

# The Gateway

Newsletter of The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd

The Oldest of the Main Line Civic Associations – 1906

P.O. Box 717, Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania 19004 • [www.balacynwyd.org](http://www.balacynwyd.org)

[TheNeighborhoodClub@BalaCynwyd.org](mailto:TheNeighborhoodClub@BalaCynwyd.org)

Amara Briggs, *President* • Courtney Harris Bond & Shifra Vega, *Editors*

## President’s Letter

Dear Neighbors,

I hope everyone is settling back into the fall routine — whether it is going back to school or simply watching the leaves change. For some reason, I always view the fall as a beginning of something new!

With this opening, we are beginning to see a lot of new real estate development in Bala Cynwyd. Bala Cynwyd is an attractive location for many developers given the trend of building a vibrant urban living center to support the city of Philadelphia. With the recovery in the financial markets, real estate is an attractive growth engine for an investor. As a club, we are seeing more and more interest by developers to build new apartment complexes and commercial developments in Bala Cynwyd.

Today, we see the investment by Euromotors and BMW of the Main Line in a new facility in Bala Cynwyd, along with a focus on developing non-automotive retail space on Bala Avenue. We saw the demolition of an old gas station on Rock Hill Road and the construction of a new CVS, as well as the beginnings of O’Neill Properties Group’s apartment complex. Since the rezoning guidelines passed in 2012, there have been several applications for permits for apartment complexes on City Avenue.

While this development is exciting for Bala Cynwyd and Lower Merion Township, it presents new challenges for our civic board to balance this interest in our neighborhood with appropriate demands of our residents. We are concerned about traffic and the state of our roads. We are concerned about the

*(continued on page 3)*

## All Neighbors Are Encouraged to Attend The Neighborhood Club Annual Meeting!

The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd’s Annual Meeting  
 Tuesday, November 11, 2014

7:00 p.m., refreshments • 7:30 p.m., start of business meeting

**LOWER MERION ACADEMY**

*(Adjacent to Bala Cynwyd Middle School on Bryn Mawr Ave.)*

**Please join us for refreshments prior to the meeting followed by Elections of Directors and Officers. After our elections we will conduct a full slate of business including presentations and discussion about current neighborhood issues. All neighbors are welcome.**

### Candidate Slate for The Neighborhood Club Annual Elections

Following are the candidate slates for The Neighborhood Club elections. Candidates were interviewed by The Neighborhood Club’s nominating committee. Per our bylaws all members (dues paid for 2014) are eligible to vote.

#### The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd Officers

- President:** Roger Moog
- Vice President:** Jerry Skillings
- Secretary:** Anne Greenhalgh
- Treasurer:** Casey O’Bannon
- Solicitor:** John Grugan
- Past President:** Amara Briggs

#### Directors, terms expiring December 2015

Ralph Clapp, Glenn Manko, Maxine Goldberg, David Haas, Frances McComb, Shifra Vega, David Rosenbaum

#### Directors, terms expiring December 2016

Alison Munoz, Dan Russinello, Sara Pevaroff Schuh, Meredith Toole, Merle Zucker, Eric Godfrey

Any Neighborhood Club member wishing to nominate a candidate for officer or director other than those selected by our Nominating Committee should consult The Neighborhood Club’s bylaws at [www.BalaCynwyd.org](http://www.BalaCynwyd.org) for details.

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## Goats Grazed Along the Cynwyd Heritage Trail

**Y**es, those really were goats you saw grazing during the summer and fall along the Cynwyd Heritage Trail.

Eco-Goats twice visited the approximately one-acre West Laurel Hill Cemetery property visible from the trail, gorging themselves on invasive weeds, safely enclosed behind an electric fence.

“Goats are very good at going places people and humans can’t, areas with a lot of thorns or things like poison ivy,” said Brian Knox, supervising forester and president of Eco-Goats, a company based near Annapolis, Md., who brought his herd to our neighborhood.

Between May and October, Knox roams through parts of Maryland, Virginia, Delaware and Pennsylvania with varying groupings of his approximately 140 goats, helping defoliate public and private properties without the use of harmful chemicals or machinery.

