Winter 2017

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

info@BalaCynwyd.org

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

President's Letter

Dear Neighbors,

Thank you for supporting The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd during the past year.

Because of you, we were able to: host our 100th Annual July 4th parade and Independence Day festivities attended by hundreds of neighbors; represent our community's interests on all plans affecting Bala Cynwyd, which include development, school expansion, and zoning code reform; review all proposed commercial and residential projects in Bala Cynwyd and provide recommendations to developers, owners and the Lower Merion Township Zoning Hearing Board; sponsor special community presentations at our monthly meetings to make neighbors more aware of potential changes ahead that affect all of us, such as new developments to City Avenue.

In the year ahead, we are planning: Bala Cynwyd's 101st July 4 Celebration; a review of all community development projects in order to understand and shape the impact on our neighborhoods; outreach to new residents, along with updated Neighborhood Club website and social media presence; monthly meetings, open to the community, where we discuss a wide variety of topics relevant to Bala Cynwyd, as well as host information sessions and presentations

I am writing now to ask you to join or renew your membership in The Neighborhood Club. We are a *volunteer civic association*. Your dues support our wonderful July 4 events, newsletters and website.

(continued on pg. 2)

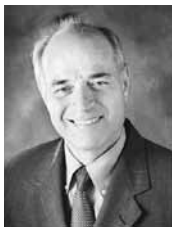
Mike McKeon lives in Bala Cynwyd with his wife and two daughters. He graduated from Lehigh University with a degree in international relations and obtained his juris doctor from Washington University in St. Louis School of Law. Mike is a shareholder at the civil defense firm of Lavin, O'Neil, Cedrone and DiSipio and specializes in product liability, contract law and personal injury defense work. Mike has obtained defense verdicts in jury trials in Pennsylvania, New York and Connecticut. He has also coached his daughters' Lower Merion Township basketball and softball teams. In addition, Mike serves as a student mentor in the corporate work-study program for the Cristo Rey School of Philadelphia. His father Barry, a Vietnam veteran, has organized the Ardmore Memorial Day parade for the past 25 years. Mike is the coordinator of the annual Independence Day festival for The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd.

Ricky Guerra was a resident of Texas until 2001 when he moved to Lower Merion Township to attend both law and business school at Villanova University. After working and living in Philadelphia for several years, he returned to Lower Merion in 2014 with his wife and three children. Ricky has been practicing as a general liability defense attorney in Philadelphia for the past decade. From 2014–2017, Super Lawyers recognized him as a "Rising Star," a peer-reviewed category reserved for only 2.5 percent of all Pennsylvania attorneys under age 40. He has been a member of The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd since 2014. Ricky is a former political candidate for Ward 9, and he is a regular volunteer soccer coach for the Lower Merion Soccer Club.

Randy Myer has been a Bala Cynwyd resident for 26 years and a poll worker for 25. Randy has been a realtor at BHHS Fox & Roach, Gladwyne, for more than 28 years. Randy is also the past president of the Delaware Valley REALTOR Association. She has been the director of the Pennsylvania Association of Realtors since 2001. Myer graduated from the University of Pittsburgh. In addition to real estate, Myer enjoys travel, theater, movies and the beach.

Vanessa Coke Cohen has been a resident of Bala Cynwyd for almost nine years. She is involved with social action activities coordinated through Main Line Reform Temple, Cynwyd Elementary School and other organizations. Vanessa is also a board member of Wolf Performing Arts Center, a children's arts program in Bryn Mawr. Vanessa has worked as a corporate lawyer at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP and Silver Lake, a private equity firm specializing in technology-related investments. She received her law degree from University of Pennsylvania Law School and her undergraduate degree from Harvard University.

Commissioner's Corner



Greetings, Neighbors!

I hope you all had an enjoyable and safe holiday season! As of writing this in late January, we have been fortunate in terms of weather. We enter 2017 without a township tax increase for the sixth straight year, the local economy is improving, public safety (always a concern) remains strong, and Bala Cynwyd continues to be an extraordinarily robust and diverse community. All that said, there are also concerns, mainly about traffic and growth in the commercial sector. I'd like in this issue to examine one aspect of this growth, namely the affect of recently-planned apartment projects on public school enrollment.

