

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA TORCH CLUB MINUTES (September 11, 2019)

Club President Dick Held convened the business meeting at 7 p.m. Treasurer Lee Stout reported that receipts for 2018-19 totaled about \$7,700. Expenditures totaled about \$7,500, primarily for dues sent to the International Association of Torch Clubs, monthly dinners, and printing and website expenditures.

Art Goldschmidt reported that he and his wife, Louise, along with Dick Held, attended the annual International Association of Torch Clubs meeting this past summer, held in Durham, North Carolina. They attended several paper sessions, panel discussions, and the business meeting. The Association is aiming to increase its membership to 5,000 by the Torch centennial year of 2024. The 2020 annual meeting is scheduled to be held in the mountains of western North Carolina. The meeting's autobiographical talk was given by incoming Vice President Ming Tien. Three new members were welcomed by unanimous vote: Floyd Todd, nominated by Bob Igo; Bob Foster, nominated by Scott Kretchmar, Emilie Allen, nominated by Art Goldschmidt. Guests Madge Carline and Dave DeWalle were introduced by Bob Carline.

Frank Deutsch then presented the evening's program, "How to Survive Prostate Cancer," which he based on his own experience as a prostate cancer survivor, having been diagnosed with the disease in 2005.

Frank began with a basic description of the form and function of the prostate—a gland about the size and shape of a crab apple located below the bladder and in front of the rectum whose primary job is to produce part of the fluid that makes up semen. He noted that prostate cancer is the second most common form of cancer in men (after skin cancer). In 2019, an estimated 175,000 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer. It's also the second most common cause of cancer deaths among men (after lung cancer). An estimated 32,000 men will die from the disease in 2019. It is most often found in older men (average age of diagnosis: 66) and African-American men. The good news, Frank explained, is that prostate cancer usually grows very slowly. In fact, 99 percent of all men will live at least five years after having been diagnosed with the disease. Also contributing to the good news is that most prostate cancers are found while they are still in the prostate "capsule" or nearby areas. Thus, early detection of the disease is critical.

The cause of prostate cancer is as yet undetermined. Typically, men afflicted with the disease experience no definitive symptoms unless the cancer has spread to other parts of the body. The weak or intermittent urine stream associated with the cancer is also symptomatic of non-cancerous conditions. So then how is prostate cancer diagnosed? In most cases by PSA (prostate-specific antigen) blood tests and to a lesser degree, by undergoing a digital rectal exam (DRE) by a physician. PSA's, while not necessarily definitive, are still the best predictors of cancer's presence. A single elevated PSA itself may mean little; the trend line of periodic PSA testing is far more important. A continual upward trend of the PSA over several years is a more likely warning that cancer might be present. Thus, regularly scheduled PSA testing, e.g., as part of annual physical exam, is all-important. Long-term PSA elevation typically leads to a biopsy to determine more definitively cancer's presence. More good news: Most cancers detected through PSA testing and a timely biopsy are curable. There are several options for treatment.

1. Conventional surgery to remove the prostate.
2. Robot-assisted laparoscopic surgery (less bleeding and pain than conventional surgery, but with the same cure rates).
3. Radiation, which may take several forms: external beam, implantation of radioactive seeds, and hormone therapy with radiation—a form most often used if the cancer has spread well beyond the prostate.

Frank outlined a number of additional therapies currently in use but which lack long-term data to confirm their effectiveness. These include "freezing" the cancer cells within the prostate, high-intensity focused ultrasound, proton beam radiotherapy, and primary hormone therapy, which focuses on testosterone, the primary "fuel" for prostate cancer growth. No consensus exists among physicians on what type of treatment is best for you. Many factors must be considered, such as your age, overall health, PSA levels, stage of the cancer, and possible side effects of treatment. Goals for the treatment also play a role; for example, to what degree do you want to regain sexual function? Frank indicated that despite myths to the contrary, for most men, the prospects are good for

recovering sexual function. Another course of treatment is essentially no treatment. Since prostate cancer is so slow growing, for men over the age of 75 watchful waiting may be the most appropriate action, because statistically speaking, they are more likely to succumb to other afflictions than to die of prostate cancer. Based on his own experience, talking with other prostate cancer survivors, and extensive reading, Frank offered words of advice to all men facing the prospect of prostate cancer. Get annual PSA and DRE tests, beginning around age 50. If cancer is eventually diagnosed, it's likely to be slow growing, so you have ample time to get opinions regarding treatment from your primary care physician and from two or more specialists. When a course of treatment is decided upon, choose an "artist" to perform that treatment. Selecting the best doctor, based on their experience and reputation, is likely to significantly increase the chances of a successful treatment. "There is overwhelming evidence," Frank emphasized, "that if prostate cancer is discovered and treated by an expert in the early stages of the disease, then the chances of a full recovery are very high!"

