

Merion

Civic Association



Telephone/Fax 610.664.0441

Email: merioncivic@yahoo.com

Merion Station, PA 19066

President's Message

By Margot Flaks

It was a seemingly endless winter, extending way into what should have been spring. But at last, the sun's rays warm and we have been treated to the most extraordinary bursts of color throughout our neighborhood. This glorious season does indeed provide a renewed sense of appreciation for all that is beautiful in this wonderful community.

Many Merion residents will be pleased to learn that new maps of Merion displaying individual properties will soon be available. For many years these maps had been updated as needed by Joe Newby, a member of the Township's staff, and distributed at our annual meeting. Unfortunately, Mr. Newby was unable to continue the work and there has been hiatus of several years. Our gratitude and thanks go to Phillip Bagley, who has spent many hours updating and computerizing the maps so we may once again distribute them to our members. Join us at the annual meeting to receive your copy.

Speaking of beauty, take a few minutes to enjoy the changing landscape along City Avenue at 63rd Street. St. Joseph's University, in conjunction with the City Avenue Special Services District, has been working to provide an attractive entrance into the City Avenue area. As of this writing there has been considerable sodding; pavements have been repaired, and a number of shrubs have been planted. In addition, new pedestrian lighting is being installed from Monument Road to 63rd Street that will offer more attractive and efficient illumination as well as greater safety.

A number of residents have inquired about the status of the Sun Oil property at One Merion Road. The two trailer-like machines currently occupying a portion of the lot are used for testing the contaminated soil. The filtering process takes a long time and not much can be done to the property until the EPA declares it safe. Some cleaning and landscaping have been done and the property's appearance is somewhat improved. Unfortunately, the trees in the planters did not survive the winter. This, we have been told, will soon be addressed.

One of our Civic Association's goals has been to find ways to bring members of the community together. We believe it is important that new residents feel at home and able to find answers to the many questions which arise when one is a newcomer. The attendance at our New Residents' Receptions has grown each year and many of the new citizens of Merion have

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Community Revitalization Grant Received by Merion-Cynwyd Business Association

Fourth Annual Celebration Planned

By Buddy Bear

In March of this year, representatives of the Merion-Cynwyd Business Association went before the Lower Merion Township Board of Commissioners to be presented a Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Community Revitalization grant for \$5,000.00 by Rep. Mike Gerber. The Association will use some of these funds for the Fourth Annual Summer Solstice event, and the rest for other tangible improvements of the neighborhood comprising Montgomery Avenue, Levering Mill Road, and Old Lancaster Road.



The Summer Solstice event will be held this year on Wednesday, June 20th. Rain date Thursday, June 21st.

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Commissioner's Report

By Brian Gordon

Please Join the Merion Civic Association

- Enclosed are my/our dues for 2007
 - \$10 Individual
 - \$15 Couples
 - \$25 Family
 - \$50 Sustaining
 - Other

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone Number _____

Email _____

Merion Civic Association is a 501(c)(3) organization. Your dues are tax-deductible. Please ask your company if they will match your donation.

Please make checks payable to **MCA** and return with this form to:
Merion Civic Association,
Merion Station, PA 19066

Streets, Lights, Traffic

For any concerns you may have, please phone Renee Hill, chairperson of the Merion Civic Association's Streets, Lights and Traffic Committee. 610-664-0441.

Please Remember to Pick Up After Your Dogs

To those residents...and there are many of you...who pick up after your dogs in our neighborhoods, **THANK YOU!** To the few of you who do not, please understand that cleaning up after your pet is the law in Merion.



Our Township has been an early leader in recycling and other environmental initiatives. Many of our land use policies from impervious surface to storm water retention already do a great deal to promote environmentalism and protect our streams. However, the reality of global warming has created an imperative to cause every governmental unit to ask "Are we doing enough?" and "Can we do a better job to reduce our carbon footprint, increase conservation and reduce pollution?" And most importantly, are we, as citizens, doing as much as we can or should to decrease energy usage, reduce emissions and protect our local environment?

As many of you are aware, the problem of global warming is very real. It threatens our planet over the long term and the health and safety of our families today. Some have linked global warming to the intensity of tropical storms and hurricanes as unusually warm temperatures in the Caribbean feed the intensity of tropical storms. During the past few summers, tropical storms have reached our area in the form of severe storms and local flooding. On a broader scale, global warming threatens millions of people who live near sea level, and threatens wildlife and biodiversity.

