The Gateway

Newsletter of The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd

THE NEIGHBORHOOD CLUB OF
BALA CYNWYD

The Oldest of the Main Line
Civic Associations – 1906

www.BalaCynwyd.org **Summer 2024**

President's Letter

Welcome to the Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd!

This is my first newsletter as president of the NCBC. I am excited to share some of what we have in store for the year ahead, but first, here's a little about me. My husband, Mike Morse, and I moved to Bala Cynwyd in 2003 We have two kids, Jacob, a sophomore at Brandeis, and Harper, a junior at Lower Merion High. Mike and I are both lawyers. I started getting involved in neighborhood-centric volunteering in 2006 – many of you know me as the judge of elections for 13-1. I joined the NCBC board in 2022, and it is an honor to serve now as president.

Kay Sickles

We have an exciting year ahead. At the top of our list, Lower Merion Township will be creating a master plan for Bala Avenue. Please check out the article in this newsletter.

We are reinvigorating existing organizations and creating new traditions to build community. Have you met the Tree Tenders team? Tree Tenders is raising awareness and helping neighbors restore the tree canopy. Watch for their important initiatives on our Facebook page.

We would like to return to the olden days by welcoming new residents with "New Neighbor" packets, but we need volunteers for this initiative! Please contact us if this interests you.

As for new traditions, we held a food drive at our polling places on Election Day in April. We'll remind you in the fall, but please keep this new tradition on your radar and bring some pantry items for all

• continued on page 2

Come on Down for Neighborhood Club's Festive Independence Day Celebration

Rain or Shine – It Sparkles on the 4th

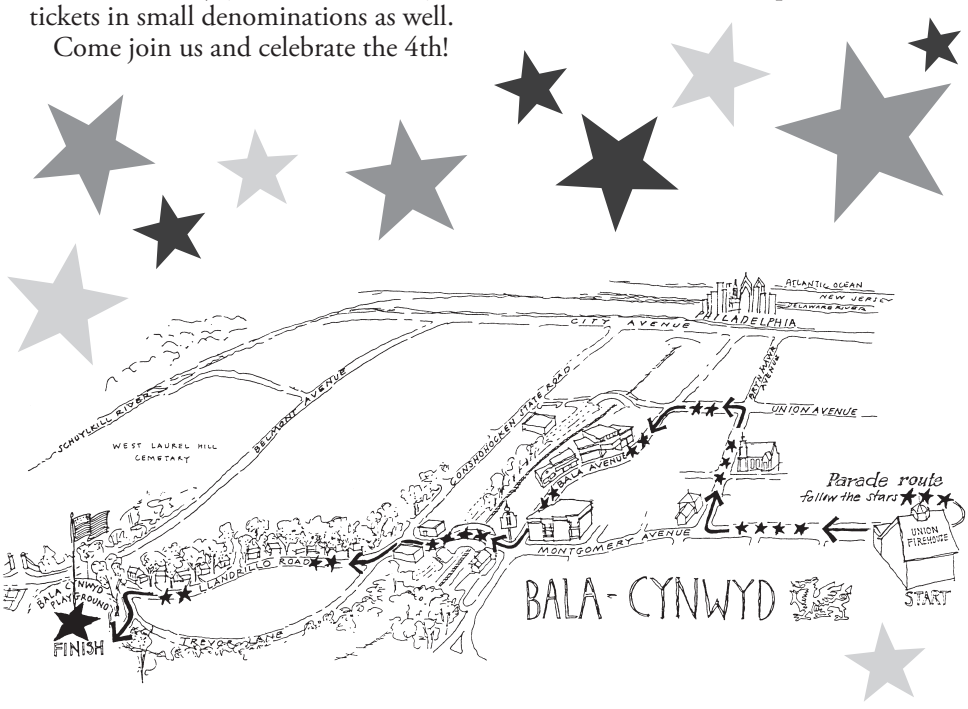
The Neighborhood Club will sponsor Bala Cynwyd's annual Independence Day celebration on Thursday, July 4, 2024. Registration for the annual parade will begin at 8:45 a.m. at the Union Fire House on Montgomery Avenue. The parade will begin by 9:30 a.m. at the Fire House and end at the Bala Cynwyd Playground.

