

The Bulletin

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The Torch Club of Frederick, Maryland



Scroll



Next Presentation

October 24, 2022

Bob Ladner on "Molecular Recognition and Why It Matters"

Molecular recognition refers to the ability of host molecules to recognize and selectively interact with guest molecules. One lay definition of molecular recognition draws the analogy between such molecular couplings being akin to a common household lock requiring a specific key.



How one molecule recognizes another has long intrigued scientists. The quest to arrange atoms in a molecule to achieve a predesigned predictable interaction has unfolded over the past half century. This host-guest selectivity has presented many opportunities in chemical research, resulting in Nobel Prizes in 1987 and 2016.

September's Presenter

Bob Ladner

Bob was born in Houston, Texas, and lived there until he was 22. He went to Rice University and studied chemistry.

After Rice, Robert went to Caltech where he learned English (and attempted to forget Texan) and morphed into Bob. Since Bob had not been good in the lab, he went into theoretical chemistry. At Caltech, Bob grew a beard and met Jane Crawford (a fellow graduate student in chemistry). He has stayed with both. Jane finished her PhD and went off to Cambridge, England, for a postdoc at the Medical Research Council Laboratory of Molecular Biology. Bob finally finished his PhD and found a postdoctoral position in Paris. The following Easter, Bob and Jane met to go skiing at Chamonix. They decided to get married in May and wed in the shire hall in Cambridge in June. Margaret, their first daughter was born in July 1974. In 1976 they moved to Heidelberg where they both worked at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory. Their second daughter, Sarah Johanna, was born in Heidelberg. In 1979 they moved back to the US to become postdocs at Harvard. Their son, Andrew, was born in Boston in 1983. They left academia and Bob took a job at Genex in Gaithersburg in 1983.

Genex was founded on a poor idea and was moribund (although Bob didn't know it). Bob had two good ideas there. Bob had been recruited to support molecular graphics for building and manipulating models of proteins and other biomolecules. He fiddled around and invented single-chain antibodies. Genex patented the concept, but had no idea of how to license it to their benefit. He had another idea, phage display. He called a friend they had known in Belmont, Mass. He was interested in backing Bob to form a new company, but not in an investment in Genex.

Protein Engineering Corp. was founded in 1988 with operations in Cambridge, MA. PEC did important research, got US patents on phage display (a method for drug discovery) and several products, but ran out of money and morphed into a new company called Dyax. Using phage display, a drug was discovered, tested, and produced for a condition called hereditary angioedema. Bob retired but Dyax continued. When Dyax announced that they were developing a long-lasting version of the drug, Shire Pharmaceuticals decided they need to own the whole company and Bob finally got paid for his inventions.

Most Recent Presentation

John Clarke on "An Absurdly Short History on the 'Art' of Solving Equations"

John introduced his presentation by telling us that, though mathematics today is ubiquitous, generally out of sight, buried in computers, and taken for granted, it has been with us for millenia and ever advancing.

John reminded us that its truths are universal, not political, but not always welcomed by some and at times have even been a cause of violent setbacks to scholarly progress.

John's presentation was not heavy on actual mathemantics but historical, starting with clay tablets from Mesopotamia dating to about 3,500 BCE. Along the way in his talk, we were introduced the the Persian mathematician who about a thousand years ago developed mathemetics of his era into the algebra that we know today, calling if al-gebr.

Dinner Sign-up

Attending or not, please let Reservations Chair John Hewetson know and, if you plan to attend, your seating requests and the names of your guests. Please respond to John at torchreservations@gmail.com with “Torch” in the subject line of your email, or call him at 301.663.8130.

Sign-up Deadline— Preferably five days before the dinner but later OK

Cost— \$35 per person (also payable if a signed-up no-show)

Cancellations— Email the address above before the day of the dinner.

Frederick Torch Dinner Meetings

Welcome back to in-person meetings when permitted. Zoom meetings may be required when county or state pandemic restrictions limit in-person attendance.

After careful consideration, your club board decided to continue in-person meetings for the 2022-23 Torch year while keeping a close watch on national and local Covid situations. The board feels that Ceresville Mansion's pandemic policies and practices are sufficient.

As ordinary consideration of others, dinner attendees must be fully vaccinated and boosted, which also applies to guests and new members.

Need a Lift?



Transportation Chair Frank Sledge invites you to get in touch with him and he will do his best to arrange your transportation to and from club dinners.

Reach Frank at f.sledge@comcast.net or at 301.980.2019.

New Members



At our next dinner, be sure to welcome new club members **Tes Kifle, Angeline Gaffigan,** and **Margaret** and **Michael Procaro.**

As one of the largest of the 60+ Torch clubs, our success relies on strong recruiting. Our membership slipped 24% during Covid so please invite your acquaintances who enjoy stimulating company and fascinating presentations to attend a fine club dinner or two and then to join.

Club Membership Chair Toni Clarke is here to help. Reach Toni at toniclarke101@gmail.com or at 301.606.2694.

For more information and to download the club membership application, visit the website at fredtorch.org.

2022-23 Presentations

September - December

Many thanks to last year's Program Chair Angeline Gaffigan for lining up the following presentations for the 2022-23 Torch year.

September 26, 2022- John Clarke on "An Absurdly Short History on the 'Art' of Solving Equations"

October 24, 2022- Bob Ladner on "Molecular Recognition and Why It Matters"

November 21, 2022- Captain Dana French on "Vietnam Boat People Rescue"

December 19, 2022- Amy Leput Strahl on "Blackie: A Memoir of a Year with a Crow"

2022-23 Presentations

January - May

January 23, 2023- Ed Seidewitz on "Wake Up and Smell the Coffee!"

February 27, 2023- Archer O'Brien on "A Political, Philosophical and Cultural Study of the American Left"

March 27, 2023- Karl Bickel on "Pros, Cons and Feasibility of a County Police Department for Frederick County"

April 24, 2023- Frank Sledge on "The Key to a Harmonious Pitch for a Uniform Musical Scale"

May 22, 2023- Margaret Procaro on "You Really Need This: How TV Commercials Persuade Us to Buy Products"

2022-23 Board of Directors

Welcome

President Norine Haas and the club's board of directors trust that you will enjoy this Torch year's interesting programs. The following members are serving as your 2022-23 board of directors.

President	Norine Haas
Vice President	John Hewetson
Secretary	Peter Michael
Treasurer	Claire Kondig
Assistant Treasurer	John Kondig
Program Chairs	Norine Haas and Toni Clarke
Presentation Support	John Menke
Reservations Chair	John Hewetson
Membership Chair	Toni Clarke
Transportation Chair	Frank Sledge
Website Editor	Meg Menke

Club Archives

Torch Club of Frederick *Bulletin*

Past issues beginning with October 2017 are archived and may be viewed, downloaded or printed [here](#).



2022-23 Program and Member Roster

The *2022-23 Program* and the club's *Member Roster* are updated regularly. View, download or print [here](#).



The Newly Updated Club Website

Board meeting minutes, past presentations and more may be reached at the club website [here](#).



Member Survey

Survey results may be viewed, downloaded or printed [here](#).