Recently, I challenged the Lower Merion Environmental Advisory Council and the Lower Merion Conservancy to do a survey of best environmental practices of governments and municipalities across the United States and the around the world to come up with a list of ideas designed to make our neighborhood and Township government more environmentally friendly. Their response was enthusiastic. I share this list with you, not because it is an exhaustive list, but to inspire you come up with additional ideas, share them with your children and your children's teachers in order to build an inventory of great ideas that we may all act on.

Some of the ideas of the Environmental Advisory Council are:

- Provide incentives for developers to use environmentally friendly methods, designs or materials (environmental design standards; sustainable design; energy star products) in return for expedited permit review, expedited approvals or other incentives.
- Educate residents about responsible environmental practices for their contractors - to insist on proper disposal practices, erosion and sedimentation controls, choice of materials, protecting stream buffers.
- Use bio-retention basins and/or other innovative storm-water controls in all new commercial parking areas. Rain gardens could also be used along streets or at intersections.
- Increase minimum lot size to prevent overdevelopment.
- Increase preservation area requirements for new subdivisions.
- Develop a comprehensive environmental plan for the Township.

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- Purchase some portion of the electricity used by the Township from renewable sources such as wind farms and solar.
- Generate some portion of the Township's electricity using solar panels and/or wind turbines purchased by and installed in the Township.
- Purchase hybrid vehicles for the Township vehicle fleet.
- Acquire open space and conservation easements.
- When the Township purchases new equipment, or updates or changes existing technology, it could select more environmentally friendly products.
- Provide rain barrels for use by residents for watering plants.

Some ideas of the Lower Merion Conservancy include:

- Ask all Township Departments to practice exceptional environmental stewardship in parks construction and building management to become a model for our citizenry.
- Restore natural areas managed by the Township.
- Increase recycling efforts by adding corrugated cardboard, additional plastics, wax covered milk cartons.
- Reduce the demolition of older homes which add greatly to our solid waste.
- Stop mowing parks to the edge of streams to create a buffer for chemicals and waste.
- Aggressively plant trees on public and private land.
- Create a dedicated open space fund to buy land and natural easements.

The Township staff is currently evaluating these proposals. However, the purpose of this letter is to elicit even more ideas from you to enable us and the Township to continue to be a leader in reducing energy usage, carbon emissions, solid waste, air and water pollution. The idea is to create a living document that represents an ongoing list of ideas and priorities that can be implemented a few at a time as we strive toward the development of a healthier and safer environment. Please help! If you, your children or children's teachers with the help of students find any more ideas or would like to research ideas which have been generated or help champion an idea, please contact Township staff member Andrea Campisi at acampisi@lowermerion.org, the Environmental Advisory Counsel through its chair, John Gullace at jgullace@mgkflaw.com and me at briangordon4@aol.com, 610.667.4445 (h) or 610.667.4500 (w).

Merion Civic Association Dues

The Merion Civic Association would like to thank all residents who have paid their Association dues promptly. A special thanks is extended to those residents who have seen fit to contribute in excess of the recommended amount. If you have not yet had a chance to pay your dues, please see page 2!



Planting Day A Success

By Scott Feuer

On Sunday May 6, many residents of Merion came out to the Train Station and Post Office to spruce up the grounds and plant flowers in the window boxes. Under beautifully sunny skies moms, dads, children and senior citizens all worked together to make the station and post office grounds a more beautiful place.

Thank you to all the residents who helped with this year's spring planting and station clean-up.



Frances Quinn



Bruce Eisenberg, Scott Feuer and Robert Marmor



Margot Flaks and Amy Murphy



Walking Tour of Merion to Take Place June 10th

By Margot Flaks



Update on the Barnes

By Margot Flaks

The Barnes Foundation’s administration and board stand firm in their decision to move the Foundation’s art collections to Philadelphia’s Benjamin Franklin Parkway. In late April, they released a shortlist of six architects or firms being considered to design the new building. As of this writing, members of the building committee are on the road visiting the sites of buildings designed by these competing firms.