Of the dozens of books and articles Frank has read about prostate cancer, he said he discovered "the best" single book just this past August. Published by the Prostate Cancer Foundation, "Prostate Cancer Patient Guide" is available at the Foundation's website, <https://www.pcf.org/guide/wellness-guide/>. You can download it directly, or click to have the guide sent to you by U.S. Mail at no charge.

Meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Mike Bezilla

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA TORCH CLUB MINUTES (October 9, 2019)

President Held convened the Club meeting at 6:55 p.m. Ed Buss introduced his guest, John Vandenberg, a biologist who has written two books and more than a hundred articles and has earned numerous awards. Gordon DeJong introduced Caroline, his wife. Secretary Goldschmidt urged the members to respond on time for meetings.

Dick Held told about the Torch Foundation, whose brochures had been distributed and introduced the speaker, Harry West, who described his background, his choice to become a structural engineer, and his fascination with suspension bridges. They originated from primitives' use of vines as cable bridges, later platforms mounted on the cables themselves, and around 1800 (when wrought iron became available) the creation of suspension chain bridges. The first modern suspension bridge spanned the River Tweed (1820); six years later Thomas Telford built the Menai Straits Bridge, which still exists. The earliest wire suspension bridge was built in Fribourg. The Avon Gorge Bridge took 28 years to build. The first cable bridge in the US was built by Charles Ellet in 1841, spanning the Schuylkill; he later built the first suspension bridge over the Ohio River at Wheeling. John A. Roebling, born and educated in Germany, developed wire cable. He began his career in Pittsburgh, later built aqueducts in northern PA and New York, the Niagara Falls railroad bridge (1865), the Sixth Street bridge in Pittsburgh, Cincinnati's Ohio River Bridge, which was almost a prototype for his Brooklyn Bridge (1883) completed by his son. Illustrations showed how the suspension bridge evolved during the 19th century. The Williamsburg Bridge, heavily trussed, is among the ugliest ever built. Rivals Othmar Ammann and David Steinman made important advances in suspension bridge construction theory. Leon Moisseiff devised the Deflection Theory, instrumental in building the Manhattan Bridge (1904). As spans grew longer, engineers tended to build narrower bridges stressing aesthetics.

Examples include Delaware Memorial Bridge (1926), Ammann's George Washington Bridge (1931) that used enormous cables without stiffening truss or girders, the Golden Gate Bridge (1936), designed by Charles Ellis (but not credited), the Bronx Whitestone Bridge (1939), the Deer Island Bridge (1939) noted for its flexibility, and the slender Tacoma Narrows Bridge (1940) designed by Moisseiff, which had a higher width-to-span ratio than any preceding bridge. It is famous for its collapse. Engineers discuss why some suspension bridges have failed. They may twist due to wind gusts. He showed a table, culminating in the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, caused by designers' failure to consider winds and the bridge's self-excitation, causing much research and debate within the engineering profession. Even the Golden Gate Bridge had design flaws; it almost collapsed in a violent windstorm in 1951. West detailed the efforts to fix the slender bridges built in the 1930s, adding stiffening trusses; e.g. the Deer Island bridge; fairings added to Bronx Whitestone (2005). Adding a second deck strengthened the George Washington Bridge, but it had never suffered from winds. He described the use of deep trusses on the Mackinac Bridge (1957), Verrazano Narrows Bridge (1964), air foil decks for the Severn River Crossing (1966), Denmark's East Bridge (1998), and the conventional American approach for the Akashi Kaikyo Bridge (1998). China has never claimed the longest span, but it has five of the ten longest (all built since 2005). Bridges proposed, but not yet built, include one crossing the Straits of Messina, a bridge between Spain and Morocco, and "Peace Bridge" linking Alaska and Russia. Crazy ideas have included Lindenthal's railroad proposals for spanning the Hudson River, Joseph Strauss's original proposal for the Golden Gate Bridge, and David Steinman's Liberty Bridge. He concluded with Montgomery Schuyler's remark that a bridge is the most durable monument to posterity. He has seen students still designing bridges. Now in retirement, Harry West paints pictures of them. In the ensuing discussion, members asked about building approaches to bridges, why the heavy trusses on the Williamsburg Bridge need to be so heavy, and marathon runners' precautions on the Verrazano Bridge.