The parade will feature a marching band, neighborhood children riding decorated bicycles, clowns, floats, fire trucks, the bicycle patrol, public officials, and guests of honor. Bring your beach chairs to the playground and enjoy music provided by the Summer Sounds Pop Band, as well as a patriotic program and honorary awards. This year, our Citizen of the Year is former Township Commissioner George Manos, and our Merchant of the Year is Slices and Rolls on Bala Avenue.

Carnival rides, foot races, and the ever-popular egg toss will follow the award ceremony. T-shirts featuring the winner of the Cynwyd Elementary School dragon contest will be awarded to winners of the races. The Union Fire Association will sell hot dogs and sodas to raise funds for the Fire House. Come see our neighborhood children enjoy the pony rides, petting zoo, exotic animals, the trackless train, extreme rock wall, and carousel.

You can purchase bracelets for $15 each, or two for $25. Each bracelet will allow the wearer to enjoy the rides as many times as desired. You can also purchase sets of tickets in small denominations as well.

Come join us and celebrate the 4th!



Commissioner's Corner

A new Face for Ward 9, Smiling About the Work Ahead

I have lived in Bala Cynwyd for over 45 years with my wife, Val. It is here that we raised our children, Alexis and Ben. In 2021 I retired from private practice as a dentist, while still teaching at Albert Einstein Medical Center and Project Home in North Philadelphia.

Lou Rossman

Prior to being elected last fall as your Ward 9 Commissioner, I served on the township's Health Advisory Council, spearheading a new project bringing free dental services to the underserved of Lower Merion. As a Commissioner, I now chair the Health Committee and serve on the Library Board and the Economic Development, Traffic Calming, and Noise Reduction Committees.

As a proud resident of Bala Cynwyd, I am excited about all the great changes and future directions of our Ward 9. For instance:

- Work is starting on the Cynwyd Trail connection with City Avenue.
- The spur of the Cynwyd Trail will take people through a safe new culvert down to Pencoyd Landing.
- Plans for the trail are to extend a safe path from Pencoyd Landing to the entrance of West Laurel Hill Cemetery. Completion is set for 2025.
- The sidewalk extension on East Levering Mill Road will be complete in short order, which will help keep people safe. It has been built without damage to the tree canopy.
- There will be signage along the greenway with safe passage for bicycles and walkers to access parts of the township.
- Walking and bicycle trails will be integrated with new development projects to enhance traffic and pedestrian safety.

We are a fiscally solid township and still AAA -rated by Moody's and S&P. I have visited with Union Fire Company members, who are excited about their new building design and its ability to attract young volunteers to live there. This can only help build for the future.

I attended a township police training course and learned more about de-escalation and use of force. We commissioners heard what each officer must perform to defuse a situation. It makes me proud to have these well-trained men and women serve all of us. I have also visited every department of the township government. We have an exciting, hardworking, and solid team.

Philanthropy has always been a part of my life. My father made sure that my brother and I learned the Jewish concept of Tzedakah, roughly translated as charity. Tzedakah has a broader significance, encompassing both charity and responsibility. It puts muscle in our giving by implying that we have an obligation to support the communities and institutions that sustain us. I thank you for the opportunity to serve each one of you. It is a privilege.

Thank you!

– By Louis Rossman

• continued from cover

elections going forward! We are also going to answer the call from the American Red Cross and host our first blood drive, most likely in the fall. Stay tuned on the Facebook page and through email for more information.

The Bala Cynwyd Farmer's market is back. In case you haven't made it there yet, it is at One Bala Plaza every Wednesday, 3-7 p.m. It's a place to bump into neighbors and a great way to freshen up your fridge contents mid-week!

Are you wondering about the important issues that concern residents of Bala Cynwyd? Zoning? The Roundabout planned by PennDot at the intersection of St. Asaph's and Belmont? Come to a meeting and find out more about the actions our board is taking to help attain the best outcome for our community.

– Kay Sickles

Several High-Priority Sidewalk Projects Designated in B.C.

You may have noticed the sidewalk under construction on the south side of East Levering Mill Road between Belmont Avenue and Conshohocken State Road. This neighborhood project was originally proposed over five years ago and is finally coming to fruition after a lot of neighborhood discussion and problem-solving by Lower Merion Township staff.