Recently, the Lower Merion School District (LMSD) has proposed providing temporary accommodations for increased student enrollment while permanent additions are made to, as of this writing, Penn Wynne Elementary and Bala Cynwyd Middle schools. According to the district, in both cases this is predominantly due to the turnover of "empty-nester" single-family homes to families with one or more school age children. This is a good thing for several reasons, not the least of which is that it is a testament to the continuing superior quality of public school education here in Lower Merion Township. It is small wonder that young families want to move here to take advantage of this outstanding township amenity.

However, the task of accommodating generational fluctuations in community demographics — that in turn translate to fluctuations in school enrollment numbers — is a truly vexing and ongoing challenge for the school district. School officials cannot predict, for example, which neighborhood is next likely to experience a boom in real estate transfers that adds students to that neighborhood's school population, as happened in Penn Wynne, and in the College Park section of Bala Cynwyd. Here in Bala Cynwyd, particularly in my ward (Ward 9), in addition to the turnover of single-family homes, we have a number of proposed multi-family apartment complexes that either have received land development approval or are "on the boards." Residents are concerned about the effect these projects will have on increased school enrollment, thereby exacerbating the school's dilemma to an unmanageable degree.

For some perspective on this, and to learn to what degree this concern is warranted, we turn to data provided by the school district on enrollment. Between 2007 and 2016 the district provided three sets of enrollment projections that included estimates of how many new students would be added from single-family homes and from new multi-family projects. These studies are all available on the school district's website. Estimates ranged from 0.04 students per new M/F unit (i.e. 4 students per 100 units) based on actual LMSD enrollment data to 14 per 100.based on projections from Sundance Associates, a consulting firm from New Jersey. In 2016, the LMSD engaged the Montgomery County Planning Commission to provide a separate estimate, which projected seven new students per 100 M/F units.

In Bala Cynwyd, over the last five years, between City Avenue and Rock Hill Road, six multi-family projects have been proposed totaling 1,541 units, of which approximately 300 have been built. Using the LMSD projections, when and if all 1,541 units are built and fully occupied, the contribution of students will total either 62, 107, or 216 students. These would be added to a total LMSD enrollment of over 8,400 students spread across twelve grades. This translates to 0.008 (8/10 of one percent) for 62 students to 0.026 (under 3 percent) for 216 students. At last count, the 600 Righters Ferry Rd. project, with approximately 130 units occupied, has 10 students attending LMSD schools, or 7.6 students per 100 units. Thus, while there are legitimate concerns about population growth throughout the township, it is fair to say that even in the extreme case, adding less than 3 percent to total school enrollment should not present the school district with an insurmountable enrollment management problem. A far greater percentage will come from the single-family home contribution which, in my view, is a healthy sign for the township.

In conclusion, if you have any questions about this subject or any other township-related matter, please feel free to contact me with any concerns or for more information at george@gtmanos.com.

Sincerely,
George T. Manos
Lower Merion Township Commissioner

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

For more than 110 years, The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd has served our community. We remain actively involved in preserving the residential character of our neighborhood, protecting our open space, and enhancing the viability of our commercial districts.

Please support The Neighborhood Club and its activities for the community. Dues are payable online at **www.balacynwyd.org** or can also be paid by filling out form on the back of the newsletter.

Also, we hope you will join us at our monthly meetings. The Neighborhood Club meets on the second Tuesday of every month, usually at the Lower Merion Academy Building on the campus of the Bala Cynwyd Middle School on Bryn Mawr Avenue.

If you have comments, questions or topics for our monthly board meetings, please send them to me at **info@balacynwyd.org**.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your support!

With best regards,
Jerry Skillings, President

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

Support Our 101st Independence Day Celebration, July 4, 2017
Sponsored by The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd

Centennial+1 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*

1 Opportunity Available @ $2,500

Lead Sponsor:

- *Prominent signage at ONE 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*
- *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 website*

Individual Sponsor:

Purchase the ad size of your choice:

- *Full-page $250*
- *Half-page $175*
- *Quarter-page $125*

Questions? Contact:

Mike McKeon, *Celebration Chair*
michaelmckeon@gmail.com
or
Anne Greenhalgh
greenhaa@wharton.upenn.edu

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.

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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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*:

Vanessa Coke Cohen
Anne Greenhalgh
Ricky Guerra
George Manos
Mike McKeon
Randy Myer
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. _____