The meeting adjourned at 8 p.m. Attendance was 31 (29 members, 2 guests).

The next talk will be given by Gary Petersen on "Soils: Why Are They Important?" on November 13.

Respectfully submitted, Art Goldschmidt, secretary

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA TORCH CLUB MINUTES (13 November 2019)

President Dick Held convened the club meeting at 7 p.m. He announced that with 39 people present, our club set a record for attendance. John Vandenberg was admitted as a new member. Two guests were present, both spouses of members: Mary Petersen and Mary Deutsch. Corresponding secretary Art Goldschmidt reported that member Al Turgeon is moving away. Vice President Ming Tien asked the membership to think about program topics and presenters for 2020-21, his year as club president. Suggestions should be sent to him at mxt3@psu.edu. Dick called on recording secretary Mike Bezilla for a brief autobiography. There was no treasurer's report.

Gary Petersen then presented the evening's program on "Soils: Why Are They Important to You, Your Community & The World," drawing on his many years of teaching and research as a soil and land resources scientist. Noting that Pennsylvania alone has 300-400 different types of soil, he focused on the soils of the Centre Region as representative of the state's ridge and valley province. Gary explained the important role that "colluvial" soils play in the region. These are soils that flow off the ridges toward the valleys. The ridges have soils derived from weathered sandstone. The valley soils are derived from weathered limestone. The ridges are flanked with colluvial soils that have moved down slope by gravity and have flowed over the limestone in the valleys. Gary cited a number of examples to show that a knowledge of soils is vital in determining best land-use practices. Valley water tables are typically lowest during August. Soil samples taken then for a housing development may indicate the feasibility of constructing septic systems. But significantly higher water tables that normally characterize the land at other times of the year will compromise the systems' effectiveness.

Such an outcome has implications for good health. Gary noted that Pennsylvania leads the nation in the number of septic systems—and in the number of reported cases of water-borne illness. In the Centre Region as elsewhere, large tracts of farmland have been lost to housing and commercial development. The consequent increase in impermeable surfaces has led to a decrease in water being absorbed into the soil. More run-off impacts floodplain management, soil and water contamination, and many other issues, both political and economic. But merely preserving farmland is not in itself an optimum solution. The simple act of cultivating the soil releases a tremendous amount of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. On that basis, Gary questioned the wisdom of certain farming practices. For instance, planting millions of acres to corn in order to supply the ethanol industry with its basic raw material seems counterproductive. The same might be said for raising vast quantities of beef cattle, another activity with negative impacts on land use. As an alternative to beef, the human nutritional requirement for protein can be satisfied from a large number of lab-grown meats and even from insects. Soils are a critical component of the ecosystem, yet they are being degraded by numerous forces: contaminants, deforestation, salinization, overgrazing, erosion, unplanned and ill-informed development, and more. Gary cautioned that environmental regulations have been implemented to protect our environment. Unfortunately, he concluded, we are living in a time when environmental protections are being weakened or eliminated.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

The next meeting, on December 11, features John Golbeck on Renewable Energy.

Respectfully submitted, Mike Bezilla, recording secretary

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA TORCH CLUB MINUTES (December 11, 2019)

President Dick Held convened the meeting at 7 p.m. He announced a change in programs for early next year. The January meeting will feature Lee Stout speaking on "Monumental Messes: Commentary on Our Past." Filling Lee's previously scheduled spot in April will be Gordon De Jong presenting on "Refugees and Asylees in the U.S." Dave Mudgett's program on steel guitars will be rescheduled for 2020-2021. John Golbeck introduced guests Carolyn Wilhelm (John's spouse) and Peter Jurs. Herman Richey was a guest of Art and Louise Goldschmidt. Corresponding secretary Art Goldschmidt noted that next year's annual meeting of the International Association of Torch Clubs will be held June 18-21 in Boone, North Carolina. He stated that financial assistance might be available to members of our club who wish to attend.