Not only are goats effective at quickly clearing areas of weeds, but they are also skilled at interrupting deeply buried seed banks that cause unwanted vegetation to reappear year after year, Knox said. In addition, because they are light on their feet, goats are gentler than machinery when working on historical sites or sensitive areas, such as West Laurel Hill’s natural burial ground visible from the Cynwyd Trail.

“On a steep slope, the goats cause very little erosion because they’re not tearing up the ground,” Knox said. “They’re nothing like a cow or even a human.

“I like watching people watch goats because it’s a great educational opportunity to get people thinking about alternatives instead of just grabbing chemicals or machinery,” Knox added.

Visit [www.eco-goats.com](http://www.eco-goats.com) for more information about Knox and his herd.



## Local Officials Will Review Cynwyd Spur Master Plan

**L**ower Merion Township and the Friends of the Cynwyd Heritage Trail are about to review a draft of the Phase II report being prepared by Natural Lands Trust to identify ongoing improvements, maintenance programs and fundraising efforts for the trail.

Michael Baker International is preparing a master plan for the Cynwyd Spur, also known as the Connelly Site. This plan will identify a further connection from the Cynwyd Heritage Trail to the Schuylkill River Trail via the existing Pencoyd Bridge, along with improvements by O’Neill Properties Group as part of their development agreement with Lower Merion Township. The Friends of the Cynwyd Heritage Trail are working with township officials to review and comment on the plan.

## Bala Village Gets New Zoning

**L**ast month, the Lower Merion Township Board of Commissioners adopted an ordinance establishing a new Bala Village District. Bala Village was created as part of the City Avenue District, which consists of the Regional Center Area, the Bala Cynwyd Retail District and the Bala Village District. The City Avenue District approved in the April 2012 ordinance included only the Regional Center Area and the Bala Cynwyd Retail districts.

The approval of this new ordinance was the culmination of years of hard work by the Lower Merion Township Commissioners, Lower Merion Township staff, the City Avenue Services District, The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd, local merchants and independent planners from throughout the township. Planning for the ordinance began with the Wallace, Roberts and Todd study in 2000 that led to the streetscape improvement plan and was followed by the 2004 Economic Research Group’s study that identified the appropriate retail mix along the corridor. These studies, along with community input through public workshops, concluded that revitalization was needed to reverse the gradual decline of Bala Avenue and to revitalize the village as a vibrant business community for residents.

The ordinance provides height and density incentives and limits, improves walkability of the corridor and recommends streetscape improvements. Further, the ordinance reduces community reliance on cars and heavy use vehicles. As such, the ordinance explicitly prohibits the purchase or use of commercial property in the village as a parking lot, such as the one proposed by the Lower Merion School District for a bus depot. Under current zoning, a private sale of a commercial property on Bala Avenue could occur and be utilized solely for this purchase — without any input from the residents or the community.

*For more about the ordinance and the City Avenue rezoning, please see the link*

<http://www.lowermerion.org/Index.aspx?page=860>

## Township Implements New Phone Alert System

News about power outages, road closures and crime alerts will now come directly to your phone via voice or text message.

Earlier this month, Lower Merion Township implemented Blackboard Connect, a telephone safety and emergency mass notification system that allows officials instantly to send out recorded messages to a pre-programmed area, targeted widely or narrowly, depending on the event.

“I think the people of Lower Merion are really going to like this service,” said Lower Merion Township Manager Ernie McNeely, who helped implement Blackboard Connect in West Chester when he was borough manager there.

Blackboard Connect — already used by many school districts and municipalities both locally and nationwide—can send out timely safety instructions and situation updates to citizens during weather emergencies. The system will also notify residents about crime alerts and give information about special events and routine updates.

“Keeping the community safe and informed is a top priority,” McNeely said. “This will supplement our means of communicating with residents by using a direct, modern and immediate method of getting important messages out.”

Using Blackboard Connect, township officials can record and send an unlimited number of personalized voice messages to home phones, cell phones, businesses and local agencies in just minutes. The service also sends email and text messages to mobile phones and posts on Facebook, RSS feeds and Twitter channels. Messages can also be sent to TTY/TDD devices for people who are hearing impaired.

