

Winter 2007

Merion

Civic Association



Telephone/Fax 610.664.0441

E-mail: merioncivic@yahoo.com

Merion Station, PA 19066

Superintendent of Lower Merion Schools to Speak at February Civic Association Meeting

By Janet Rutzel

Tuesday February 27th at 7:30 PM Dr. Jamie Savedoff, Superintendent of Lower Merion Schools, will address Merion residents as part of the regularly scheduled meeting of the Merion Civic Association at the Merion Tribute House. Dr. Savedoff will answer questions residents may have about the school district including future plans for the school district and the construction of the new high schools.

So that Dr. Savedoff will be prepared to answer all of your questions, please submit them to the Merion Civic Association, Attention: Cynthia DeStefano, at merioncivic@yahoo.com by Friday February 23rd.

This is an opportunity for every taxpayer to get answers to questions about the school district, its budget and the effect its budget may have on your taxes. Please plan to attend.

Neighbor to Neighbor:

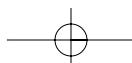
Rebecca Humphrey to Speak and Perform at Third Installment of Lecture Series

By Janet Rutzel

At 8:00 PM on **Wednesday, March 14th**, at the Merion Tribute House, Rebecca Humphrey, cellist will speak and perform at the third installment of Merion's Neighbor-to-Neighbor lecture series.

Ms. Humphrey, a Merion resident, performs with many East Coast ensembles including the Washington Bach Consort, Philomel, Brandywine Baroque and Rebel. She is also principle cellist with Tempesta di Mare. She is a founding member of Belladonna Baroque Quartet, which has toured widely in both North and South America and had their European debut in Regensburg, Germany and the Tage Alter Musik festival.

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Civic Association Welcomes New Director

By Janet Rutzel

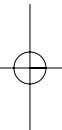


The Merion Civic Association is pleased to announce the addition of Mrs. Lauren Shay Lavin

to its Board of Directors. **Mrs. Lavin** was elected to and agreed to serve on the Board in November of last year.

Mrs. Lavin is a free-lance photographer. Her images have appeared in hundreds of publications including *The New York Times*, *The Chicago Sun-Times*, *Vanity Fair*, *People* magazine and many alumni journals. Among her clients are WLS-TV in Chicago, ABC Sports, and the Associated Press. Her portraits of authors have appeared on a number of books.

Mrs. Lavin and her husband Carl moved to Merion in 2004. They have four children.





President's Message

By Margot Flaks

Keeping the Merion Train Station Grounds Sparkling

By Scott Feuer

Every Sunday morning, even in the winter months, a small cadre of dedicated citizens gather at the Merion Train Station to clean and spruce up the station grounds. Please consider coming out, once or twice, to help them especially as the weather gets nicer. The Merion Civic Association extends its thanks to **Sylvia and Murray Lefkowitz, Phil Bagley and Gil Karash.**



On **Sunday, May 6 at 9:30 AM,** join your neighbors to keep the station sparkling. Bring gloves, rakes and clippers. Refreshments will be served.

Streets, Lights, Traffic and Potholes!

Renee Hill, chairperson of the Merion Civic Association's Streets, Lights and Traffic Committee would like to hear from you if you have any problems on your street with street lights, traffic, and now that it is winter, any potholes which need to be filled. Contact her at 610.664.4535.

Let It Snow

In the event of a snow storm, please remember to clear your sidewalks to a width of 30" within 24 hours of the end of snowfall.

After a gorgeous and extended fall it would appear that the colder winter weather has once again overtaken us. The cold and even ice and snow, however, do have some compensation. Often, the weather forces us to slow down and may even afford the opportunity for quiet contemplation and time to observe our surroundings, perhaps think about our place in the universe and what matters to us. Has anyone noticed the patterns of many of our trees' bare branches against the grey winter sky?

