

MERION CIVIC ASSOCIATION

TEL 610-664-0441 E-MAIL: merioncivic@yahoo.com www.merioncivic.org Merion, PA 19066
Spring 2013

Centennial Events

The Merion Civic Association, founded in 1913, is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. Starting in May, with a break for the summer in August, there will be one event per month to mark this important milestone. Join the Centennial Celebration with friends, neighbors and local business owners for this series of exciting events and help raise funds to support the work of the MCA including the enhancement of the Merion/Cynwyd business district.

CRAFT BEER FEST

Date: Friday, May 17th at 7 pm
Location: Merion Tribute House

Come to MCA's first ever craft beer tasting. The evening will feature a variety of craft beer from local breweries assembled by Rolling Barrel Events. Community restaurants will be providing a choice of delectable bites to accompany the brews. Please join friends and neighbors in sampling the fine beers at this fun event.

Tickets are \$40 in advance and \$45 at the door

MERION CIVIC ASSOCIATION CENTENNIAL PARTY

Date: Thursday, June 13th at 6 pm
Location: Merion Tribute House

The entire community can enjoy this family-friendly event, at the beautiful and historic setting of the Merion Tribute House. Bring blankets and lawn chairs for an outdoor party, weather permitting. There will be games, raffles, activities for children, a selection of food samplings from sponsoring restaurants, and a lively concert of patriotic music provided by the Merion Concert Band.

Speakers include Lower Merion Commissioner for Merion, Brian Gordon, State Senator Daylin Leach and U.S. Congressman Chaka Fattah.

Admission for this event is free.

FAMILY PHILLIES NIGHT

Date: Monday, July 8th at 7 pm
Citizens Bank Park

Join our group of 50 friends and neighbors enjoying Phillies baseball at beautiful Citizen's Bank Park with discounted tickets as we watch the home team take on the rival Washington Nationals.

Our reserved seats are in right field – prime territory to catch a Ryan Howard home run ball and to remind Jayson Werth why he misses Philadelphia.

Tickets for the game are \$25

MERION HOUSE AND GARDEN TOUR

Sunday, September 22nd from 1 – 4 pm
Locations to be announced

Led by the Lower Merion Conservancy (www.lmconservancy.org), a tour of Merion's beautiful homes and gardens is being planned for the early fall. This popular event returns to showcase the handsome and historic Merion homes and gardens for a memorable afternoon.

Ticket price to be determined.

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President's Message

By Scott Kalner

This is the centennial year for the civic association and we are celebrating the past and redoubling our efforts focused on the future that motivated Merion's community leaders to found the organization in the early part of the 20th century.

With all of the recent publicity concerning the preservation of the historic street signs in the Township, you may be aware that the initial signage was developed by the MCA. What you may not know is that these signs, which evolved to become the standard for the Township, were created with the careful design of the streetscape in Merion which outlined the construction details for the street and curb, sidewalks, landscaping, lighting and called for the burial of electrical and telephone utilities. It was this forward-thinking approach that created the distinctive look of the Merion neighborhood. This same sort of civic-minded attitude led the MCA to provide the first health department in the community as well as police and security forces for the neighborhood, all before these services were available for the Township.

The MCA played a key role in the development of the Tribute House, a

beautiful structure built to provide a community center for social and cultural events and to serve as a memorial to the soldiers who fought for the country in the Great War. In the following years, the members of the civic association have contributed their time and energy to beautifying the local train station and the Merion Botanical Garden. Most recently, members of the MCA have played important roles in the Township, serving on the Board of Commissioners, the Township Planning Commission, the Historical Commission and the Historical Architectural Review Board. Currently, several members serve on committees responsible for the drafting of the Township's comprehensive plan. While it might be nice to recount the history and rest on the laurels of the organization's past successes, neither would serve the mission of the MCA nor fulfill the goals set forth by the civic association's founders. Those individuals were dedicated to the betterment of the community and it is through their service that we enjoy the beautiful Merion neighborhood today. When I took on the responsibility as president of the MCA in its centennial year, I was humbled by the task before me, thinking of the many great community leaders that I now had to follow. Rare is the opportunity to take the reins of an organization at such an auspicious time in its history – and one so important for the neighborhood that the MCA serves. The responsibility for this task is not taken lightly

and we at the MCA are using this once in a century opportunity to build momentum for a number of initiatives:

- Provide a monthly forum for speakers to address issues that are vital to the concerns of Merion's residents. At each meeting, a topic serves as the focus for civic engagement and provides an occasion for residents to be educated by, as well as inform representatives of our government of community concerns.
- Work with local businesses and property owners, fellow civic associations, Township commissioners and planning staff to improve the identity, physical environment and economic health of the Merion/Cynwyd business district. A substantial portion of the proceeds from fund-raising events celebrating our centennial will go to support this effort.
- Promote the development of a pedestrian connection over the railroad tracks at the location of the closed automobile bridge at Rockland Avenue to knit the community together and provide safe connections for children walking to school and for bicyclists in the neighborhood.