John Golbeck then presented the evening's program on "Renewable Energy in Germany: A History of Energiewende," a term meaning "energy transition." Representing a full-scale transformation of German society, Energiewende aims to "de-carbonize" Germany energy by the year 2050. No other nation, John noted, has established such an ambitious goal. Germany is well on its way toward achieving it. Renewable energy sources (photovoltaic, wind, and biomass), accounting for 3.4% of Germany's electricity generation in 1990, grew to 37.8% in 2018. And in March 2019, renewables supplied an astounding 54.5% of Germany's electricity needs, thanks to unseasonably sunny weather and consistently steady winds. The growth in renewables is all the more remarkable considering that most of Germany lies at the same latitude as southern Canada. (In fact, Berlin is farther north than Calgary, Alberta.) Solar irradiance is thus at a very low ebb during the winter months. John attributed the rapid increase in renewables to five factors that played out during the years since 1970: 1) a grassroots movement that began in the early 1970s, 2) the impact of the 1970s energy crisis and the German response, 3) the founding of the Green Party in 1979, 4) the effect of the Chernobyl accident and the growing climate change movement, and 5) the political changes that stemmed from the coalition government formed from the Social Democratic Party and the Green Party.

John discussed each factor in some detail. For example, he noted that the grassroots resistance movement emerged in response to the proposed construction of a nuclear power plant at Wyl in southeast Germany. Both major political parties, the left-of-center Social Democrats and the right-of-center Christian Democrats, had made nuclear power a cornerstone of the country's energy supply. They claimed that safe, clean nuclear technology might one day eliminate energy bills. A coalition formed from Protestant clergy, labor unions, farmers, vintners, and housewives was successful in forcing the power company to back down. Thirty-five years later, the meltdown of the Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan changed opinion irreversibly, and all nuclear power plants in Germany are expected to be phased out by the year 2022. John concluded by noting that Germany still derives 43% of its total electrical output from coal and nuclear. If Energiewende is to be successful, radical changes will be required, including constructing transmission lines (opposed by some environmental groups) eight times faster than they are currently being built, building new back-up power plants, and installing instruments to control electricity demand. These changes will drive electricity prices higher. Fulfillment of Energiewende thus presents major challenges that currently do not appear to have easy solutions.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m. Attendance: 28 members, 3 guests.

The next meeting will be January 8.

Respectfully submitted, Mike Bezilla, recording secretary

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA TORCH CLUB MINUTES (January 8, 2020)

President Dick Held convened the meeting at 7 p.m. John Golbeck introduced guests Carolyn Wilhelm (John's spouse) and Charles Maxin. Carl Sillman introduced his spouse, Kathi. Peter Jurs was welcomed by unanimous vote as a new member. The evening's autobiographical talk was given by Steve Smith.

Lee Stout then presented a program, "Monumental Messes: Statues and Stories, Commentary on Our Past." He discussed controversies surrounding Confederate monuments and how our society is now reconsidering their meaning. Important questions have arisen in recent years, such as: What do these monuments represent? What do they say about our values as Americans? What should be done with them? Allow them to stand? Pull them down? Move them to different locations (even into long-term non-public storage)? Lee noted that these questions have become part of a national discussion after the racially motivated murders of nine worshippers in a Black church in Charleston, South Carolina, and violence between anti-Semitic white nationalists and anti-fascist counter-protestors at the University of Virginia in 2017. The presence of statues honoring Confederate leaders such as Robert E. Lee in New Orleans and "Silent Sam" on the University of North Carolina campus at Chapel Hill have led to a public outcry that in these two cases and elsewhere, has resulted in generations-old landmarks being removed. Lee said that the monument controversy represents a major departure in how Americans see their nation's history and how that story is being told by many historians.