Anyone in the township with a landline telephone will automatically be a part of the system, but residents can opt out of the service if they wish. Direct links to the service will be provided at [www.lowermerion.org](http://www.lowermerion.org), enabling residents to add mobile phone numbers and/or email addresses, or to opt out.

Lower Merion Township also conveys important messages and emergency information through its website ([www.lowermerion.org](http://www.lowermerion.org)) and e-notifications; the government access TV channel (LMTV); the township’s Facebook page and Twitter account; and the quarterly “Messenger” newsletter.

For more information about Blackboard Connect, visit their website at [www.blackboard.com](http://www.blackboard.com) or contact Lower Merion Public Information Officer Thomas Walsh at [twalsh@lowermerion.org](mailto:twalsh@lowermerion.org) or (610) 645-6199.

### Interested in Becoming a Director of The Neighborhood Club?

Please send a resumé or letter of interest to:

The NCBC | Attn: Nominations  
P.O. Box 717 | Bala Cynwyd PA 19004



GREATER PHILADELPHIA

### **Local Group Offers Support for Families Battling Cancer**

The Cancer Support Community Greater Philadelphia provides free cancer support programs to men, women and children who are living with their own cancer diagnosis, who have a loved one with cancer or who have lost someone to cancer. The organization offers support groups, social events and educational lectures, as well as yoga, tai-chi and meditation workshops. The community operates out of five locations in the greater Philadelphia area, including its main center on Chamounix Drive in Fairmount Park near Bala Cynwyd.

**Call 215-879-7733 or visit  
[www.cancersupportphiladelphia.org](http://www.cancersupportphiladelphia.org)  
for more information.**

### **President’s Message** *(continued from page 1)*

impact of the development on our schools and class sizes. We are concerned about balancing density and building heights with a vibrant and attractive commercial community with our desire for green and open space for our residents.

As residents, you should feel free to approach us with issues that are important to you. Attend our meetings. Visit our website at [www.balacynwyd.org](http://www.balacynwyd.org). Read our newsletters and ask questions of our board members. We share the same concerns and welcome your input and support.

Finally, I am personally wrapping up my two-year tenure as the neighborhood club’s president. I have learned a great deal not only about each and every member of our board of directors, who are outstanding contributors, but also about our community. I look forward to passing the gavel to our long-standing board member, Roger Moog.

Roger has lived in Bala Cynwyd for 35 years and served on the NCBC for 32 years! He served as president from 1986–88 and was a transportation engineer for many years. We on the board have valued Roger’s guidance over the years, his sense of history and his ability to keep an open mind. His historical knowledge, expertise and experience will be what we need going forward as a board. I look forward to working with him on the board!

Have a great fall. I look forward to seeing you in the neighborhood.

Amara Briggs

# Thanks for a Successful 4th of July Celebration!



The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd thanks the following individuals and organizations whose contributions helped make the Independence Day Celebration a success, despite the rain:



Bala Cynwyd School for Young Children • Bala Eye Care • Bala House Montessori • Bala Motor Works • Beth Samberg • BMW of the Main Line • The Bosin Family • Boston Style Pizza at Merioni • Boy Scout Troop Bala One • The Briggs Family • Bryn Mawr Trust • Cheryl Clearwater – RE/MAX Executive Realty • City Avenue Special Services District • Cub Scout Pack 581 • Evie Cohen – RE/MAX Executive Realty • EY Productions • Francie and David McComb • French International School of Philadelphia • Friends of the Cynwyd Heritage Trail • The Gerald Skillings Family • Herbert Yentis and Company Realtors • Howard Rubin • Jane, Tom and Sam Fischer • John Gilliam Insurance Agency • Karen and Marc Zucker • Ken Brier • Law Offices of Jeffrey M. Lindy • Long Stems • Lower Merion Township Commissioner George Manos • Lower Merion Township Commissioner Brian McGuire • Lower Merion Historical Society • Manko, Gold, Katcher and Fox • Maxine Goldberg • Merle Zucker • MINI of the Main Line • Randy Myer — Berkshire Hathaway Home Services • Ray Custom Shirtmaker • Saint Joseph’s University • Samuel Adenbaum

Family • Sidd’s Automotive • The Cynwyd Club • The Fairmont The New Tavern Restaurant and Bar • Valley Press • West Laurel Hill Cemetery

## New Streetscape Banners to Be Installed

New streetscape banners will soon adorn the Merion-Cynwyd Business District. The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd donated \$1,000 toward the installation of the new banners, designed by the Bala Cynwyd firm, SALT Design Studio, and pictured here.

