Summer 2016

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

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Jerry Skillings, *president* • Courtenay Harris Bond, *editor*

President's Letter

Dear Neighbors,

This July 4 will mark 100 years that The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd has sponsored our community's Independence Day Celebration. I am proud to be part of the event, and I hope you and your family will join us too. Here you will find a list of the day's activities.

Looking back to 1916, the festivities included a parade with decorated floats and firemen on their trucks, as well as a patriotic program with songs and speeches, games with prizes and baseball on the Cynwyd Field. And from this, a tradition was created.

The spirit of that first celebration is still very much alive today. Every July 4, we come together with family, friends and neighbors to celebrate our freedom and enjoy a summer day. It is a wonderful time for all.

When delving through the archives for July 1916, I was struck by how familiar the neighbors' concerns were. Then, as now, Bala Cynwyd was in a period of rapid growth. Area farms were sold and land was converted into suburban developments, giving way to roads, homes and schools. At community meetings, residents in the two villages of Bala and Cynwyd voiced concern about increased density, traffic and pedestrian safety. At one point, The Neighborhood Club lobbied for sidewalks to be built, and the township soon responded.

A century later, we face a similar challenge. With close to 1,500 apartments

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2016 Marks The Neighborhood Club's 100th Independence Day Celebration

The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd will sponsor its 100th annual Independence Day celebration on Monday, July 4, rain or shine.

Registration for the annual parade will begin at 8:45 a.m. at the Union Fire House on Montgomery Avenue. The parade will follow the same route as in previous years, starting at 9:30 a.m. at the fire house and ending at the Bala Cynwyd Playground.

The parade will feature neighborhood children on decorated bicycles, marchers in costumes, juggling stilt walkers, floats and fire trucks, as well police and public officials.

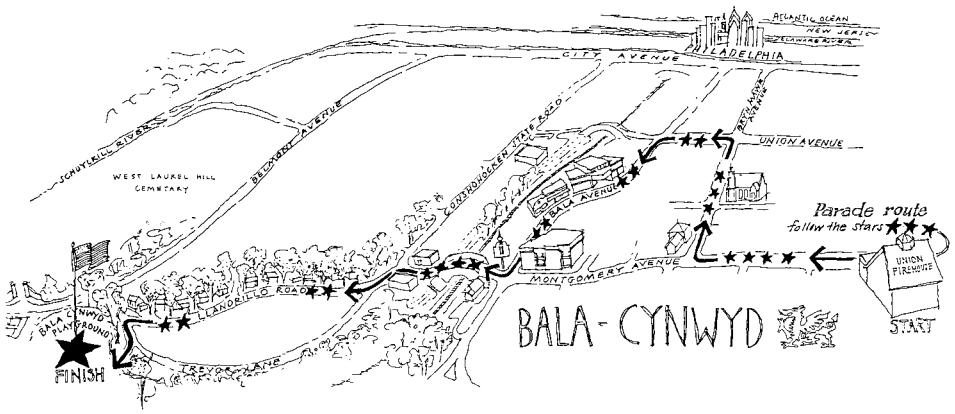
Bring your blankets and beach chairs to the playground and enjoy a patriotic program including inspirational and patriotic speakers, music provided by Elaine Watts and The Summer Sounds Pop Band and awards for Citizen of the Year and Merchant of the Year.

Carnival games, foot races and an egg toss will follow the ceremony. Select parade participants and winners of the races will receive prizes. The Neighborhood Club will also award a prize to the house along the parade route that displays the best patriotic decorations.

The Union Fire Association will serve hot dogs and sodas, and children will enjoy pony rides, a petting zoo, a moon bounce, a trackless train, a bungee run, an extreme rock wall and a carousel.

Bracelets for unlimited rides and games are $15.00 each, or two for $25.00. You can also purchase sets of tickets in smaller amounts.

Come join us and celebrate the 4th!



Lower Merion Receives Call to Action on Storm Water Management

Lower Merion typically spends about $1 million annually building and maintaining pipes, culverts and inlets to help storm water flow into small creeks and eventually into the Schuylkill or Delaware rivers.

Unfortunately, while these and other investments managing the quantity of storm water are substantial, we have not done enough to improve the quality of storm water runoff, which picks up salts, sediment, pesticides, fertilizers and other contaminants along the way, according to Lower Merion Township Commissioner Brian McGuire (Ward 13).