Prior to the 1960s, historians talked and wrote in the manner of "consensus history," that is, they told a story with an accepted body of facts that emphasized great men and major events as part of a panorama of ever-expanding political and human rights and economic progress. It was a history around which citizens could find a common identity and build a unifying national story. However, it neglected the role of women, people of color, and other self-defined minorities. More recently, historians are beginning to examine a new body of previously ignored facts and are telling new stories that do not fit the consensus model. Statues that in previous generations stood as symbols of a romanticized Confederacy dedicated to the cause of states' rights now to many Americans symbolize oppression and dedication to the right to keep slaves. Lee noted that the re-thinking of the role of monuments and even such remembrances as building and street names is not confined to the Civil War era. Controversy has swirled around figures as diverse as Christopher Columbus, Junipero Serra, and Woodrow Wilson as their actions and values are being reconsidered by the current generation of Americans. Monuments have their own story to tell beyond honoring past heroes, Professional historians, Lee explained, generally say it's a local decision as to what part of the past should be honored. Historical context and interpretation should be attached so that people can better understand why these monuments exist.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

The next meeting will be February 12, with Bob Igo scheduled to speak on "Planning in the Centre Region."

Respectfully submitted, Mike Bezilla, recording secretary

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA TORCH CLUB MINUTES (12 February 2020)

President Dick Held convened the meeting at 7 p.m. By unanimous vote, Charles Maxin and Carolyn Wilhelm were welcomed as new members. Dick thanked Carl Sillman for temporarily assuming treasurer Lee Stout's duties of collecting the evening's dinner money. He also noted that the club is building a database of who invited each member to his/her first Torch meeting. Members who were not present at the meeting are asked to send this information to Dick at cpaasa@aol.com. Vice President Ming Tien (mxt3@psu.edu) reminded the group that he is still seeking volunteers to present programs for 2020-21, during his year as president.

Bob Igo then presented the evening's program, "Planning for Growth in the Centre Region," drawing on his experience as a member of the Harris Township Planning Commission since 2003. Bob noted that the basis for planning is the state Municipalities Planning Code, which empowers local governments to guide the development of land, structures, streets and public facilities in a way that promotes the preservation of natural and historic resources, encourages revitalization of urban centers, and ensures consistency of land use regulation. Centre County has seven planning regions (whose boundaries are those of the county's seven school districts), supported by the overall Centre County Planning Commission, comprised of elected officials representing each of the regions. In similar fashion, the Centre Region Planning Commission is comprised of one member from the planning commissions of each township, State College borough, and Penn State University. Bob noted that such an arrangement may not be as efficient as one centralized body of professional planners. However, it ensures that decision-making rests in the hands of community volunteers who are elected or appointed to their respective commissions.

Bob then focused on population. The university historically has been the most important driver; the student population alone has increased from approximately 16,000 in 1960 to more than 46,000 today. Centre Region population (including students) has climbed from about 35,000 in 1960 to nearly 100,000 today. Current projections estimate the region's total population will be about 114,000 in 2040. Population growth has implications across many areas. In housing, for example, regional dwelling units totaled nearly 35,000 units in 2010; about 4,600 units were added through 2019. Remaining capacity is estimated at a little over 10,000 units. Planning for such growth is therefore essential. So how are we doing so far? Bob pointed to the region's consistently high rankings in national surveys in "livability," entrepreneurial climate, education and similar quality-of-life measures as indications that planning has managed regional growth effectively. But what about the future? Major questions loom, such as: To what extent will Penn State continue to grow? Will tourism emerge as a dominant economic driver? What will the transportation needs be? What are the best ways to reconcile growth and sustainability?

The meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

At the next meeting, March 11, Mike Bezilla will give a program on "A Railroad History of Scotia."

Respectfully submitted, Mike Bezilla, recording secretary

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA TORCH CLUB MINUTES (11 March 2020)

President Dick Held convened the meeting at 7 p.m. Vice President Ming Tien noted that he has four commitments for speakers in 2020-21, during his year as president, but he needs six more. He is open to all topics and urged members who might wish to give a talk to contact him (mxt3@psu.edu). Jim Serene called members' attention to a q&a page with Ming in the March/April issue of the *Penn Stater* alumni magazine about his research in transforming cellulose into biofuel. The meeting's biographical talk was given by Art Goldschmidt, who noted that he is in his seventh year as secretary and has been a member of our local Torch Club since 1986. Art also spoke about the upcoming convention of the International Association of Torch Clubs, to be held June 18-21 in Boone, North Carolina. He said financial assistance is available to members who would like to attend and encouraged prospective attendees to contact him (axg2@psu.edu). (According to the IATC website (<http://torch20.org>), financial penalties for late registration and/or cancellation will be waived in light of covid-19 issues.)