About seventy-five years ago two neighbors went walking through the then, sparsely settled streets of Merion, and as they walked they discussed the quality of life in their beautiful neighborhood and ways by which it could be made even better. They immediately sought the aid of Edward Bok, a resident of Highland Avenue, and editor of *"The Ladies Home Journal,"* at that time, one of the most influential magazines in the country. Bok called together twenty of his neighbors, proposed the organization of a civic association, and asked them for a contribution of \$2,000 so that a paid secretary might be engaged to attend to some of the work they might be too busy to do. The amount was promptly subscribed, and in 1913 a charter was applied for, and with some of the most prominent men in the community elected as directors, the Merion Civic Association began its existence.

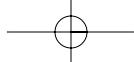
Three objectives were selected to attract community interest and membership: safety to life in the form of adequate police protection; safety to property, in the form of adequate hydrant and fire engine service; and safety to health, in the form of careful supervision of the water and milk used in the community.

Community response was immediate and membership grew. The police force was increased from one officer at night to three at night and two during the day. A fire hydrant was placed within seven hundred feet of every house, which considerably reduced insurance rates. The water supply was chemically analyzed and the milk supply carefully scrutinized. One hundred fifty new electric light posts were specially designed and pronounced the most beautiful and practical ever introduced into any community, making Merion the best-lighted area in the vicinity.

In addition, within its first few years, the Merion Civic Organization erected new cast iron road signs, installed community bulletin boards at the station to discourage the placement of notices on trees and posts, and managed to secure a new railroad station and post office, with the station grounds laid out as a garden by a landscape architect. Trees were planted along the roads, bird houses made and sold in an effort to attract birds, toll gates were eliminated from Old Lancaster and Lancaster Avenues, roads were regularly cleaned and oiled, and automobile speed limits were reduced from twenty-four miles per hour to fifteen as a protection to children. One goal, that of getting all overhead wires underground, was only partially realized.

But, so effectively had the organization done its work that it attracted the attention of Theodore Roosevelt (perhaps with a little nudge from Bok), who wrote a magazine article declaring Merion's Civic Association "to stand as a model in civic matters."

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“Friends of the Barnes” Presses On

By Margot Flaks

Undeterred, the “Friends of the Barnes Foundation” continues to press for the retention of the Foundation’s art collection in its historic home. At the January meeting of the Lower Merion Federation of Civic Organizations, following powerful presentations by several “Friends”, the Federation passed a resolution declaring “...that the collection of international art was designed to be viewed in its present facility and surroundings and that they should not be separated....”

The Montgomery County Commissioners, following the January 18th meeting where the “Friends” also offered presentations, passed a Resolution, declaring the Barnes Foundation to be “part of the fabric, character, and culture of Lower Merion Township and Montgomery County” and that moving it from Merion is not the “appropriate solution to maintaining its sustainability and supporting its long term viability.” They further asked that the Barnes Board work with the community to explore means to “increase visitation and financial opportunities.”

A small delegation of “Friends” recently met with Derek Gillman, Merion resident and Director of the Barnes Foundation. While cordial and attentive, Mr. Gilman remains committed to the collection’s relocation.

The Merion Civic Association urges that all who are opposed to the move become involved. A determined group of citizens can effect change.

For more information on how you can help, contact, www.barnesfriends.org



“...that the collection of international art was designed to be viewed in its present facility and surroundings and that they should not be separated....”

— Margot Flaks

Narberth Fire Company Serves Parts of Merion: Please Support Its Annual Fund Drive

By Janet Rutzel



Do those of you who live in certain parts of Merion wonder why the Narberth Fire Company asks you for a donation each year?

It is because for those of you who receive those donation requests, the Narberth Fire Company has been designated as the “first responder” to your address. That means that should you require the assistance of a fire company, the Narberth Fire Company is the one that will come to your aid – even though you live in Lower Merion Township.

Despite serving parts of Lower Merion Township, the Narberth Fire Company does NOT receive the same financial support from the township as the other local fire houses. It is primarily a volunteer fire company that relies heavily on its annual fund drive to support itself.

When you receive the fire company’s request for support, please give as generously as you can.

Thank you.

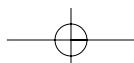
Neighbor-to-Neighbor

Continued from page cover

Prior to moving to Merion, Ms. Humphrey lived in Switzerland, where she was principle cellist with Kammerensemble Luzern and Cappricio Basel.