"To the township's credit, we have some of the most far-reaching storm water management requirements for new development," McGuire said.

He added that the township has also funded a number of demonstration projects which address storm water quality — including stream bank restoration, rain gardens, retention basins and a green roof — in our parks and other properties. All of these steps focus on maximizing infiltration of storm water into the ground, where contaminants can be removed close to their source and before they make it into a river and our drinking water.

But the vast majority of storm water generated in the township has very little chance of being recharged into the ground. Mill Creek, for example, which has its headwaters in one of the more developed areas of the township (Ardmore, Bryn Mawr and Wynnewood), is now one of the most degraded tributaries of the Schuylkill River, McGuire said.

Improving water quality is no longer an option for the township. New state regulations triggered by the federal Clean Water Act will require far stricter regulation and reduction of phosphorous, sediments and other pollutants.

A new report developed recently by a special township-appointed task force summarizes its recommendations as follows: "The township should shift the current orientation of storm water management from a focus on public infrastructure and new land development property only towards a model where traditional grey infrastructure is complimented by smaller, decentralized green infrastructure on public as well as individual private properties (including commercial and institutional)."

The report suggests starting the process by developing a pollutant baseline study, which will inform the nature and location of programs and facilities needed to mitigate those pollutants.

One of the more contentious issues that will likely arise is how to pay for these storm water improvements, estimated to add about $400,000 a year to current costs, McGuire said.

More Improvements Slated for The Cynwyd Heritage Trail

The Manayunk Bridge, joining Lower Merion Township and Philadelphia via the Cynwyd Heritage Trail, is set to receive new lighting.

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission recently approved a $600,000 federal grant to put lights along the bridge. Installation will probably be completed in about one year. Lower Merion Township is also reviewing the feasibility of extending bridge opening hours and of providing lighting from the bridge to the Barmouth and Rock Hill trailheads, according to Lower Merion Township Commissioner Brian McGuire (Ward 13).

In addition, the new stretch of trail along the Schuylkill River, over the Pencoyd Bridge, should be ready for pedestrian use by the early summer.

Lower Merion Township is also working with West Laurel Hill Cemetery to find a way to connect people from the Manayunk Bridge to the Pencoyd Bridge through the cemetery. The new system will consist of signs and striping on cemetery paths and should be ready when the Pencoyd Bridge opens, McGuire said.

Furthermore, the township is partnering with Philadelphia on a feasibility study directed at extending the Cynwyd Heritage Trail to Bala Station and on to Fairmount Park, McGuire said.

President's Letter *(continued from pg. 1)*

slated to be built, Bala Cynwyd is experiencing a housing development boom. And we can expect more growth along City Avenue as a result of a new zoning ordinance, which encourages higher density as well as multiple use and pedestrian-oriented development. Now, as in 1916, our goals are to advocate for planned development and influence projects in ways that benefit our community for the future.

As we prepare for upcoming changes, The Neighborhood Club is working closely with our commissioners to shape positive and thoughtful development. Already, commissioners have endorsed improved traffic signals, more crosswalks and the widening of some streets to assure safety and relieve traffic burden. Also, with each new project, developers present their plans to The Neighborhood Club where we recommend improvements to design, aesthetics, green space, accessibility and safety. This year we have been pleased that developers have been receptive to our ideas.

In a 1912 directory of Bala Cynwyd, The Neighborhood Club wrote that its purpose was "to promote civic interest and make still more binding the friendly feeling of the community." Our sense of community is a long held virtue, and the reason many of us have moved here.

We are delighted to have many new members of The Neighborhood Club this year. We thank all of our members for their support, and we welcome the entire community to join us at our monthly meetings, as volunteers and on our email list. As we explore the impact of upcoming development, we encourage you to participate in forging our community's future.

I look forward to seeing you on July 4!

Jerry Skillings

Trail's End Café Open For Business

The new Trail's End Café at Cynwyd Station is now serving coffee, tea, pastries, Paninis and soft-serve ice cream.

"Our mission is to build inclusive communities," said Julia Barol, who is running the new café with Tracy Katz.

Both are Bala Cynwyd residents and educational consultants who focus on disability, employment and seamless transition for youth from school to work. This is their first venture into the restaurant business.

"With the location here on the trail, it is a perfect spot for people to come together and meet their neighbors before or after a walk or bike ride," Barol said. "We know that there is a large group of people who work from home. We've spent years working from our homes and recognize the value of having a space where you can meet with a coworker or client or just a workspace outside the house to network and collaborate with others."

