

Foreword

The chartered Torch club has not only the right but the responsibility to decide for itself all questions of administrative procedures that are not specifically set forth in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association.

The purpose of this information is to outline the administrative decisions that either must or should be made by a chartered Torch club and to suggest specific questions that should be answered in arriving at those decisions. In addition, we have supplied “commentary” on these matters wherever we thought we had information that might be helpful.

We have also included copies of the report forms that are available from headquarters and the order form for supplies.

One word of caution: The fact that a certain practice is followed by a majority of the clubs or a certain procedure is reported as being favored by most of the more successful clubs does not necessarily mean that it is the right one for your club. The “counsel of experience” should be given weight in your considerations. But in every instance it should be tested against the realities of your own situation and the good judgment of your own members.

You are invited to write or call headquarters whenever we might be able to amplify the material in this information guide or to supplement it with additional information.

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Responsibilities of the Association to the Club

- Statements of Account must be sent to each club at least twice each year (March 1 and October 1).
- A list of the names and addresses of record for each member must be sent to each club three months prior to the above billing dates.
- Supplies for club use must be kept in stock for prompt shipment upon order or request.
- A subscription to *The Torch* magazine must be entered for each member for whom dues have been paid, and the publication must be mailed to the latest address of record.
- The Association must organize and conduct an annual convention to which all members be invited, along with their guest, at convention fees to be determined by the Association in cooperation with the host club for each convention.
- The Association must encourage and assist in the development of regional and sub-regional conferences.
- The Association must endeavor to provide the clubs with information, counseling and problem solving when requested and must constantly work to improve and expand its supplies of materials for club use.
- The Editor of *The Torch* must acknowledge each paper submitted for consideration for publication in the magazine and must select those considered most suitable for such publication.
- The name of a Torch club member who moves to another city should be send to the secretary of the Torch club in that city if one exists therein and if such person has been recommended for transfer by his former club.
- The Association must continually be alert to the need for research that will be beneficial to the Association and its member clubs.
- It must also prepare statistical reports that will aid the clubs in their development programs.

Responsibilities of Clubs to the Association

When the club charter is issued:

- The club must have a minimum number of members that is acceptable to the Bonn of the Association as prescribed in the Association Bylaws.
- It must adopt a constitution and bylaws that are consistent with the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association.
- It must pay an initiation fee of \$10 for each member (except any who have already paid such a fee elsewhere).

After the club charter is issued:

- It must maintain a sufficient number of members to justify continuation of the charter status.
- It must pay to the Association:
 - Annual dues of \$50 per active member.
 - Initiation fees of \$10 for each new member (except any who have paid such a fee elsewhere or who are renewing a former membership in the club)
 - The cost of any supplies purchased from the Association
- It must send to the Association a Monthly Club Report and a Program Report on forms supplied by the Association.

It is encouraged to:

- Select outstanding papers for submission to the editor of *The Torch* to be considered for possible publication
- Submit news items and special features on members for possible use in *Torchlight*.
- Suggest names of possible nominees for directors to be considered by the Nominating Committee of the Association
- Encourage representation at the annual convention each year and at regional (or sub-regional) conventions
- Submit names to the IATC for selection of the future leaders of Torch

Club Functions

All clubs have in common the following functions:

Assessment of Dues and Collection Thereof

- Each club must determine for itself what its dues are to be, after having determined its financial needs. Questions it must answer are:
- Shall we include the cost of the meals in the dues? Over one-half of our top-rated clubs follow this practice. The arguments for it are:
 - Research shows that attendance is 10-15% higher in clubs which follow this practice
 - The treasurer can avoid the burden of collecting payments at the door
 - It enables the club to use the unexpended for other purposes, such as paying for prospective members' meals or subsidizing a delegate's attendance at a convention

The argument against this practice is that members who cannot attend regularly may object to the system.

- Shall the club treasury pay for the meals of prospective members? Nearly half of the top-rated clubs follow this practice. In the other clubs, the host pays for the meal of a prospective member.
- Shall we include provision for sending representation to the annual convention of the Association? And to regional or sub-regional events? Some clubs include this in the budget. Others use a portion of the funds remaining at the end of the year for this purpose.
- How much must be allowed for other club expenses, such as stationery, printing, postage and supplies?
- How often shall the dues be billed to the members? The association bills the clubs for dues on January 1 (for January 1 to June 30) and August 1 (for July 1 to December 31). Most clubs bill local members for dues on July 1 and January 1.
- What collection policies shall be followed? And exactly what procedures are to be used in determining when and how a member shall be expelled for non-payment of dues? Because the Association bills a club for dues based on the number of members on record on April 1 and October 1, the treasurer should notify the members that their dues must be paid by that date.

Meetings

Common to all clubs are these elements of a successful Torch meeting:

- A convenient date. Most clubs meet on a regular day of the month.
- A pleasant physical atmosphere. Over one-half of our clubs meet at private clubs or colleges. Three-fourths of the top-rated clubs favor this arrangement.
- Good food.
- A convenient time. Clubs usually meet in the evenings.
- An agreeable time schedule. Sixty percent of the clubs report that they operate on a fixed time schedule. If the meeting consists only of the dinner, introductions, the speaker and the discussion period, a span of two hours may be enough. If there is also to be a social hour, a rest break between dinner and the program, a time for business or committee reports, or any combination of these activities, then additional time will be required.
- An alert and able presiding officer.
- Courteous consideration and introduction of guests and new members.
- A paper or program of Torch quality. Five tests of a good Torch paper:
 - Contemporary Significance. It should have some application to the world around us.
 - Universality of Interest. It should have some appeal for all people in the audience.
 - Freshness. There are few, if any, new subjects, but the speaker should try to do something creative, something original, something of a new approach.
 - Substance. Many subjects that may be “entertaining” have minor worth and minimal discussion value.
 - Provocative Thesis. If the paper does not stimulate thinking and provoke discussion, it does not belong in a Torch meeting.
- A discussion period conducted to obtain and encourage participation.
- Adherence to the time schedule.