The demand for increased pedestrian access and safety across the township led the Lower Merion Board of Commissioners to establish a priority sidewalk program last fall. After reviewing nearly 100 gaps in the township sidewalk network that were identified by staff, ward commissioners, civic associations and residents, the Board of Commissioners designated 14 high-priority segments for the initial round of design and construction.

Like East Levering Mill Road, high-priority segments serve as neighborhood spines. They connect multiple neighborhoods with multiple public facilities such as schools, parks and trails.

High-priority projects in Bala Cynwyd include filling gaps along Belmont Avenue, Righters Ferry Road and Llanberris Road to connect the Cynwyd Heritage Trail with trails in Laurel Hill Cemetery, as well as those being developed in the City Avenue area. Construction dates have yet to be scheduled.

Township staff is in the process of setting up a township-wide educational workshop to be held before the summer break.

– By Brian McGuire

Proposed Roundabout Draws Interest And concern

Lots of people are talking about Penn DOT's proposed roundabout at the intersection of St. Asaph's Road and Belmont Avenue, and whether it would be an improvement or a detriment to the community. Township officials are reviewing the proposal for its "consistency with the City Avenue District's vision for a safer and more cohesive bicycle and pedestrian environment, as well as its coordination with ongoing and future township land use and circulation plans and projects." A township official will attend the Neighborhood Club's monthly meeting June 4, 7:30 p.m., at the Union firehouse to share information. Learn more about the PennDOT proposal by searching for "Belmont" at www.penndot.pa.gov. You can learn more about roundabouts in general at www.Freakonomics.com/roundabouts and at www.planetcitizen.com.

This slide from a PennDOT presentation depicts the roundabout lanes and traffic flow.

Status Report on Bala Avenue of the Arts

Efforts to revitalize the Bala Avenue corridor are proceeding apace on several fronts.

The City Avenue Special Services District has issued a retail study that calls for establishing an Arts District along Bala that would feature public art installations and programming. (The study can be found online at cityave.org/reports-and-publications.)

Lower Merion Township allocated $25,000 to implement the study's recommendations. The funding has been used in part to hire an arts consultant to develop a "blueprint" for stakeholders such as the Bala Avenue of the Arts nonprofit to follow. The consultant, Civic Centered, is expected to issue its report this autumn, according to township senior planner Jillian Dierks. The rest of the funding, she said, will be used for murals, banners and other public art.

In addition, the township planning staff will conduct a feasibility study on integrating Cynwyd Station Park into the improvement plans. Ideas being floated for the township-owned property include an outdoor entertainment space, artistic benches, and a dog park, said Ward 13 Commissioner Gilda Kramer, who chairs the township parks and recreation committee.

On a related front, construction is slated to begin this summer on the Cynwyd Heritage Trail extension down to City Avenue, running parallel to Bala Avenue. Because the trail is "a strength" of the Bala revitalization plans, Dierks said, the goal is to create visual links with murals and the like.

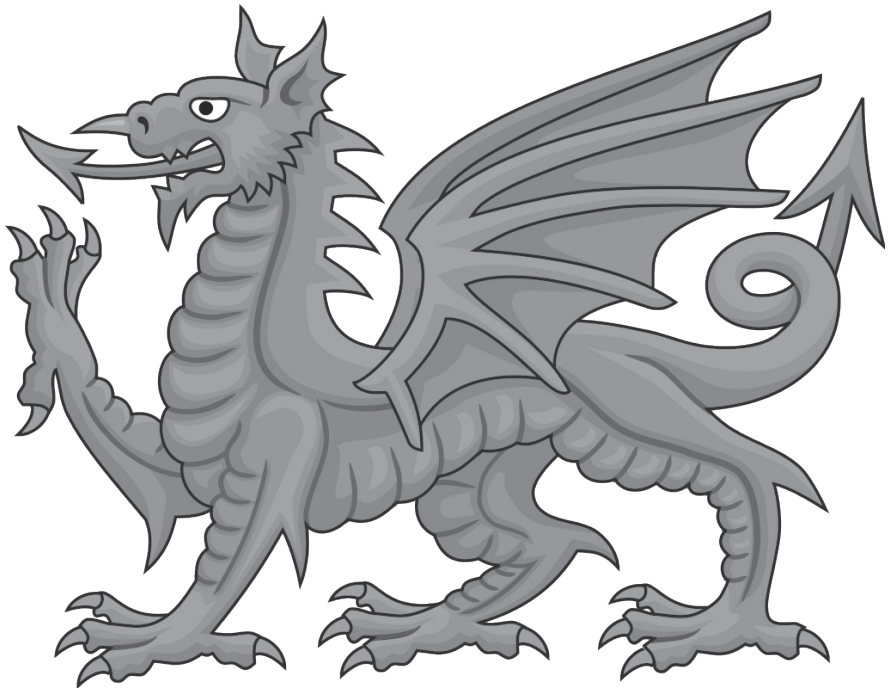
Unfortunately, there is no progress to report on either the empty lot on Bala, the site of stalled private development, or the Bala Theater, which remains locked in legal infighting.

