Spring 2018

ESTABLISHED 1906
The Neighborhood Club of BALA CYNWYD

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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David Rosenbaum, *president* • Courtenay Harris Bond, *editor*

President's Letter

The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd is on the move and becoming more strategic and inclusive. While the Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd has historically been recognized as one of the most effective and well-respected civic associations in Lower Merion, we are not content with the status quo.

We are actively seeking to be more inclusive and representative of Bala Cynwyd and more strategic in our efforts to influence development and help guide its future. We are building on past successes and learning from our failings and shortcomings. To do this, the NCBC NEEDS YOU!! Please join and support us!

If you drive through Bala Cynwyd, you can see development in many places in our community. Whether you like it or not, Bala Cynwyd is growing and changing. While some of this development may lead to positive commercial redevelopment, particularly, in the Bala Village, if we stand on the sidelines and fail to effectively participate in the process, the end result may be a community that falls short of its potential.

One of the primary goals of the Neighborhood Club should be to foster community understanding, tolerance, and congeniality. We are committed to promoting Bala Cynwyd's uniqueness and seeking to improve our high quality of life. The fabric of our community is textured, and our unique political and religious views are cause for celebration.

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Introducing new Neighborhood Club board members

Linda Sagman has been a resident of Bala Cynwyd since 2009. She moved here from Israel, where she worked as a consultant to an apparel chain and prior to that worked as a buyer for David's Bridal in Conshohocken. She and her daughter, Shira, love living in this community with its diversity, neighborhood feel and proximity to Philadelphia. Last year she was an advocate for the Fourth of July parade, helping with fund raising, and has taken on management of the NCBC's Facebook presence.

David Yavil is a 31 year resident of Lower Merion and 1993 graduate of Lower Merion High School. David currently lives in Bala Village with his wife, Heather, and two sons, Alexander and Samuel, who attend the Cynwyd Elementary School. David is an attorney with Segal McCambridge in Philadelphia where he focuses on the defense of product manufacturers, licensed professionals, premises owners, real estate brokers and agents, insurers and employers in various civil litigation matters. David has volunteered for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and Philadelphia VIP. Additionally, David just completed a 2 year term on the Advisory Council of Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church Weekday School. In 2007, David founded the Patrick Callahan Cancer Fund.

Michal Frankel lives in Bala Cynwyd with her husband and four children. She was proud to return to the neighborhood five years ago, having grown up practically around the corner from her current home. Michal received her B.A. in Biology from Yeshiva University and a BSN from Columbia University School of Nursing. She practiced as an oncology nurse at both Columbia Presbyterian and Massachusetts General Hospitals. Since moving back to Bala Cynwyd Michal has run the accounts receivable department at Fun and Function, a company that sells therapy tools for children with sensory needs and has worked as a camp nurse in the summers. She has organized social and fundraising activities for the Young Israel of the Main Line, Caskey Torah Academy and The Mesivta High School. As a frequent beneficiary of the Bala Cynwyd Library, the Cynwyd Heritage Trail and the Independence Day festival, Michal is excited to give back to the neighborhood as part of The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd.

To be included on our email list, notify us by emailing info@balacynwyd.org.

Commissioner's Corner

Greetings.

I hope this newsletter finds you well and preparing for spring. This edition offers me a very unique opportunity. I am fortunate to have the chance to offer a final thank you and goodbye to the residents of Bala Cynwyd. As some readers may know, an opportunity presented itself that offers me an exciting professional challenge while at the same time continuing my association with the township. But while I will now be the Lower Merion Township Assistant Director of Public Works, I am not permitted by law to simultaneously continue in the role of township commissioner. So I submitted my resignation as Ward 3 Commissioner in early January.

In the ten years that I have served as a commissioner, I have the opportunity to meet many great people. These include people of a variety of viewpoints, some of whom agreed with me, and others who might have differed on some issues. I've often been asked "How do you deal with" or "How do you tolerate" those individuals who disagree with your point of view, including those who might do so forcefully. Simply put, I appreciated all of my interactions, even the difficult ones. They offered a view different than that of mine, and allowed me to see issues from different sides. Sometimes this re-enforced my view on an issue, or, at times, altered my position. Gaining perspective from another's point of view is both healthy and beneficial to all.

I mention differences because the township commissioners are about to undertake one of the most important tasks in the last 60-plus years. The task of taking the new Comprehensive Plan (guide of what the residents of Lower Merion Township want to see the township look like) and rewriting the Township Zoning Code to reflect that vision. That will necessitate many discussions, and of course differing views as to how the Comprehensive Plan is interpreted. I would encourage everyone to learn about the issues, engage in these discussions, and make their opinion known. In doing so, listen openly and give consideration and thought to others and their positions. But most importantly, to be respectful of one another and treat others as we would like to be treated. This is the civil civic discourse that is vital to our community. Doing otherwise is a disservice to our community.