The café will be open from 7 a.m. to dusk throughout the spring and summer. The menu will feature coffee and espresso drinks from Green Street Coffee Roasters, tea, cold drinks, pastries from High Point Bakery, as well as Panini sandwiches and soft serve ice cream.

Barol and Katz are eventually hoping to offer bike rentals. The café will also welcome book clubs, board game groups and others who would like to "get together around a community table," Barol said.

"We will always be open to serve the commuters and for neighbors to enjoy a morning or afternoon treat."

Julia Barol and Tracy Katz at the new Trail's End Café

Interested in Becoming a Neighborhood Club Director?

Please send a resumé or letter of interest to:

The NCBC | Attn: Nominations

P.O. Box 717 | Bala Cynwyd PA 19004

Lower Merion Community Watch Seeks Volunteers

Founded in 1977, Lower Merion Community Watch is recognized as one of the finest volunteer mobile crime watch organizations in the nation.

Working in close cooperation with the Lower Merion Police Department, more than 1,100 residents have been trained to serve as the extra eyes and ears of the department's ongoing crime prevention efforts.

"The Lower Merion Community Watch Program is paramount to the ongoing safety of our Community," said Glenn Manko, a Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd Board member and community watch volunteer. "We can many times be instrumental in helping thwart crime before it happens, alerting our law enforcement professionals and really being the difference. But we need more volunteers as it really does take a village!"

To find out more, please visit the Lower Merion Community Watch website: **www.lmcommunitywatch.org**

City Ave District Project Updates

Due to the state budget impasse, the City Ave District is confronting funding issues, delaying some hoped-for streetscape and physical enhancements, as well as traffic-reduction initiatives.

District leaders had applied for state and federal grants to pay for these improvements.

"And with this year's lengthy budget impasse, we have had to put some of these projects on hold as we await funding," said Terrence Foley, City Ave District president and CEO.

This includes four state grants that have yet to be released that the district has been awaiting for traffic improvements.

"In fact, we may be submitting new applications for funding without knowing with certainty the status or timing of last year's applications," Foley said.

This delay impacts projects including improvements along City Avenue and Presidential Boulevard.

"We will keep the community informed as these projects hopefully progress soon," Foley added.

Additionally, and on a more positive note, district leaders are exploring creating an outdoor programming series this summer.

"While details are still in the planning stages, this is part of our effort to continue to make the district a more vibrant place to live and work," Foley said. "We are certain this will be a positive addition to the community."

Stay up-to-date on these projects and other initiatives of the City Ave District at **www.cityave.org** or on Twitter **(@City_Ave)** or Facebook.

Looking for 2016 Sidewalk Garden Nominations

It's time for Bala Cynwyd's annual Sidewalk Garden Awards. This is an opportunity to recognize the many beautiful gardens in our community. Along with residential gardens, we also recognize a business property.

Nominate yourself, a neighbor, a garden you admire or a local business by emailing Eileen Conry **(econry@comcast.net)**.

Please include your name, the address of the garden you are nominating, as well as a way to contact you.

Nominations will be accepted up to July 4. The Bala Cynwyd Beautification Committee will evaluate nominated gardens will between July 5 and July 31.

The Beautification Committee also welcomes new members. If you are interested in volunteering, email Eileen Conry.

We hope you will join us in keeping Bala Cynwyd beautiful!

The Neighborhood Club Seeks New July 4 Chair

For more than 20 years, Anne Greenhalgh has served as chairperson of The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd's July 4 Celebration.

Greenhalgh has been the driving force behind our festivities, which she has planned and led in every detail from the parade to events in the park. She will be stepping down next year to focus on other civic activities.

Therefore, we are looking for the next chairperson of our Independence Day festivities, someone who is dynamic, energetic and well organized.

The position is voluntary, and the chair works with The Neighborhood Club's Board of Directors. Greenhalgh will remain available to offer advice and provide guidance throughout the year.

Responsibilities include:

- organizing the July 4 parade and activities related to the festivities
- directing volunteers according to their assigned duties
- identifying honored guests and speakers for the patriotic ceremony
- planning carnival activities
- preparing budget and organizing fundraising efforts
- informing community of the celebration

***If you are interested, please contact Jerry Skillings at* jskillings@comcast.net *or at* (610) 664-0917**.

Lower Merion Fire Department Launches Volunteer Recruitment Campaign

The Lower Merion Fire Department has launched a new website to recruit and retain volunteers within the township **(www.joinlmfd.org)**.