But stay tuned for an upbeat public event. The Bala Avenue of the Arts will be holding its second outdoor Art Walk later this year. September is the target month, said BAoA board president Daniella Weinberg.

– By Jim Remsen

Home Sweet Poem

In the last issue of *The Gateway*, we invited readers to submit limericks with Bala Cynwyd references. As you can see, the response was delightful.



Edward M. Spivack,
near 54th & City Line

There once was a child from B-C
Who knew it's the best place to be.
From Pop's to the movies,
It was always so groovy
And had everything from A to Z.

With Penn Fruit, a Woolworth's and Blum's,
Some shopping there for everyone.
A Saks down the street,
Plenty of places to eat
For groups of 25 or just one.

There was no McDonald's in sight,
But an H&H for a quick bite.
Mama's, San Marco,
Other places to go
And all made their meals just right.

Synagogues, churches and schools
Raised you to be not a fool.
There was skating on ice,
(The Marriott was nice)
And sledding in winter was cool!

Pixanne and Gene London you could see
And maybe get to be on TV!
There was oh, so much more
That anyone could adore –
All packed into our town of B-C!

Harry Mazurek, East Amherst Road

In every customer service chat
They follow the same old format.
Bala Cynwyd is where I live.
The spelling I need to give.
They always ask how to pronounce that.

It will come to you as a big surprise
There are many words with two y's.
Cynwyd chemists are not thrown for a loop
We're familiar with the hydroxyl group.
Unless you can do better, don't criticize.

Jim Remsen, Penarth Road

There's Babis, and Rite-Aid nearby,
But careful, the traffic flies by!
There's Hymie's and Murray's
Plus red sauce and curries
Tis yummy … but not for to die!

You think snooty Bryn Mawr's where it's at.
Or Wynnewood, where resides the fat cat.
They're okay, I guess,
But here's what I stress,
Dear old B.C.'s where I hang my hat!

Harriet Katz, Penarth Road

There's a good old road, Conshohocken,
Through our township it runs, but what's shocking
Is that danger is near
as drivers career
tail-gating and speeding – let's stop 'em!

If your take-out or dine-out is Thai
If for satay or noodles you sigh,
Then to Anchan go! Hurry!
For pad thai or curry
So delicious, you'll love it, oh my!

Phyllis Warchaizer, The Fairmont

I once was told it's just plain "Bala",
Skip the Cynwyd…everyone knows.
Now we live in Bala…yes, we crossed the river
Yet still when it's cold we're likely to shiver.

It is not South Florida where many do flee
With pickleball and golf as far as the eye can see!
We winter in Bala braving cold and snow…
Snug in our condo, reading and watching our shows!

NCBC Announces Pair of Annual Honors

The Neighborhood Club's upcoming Fourth of July celebration will feature a pair of annual awards, one going to a fixture in Bala Cynwyd and the other to a relative newcomer.

Longtime community activist George Manos, the former township commissioner for Ward 9, is being honored as 2024 Citizen of the Year. For Merchant of the Year, the club's Independence Day Committee selected Slices and Rolls, a recently opened kosher pizzeria owned by Eli Etgar.

Manos continues to be involved in community affairs through the Bala Avenue of the Arts, the Neighborhood Club, and as a photographer at many local events. "Whether he's volunteering his time or advocating for important causes, George's passion for our community is evident," the committee said.