Art lovers and critics around the country offer harsh criticism at what they consider to be a wasteful and destructive move. Christopher Hawthorne, writing in the Los Angeles Times stated it well:

What makes visiting the old Barnes so unusually satisfying, though, is not simply the depth of the collection and the way it was arranged by Albert B. Barnes, in dense rows without any identifying wall placards. It is those things in combination with the ineffable qualities that make up a sense of place: the way the worn floors creak, the way the light filters through the trees that surround the building, the experience of leaving the city and giving

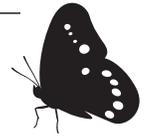
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On June 10, Rolf Charlston, under the auspices of Landmark Tours, will lead a leisurely stroll through several historically and architecturally interesting streets in Merion. The tour will begin at the Merion Train Station, inbound side (Idris and Hazlehurst), at 2:00 PM. Cost for the tour is \$10 for adults, \$8 for students. Children, under 10, accompanied by an adult are free. The tour will be held rain or shine. No reservations are necessary.

Merion was originally a community of small farms which many existing well into the 19th century. The coming of the railroads made the area much more accessible to Philadelphia business men who desired the cleaner air and open spaces of the country. As many of these men were quite prosperous, the homes they built were often lavish and imposing. A number of these residences still stand, allowing us to obtain glimpses of the past as well as the opportunity to view true architectural gems.

Rolf is an outstanding lecturer, well versed in both history and architecture. He has led tours for the Foundation for Architecture and Walk Philadelphia, Inc. and has also been a professor of English, an Academic Dean, a lecturer in art, architecture, and music, and a choral director. Many of us know and enjoy his mellifluous voice on Saturday mornings on Temple University’s WRTI.

Have You Been to the Merion Botanical Park Lately?



By Bill Hanafee

It’s spring; the weather is great; it’s a wonderful time to take a stroll outdoors! The Botanical Society of Lower Merion invites you to make that next leisurely walk in the Botanical Park next to the Merion Train Station. Spring is a delightful time to experience the wonders of nature as Dogwoods, Azaleas, Redbuds, Magnolias, Cut-leaf Maples, Rhododendron, and Viburnum reveal their colors and splendor in the Botanical Park.

Each spring the Board of the Botanical Society of Lower Merion conducts its Annual Membership Drive to raise funds for the maintenance and preservation of the Botanical Park. The generous community support enables the Botanical Society to safeguard this wonderful open green space.

At your next Merion Botanical Park meandering, you will see: New wider pathways ● New tree and shrubbery plantings ● Beautification of the azalea beds with fabric and mulch ● New markers identifying more plant specimens

To help maintain the 12-acre Botanical Park, the Botanical Society engages two gardeners for 20 hours per week during the spring and early summer months to provide general horticultural care of the Park. You will also notice that the Merion Botanical Park is “pet friendly.” The Botanical Park is open for dogs on leashes and the Township supplies disposal bag stations so that owners can easily remove doggie business. In this age of green house warming and ever-increasing development, Merion Botanical Park is the community’s safe-haven for a relaxing stroll to admire a bit of nature’s magnificence.

President's Message

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met new friends and some have expressed an interest in participating in the activities of the Civic Association. Our "Neighbor to Neighbor" series has also provided an opportunity for people to meet each other and learn about the many very interesting occupations they engage in. This is an evolving series and we hope that many of our residents will come forward and offer to talk about the practice of their professions and all the joys and the hardships they encounter along the way. The Flag Day band concert is yet another means by which our community can come together. Families are encouraged to bring a picnic supper and enjoy the evening with their children on the lovely grounds of the Merion Tribute House on Thursday, June 14th. The concert begins at 7:15 p.m. Should the weather be inclement, the concert is held indoors and still enjoyed by young and old alike. And of course there is the Annual Meeting in October. Come for a brief business meeting, be enlightened by a talk, given always by someone of interest to the community, and partake of some wonderful food and drink. It is yet another great opportunity to meet your neighbors.

We have much to enjoy in Merion, yet there are ongoing issues that will continue to merit our attention. The pressure to cram more and more residences into smaller spaces often means the destruction of proud older homes, an increase in traffic, and more parking problems. We shall continue to watch carefully requests for zoning changes. Balancing the needs of our neighboring institutions with our own desires to maintain the tranquil, residential character of our community will also continue to absorb us. Open communication, respect and consideration have served us well in the past and we hope to continue the cordial, co-operative relationships we have enjoyed thus far.

As this school year winds down, we know there will be many challenges to come. It is back to the drawing board for the new Harriton High School in the effort to reduce costs. We await the appointment of a new superintendent and business manager for the School District together with other personnel. In addition, there are new candidates for the School Board who will be sharing their visions of what our schools should be. We urge you to attend meetings, listen carefully, ask questions, and stay involved.

I wish you all a pleasant and an interesting summer.