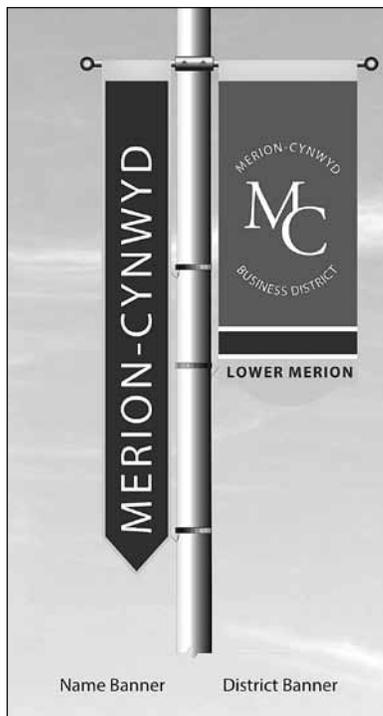


Photo by SALT Design Studio

## Cynwyd Station Café Offers New Hours and Menu — Even a Séance

The Cynwyd Station Café and Tea Room, a Victorian ice cream parlor at the head of the Cynwyd Heritage Trail, not only celebrated its sixth anniversary this month but also expanded its menu and changed its hours.



The café now opens at 7:30 a.m. on weekdays except for Tuesdays. While still offering a full range of ice cream sodas, milkshakes and malts—as well as teas ranging from Chamomile Clementine to Masala Chai—owner Sadie Francis has also brought in artisanal cheese plates and homemade soups, quiches and Panini.

“Business has been stable, but we hope to become a destination spot and a true trailhead and community center for the Cynwyd Trail,” said Francis, who dresses in Victorian garb while serving her delicacies.

To celebrate the café’s six-month anniversary, Francis threw a party where visitors enjoyed live music and a performance by Tiny Circus while snacking on \$3 cones and Frank and Jenny’s Artisanal Gelato. Francis is also planning to hold more “meet the vendor” parties where owners of the businesses she supports and whose wares she carries talk to patrons about how and why they do what they do.

In addition, Francis plans to turn her tea room into a meeting place for classes and workshops. She will host a Haunted Train Station Halloween Bash from 7 to 10 p.m. on Oct. 31 with pumpkin carving, Halloween treats and drinks — and even a Victorian-style séance during which psychics evoke the spirit of Mary Riddall, the station’s last postmistress.

## Bala Cynwyd Farmer's Market Runs Until November 26

The Bala Cynwyd Farmer's Market will continue running from 2:30 to 6:30 p.m. every Thursday, in the parking lot of the GSB Building at Belmont Avenue and St. Asaphs Road, through the end of November. The last market day of the 2014 season will be Wednesday, Nov. 26.

*For more information, visit:*

<https://www.facebook.com/balafarmersmarket>  
or <http://balacynwydfarmersmarket.weebly.com/>



## Sections of Rock Hill Road Will Be Closed Through Mid-December

Rock Hill Road in Lower Merion Township will experience partial closures through Dec. 12 due to adjustments necessary for the development of an apartment building on the 131-151 blocks. Traffic will be prohibited from Conshohocken State Road to Belmont Avenue via Rock Hill Road. However, during the construction, businesses between Belmont Avenue and 151 Rock Hill Road can be accessed from Belmont Avenue, and businesses and residences between Conshohocken State Road and 131 Rock Hill Road can be reached from Conshohocken State Road.

Furthermore, improvements underway at the intersection of Rock Hill Road and Belmont Avenue will not necessitate the closure of the road, and through traffic to local businesses and properties will be maintained through that location.

Traffic levels may increase on Levering Mill Road and along side streets in College Park during the road closure. Please follow detour signs and observe speed limits. If you have questions or concerns, contact Lower Merion Township Commissioner George Manos at [George@gtmanos.com](mailto:George@gtmanos.com) or The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd at [theneighborhoodclub@balacynwyd.org](mailto:theneighborhoodclub@balacynwyd.org).