Slices and Rolls is a relatively new establishment on Bala Avenue that has proven to be very popular. "The pizzeria's success is a testament to Eli Etgar's dedication to providing quality service and food to our community," the club's committee said.

– By Shira Segman, student reporter

Environmental Corner

OPINION / By Marion J. Williams

BC Tree Tenders' mission to increase tree canopy is but one critical step in the web of actions that people can take to slow the impact of climate change. When we learn of a child's peanut allergy, we change diet and behaviors overnight. Our planet is our collective responsibility, so why aren't we acting now and pushing our township to act immediately? Regulation is critical in forcing this action as community members prioritize their own "urgent" causes. What is more urgent than a livable planet? In addition to planting trees, here are three related issues that we must address:

Gas-powered equipment: On top of noise pollution, emissions and workers' eventual hearing loss, blowers do real harm to beneficial insects and bird decline. When we blast away leaf litter in the fall, we blast away the habitat of fireflies, butterflies and beneficial insects that use fallen leaves as habitat over the winter. Washington D.C.'s gas-blower ban went into effect more than two years ago. Climate Action Lower Merion has started a petition seeking such a ban here. (See QR code at left.)

To learn more, scan QR code.

Mosquito sprays & lawn chemicals: Don't fall for marketing that claims sprays are eco-friendly or organic, neither is true. The sprays kill all insects, including butterflies, bees and other beneficial creatures. Without insects for food, birds don't find sufficient insects to feed their young. The website www.colinpurrington.com offers safer mosquito-control methods.

Light pollution: Outdoor lighting is a major cause of insect decline. Many insects are nocturnal, and light pollution interferes with everything from mating (fireflies), navigation, how they hunt and where they lay eggs. We can all reduce harm to the insect population by purchasing amber light bulbs, using motion-activated fixtures, or turning off lights.

These are the most critical issues that our commissioners could prioritize if they are serious about sustainable living.

To get a tree for planting this fall, email bctreetenders@gmail.com. Our fall order deadline is August 30, so be in touch a few weeks beforehand.

Volunteers ar work during an invasive-vine removal day that the BC Tree Tenders held in March. At left is Neighborhood Club board secretary Jason Landau Goodman.

Welcoming Four New Board Members

Joe Hirsch appreciates the opportunity to serve on the Neighborhood Club Board. He is a lawyer and long-time resident of Bala Cynwyd, having grown up here and raising his three children here as well. "I regularly walk and ride my bike throughout the community with my wife Jill," he says, "and have a strong interest in maintaining and improving the quality of life for all of us." Of particular interest to Joe are making our streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists, and contributing to efforts to improve Cynwyd Station Park for the benefit of the community.

Sandy Kornhauser and her family are 30-year residents of Bala Cynwyd. Her five children all attended Lower Merion schools and camps, and currently all her grandchildren live and attend school in the area. Sandy is an outpatient trauma therapist at the Joseph J. Peters Institute, where she facilitates individual and group therapy sessions in the Dialectical Behavioral Therapy program. She also works in the urban planning space, teaches art in area schools, and paints and draws as an avocation. "I am honored to join the Bala Cynwyd Neighborhood Club," she says, "to help maintain and cultivate the unique character of the neighborhood."

Bill Krebs moved to Bala Cynwyd in 2022 to be close to his two grandchildren. He has a B.F.A. in interior design focusing on corporate work. His interest is in community quality of life and planning issues, interfacing with neighboring groups and associations in a proactive manner. He notes that Bala Cynwyd is "a terrific neighborhood with a broad variety of housing types, businesses, and transportation options." To protect history and add to the future by maintaining the quality of life and convenience offered by what exists today is something Bill sees as well worth his time and involvement.

Marion Williams is a nonprofit accounting specialist with Your Part-Time Controller. She also is the proud mum of three Lower Merion High School graduates, is former treasurer of LM Crew, and is a founder of the parent boosters for the high school's Dawgma Robotics - FIRST Team 1712. Marion and her husband Charles have helped to revive BC Tree Tenders, an initiative of the Neighborhood Club. Previously, Marion volunteered for Neighborhood Bike Works in West Philadelphia and St. Vincent Learning Lab in Germantown. She enjoys the process of increasing the biodiversity of her garden and community, as well as cycling and hiking.