Community Revitalization

Continued from cover

Lower Merion Police will close the block of Levering Mill Rd. from Montgomery Avenue to Bala Avenue to accommodate the merrymaking. There will be live music, games and attractions for children, booths for local merchants' wares, and local restaurants will be serving food. Those who have attended earlier Merion-Cynwyd Summer Solstice events know it as a beautiful time when neighbors gather in the early evening to chat in the most relaxed of atmospheres. It is definitely the place to be at the beginning of summer in Merion and Bala Cynwyd. We hope to see all of you there!



Update on the Barnes

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yourself over to the idiosyncrasy of Barnes' ideas about how paintings affect the eye and mind. None of that is replicable.

Later in the article he writes: The prospect of giving up the old Barnes seems especially cruel at a time when oversized, over-budgeted expansion projects have removed a good deal of the intimacy from the museum going experience in this country. It surely says something about the trajectory of the field that the most satisfying new museum spaces tend to be the smallest ones.

Lower Merion Township and Montgomery County commissioners are equally firm in their resolve to maintain the collection in Paul Cret's stately building in accordance with Albert Barnes' will. The county commissioners have invited local law firms to submit proposals to investigate legal strategies to contest the move.

Friends of the Barnes Foundation remain convinced that the move is not a "done deal." A site for the relocation of the Youth Study Center is in dispute, construction costs will continue to rise, the city has yet to provide plans for parking. The group will continue to work to rouse public opposition, enlist the support of elected representatives, and also investigate legal strategies. They strongly believe it is not too late to halt the destruction of this unique institution.





Merion

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The Merion Civic Association

Meets at 7:45 PM (7:30 PM in winter months) the fourth Tuesday of each month except December, July and August at the Merion Tribute House. (call 610.664.0441 to confirm time). 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 (c/o Merion Civic Association, Merion Station, PA 19066).

Officers and Directors of The Merion Civic Association

President	Margot Flaks
1st Vice President	Scott Feuer
2nd Vice President	Kevin Murphy
3rd Vice President	Janet Rutzel
Treasurer	Bob Levin
Secretary	Cynthia DeStefano

Ann Bagley, Randy Blakeney, John Brogan, Lita Cohen, Bruce Eisenberg, James Ettelson, Francis Ferdinand, Irene Frank, Peter Gardner, Brian Gordon, Renee Hill, Gil Karash, Harriet Lam, Laura Lavin, Robert Marmon, Martin Piltch, Frances Quinn, Jim Stevenson, and Nancy Tompkins.

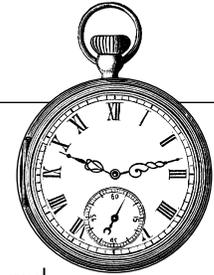
Newsletter Committee

Janet Rutzel, editor
Scott Feuer, design & layout
Cynthia DeStefano, distribution
Margot Flaks

Merion Civic Association Meetings at Merion Tribute House:

May 22, 7:45 PM
June 26, 6:00 PM
September 25, 7:45 PM
October 23, 7:45 PM

Community Calendar



May 28th, Memorial Day Holiday
Township Administration Building
Closed. All township libraries closed.
No refuse or recycling collection.

**June 10th, Walking Tour of Merion
with Rolf Charleston, 2:00 PM**
Meet at the in-bound side of the Merion Train Station. Cost for the tour is \$10 for adults, \$8 for students. Children under 10, accompanied by an adult, are free. The tour will be held rain or shine. No reservations are necessary.

**June 14th, Flag Day Band Concert,
Merion Tribute House Grounds, 7:15 PM**
Mark your calendar for the seventh annual Flag Day Concert. The concert will be held on the grounds of the Merion Tribute House. Bring a picnic supper to enjoy prior to the performance by the Merion Concert Band. The concert will be held indoors in case of inclement weather.



**June 20th, Summer
Solstice Block
Party, 5:30 PM**
Corner of
Montgomery Avenue and
Levering Mill Road. Please see article
on cover of this newsletter for details.

July 4th, Independence Day Holiday
Township Administration Building
Closed. All township libraries closed.
No refuse or recycling collection.

September 4th, Labor Day Holiday
Township Administration Building
Closed. All township libraries closed.
No refuse or recycling collection.

SAVE THE DATE:
**October 21st, Merion Civic
Association Annual Meeting
4:00 PM to 7:00 PM**
Merion Tribute House, Hazelhurst
Avenue.

**October 28th, Merion Walk II
"The Other Side of the Tracks!"
2:00 PM**