As always, all are welcome at our monthly meetings at the Tribute House. And, please, come out to one – or more – of the exciting centennial celebration events to support your community, connect with neighbors and to help us build bridges from the past to our future. I hope to see you soon.

Commissioner's Report

By Brian Gordon

**Lower Merion Commissioner, 12th Ward,
Merion Civic Association Board Member**

A large part of a Township Commissioner's job is dealing with zoning law and applications for land development. Some Commissioners believe that private property rights are paramount, and that zoning law, whether existing or proposed, should not interfere with the desires of commercial property owners or institutions to develop and expand. Correspondingly, institutions contend that they need to light playing fields, install artificial turf, and erect large new buildings to remain competitive. Some argue that telling homeowners that they cannot tear down a 100 year old home or that they should not add vinyl capped windows and sills in a neighborhood with uniformly historic windows treatments unfairly burdens property rights.

The premise that only the owners of property or institutions who wish to expand or tear down have property rights is deeply flawed. Neighbors, who have no plans to develop or expand, have property rights too.

A home is usually the single biggest investment an individual makes. We willingly take on a 20 to 30 year mortgage in order to live in the home and the neighborhood of our choice. A house is not simply a place to eat or sleep. It is the place to live or raise a family, a place of gathering, memories, and community. Many of us spend lots of time outside of our homes. We enjoy our yards, porches and gardens. We appreciate the peace and quiet of our neighborhoods. Many of us walk and ride bicycles in our neighborhoods. We congregate and communicate with our neighbors on our streets or sidewalks. When one buys a home, one does not buy an isolated property. One buys a home in a neighborhood with a characteristic level of noise, parking, lighting, traffic and scale surrounded by

properties of a similar height and scale. When purchasing a home, one expects the elected officials to protect the stability of the neighborhood by enforcing zoning rules, stable levels of traffic, lighting and noise from surrounding institutions and developers.

Zoning law is a communal expression of rules in a democratic society.

When Commissioners change zoning rules to allow more development, the Commissioners weaken the protections of existing law and do a disservice to neighbors and infringe upon their property rights as well.

To be sure, neighbors are not always right. Sometimes neighbors over-react or ask for too many concessions. In many situations, the proposed development turns out not to be as bad as anticipated.

In all cases, Township Commissioners must listen to both sides and strive to protect the character and quality of life of our residential neighborhoods. When holes are poked in our zoning code, the Commissioners have an obligation to plug the holes and give meaning to the rule that was sidestepped by the applicant. When we hear land use applications, we need to enforce all of the zoning rules with reasonable clarity and not grant waivers where new development will infringe on the peaceful enjoyment of neighbors' homes. When considering new zoning rules to allow more development, the Commissioners duty is to listen to neighbors and protect them from the erosion of the quality of life of their neighborhoods. Residents rely on the certainty of the law to help protect the stability of their neighborhoods.

It is my pleasure to listen to my neighbors' concerns, and I will always strive to carefully balance the rights of all neighbors with the rights of developers and institutions.

Happy Spring.

Famous Merion Residents

By Michael Seiden

1st Vice President

Frank Thomson (1841-1899) President of the Pennsylvania Railroad

<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=940DEFD81530EE32A25755C0A9609C94689ED7CF>

Edward Bok (1863-1930) Editor of the Ladies Home Journal(1889-1919).

Founder of the Merion Civic Association.

Author: *The Americanization of Edward Bok* (Pulitzer Prize 1921)

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/71904/Edward-Bok>

<http://www.accuracyproject.org/cbe-Bok,Edward.html>

Mary Louise Curtis Bok (1876-1970) Wife of Edward Bok.

Founded Curtis Institute of Music

(1924).http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Louise_Curtis_Bok_Zimbalist

Eldridge R. Johnson (1867-1945) Founder of the Victor Talking Machine Company.

Donated land and funds for the Merion War Tribute House.

Philanthropist.<http://soundofthehound.com/2011/07/19/victor-lodorum-the-forgotten-man-of-music-history-eldridge-r-johnson/>

http://www.stokowski.org/Victor_Eldridge_Johnson_Acoustic_Recording.htm

Dr. Albert Barnes (1872-1951) Developed Argyrol, used to prevent infant blindness.

Collected Impressionist art, sculptures, African native art and jewelry.

Developed his own art education program, author of art theory books.

Founder of the Barnes Foundation

<http://www.redlandsfortnightly.org/papers/barnes.htm>

Joseph Lapsley Wilson (1844-1928) Created original arboretum of the Barnes Foundation

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Lapsley_Wilson

Leopold Stokowski (1882-1977) Director of the Philadelphia Orchestra (1912-1936).

Conducted the Philadelphia Orchestra in the sound track for Disney's Fantasia.(1939)

NBC Symphony Orchestra (1941-1943), New York Philharmonic (1947-1950),

Houston Symphony Orchestra (1955-1961), American Symphony Orchestra (1962-1972)

<http://www.stokowski.org/Leopold%20Stokowski%20Biography.htm>

Henry Drinker, Jr. (1880-1965) Lawyer of Drinker Biddle. Hosted the von Trapp family.

