the NCAA “has not adopted any consistent definition of amateurism.”

-- Ron Smith’s amicus brief on the history of amateurism figured in the Supreme Court decision, with Justice Neil Gorsuch quoting from it.

Many questions and comments from member followed, indicating both their level of interest in and awareness of the issue and its future effects on college athletics and athletes.

The meeting concluded at 8:10 p.m.

The next meeting will be on Oct. 13. The speaker will be Louise Goldschmidt; her topic, "Is That Thing Really a Mosque."

Respectfully submitted, John Dillon, recording secretary

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA TORCH CLUB MINUTES (13 October 2021)

Attending at the Ramada – 22

Speaker: Louise Goldschmidt, 'Is That Thing Really a Mosque?'

President John Golbeck called the meeting to order at 6:50 pm. Reported officers' meeting, in which it was agreed to have meetings both in-person and on Zoom, depending on the Pandemic's course. He reminded members to pay their dues (\$60 for individual members, \$80 for couples). Bob Sills introduced his wife, Julianne. John introduced Ron Smith, a candidate for membership, who was voted in without opposition. The current *Torch* issue has an article about the *amicus* brief that Ron and five other scholars helped to write about so-called "amateur" athletes. John introduced the speaker, Louise Goldschmidt, her degrees, the influence of her parents, her husband, and her residency in State College.

Is That Thing Really a Mosque?

Louise began by thanking Tom Reyburn and Larry Ragan for their technical assistance. This talk is a follow-up to a previous one about American mosques, which pointed out the effects that regional differences and Muslims' lifestyles in various parts of the country had on mosque design.

Canada. Global warming is bad news for many countries, but good news for Canada, as it will probably make it possible for Canadians to settle farther north in their country in the future. The government is investing a lot of money in developing Canada's newest province, Nunavut, which is mostly north of the Arctic Circle. Inuits (Eskimos), who used to make their livings hunting and fishing, have been strongly encouraged to move into town. Social problems have developed as these men have been deprived of their traditional functions and status. However, two groups, one in Inuvik and another in Iqaluit, have converted to Islam and worked together to buy and install new mosques, and this has given new meaning to their lives. Both mosques have subsequently opened food banks to help support needy families, as food, especially in Inuvik, must be flown in by plane and is very expensive.

Germany. Turkish workers, brought in to help re-build after World War II, have now become a significant and vocal minority of the German population. Many of their mosques are controlled by the Turkish government, which supervises the education of the imams and provides them with weekly sermons, which are often pro-Turkish and anti-German. The new mosque in Cologne, built in 2015 and financed entirely by the Turkish government, makes a strong political statement, and has brought many of these tensions to the fore.

Russian Federation. Russia has the largest Muslim population in Europe---about 12 million according to the last census. Many of them live in Central Asia, and are migrating to Moscow and Leningrad in search of better job opportunities. The European Muslims are an older group, declining in numbers; the Central Asians are younger and are increasing in numbers. Relations between the two groups are not good. There are an estimated 2.5 million Muslims in Moscow alone, and until recently there were only four functioning mosques. Recognizing the political volatility of the situation, the Russian government in 2015, with Turkish financial assistance, was able to renovate the old Moscow Cathedral Mosque, and ease the situation.

Timbuktu, **Mali.** Timbuktu, located at the juncture of four important trade routes, was once one of the wealthiest cities in Africa. Salt, cloth, and horses from Egypt and North Africa were traded for gold, ivory and slaves from the Gold Coast. The city was also home to a prestigious university, which attracted students from all over the Muslim World. Unfortunately, it is located in a climatic zone of grassland where the climate is becoming hotter and drier, and trees are few and far between. Although the area has mosques that go back to the 14th century, they are all built of adobe bricks and mud, and must be constantly maintained. This maintenance is a community effort and takes place every year.

Saudi Arabia. The pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, Islam's two holiest cities, takes place during a special month once a year and normally draws 2.4 million people from all over the world. However, the Covid-19 epidemic of 2020 and 2021 has greatly disrupted this and has seriously cut into foreign revenue. The Saudi government has dealt with the problem by severely limiting the number of pilgrims, insisting on quarantines and close supervision, and closely monitoring where the pilgrims can go. The area around the Ka'aba in Mecca is a dramatic example of the new rules.

Mosul, **Iraq.** Mosul's Nuri Mosque, named after local ruler Nur-ed-Din Zengi, was built in 1172 and was famous for its leaning minaret. In 2014 a UNESCO team was examining it for much-needed repairs, but that same week ISIS invaded Mosul and occupied the city. Three years later ISIS was challenged by an army of liberation, and, rather than surrendering, blew up the mosque, which was over 800 years old. The United Arab Emirates has pledged \$50.4 million to rebuild it, and an Egyptian architectural firm has won the contract to design a new mosque, but it is going to take much more than \$50.4 million to restore the old building and its surrounding historic neighborhood.