Noise Ordinance Prompts More Public Notice

One of the issues residents were talking about this past winter was revisions to the township's noise ordinance. We have been assured by township officials that the revised version will reduce noise. Our review of the ordinance showed us that ultimately, the most significant changes affect residential properties near commercial and sometimes institutional uses, which impacts other parts of the township such as Ardmore more than Bala Cynwyd.

At the same time, the township's process for revising the ordinance highlighted the complexity of trying, as a public citizen, to track and understand the changes that are proposed to our local laws. At the behest of the Federation of Civics, the township recently agreed to start using a process that will help the public review and understand proposed ordinances that the township believes will generate a lot of public interest, such as the noise ordinance.

Going forward, those ordinances will be included on the Building and Planning agenda one month before being considered for authorization to advertise. When applicable, the ordinance will also be included on the Planning Commission agenda in the same manner. The agendas will include links to a full redlined version of the code as well as a "clean" version that reflects only the proposed amendments. The following month's agenda will include the actual ordinance for consideration to authorize advertisement.

The officials hope this new process of public notice will eliminate the kind of repeated and confusing reviews that occurred with the noise ordinance.

– By Kay Sickles

SUPPORT THE NEIGHBORHOOD CLUB'S BUSINESS MEMBERS

Platinum and Gold Business Members

CYNWYD 1913

Cynwyd Club

Main Line's premier private clubs for tennis, squash, swimming, fitness, banquets, and socializing. Since its founding in 1913, The Cynwyd Club has been a favorite place for countless tennis and squash enthusiasts and many multi-generational families.

Bala House Montessori

Bala House Montessori School

Bala House Montessori is a private school in Bala Cynwyd, PA offering preschool, kindergarten, extended care, and summer camp programs carefully designed for children 3 to 6 years old.

CENTURY AUTO BODY

Century Auto Works

Century Auto Body offers quality and excellence in collision repair services while providing customers with an experience that consistently exceeds expectations. Our technicians are certified to provide you excellence and quality in collision services.

Silver Business Members

555 Associates

Bala Cleaners

Bala Cynwyd Library Association

Body Rebuilders PC

Converse Winkler Architecture

Friends of the Cynwyd Trail

Jake Hornung Electric

JS Excavating and Paving

Lower Merion Education Association

Merion Memorial Park

Right on Dental Lab

Promote your businesses and demonstrate support for our community by becoming a Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd business member.

Visit www.BalaCynwyd.org to learn about our three business membership levels, and also about sponsorship opportunities for our big annual July 4th festival.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD CLUB OF
BALA CYNWYD
EST. 1906

P.O. Box 717
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

Presorted Std
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 1339
Upper Darby, PA

www.BalaCynwyd.org
info@BalaCynwyd.org

Have a Seat, Please

Residents are always welcome to attend the Neighborhood Club's monthly board meetings. It's a great way to hear directly from your elected representatives and from township officials. You'll hear police reports on current activity in Bala Cynwyd, as well as presentations and discussion about local development projects. Whether your issue is zoning, pedestrian safety, tree health, or community-building, you can make your voice heard – and even join one of our committees.

The meetings take place the first Tuesday of each month (except July and August) at 7:30 p.m. at the Union Fire Station, 149 Montgomery Ave. Enter through the side door. The meeting room is on the second floor and is accessible by elevator.

This form is available on our website.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD CLUB OF
BALA CYNWYD
EST. 1906

MEMBERSHIP FORM

YOUR 2024 DUES HELP TO:

- represent neighborhood interests during public meetings on new zoning code and other issues
- sponsor community events like the annual 4th of July parade and carnival
- promote appropriate commercial and residential development
- preserve the residential character of Bala Cynwyd
- provide information on critical issues and meetings affecting Bala Cynwyd

HOUSEHOLD: ☐ Benefactor $100* ☐ Premium $50* ☐ Basic $35

**Contribute at the benefactor and premium levels and be recognized on our website.*

BUSINESS: ☐ Platinum $350 ☐ Gold $200 ☐ Silver $100

NAME _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

EMAIL _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

☐ Check here if you do not want to be listed as a member in the website directories.

PLEASE SEND YOUR ANNUAL DUES TO:
The NCBC, P.O. Box 717, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004