The website directs residents to their local fire companies and connects them with station recruitment contacts.

In addition, the Lower Merion Fire Department is enlisting the help of township civic and business associations. Through community outreach at local events, signage in business districts, as well as recruitment at area college campuses, the Lower Merion Fire Department is dedicated to bolstering its volunteer staff and providing them with expert training, equipment and advancement opportunities.

The township fire department depends heavily on the support of residents for everyday operations. LMFD, and the seven fire companies that execute fire service and rescue operations in Lower Merion Township and the Borough of Narberth, is a combination fire service made up of mostly volunteers. These fire companies need volunteers to provide the essential services that protect these communities

Volunteer firefighters are the most needed, though non-firefighting administrative positions within each company are also available. No experience is necessary, and training will be provided.

Membership benefits include free training (firefighting and rescue/medical), free uniforms and equipment, fitness reimbursement, computer facilities and Wi-Fi access and resume building opportunities.

Volunteers must be 18 or older, live in Lower Merion Township or within 1 mile of a LMFD fire station, have a high school diploma and a valid driver's license and submit to a background check.

Some companies have opportunities for high school students as young as 14.

Lower Merion Township Fire Companies are partially funded by township allocations, but they all depend heavily on the support of our local residents.

There are six fire companies in Lower Merion Township:

Belmont Hills Fire Company, Bryn Mawr Fire Company, Gladwyne Fire Company, Merion Fire Company of Ardmore, Penn Wynne/Overbrook Hills Fire Company and Union Fire Association of Lower Merion (Bala Cynwyd/Merion).

In addition, the Narberth Fire Company covers the Borough of Narberth and a large district in Lower Merion. Together, these seven fire companies make up the Lower Merion Fire Department.

Support The Neighborhood Club's 100th Independence Day Celebration

Centennial Sponsor:

- *prominent signage at THREE of our attractions: pony ride, moon bounce, trackless train, rat race, extreme rock wall, carousel, bungee run, tubs of fun*
- *corporate logo on the Sponsorship Banner*
- *car/banner sponsor in parade*
- *prominent logo on commemorative t-shirt*
- *full-page advertisement in our special event program*
- *speaking engagement at the event*
- *special recognition on NCBC website*

One opportunity available @ $2,500

Lead Sponsor:

- *prominent signage at ONE of our attractions*
- *corporate logo on the sponsorship banner*
- *full-page advertisement in our special event program*
- *special recognition on NCBC website*

4 opportunities available @ $1,000

Neighbor Sponsor:

For $500 enjoy:

- *your name listed on the sponsorship banner*
- *half-page advertisement in the event program*
- *acknowledgment on NCBC website*

Individual Sponsor:

Purchase the ad size of your choice:

- *full-page $250*
- *half-page $175*
- *quarter-page $125*

Questions? Contact:

Anne Greenhalgh, *celebration chair*
greenhaa@wharton.upenn.edu
or
Amara Briggs, *celebration co-chair*
amara.briggs@comcast.net

Make checks payable to:
The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd
P.O. Box 717, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

The NCBC is a 501(c) 4. Donations to this event are not tax deductible.

A Look Back at some of The Neighborhood Club's 1916 Festivities

In 1916, The Neighborhood Club held its first July 4 parade, which ended at the Cynwyd School, pictured at top. World War I had already been raging for two years, so service men parading to stir up patriotic fervor was part of the festivities (middle photo). Patriotic themes were also acted out, such as the arrival of William Penn in 1682 (bottom).

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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**.

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

Julia Barol
Amara Briggs
Terrence Foley
Jerry Francis
Anne Greenhalgh
Glenn Manko
Brian McGuire
Jerry Skillings

The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd Membership Form

Your dues help to:

- alert you to neighborhood discussions about critical topics
- preserve the residential character of Bala Cynwyd
- support appropriate commercial development
- monitor zoning, traffic and safety on our streets
- provide community 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

*Contribute at the benefactor level and be recognized in our fall newsletter and on our website.

Business: ☐ Gold $250* ☐ Silver $100

*Businesses that contribute at the gold level receive an ad in the July 4 program, as well as a listing in our fall newsletter and on our website.

Name _____

Address _____

Email Address _____

Phone No. _____