Her discography includes recordings for Dorian, Chandos, Ten Thousand Lakes and Loft Recordings.

“Neighbor to Neighbor” is a lecture series featuring Merion residents speaking on a variety of topics; their professions, special areas of interest and expertise, global affairs or places they know well. The series is sponsored jointly by the Merion Civic Association and the Merion Community Association.





Commissioner's Report

By Brian Gordon

"I welcome your ideas and reports of what other governments are doing throughout the country and around the world to conserve, recycle, and protect land, air and water resources."

— Brian Gordon

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.



Lower Speed Limit On Hazelhurst Avenue

Please note the new speed limit on Hazelhurst Avenue. It has been **reduced** to 25 miles per hour to ensure the safety of all residents.

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 contributed in excess of the recommended amount.



As I passed the one year mark serving as your Commissioner, I began to reflect on all that has transpired over the past year. There have been a number of successes. These include the passage of a resolution opposing the use of eminent domain in Ardmore and the passage of a strong resolution calling for the Barnes Board of Trustees to work with neighbors and forever abandon plans to move its priceless art collection from Merion.

There have been steps to improve the Merion-Cynwyd business district which include the opening of a new Township parking lot behind Govberg Jewelry and the preparation of a retail study of the district that can guide its future development. We have commissioned retail design guidelines for Ardmore which can be used throughout the Township to regulate and improve the quality of store fronts and aid commercial establishments in attracting shoppers back from the malls.

We have been successful in reexamining the need for a large cell phone tower in Gladwyne and encouraged staff to look at the feasibility of a distributed antenna system to solve coverage problems in Gladwyne and elsewhere though out the Township.

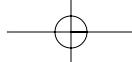
We have completed a planning process for the future of Bryn Mawr that was truly a model of inclusion. The viewpoints of the residential, business and student communities in Bryn Mawr were incorporated in a comprehensive and workable plan.

We have stalled the demolition of several historic homes in time for alternative buyers to be found who are interested and willing to preserve these pieces of our history before they are lost forever. Many thanks are owed our own **Marty Pilitch** who serves tirelessly to advocate for historic properties as **Chairman of the Lower Merion Historical Commission**.

Locally, I have been able to get the Rockland Avenue Bridge on the Township Capital Improvement Budget. The process of finding remaining funds and getting the bridge demolished and rebuilt remains far too slow. This pace is in large part due to the curious geography of the bridge which primarily serves the residents of Merion but is drawn within the confines of Narberth. As a result, Narberth largely controls the pace of the project.

With my encouragement, Saint Joseph's has dramatically improved Sullivan Hall next to Latches Lane Condos with fifty spruce trees, new curbing and removal of dumpsters.

I have enthusiastically supported the City Avenue Special Services District as a member of its Board of Directors. Its bike patrol representatives continue to make our community safer by their mere presence along the City Avenue Corridor. The District is poised to function at a whole new level with an initiative to encourage redevelopment of boxy commercial structures along City Ave in favor of mixed use (commercial and residential) structures. In concert with those efforts, the Board of Commissioners has authorized the Township to acquire the Sunoco property at Merion and City Avenue for permanent green-space.



Commissioner's Report, Continued from page 4

Of local note, the Township staff is also making improvements to the Merion Botanical Park. One project currently underway is the installation of pipes under the walking path to allow drainage of swampy areas in the Park. Have patience. I have been assured that the grass will be repaired and new stone will be applied to the paths before the project is complete. I am also pleased to have advocated successfully for lower speed limits on Hazelhurst Avenue.

Items that I count as something less than a success are often matters over which the Township Board has little or no control. These include development proposals where property rights prevail over the interests of the larger community or where there are conflicts between neighbors and institutions that do not lend themselves to win-win solutions. In one instance, a developer in Haverford plans to demolish homes in lovely residential neighborhoods to make way for a condo development which is out of scale with the surrounding neighborhood. In every land use proposal where institutions or developers come into conflict with neighbors, I ask if solutions or modifications are possible to accomplish the institutional goals while preserving the character of surrounding neighborhoods.

