

MERION CIVIC ASSOCIATION

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F A L L I S S U E 2 0 1 0

PROPOSED CITY AVENUE ZONING ORDINANCE

By George Manos, Merion Township Commissioner, 9th Ward

The proposed zoning ordinance is the most comprehensive and far-reaching piece of zoning regulation undertaken by the Township in recent memory. Appropriately, it is being exposed to the greatest degree of advance public scrutiny on recent record in the Township for a legislative initiative, with public hearings and public workshops scheduled to take place that focus on each part in an ongoing process that began over two years ago and will continue for many months.

It is not possible to explain the proposed ordinance in a single article, but there are several key factors around which all elements in the ordinance revolve that are very important to understand. They are outlined here.

Background

The study that led to the creation of the ordinance was underwritten by a \$100,000 grant from the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission ("DVRPC") see <http://www.lowermerion.org/Index.aspx?page=860> for selected documents associated with the study] and administered through the City Avenue Special Services District ("CASSD") under the leadership of CEO Terrence Foley. A huge volume of work was produced by the researchers and consultants who provided services during the process, all of it top notch. Planning services were provided by Philadelphia's nationally recognized planning firm Kise Straw & Kolodner. Forecasting and economic projections were provided by Econsult Corporation (economic impact, economic policy, real estate analysis), and traffic studies by Tavani Associates (traffic engineering and planning), to name a few.

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97TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MERION CIVIC ASSOCIATION

SUNDAY OCTOBER 24, 4:00-7:00 PM

Merion Tribute House, 625 Hazelhurst Avenue, Merion

This is the Annual Meeting for annual reports of operation and the election of Directors.

Featured Speaker: Dr. Christopher McGinley,
Superintendent of the Lower Merion School District

Light food and refreshments will be served following the meeting.

NEW LOWER MERION HS OPENS DOORS

By Helen Guy

The new Lower Merion High School opened its doors for classes after Labor Day this September. On October 17, the school district sponsored an open house to tour the light-filled library, new labs and classrooms, state-of-the-art auditorium, and more, all reflecting a decade of planning by the Lower Merion District.

The first floor is comprised of the administrative offices, classrooms, and music rooms arranged around a central courtyard, as well as the auditorium. The second floor has the physics labs and the library. The third floor has math, English and social studies classrooms, a TV studio and a greenhouse. The gym, a full commercial kitchen, the food court and cafeteria, as well as the pool, are grouped together on a separate level behind the main building.

The new high school helps assure the continued level of excellence of the Lower Merion public schools. ■

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LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BEING UPDATED

By Michael Seiden, Director and Webmaster

The township is preparing to develop an updated Comprehensive Plan, to replace the prior plan last updated in 1979. This is a requirement of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

The new "Issues Report" will serve as the program for the development of the new Comprehensive Plan. It is available on the **Lower Merion Township** website www.lowermerion.org, and additional access to the various chapters has also been made available on the **Merion Civic Association** website, www.merioncivic.org on the News Page in an article labeled **Lower Merion Comprehensive Plan**.

From the Introduction section of the Issues Report:

- The Comprehensive Plan is not a single document, but rather a central organizing structure necessary to identify, evaluate and address a wide variety of land use, transportation, housing, community facility, economic development and historic challenges facing the community. This Issues Report is the first part of a process to coordinate planning activities to meet the specific challenges of this community.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Scott Feuer



Dear Merion neighbors,

I want to start by wishing you and your family's good health and a pleasant fall.

I have been honored to assume the presidency of the Merion Civic Association (MCA) for the last two and half years. With the help of my Board of Directors, we have been able to institute many changes which have affected the Merion community.

We partnered with the Lower Merion Botanical Society, Merion Community Coalition, St. Joseph's University, and The Barnes Foundation, among other groups, to achieve mutual goals of enriching life in Merion.

We developed the Merion Civic Association web site, which contains information about the community, calendar of events, photos and additional links. Please check it out. www.merioncivic.org

In addition, in the spring we sponsored a House & Garden Tour with the Lower Merion Conservancy. This was a huge success. Our Neighbor-to-Neighbor lecture series, now in its third year, brought out speakers from the Merion community, including Glen Umberger, who gave a very informative presentation about the architecture of City Hall in Philadelphia, and Jay Albrecht of John Albrecht Nurseries who enlightened us about the history of gardening.