Malaysia and Indonesia. European demand for spices goes back to the Middle Ages, but in the 15th and 16th centuries the usual trade routes across the Mediterranean and the Arabian Peninsula had been cut off. Europeans needed to find other routes. The Portuguese led the way in exploring the west coast of Africa. In 1497 Vasco da Gama, commanding a fleet of four ships, rounded the Cape of Good Hope, entered the then-unknown Indian Ocean, and reached the port of Calicut near the tip of India. In 1511 the Portuguese, sailing east and then south down the Malay Peninsula, entered the Strait of Malacca, and captured its fort, which controlled the Strait, which led to the Spice Islands of Indonesia. They were followed in the 17th century by the Dutch, who established themselves at Jakarta on the island of Java, and built an empire which would last until 1949. The British, who arrived soon after, learned how to dominate the local rulers of the Malay Peninsula, and continued to do so until World War II.

Both Malaysia and Indonesia are predominantly Muslim countries but have an enormous variety of ethnic groups and a great many islands within their borders. Both countries have a hot, rainy, tropical climate. The indigenous mosque architecture reflects this. The older mosques are kampong style---built on stilts, of tough, native wood, and with steep, two- or three-tiered roofs. Modern mosques are very eclectic in style and may include any kind of architectural feature---European, Malaysian, Indian, Arab, Javanese, Chinese or modern---the sky is the limit. The Malaysians, especially, like to build their mosques on man-made islands or peninsulas, festooning them with colored lights, which are reflected in the water.

Australia. Historically, Australia has had a very strict immigration policy, which barred non-white people from immigrating to the country, but that has gradually loosened over the years. As of 2016 the percentage of Muslims in Australia was only 2.2%, but it has increased 15% since the 2011 census, a space of five years. Even today, Muslims often find themselves on the defensive, but there are some mosques, including two, that are decidedly modern.

Japan. The first mosque was built in the port of Kobe in 1935 and was intended for the use of foreigners. The second one, built in Tokyo in 1938, now functions as a Turkish cultural center, and is very active in giving tours to outsiders. After World War II Japan imported many "guest workers" from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Indonesia to work on reconstruction projects. Many have remained and have taken Japanese wives. Because the Japanese census does not inquire about religious preference, the number of Muslims in the country is unknown. Best current estimates are between 70,000 and 100,000.

Questions from the audience.

- Why did some Eskimos decide to convert to Islam?
- How rapidly is Islam growing in countries outside the realm of historic Islam?

- Are there any physical features that are common to all mosques?
- Comment: In Cologne Muslims are finally being allowed to make the call to prayer outside the mosque.

Discussion ensued on the role of the Turks in Germany.

The meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

Next meeting is 10 November, with a talk by Bill Arden.

Respectfully submitted, John Dillon, recording secretary

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA TORCH CLUB MINUTES (10 November 2021)

Attending at the Ramada – 31

Attending via Zoom – 10

Speaker: Bill Arden, “Celestial Navigation – Shackleton’s Way Home”

President John Golbeck opened the meeting at 6:56 p.m., saying he has been impressed with the growing in-person attendance. He said the idea of a May meeting at a place other than the Ramada is looking less realistic but having an extra, weekend daytime gathering at a winery or other social site will be explored. He asked for volunteers to help organize this event.

Three guests were introduced. Marylee Taylor’s guest via Zoom was Mike Johnson, a retired social psychologist. Larry Ragan introduced Scott Henderson, who recently retired after 41 years with Raytheon and briefly with Penn State’s Applied Research Lab. Scott’s field included digital signal processing, detection processing and wideband communications. Peter Jurs introduced Wayne Osgood, professor emeritus of criminology and sociology at Penn State, where he taught from 1996 to 2017. Wayne has also been on the faculty at the University of Nebraska, the University of Michigan and the Behavioral Research Institute in Boulder, Colorado. Wayne plays classical guitar and banjo. Wayne had expressed an interest in joining the club and was quickly voted in by the membership.