It was clearly an honor and privilege to serve as a Lower Merion Township Commissioner. I enjoyed the challenge of the issues large and small with which we wrestled during my time on the board. I thank you for allowing me to be your voice as a steward of this great township I shall always feel very fortunate for having had that opportunity.

Sincerely,
Paul McElhaney

Please follow The Neighborhood Club on Facebook at www.facebook.com/balacynwydcivicassociation

Please Join Us!

One of the most meaningful connections a citizen can make is to join their local civic association. With The Neighborhood Club, Bala Cynwyd residents have the opportunity to meet and interact with people who make a difference by planning our future, whether it is for our homes, streets, community and township. These connections and conversations are important because they include your interests and your voice that ultimately shapes the outcome.

Please join the The Neighborhood Club and pay your 2018 dues for as little as $35.00 . . . come to meetings . . . meet your neighbors . . . make a difference.

Upcoming Board Meetings

NCBC Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month, September through June, 7:30 p.m. Meeting locations will be announced prior to each date. Please join us for our upcoming meetings.

May 8: regular board meeting
June 12: regular board meeting
Sept. 11: regular board meeting
Oct. 9: regular board meeting
Nov. 13: annual membership meeting

Lower Merion Academy where some of our board meetings take place.

2017 Sidewalk Gardens

The Beautification Committee once again had the pleasure and challenge of evaluating many beautiful gardens in our neighborhood. This year's sidewalk garden winners are: **Jackie Faimen**, residential garden; **Beth Yount**, residential farm-to-table garden and **Symphony Square**, commercial property garden. Many thanks to everyone who nominated a garden, they were all beautiful! We also want to applaud everyone who has planted and tends a garden — you make Bala Cynwyd a more beautiful place to live and work.

Congratulations to our winners.

Neighborhood Art Center Opens in Bala Cynwyd

The idea behind Bala Cynwyd's Sky Soup Art Center's name "is that when making art, the sky's the limit, and the soup is all of the art materials," said Director and Owner Heather Exley.

Her storefront art center for all ages opened in September at 203 Bala Avenue, at the center of Bala Village, right near the Cynwyd Heritage Trail and the Cynwyd Train Station.

Exley, herself, lives in Bala Cynwyd and says she's a "neighborhood person.

"I definitely wanted it to be a neighborhood art center," Exley said. "It's a place where people should be able to create or express themselves without judgment."

Her center offers three-to-10-week classes for children of various ages, as well as programs for half-day kindergarteners and pre-K students and workshops. Sky Soup has evening classes for adults and even offers camp options for students during school holidays and summer. Exley also hosts birthday parties at Sky Soup. Her youngest artists are 18-months-old.

"I believe so much in art and art making," added Exley, who also teaches art at Friends' Central School. "I just think it helps people thrive. People can express themselves through art, and art can say things that words can't say."

To find out more about the Sky Soup Art Center and/or to sign up for classes, visit: https://www.skysoup.org/ or call 610-206-3568 or email heather@skysoup.org.

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

As a community, we don't have to agree on all of the issues, and we should resist efforts to undermine and divide ourselves.

This starts with our effort to reach out and include Bala Cynwyd residents who historically have not been involved in the Neighborhood Club, but it will not stop there. We are working to be more visible and welcoming. We welcome your suggestions on how we can promote a closer knit, friendlier and more livable community.

With regard to land development issues, we recognize the importance of educating residents about land development laws and making sure that our neighbors are aware of how they can influence the future of Bala Cynwyd. We publish monthly lists of public meetings dealing with or affecting Bala Cynwyd Land Development and regularly circulate it to our members. We send email blasts of particularly important issues and public meetings, and we will continue to promote more effective public discourse by educating our membership about both the land development process and the changing zoning laws that will shape our community.

To increase our effectiveness, we have adopted a three pronged approach: We regularly meet with developers to discuss their projects and possible conditions of approval, even if they can be built entirely by right and without special township approval, special conditions or waivers. We identify and advocate for appropriate changes to the current zoning code. And we intend to actively participate in the township's current redrafting of its the zoning code.

As you can see, we have lofty goals, but our aspirations are tempered with a healthy dose of realism. We know that we will not prevail in everything that we hope to accomplish. However, we will not be disheartened by our failures nor will we be complacent with our successes. We intend to learn from both as we move on to face the challenges ahead of us in 2018 and beyond.