It has been a pleasure to see how the community has taken an interest in all of these various areas. **Getting involved in the Merion Civic Association is really a way of making a difference in our community.**

I invite you to come out to our Annual Meeting on October 24th from 4:00-7:00 PM to meet our MCA Directors, mingle with your neighbors and hear a presentation from our school superintendent, Dr. Christopher McGinley.

I look forward to seeing you in October. ■



PROPOSED NON-DISCRIMINATION ORDINANCE FOR SEXUAL ORIENTATION

By Brian Gordon, Lower Merion Township Commissioner, 12th Ward
and MCA Director



The Lower Merion Township Commissioners are considering an ordinance to protect people from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in housing, employment and public accommodation. The following is an overview of the ordinance and the context in which it is being considered.

About every hundred years our region, and sometimes Lower Merion itself, becomes a place where the principle of equality under law and non-discrimination is significantly advanced. Over three hundred years ago in 1682, William Penn made Lower Merion a place of refuge for Welsh Quakers, who were given a place to worship in freedom and without fear of persecution. While other religions recognized the notion of divinity within each person, Quakers exalted the principal that each person had part of god within them. In recognizing this quality of the human spirit, Quakers made Pennsylvania a place of refuge for Catholics, Jews, and people of every religion.

In 1776 Thomas Jefferson, perhaps inspired by this notion, drafted the Declaration of Independence which formally recognized that “. . . all men are created equal,” and that “. . . they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” The purpose of government, Jefferson continued, was to “secure these rights.”

As a site of the Underground Railroad, Lower Merion again was a place where civil rights were expanded. Members of our community defied run-away-slave laws by creating safe houses for fleeing slaves. Following the Civil War, the 14th Amendment was enacted to nullify laws which openly discriminated against freed slaves. The 14th Amendment declared that, “No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of the citizens of the United States . . . nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”

There remained a gap in American law until the 1960’s in which private acts of discrimination in commerce were openly permitted. This gap in the law was closed with the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act which prohibited discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodation. Hotels, restaurants and even cemeteries were no longer permitted to discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color or national origin.

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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- The Issues Report is the first step towards developing a new Comprehensive Plan. It explains the consequences of recent growth and redevelopment in the Township and outlines the specific program for the various elements of the plan.
- The issues identified within this report serve as the program for the development of a series of coordinated, comprehensive elements or action plans, which when completed over the next several years will result in a Comprehensive Plan.

The Issues Report was prepared by the Planning Staff of Lower Merion Township led by Christopher Leswing. It will be reviewed by the Planning Commission (appointed by the LM Board of Commissioners).

The public needs to voice their opinions, concerns and suggestions regarding the plan in the public hearings. There will be a series of workshops conducted this fall on various aspects of the Issues Report.

Since the Issues Report has 398 pages, each workshop will address only a part of the report. Note that this new iteration was started in 2007, and as the report states, will continue for the next several years. ■

BARNES FOUNDATION LAUNCHES ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

By Deborah Satya Starr



During this exciting time for the Barnes Foundation, as it prepares to expand access to its collections and educational offerings both in Merion and at its new Parkway facility scheduled to open in 2012, the Barnes is in the process of launching a new Alumni Association.

The Alumni Planning Committee, made up of former teachers and students, has been working for months to develop an organization for former students in the Barnes's Art and Arboretum programs who wish to renew old friendships and enjoy their unique association with the Barnes education programs. A celebratory kickoff Alumni Reunion Weekend was held the first weekend in October. An ongoing schedule of events, trips and talks that only the Barnes could offer including private garden tours, presentations and opportunities to volunteer are being planned for alumni to support their continued interactions, and to renew the intimate bonds they developed with the Barnes through years of small classes and shared experiences.

Interested former students who have not received a Save-the-Date notice for the fall event are urged to send their contact information — email and street address and years of class attendance — to Mark Mills, mmills@barnesfoundation.org. ■

LOWER MERION & NARBERTH PUBLIC ACCESS TELEVISION

By Irene McNeil

The Merion Civic Association has produced several television announcements and programs with the help of the community channel known as Lower Merion & Narberth Public Access Television (PATV). The Public Access channel is now in its 4th year of operation. It is designed for and by the residents themselves to have their own voice represented, while the School District and Township channels are designed for and by both authorities to address residents about their policies and functions.