The members should decide the following questions:

- How many times a year should we meet? All clubs meet on a monthly basis. Most clubs meet 8-9 months out of the year and do not meet during the summer months.
- Should there be a preliminary social hour? And, if so, for how long? Approximately three-fourths of our clubs have a social hour, usually lasting a half-hour.
- If the social hour is added, should there be a short break between the dinner and the program?
- What about business, other than the annual meeting for election, reports, etc.? Should there be a regular provision in the program schedule or special provision when necessary?
- Should name tags, badges, or name cards be provided? "Tent Cards," with the name in large lettering, can be prepared for placement on the table, picked up after the meeting and used over again. Some form of identification appears to be appreciated by most members.

Papers (or speeches) must be expected to meet Torch standards. The members must decide these questions:

- Do they wish to confine the speaker list to members of Torch? Over one-half of the top-rated clubs use members only. About one-third of all clubs use non-members speakers 1-2 times per year.
- How should the speakers be selected? Almost all clubs have a program committee or chairperson who selects the speaker. A few use a fixed rotation system (alphabetically by name of member).
- Should the speakers be free to select their own subjects? If not, how should the subjects be selected or assigned? Most clubs expect the speakers to select their own subjects. But several clubs have successfully used a system where the program committee requests from the members suggestions on programs they'd like to hear during the following year. Then the committee finds the speakers to talk on the more popular subjects.

Membership Development and Recruitment

Because the subject of membership development and recruitment is of such paramount and vital importance to all Torch clubs, we have made our *Handbook on Membership Development and Recruitment* available to all members upon request. Also, there is a IATC Board position, Membership Director, dedicated to supporting Clubs in the development and recruitment of members.

Communication with Members

All clubs need to provide for the following types of communication:

- ✓ Meeting Notices
- ✓ Club rosters
- ✓ Information on club decisions
- ✓ Notices of dues
- ✓ New member notices
- ✓ Letters to members dropped
- ✓ Letters to members resigned

Club practices in communications vary widely. Some produce printed monthly newsletters which carry not only the news of the upcoming meeting but also such other features as editorials by the president, reports of prior meetings, introductions of new members, news from the Association, and – occasionally – some delightful “personal journalism” by the secretary. At the other extreme, some do nothing more than send out card notices.

Questions that the members should answer are:

- Do they wish to have a “yearbook”? And, if so, how much should be spent on it? More than one-half of our clubs produce some form of a “yearbook,” containing such information as membership rosters, program schedules, local constitution and bylaws, history of the Association, and the club, and officer list. One even includes photographs of the members!
- How do they wish to be notified of meetings? Should reply cards be used for reservations? Most clubs ask members to make reservations by use of a reply card.
- Should telephone communication be used? If so, for what purpose?

Records and Reports

The following records are essential:

- ✓ Roster of members
- ✓ Attendance date
- ✓ Member ledger cards
- ✓ Simple bookkeeping system
- ✓ Files (current and past)

The necessary reports are;

- ✓ Monthly Club Report
- ✓ Monthly Program Report
- ✓ Financial Reports
- ✓ Reports certifying delegates to Annual Convention
- ✓ Minutes of meetings

The primary decision the members need to make is whether all of the above work is to be assigned to one person as secretary and treasurer or to be divided between two persons, a secretary and a treasurer. If the latter, then the functions of each must be clearly stated.

Nearly half of our clubs assign the duties of both secretary and treasurer to one person. In nearly three-fourths of our clubs, the secretary serves for more than one year.

In addition to the required reports and remittances to the Association, the secretary and treasurer have those duties to perform for the local club which are usually associated with such positions in a voluntary association.

Leadership

- Good leadership is the most essential ingredient of any organized group. With it, the possibilities for achievement of the group's goals are greatly enhanced; without it, they are nil. The questions the members of a Torch club ask are these:
- What are the functions we want our leaders to carry out?
- With these functions defined, how shall we assign them to responsible officers?
- What are the best ways to develop these leaders? Over one-half of our clubs have a member serve in a succession of offices before becoming president. Some clubs follow a regular practice of sending the incoming president to the annual Association convention.
- How should these leaders be selected? Most clubs have a nominating committee which makes recommendations.
- When should officer elections be held? In most clubs, elections are held at the last meeting before the summer recess.
- When should the officers begin their terms?

Government

Most Torch clubs are small enough so that the basic decisions can be made by the members. The questions the members need to answer are these:

- What types of decisions, if any, should be made by an elected board of directors? Over three-fourths of our clubs have an elected board of directors.
- If the decision is that some such governing body is needed, how large should it be, how often should it meet, and how should it be selected? The selection, involvement and use of boards of directors vary greatly among clubs, dependent largely upon the size of the club.

Committees

There are two types of committees that might be useful in Torch club organization: standing committees and ad hoc committees. The questions the members should decide are:

- Are these functions the club which required continuing attention? If so, what are they? How large a committee should be assigned such functions and how should it be chosen? Here, again, we find a wide range of opinion and practice among our clubs. There should be no committee carried on simply because of tradition.
- Are there functions which should be handled by ad hoc committees? If so, what are they? How should such committees be appointed? Those who favor standing committees argue that this is a way to stimulate interest in the club and to develop leadership. Those opposed feel that most Torch members rebel against the idea of a conventionally-structured organization.



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