Our ability to achieve our goals will be significantly enhanced with your support and involvement. At a minimum, we invite you to join or renew your 2018 NCBC membership. Our hope is that we will have a record number of dues paying residents this year to validate and support our efforts. As a member, you can sign up to receive informative emails about issues affecting our community and particularly important public meetings. We also hope that you will participate in our monthly meetings and become active in our organization.

If you have a special skill or interest and can support the organization in ways other than financially, we also welcome you. We always need volunteers to help with the annual July 4 celebration, which is our most visible public event. We are also looking to modernize and improve our website and communications programs. If you have ideas or special skills, please join us. We are looking forward to an exciting year and hope to work with you to create a more vibrant community.

— David Rosenbaum

What's Happening on the Cynwyd Heritage Trail (CHT)

According to Lower Merion Township's 2016 Comprehensive Plan, the Cynwyd Heritage Trail is "the spine of the Lower Merion's trail network and the township's primary connection to the regional trail network." As an indication of this, we have seen increased usage by cyclists and pedestrians who are now using the Manayunk and Pencoyd Bridges to ride along the trail and through the West Laurel Hill Cemetery to and from Manayunk and the Schuylkill River Trail.

The most visible presence of the Friends of the Cynwyd Heritage Trail (FOCHT) is the maintenance work we do. With the pool of community service volunteers, we are able to work all year round on weeding, planting, cutting vines, beating back invasive plants and generally trying to keep the trail looking tidy and cared for. During the Spring and Fall we have regular workdays the 3rd Saturday of the month. In June, July and August, we hire a landscaping company to do the major weeding since most people are out of town. Thus, the maintenance we perform is either physically or financially borne by FOCHT, and to that end, FOCHT can always use more help maintaining the trail. If you are interested in helping or would like to "own" a section of the trail for maintenance, please contact us at **info@cynwydtrail.org**. Put "volunteer" in the subject line. Contributions to FOCHT for its work can be made at **www.cynwydtrail.org**

FOCHT would like to work with homeowners along the trail to plant out the slope behind their houses. The FOCHT Board of Directors includes such relevant talents as landscape architecture and soil science. Interested? Contact us at **info@cynwydtrail.org**.

We always welcome BuildOn from the Bala Cynwyd Middle School, and both Lower Merion and Harriton High Schools and are planning a Scouts Day in April. If you are involved with Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts or Brownies, please let us know at **info@cynwydtrail.org**. Put "volunteer" in the subject line.

In 2018 the major CHT project will be the start of the Barmouth Trailhead redesign to provide more user amenities. Some of the things proposed are a shade structure, some type of restroom facility, more seating (besides the existing rocks), and improving the pedestrian access down Levering Mill Road. Watch the FOCHT website **www.cynwydtrail.org** and Facebook/FOCHTfriend for updates.

As you may know, the FOCHT Board meetings are open to the public. If you are interested in serving on the board or on one of our committees, let us know at **info@cynwydtrail.org**. If you just want to make a contribution you can do so on our website.

We know the CHT has made our community stronger by providing recreational opportunities, improved commuting options and a connection to green space that makes our neighborhood an even more appealing place to live and work. Please join us in our efforts to enhance this neighborhood treasure.

Volunteers clean up at Bartmouth.

Interested in Becoming a Neighborhood Club Director?

We are especially interested in residents who have marketing backgrounds, computer skills, and/or an interest in helping with the July 4 celebration. Please send a resumé or letter of interest to:

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

Improvements Continue in City Ave Services District

Phase I of our Streetscape and Safety Improvement Program on the corridor between I-76 and Lancaster Avenue is complete. The traffic signals are still being tweaked but everything is functioning well. We'll move on to Phase II in the fall. The engineers are working on plans to upgrade the major intersections and areas along City Avenue between 50th Street/Bala Avenue and 63rd Street/Wynnewood Road. Work is expected to begin this September.

The Presidential Boulevard has been delayed due to the discovery of a previously unknown underground utility that required a redesign. The redesign of the mid-block crosswalk with signalization has been approved by Lower Merion Township and PennDot, and work will begin in the spring.

We've got some great social events planned for this year as well Stay up-to-date on these improvement projects, social events and other initiatives of the City Ave District at **www.cityave.org** or by following us on Twitter (@City_Ave) or Facebook.

Support The Neighborhood Club's 102nd Independence Day Celebration

Centennial+2 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*
- *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:

Maxine Golberg, *sponsorship chair*
maxine.goldberg@foxroach.com

or

Courtenay Harris Bond
courtenayharrisbond@gmail.com

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.

Photos taken at the July 4, 2017 celebration

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P.O. Box 717, Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania 19004
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*:

The City Ave Services District
Heather Exley
Kitty Rapalyea
David Rosenbaum

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. _____