

# CENTURY PROJECT

## Calling all Torch Clubs

We need your participation! The goal to be reached by 2024—**one hundred Torch Clubs** and **5,000 members** by Torch International's **100<sup>th</sup> birthday!** To celebrate we plan to have the centennial convention in Minneapolis where it all started. And we plan to have a great time!

## What are we doing to reach the goal?

New clubs have been added in the past three years and plans are in the works for several more. There is a continuing emphasis on growth in currently existing clubs, along with urging clubs to reach out and found other new clubs. Four clubs have had double digit membership growth this year, one with the equivalent of a new club by itself.

College students and young professionals are being recruited to clubs to bring needed age diversity and new voices to Torch.

## How are we promoting club growth and local club buy in for this major goal?

The Torch magazine has been remade into an attractive, colorful publication that is now online in thousands of libraries. Torch members will be visiting Cuba next year on a **Torch Tour**—a new wrinkle! The Torch website is being improved and a new data base is being constructed to make it much easier for local Torch clubs to interface with the Torch international office. We're in Wikipedia and have a Torch blog. Torch is on the move!

## Are there financial implications in implementing The Century Project?

Yes, based on recent experience, this major effort could cost about \$6,000 a year for the next nine years. Fortunately, the **Torch Foundation** has initiated new club startup funds to help finance this work, with individuals and clubs involved. Your club is invited to contribute, or individuals can make tax deductible gifts via the Foundation to the new club startup fund.

Clubs and individuals are also encouraged to send contributions to the Torch Foundation's **New Club Development Fund** in memory of long-time members who have died. For instructions to send contributions, see [www.torch.org](http://www.torch.org).

Membership development funding from the IATC is available for use by clubs. Each Torch club needs to grow. At minimum, considering attrition, a 10% growth rate per year is needed just to stay even. A desirable club membership goal is at least 30 to 50 members or more, in order to have a good diversity of paper presentations. An excellent paper is still the key to a successful Torch meeting.

## What do we need to do to make this work?

The key to success will depend upon leadership from the Regional Directors, as well as cooperation from local clubs to relay this information to every member of our Association. Clubs also need to be prepared for prospective guests with information kits that include the **Torch Is...**sheet, a copy of **The Torch** magazine, local club information, and a membership application form.

## What about new club formation?

It is essential that Regional Directors work with clubs to identify communities that are likely prospects for new club starts, and a list of sparkplug members of the local club and the new communities who can help start a club. Contact your Regional Director to see about available resources for travel, supplies and luncheon or dinner expenses for potential members. A major consideration when planning a new club start: The key is to find community leaders who can invite 20-30 friends to the event. Ask if IATC officers are available to attend.

Begin now! Plan activities such as luncheon or dinner receptions to start new clubs or special guest nights to introduce prospective members to Torch. Prepare information kits to distribute to guests and prospective members. Invite professional men and women who may be potential members to dinner as your guest. Plan a special guest night, with an enhanced presentation, menu and information about Torch. Ask guests to sign up as members on the spot, paying the initiation fee and receiving new member kits. Order the kits ahead of time, in any quantity.

If your club holds a special luncheon or evening event to introduce prospective members to Torch, the IATC will reimburse your club for the lunch or dinner of every person who fills out an application and provides a check for the application fee.

Seek out introductions to college presidents or deans of students at local universities for permission to subsidize one or two college students as Torch members of existing or new clubs. Check out young professional groups or leadership training classes that many cities sponsor. All are ready reservoirs of potential young Torch members.

There is an old saying that there is no burden if everyone lifts. To bring a lot of new life to our beloved Torch organization, we all need to lift.

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