In a recent effort to improve the character of neighborhoods, I am also promoting changes to all commercial districts throughout the Township to improve the scale, design and pedestrian experience of new commercial construction.

Finally, I have challenged our Environmental Advisory Committee and others to develop a roster of the 100 best ideas to make our local government environmentally friendly and to reduce our collective carbon foot print. I welcome your ideas and reports of what other governments are doing throughout the country and around the world to conserve, recycle, and protect land, air and water resources. We can then prioritize those ideas and adopt those which are feasible. These steps will improve upon a Township that has already taken great strides to protect the environment through conservation and recycling.

Please write of call with your ideas, questions or concerns.

Brian Gordon • Briangordon4@aol.com • Home 610.667.4445 • Work 610.667.4500

President's Message, Continued from page 2

We no longer need to oil our roads, our police are provided by the township, the design of our street signs is now determined by the government, our telephone wires and electric cables are now mostly underground and milk, now well sanitized, comes from a market, not the milk wagon, yet there remain tasks for us to do. Is our neighborhood as beautiful as it could be? Are our schools all that we desire? Do our zoning regulations need protection or changes? Do we, as neighbors know each other and work together for common causes? Where the Merion Civic Association's efforts have been successful, it has been because of the hard work and collective efforts of many dedicated people who believed in the community and thought they could preserve what they had and make it even better. It is my hope as new president that I can follow the examples set by many who have preceded me and that I can say, at the end of my two-year term, "I helped to make a difference."

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

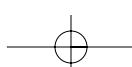
E-Mail

Your dues will help your Civic Association

- Hold public meetings with the community and members of the school board
- Work with St. Joseph's University
- Work with the Friends of the Barnes Foundation
- Monitor the condition of street lights, trees and roads
- Sponsor Historical Walking Tours
- Keep abreast of Township issues
- Sponsor various concerts and speakers
- Beautify the train station and post office grounds

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





Merion
 Civic Association
 Merion Station, PA 19066
 Email: merioncivic@yahoo.com

U.S. Postage
PAID
 Merion Station, PA
 19066
 Permit No. 28

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

Gary Adler, 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, Lauren Lavin, Robert Marmon, Martin Piltch, Frances Quinn, Jeanne Ryan, 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:**

February 27, 7:30 PM
March 27, 7:30 PM
April 24, 7:45 PM
May 22, 7:45 PM



Community Calendar

Tuesday, February 27th, 7:30 PM
Dr. Jamie Savedoff, Superintendent of Lower Merion School District

Dr. Jamie Savedoff will address the regularly scheduled meeting of the Merion Civic Association. All members of the community are encouraged to attend the meeting. Dr. Savedoff will take questions from audience members regarding any topic pertaining to the school district.

Sunday, March 4, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM
New Residents Reception

Hosted by the Directors of the Merion Civic Association. Merion Tribute House, Hazelhurst Avenue, Merion Station.

Wednesday, March 14th, 8:00 PM
Neighbor to Neighbor

The third installment in a lecture series featuring distinguished Merion Residents. Ms. Rebecca Humphrey, cellist with many prestigious East Coast ensembles, will speak and perform. Refreshments and further discussion will follow the talk. For more information call the Civic Association at 610.664.0441.

April 6th, Good Friday

There will be no refuse or recycling collection. All town Libraries will be closed.

April 21 and April 22
8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Spring Clean-up Weekends

Free disposal of refuse and recycling material at the Lower Merion Public Works Complex, 1300 Woodbine Avenue. NO HAZARDOUS WASTE. Proof of Residency required.

Sunday, May 6, 9:30 AM
Merion Train Station Spring Planting and Clean-up

Merion Train Station. Bring trowels, gardening gloves, rakes and shovels.

May 5 and May 6, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Spring Clean-up Weekends

Free disposal of refuse and recycling material at the Lower Merion Public Works Complex, 1300 Woodbine Avenue. NO HAZARDOUS WASTE. Proof of Residency required.

Monday, May 28, Memorial Day

There will be no refuse or recycling collection. All town Libraries will be closed.