<http://www.zoominfo.com/p/Henry-Drinker/89706431>

<http://www.mainlinetoday.com/core/pagetools.php?pageid=5935&url=%2FMain-Line-Today%2FJanuary-2007%2FFRONTLINE-Retrospect%2F&mode=print>

Catherine Drinker Bowen (1897-1973) Author and historian.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catherine_Drinker_Bowen

Maria von Trapp (1905-1987)(Merion 1939-1943)

http://articles.philly.com/2002-03-17/news/25342651_1_baron-georg-maria-von-concerts

Chaim Potok (1929-2002) Author and Rabbi. *The Chosen, My Name is Asher Lev*

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/Potok.html>

<http://potok.lasierra.edu/menu.html>

From the *Merion Civic Association Eighteenth Annual Report (1931)*

Snow Removal

The Township authorities insist upon a strict compliance with the ordinance requiring the cleaning of sidewalks after each snowfall. Compliance on the part of residents will not only contribute to the comfort of pedestrians but will avoid the annoyance that follows a summons for violation of the ordinance. Your Association maintains and operates a horse-drawn plow to break paths through the snow and make its removal easier.

Membership

By Kevin Murphy

The Merion Civic Association has been the “voice of our community” for nearly 100 years and we need your support! While the payment of dues is appreciated, your active participation regarding issues that impact the Merion community is imperative. To maintain the quality of life that we enjoy and expect in Merion, the Merion Civic Association has standing committees monitoring our local police & fire departments, zoning issues, the school district, community action and more. We encourage you to come to our meetings and have your voice heard!

Please circle any Committees you wish to join. See the website for descriptions of the committees:

- Cultural & Social Programming
- Land Use, Zoning & Community Relations
- Finance
- History
- Membership
- Newsletter
- Train Station/ Post Office & Grounds
- Streets, Lights & Traffic
- Website
- MCC / SJU Ad Hoc
- Centennial

Enclosed are my/our dues for 2012-13.

- \$15.00 Individual
- \$25.00 Couples
- \$35.00 Family
- \$50.00 Business
- \$100.00 Institutional/Patron
- \$500.00 Sponsor
- Other

The MCA is a 501 (c)(3) organization.
Your dues are tax-deductible.

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

PHONE/EMAIL

Please make checks payable to MCA and mail to:

Merion Civic Association, Box 263, Merion, PA 19066

MERION CIVIC ASSOCIATION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President	Scott Kalner
1 st Vice President	Michael Seiden
2 nd Vice President	Les Greenberg
Treasurer	Bob Marmon
Secretary	Helen Guy

DIRECTORS

Ann Bagley	Renee Hill
Randy Blakeney	Scott Kalner
Dolores Browne	Harriet Lam
Bruce Eisenberg	Carol Lavoritano
James Ettelson	Bob Marmon
Scott Feuer	Kevin Murphy
Judith Flaks	Adena Potok
Tami Fratis	Frances Quinn
Brian Gordon	Dave Rutzel
Leslie Greenberg	Michael Seiden

NEWSLETTER

Michael Seiden, editor
Helen Guy, Scott Kalner

MEETING TIMES

Meets at 7:30 PM the fourth Tuesday of each month except July, August and December at the Merion Tribute House. Call 610.664.0441 to confirm time, or check website.

To address the association, please call 610.664.0441 and request to be added to the agenda. Community members are always invited to attend the meetings, contact the Association with a concern or submit articles of community interest to the newsletter.

Mail: Merion Civic Association
P.O. Box 263, Merion PA 19066
Phone: 610:664.0441
Email: merioncivic@yahoo.com
www.merioncivic.org

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Merion PA 19066

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

See www.merioncivic.org Calendar for updates and other events.

Unless noted, events at: Merion Tribute House, 625 Hazelhurst Ave
Open to the public. Please park in the lot behind the Tribute House.

Tuesday, May 17 7:00pm

Merion Civic Association Craft Fest

See first page of newsletter for details. See www.MCA100.org to make reservations

Tuesday, May 28 7:30pm

Merion Civic Association May Meeting

PA Representative Mary Jo Daly; Christian Busch, Chair of LM Historical Commission

Thursday, June 13 6:00pm

Merion Civic Association Centennial Party

Congressman Chaka Fattah, PA Senator Daylin Leach, LM Commissioner Brian Gordon

Merion Concert Band. Food samplings from local restaurants. Will be held indoors in event of rain.

Tuesday, June 25 7:30pm

Merion Civic Association June Meeting-No Meetings in July/August

Speakers to be determined.

Monday, July 8 7:00pm

Merion Civic Family Phillies Night

Citizens Bank Park. See www.MCA100.org to make reservations.

Tuesday, September 22 1:00-4:00pm

Merion Civic Association House & Garden Tour

Tuesday, September 24 7:30pm

Merion Civic Association September Meeting