Mike Bezilla then presented the evening's program, "Scotia: A Railroad History," in which he shared some aspects of his years of research and writing about the history of the long-gone iron ore-mining community situated a few miles west of State College. Mike told of how, in the early 1800s, the area around what became known as Scotia was an important source of timber that was made into charcoal to feed many small iron-making furnaces in the Nittany Valley. To a lesser extent it was the source of hematite ore for these furnaces. About 1880, prospectors for steel king Andrew Carnegie pronounced the ore ideal for steel-making using the Bessemer process. Carnegie then acquired more than 500 acres from landowner Moses Thompson. Ore mined at the site - soon named Scotia -- was shipped to Pittsburgh mills via the Pennsylvania Railroad, which built a branch to Scotia from its mainline in Tyrone. The mine had its own narrow-gauge railroad to haul ore from the diggings to the crusher and washer, where as many as eight carloads a day were given to the PRR. By the mid-1880s, Scotia had more than 500 residents. Its fortunes changed drastically in the early 1890s.

Carnegie began sourcing most of his ore from the immense high-grade deposits around Lake Superior, idling Scotia for several years. In 1899, a syndicate of East Coast investors acquired the property, and contracted with the Bellefonte Central Railroad to build a line to Scotia and haul the ore to Bellefonte. There the syndicate's two blast furnaces (Bellefonte and Nittany) reduced the ore to pig iron for shipment to steel mills. In 1910, the two furnaces closed permanently owing to steel companies' growing preference for smelting all of their own ore. Scotia was idled again, and its residents gradually moved away. Meanwhile, the McNitt-Huyett Lumber Co. began timbering several thousand acres around Scotia, moving logs over their own narrow-gauge railroad to a saw mill at Waddle. By 1920, forest reserves were exhausted. Theodore Boal (of World War I's Boal Machine Gun Troop fame) acquired the land for possible use as a training site for the Pa. National Guard. When the state chose Indiantown Gap instead, both the BFC and PRR pulled up their rails. Most of the Boal lands were eventually acquired by the Pa. Game Commission. During World War II, a private company backed by \$770,000 from the federal Defense Plant Corp. resumed mining. The ore was shipped over the Bellefonte Central on a newly constructed branch line. Bethlehem Steel Co. was the consignee. After 35 carloads, the steel company refused further shipments, claiming the ore was of insufficient quality. Scotia's infrastructure was sold as war surplus, and mining there came to a close.

The meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

At the next meeting, April 8, Gordon DeJong will talk about "Refugees and Asylees in the Trump Era."

Respectfully submitted, Mike Bezilla, recording secretary

April meeting cancelled due to Covid-19

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA TORCH CLUB MINUTES (13 May 2020)

President Dick Held convened the meeting via Zoom (owing to restrictions on social distancing because of the Covid-19 pandemic) at 7 p.m. Twenty-five members were in attendance. Vice President Ming Tien announced that John Golbeck had agreed to serve as vice president in 2020-21 and Carl Sillman as treasurer. Both were then elected by unanimous vote. Ming reported that no one had volunteered to serve as recording secretary. He indicated that during his year as president, he would ask whoever presented the program at each meeting to prepare a brief summary. This would relieve the recording secretary of that chore, reducing the time it takes to prepare the minutes to less than an hour per month. Ming asked persons interested in serving as recording secretary to contact him (mxt3@psu.edu). President Held reported that eight members had each recruited two or more new members. Roy Hammerstedt recruited the most, and at our next meeting at the Ramada his meal will be free, in recognition of his efforts. Phil Park then presented the evening's program on "Cooperation or Consolidation: Local Government in the Centre Region."

Phil noted that the State College borough and the five contiguous townships that comprise the Centre Region occupy 150 square miles in Centre County, which itself is larger in land area than Rhode Island. Each state is the creator of municipal subdivisions within its boundaries and has absolute control on the structure and powers of subordinate local governments. Pennsylvania has created 67 counties as administrative subdivisions to handle various state functions such as local court administration. The counties are further divided into 2561 general purpose local governments to carry out local governance, administer police and zoning powers, provide protection to persons and property, and maintain local infrastructure such as roads and public water and sewer systems. Municipalities are governed by a set of state laws called municipal codes that vary according to the class of government, such as boroughs and townships of the second class. Many of the general powers listed are comparable across classes. The differences arise primarily in how the governing bodies are organized.