## BMW Getting a New Look in Bala Cynwyd

The construction of a new BMW building in Bala Cynwyd that started in July is slated for completion by December of next year, barring any major weather delays, a company official said.

"These plans have been in the works for so long that at one point we wondered if they would ever happen," said Amanda Baldwin, business development manager for Euro Motorcars Main Line Inc. "Now that it's underway and all of the proverbial roadblocks have already been cleared, we are very excited to bring a fresh look to this corner of Bala Cynwyd."

With the shift in ownership and management from Don Rosen BMW to Euro Motorcars, Baldwin said it was time to update the dealership both structurally and aesthetically. "It was decided that we would start from scratch and build from the ground up."

The new building will combine sales and service under one roof, said Baldwin, adding that the company is working hard to minimize traffic disruptions at the busy intersection of Bala and Montgomery avenues and Conshohocken State Road.

During the construction, the service building for BMW of the Main Line remains in its original location, with signs posted on Bala Avenue to direct customers to the driveway. A temporary showroom is also on Bala Avenue, directly across from the work site. Since some vehicles are being housed elsewhere during construction, Baldwin recommended making an appointment before visiting the showroom so the sales team can make sure it has desired models on hand.

"We will always seek ways to continue to build a strong relationship with the township, our neighbors and our customers," Baldwin added. "This building will be a fresh start."

## Manayunk Bridge Extension to Start Soon

The project that will extend the Cynwyd Heritage Trail all the way into Manayunk is set to begin later this month. The Manayunk extension will turn the 1918 bridge into a leg of the Cynwyd Heritage Trail, creating a link to Manayunk's Main Street and the Schuylkill River Trail. The City of Philadelphia will manage the building of the nearly half-mile extension. The project was awarded to A.P. Construction and designed by the Philadelphia firm Whitman, Reardon and Associates.

A ground breaking was scheduled at press time for 11 a.m. on Oct. 28. The project is slated for completion by the third quarter of 2015.

### ***Volunteers Needed***

**The Neighborhood Club is always looking for new members and volunteers! Please contact us if you are interested in:**

***Becoming a member • Volunteering for the Fourth of July Celebrations • Helping out with our email communications and newsletter***



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P.O. Box 717, Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania 19004  
[www.balacynwyd.org](http://www.balacynwyd.org)

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### Please Visit Our Website!

The NCBC website is a resource for:

- ✓ The monthly agenda
- ✓ Minutes of previous meetings
- ✓ Past copies of *The Gateway*!
- ✓ Contact information for Board members
- ✓ Community Links
- ✓ PAYPAL — to pay dues electronically!

Please visit [www.balacynwyd.org](http://www.balacynwyd.org).

*Thanks to the following neighbors and friends who contributed to this issue of The Gateway:*

Amara Briggs  
Barrett Dunigan  
Anne Greenhalgh  
John Grugan  
Brian McGuire  
Sara Schuh



### The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd Membership Form

Your dues help to:

- Alert you to neighborhood discussions of critical topics
- Preserve the residential character of Bala Cynwyd
- Support appropriate commercial development
- Monitor zoning, traffic and safety on our streets
- Provide community-building events like the 4th of July Celebration

Please send your annual dues to: The NCBC  
P.O. Box 717, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

Household:  Benefactor \$100     Patron \$50     Friend \$35

Business:     Gold \$250     Silver \$100

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

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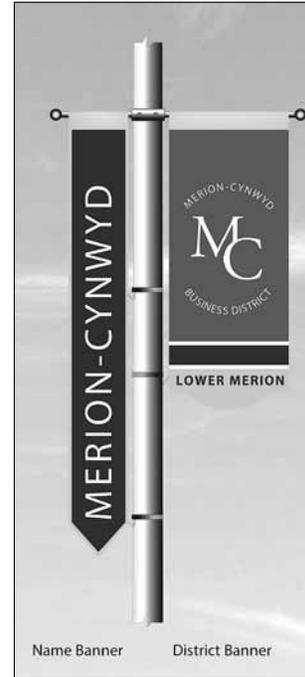
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SALT Design Studio