John introduced the speaker, Bill Arden. Bill has degrees in physics and math, an MBA and a master’s in astronomy. He lived in Minnesota for 40 years and his career included 35 years in technology management, 10 years teaching business courses and two years teaching astronomy, both at the college level. He also has a passion for sailing. Bill handed out a sextant to be passed around among the members while he told the story of Ernest Shackleton, whose 28-man expedition to the Antarctic in 1915 was shipwrecked there. While 22 men awaited his return, Shackleton and a crew of five sailed in a lifeboat to South Georgia Island, 830 miles away, using celestial navigation, standard for seafarers at the time. They returned with a rescue vessel after four and a half months and saved the remaining men.

How did Shackleton do it? Bill explained the basic concepts of celestial navigation using the sun, moon and stars, as practiced across cultures for centuries. The techniques are still in use today. The basic elements: measure the angle of the celestial object above the horizon, know what time it is, calculate your position. Bill’s slides showed the basic steps for sun navigation, the math behind it, and the purpose and use of the sextant and the annual Nautical Almanac. He also explained how factors that could cause errors are accounted for, including the need to use the geometry of spherical triangles since the Earth is round. “It’s all just math,” he said.

Other highlights: The U.S. Naval Academy stopped teaching celestial navigation in 2006 but resumed in 2015 when cyberwarfare threatened GPS signals. Celestial navigation isn’t just for sailing: Lewis and Clark used sextants to navigate across North America, and aircraft have used them as well. Numerous questions from members indicated a high level of interest in Bill’s talk.

The meeting adjourned shortly before 8 p.m.

Larry Ragan is the speaker for the Dec. 8 meeting.

Respectfully submitted, John Dillon, recording secretary.

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA TORCH CLUB MINUTES (8 December 2021)

Attending at the Ramada – 27

Attending via Zoom – 2

Speaker: Larry Ragan, “The Story of St. Rita’s Professional Development Academy (PDA)”

President John Golbeck opened the meeting at 7 p.m., following dinner. He reported that club treasurer Carl Sillman had died on Dec. 7 after an illness. He was 67 and had been a member for five years. John also congratulated Roger Williams on becoming president of the Centre County Historical Society. Lee Stout, who has filled in for Carl as treasurer at recent meetings, was nominated by Bob Hendrickson to be the new treasurer and was elected in a unanimous vote. John asked that members wear their masks during the meeting when not eating or drinking. In light of the increase in Covid infections in the region, he said that holding future in-person meetings would be assessed on a monthly basis.

Larry Ragan introduced his guests – Jim Diamond, an agriculture educator of 50-plus years at Penn State; Larry’s wife, Laurie, a speech therapist; and Jan Dillon, who was serving as the Zoom moderator, a role that Larry fills at other meetings. Ron Smith introduced his guest, Terry Engelder, a geologist and geosciences professor at Penn State who had a key role in the discovery and assessment of the Marcellus Shale natural gas field in Pennsylvania.

Art Goldschmidt asked for a vote of members on their preference for decaf versus regular coffee at the club meals, in order to inform the hotel. Decaf was overwhelmingly preferred.

John then introduced Larry. Here are the highlights of Larry’s presentation:

-- His professional background fit the needs of an ambition of a school in Buea, Cameroon, and he was drawn to helping. He has a Ph.D. in instructional systems and a 37-year career in continuing and distance education, course creation and professional development, as well as international education experience.

-- The project was the brainchild of Margaret Mbeseha, a Ph.D. in special education, who founded and is principal of St. Rita Inclusive School in Buea. It has 400 students, including 40-50 with special needs.

-- In Cameroon, special-needs children receive no help in the school system, and there is no teacher training for special needs. Twenty-three percent of children ages 2-9 have at least one disability; 65 percent of those are the result of illnesses, including polio, malaria, leprosy and measles. Margaret’s vision was to provide St. Rita’s teachers with basic special education knowledge and skills and to identify therapy consulting services for special-needs children there.

-- She posted a request for assistance in State College’s Our Lady of Victory parish bulletin. She had attended the church while living here (she now lives in Virginia). Larry and Laurie stepped up to help.

-- A faculty of volunteer experts and specialists was assembled from around the state, plus a lead faculty member at St. Rita’s. Training of St. Rita’s teachers began in January 2019 using technology and software including Moodle and Zoom. The first course taught topics in special education and physical, occupational and speech therapy. St. Rita teachers, often using just their cell phones, met with the volunteer faculty weekly on Zoom. Rolling power outages, unstable Wi-fi connections and the cost of bandwidth were regular challenges for the teachers.

-- The impact of the course was powerful for the teachers, faculty, the children, their parents and their community. More teachers wanted the training. Children’s lives and education were improved.

-- For the professional development academy’s future, goals include stabilizing funding and finding a university to take it on.

A number of questions and comments from the members followed.

The meeting ended at 8 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, John Dillon, recording secretary