Centre Region municipalities have a total population of 96,000, or approximately 60,000 if Penn State students are not counted. Phil pointed out that the student population matters to the member municipalities of the Centre Region Council of Government (COG) because students differ uniquely in their contribution to the local tax base. COG municipalities finance most general government activities through a combination of real estate and earned income taxes. The local tax burden, which approximately reflects the level of services provided, varies from a per capita (excluding students) low of \$317 in Halfmoon Township to \$1088 in State College. Ferguson, Patton and College townships have local tax burdens ranging from \$482 to \$560.

The Centre Region COG was formed fifty years ago to enhance communication and coordination among the municipalities. Although the COG has no power to enact ordinances or levy taxes, municipalities are empowered by state law to do cooperatively many of the functions and tasks they may do individually. Over the years, the COG has grown to be the primary organization sponsoring jointly funded fire protection, emergency planning and response, refuse collection, planning, building-code administration, and library and recreational services and programs. Because of the cooperative arrangements, citizens enjoy a wide range of high-quality services. No other community of more than 85,000 residents has a fire protection service that is primarily volunteer and costs only \$17 per person. All others have paid firefighter staff. The Centre Region COG is contiguous with the State College Area School District. In fact, by many definitions other than municipal boundaries, we are a single community. The question is whether all citizens' needs and priorities are better served through a cooperative arrangement such as COG or by consolidation into a single municipal government, which would require approval by referendum in each municipality.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

The next meeting will be on June 10. Louise Goldschmidt will give a talk on "Is That Thing Really a Mosque?"

Respectfully submitted, Mike Bezilla, recording secretary

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA TORCH CLUB MINUTES (10 June 2020)

President Dick Held convened the meeting via Zoom (owing to restrictions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic) at 7 p.m. There were twenty-five participants. Ed Buss received the Silver Torch award for his 34 years of devoted service to our Torch Club. President Held said that among Ed's accomplishments during those years were the presentation of seven talks, the recruitment of twelve new members, and service as club president. Ed expressed his deep appreciation and said how much he has enjoyed being a Torch member. Corresponding Secretary Art Goldschmidt was unable to persuade the members to decide immediately on a preferred candidate for IATC Vice President, so he asked them to review the information that he had sent them on May 29 about the three candidates and then express their preference to him by email. (axg2@psu.edu) He noted that five members have already expressed to him a preference for Susan Breen-Held. Art must report the Club's choice to the IATC BY JUNE 15. John Dillon has agreed to serve as the Club's Recording Secretary in 2020-21.

Louise Goldschmidt then gave a slide show, "Is That Thing Really a Mosque?" as a follow-up to her presentation last year, "What is an American Mosque?" in which she introduced the history of mosques in the U.S. from the early 20th century to the present. This year she took us farther afield, examining (1) two mosques in the Canadian province of Nunavut, which were trailers brought thousands of miles through the Canadian wilderness; (2) an "ecologically friendly mosque" in Cambridge, UK; (3) an egg-shaped Turkish mosque in Cologne, Germany; (4) a mushroom-shaped one in Copenhagen, Denmark; (5) the classic Great Mosque in Cordoba, Spain, part of which has been transformed into a Christian church; (6) the Great Umayyad Mosque of Damascus, originally a church which has been transformed into a mosque; and (7) the amazing mud-built mosques of Mali in western Africa. Louise concluded that although mosques can take an amazing variety of forms, they all maintain their unity of purpose, which is to serve as places for Muslim worship.

The discussion that followed the presentation noted the tendency of Islam to factionalize as Muslims moved farther from their original center. Other discussion topics included the resemblance between striped arches of the Cordoba mosque and the Cathedral in Aachen (which can also be found in Cairo); the fact that the Cologne mosque developed from an older structure; the migration of Muslims to Europe, Africa, and East Asia; the architectural features that are essential to every mosque; and whether Christians and Muslims ever managed to worship in the same building. Louise described mosques built by the Afghan camel drivers in Australia and the Saudis in Fidel Castro's Cuba. She said she considers the modern mosques in Malaysia and Indonesia to be especially beautiful and would like to give a future talk about them.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m., concluding the 2019-20 year.

The first meeting of the new year is scheduled for September 9, 2020.

Respectfully submitted, Mike Bezilla, Recording Secretary