Under federal policy, Public Access is one of three non-commercial television channels known under the acronym "PEG." The P stands for Public Access and is hosted by Lower Merion and Narberth residents on Comcast 99 and Verizon 34. The E stands for Education Access and is hosted by Lower Merion School District on Comcast 6 and Verizon 36. The G stands for Government Access and is hosted by Lower Merion Township on Comcast 7 and Verizon 37. The Township and School District channels were activated decades ago while the Public Access channel was activated more recently in September 2006. Here's a look 'behind-the-curtain' in the hope that this article will help explain the modalities of activating and managing the three PEG channels.

PEG channels are activated and funded under the provisions of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Cable operators (including FIOS) are obligated to activate the PEG channels at the request of the municipality and to fund the PEG channels with the Franchise Fee (for PEG salaries and operations) and with the PEG Grant (for PEG capital costs). However, when the Cable/FIOS companies give funds, in reality it's the Cable/FIOS subscribers who are the funders because they are the ones providing the money to the Cable/FIOS companies for them to give.

If you are a Cable/FIOS subscriber, look at your monthly statement and you'll find the "Franchise Fee", which is passed on to the Township as the local Cable Franchise Authority. The Franchise Fee is calculated at 5% of the Cable operators' gross revenue. Cable/FIOS revenue has grown steadily and the Township 2010 budgeted Franchise Fee revenue is estimated at \$1.053 million. In addition to the Franchise Fee, cable companies give a PEG Grant that is 3% of gross revenue after the 5% Franchise Fee is deducted. The PEG Grant is not listed separately as a line item on your statement and is included within the overall cable charges.

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LOWER MERION & NARBERTH PUBLIC ACCESS TELEVISION

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The FCC gives authority to the municipal government for the distribution of the Franchise Fee and the PEG Grant to the three PEG channels. There is an on-going conversation between the PATV organization and the Township for the purpose of recognizing the community channel as an equal voice and partner in the PEG system based on federal policy and the practices of other municipalities. In addition, PATV reaches out for funding to potential corporate and individual sponsors.



Since the activation of Public Access in 2006, residents are learning how to use PATV equipment to videotape neighborhood events and also how to use PATV's home-office studio to produce announcements and interviews. In addition to resident use, over 200 local non-profits use Public Access to give information about their activities. Until more funds can be secured for the future of Public Access, PATV's volunteer President and CEO manages the day-to-day operations out of her home office, with the help of PATV's Board of Directors and Advisory Committee as well as community volunteers. Once a week, she goes to Comcast, near the corner of Levering Mill Rd. and Belmont Avenue in Bala Cynwyd, to upload new programs to the automated replay system that is connected to the Comcast/Verizon cable feed.

To learn more about how you can use Public Access on Comcast 99 and Verizon 34, visit www.LowerMerionandNarberth.TV. If you want to read more about the start-up of Public Access, click on the top menu button "About Your Public Access" and scroll to "PATV: The Story." For the list of local producers and their respective programs, click on the menu button "TV Schedule & Programs" and scroll to "Producers' Club." To view the current program schedule, click on the "TV Schedule" button located under the TV screen graphic. If you are interested in sponsoring, volunteering or learning how to use your community television channel, email Irene McNeil at glenneil@comcast.net or call 610.642.0499.

Irene McNeil, Full-Time Volunteer: Founder, President & CEO Lower Merion & Narberth Public Access Television (PATV) Comcast 99 and Verizon 34. ■

MCA'S WEBSITE — FOR COMMUNITY INFORMATION

By Michael Seiden, Director

The Merion Civic Association has a website used to explain its organization, mission and history, and to keep you informed of matters and events of interest to local residents. The website also includes links to local and neighboring organizations and schools, as well as government contact points up to the national level. The Calendar gives notice of community and Township events that affect us. The News section contains more explanations for ongoing news issues, including references to *Main Line Times* articles and documents from the Lower Merion Township or other websites.

The Webmaster, Michael Seiden, requests help from the community to identify events of public interest, and any other suggestions for improvements to the website. Send email to MCAWebmaster@gmail.com. ■



**STREETS, LIGHTS,
TRAFFIC & POTHOLES!**

By Renee Hill, Director

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 fall/winter, any potholes which need to be filled. Contact her via the Civic Association at 610.664.0441 ■

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO PICK UP
AFTER YOUR DOGS AND DISPOSE
OF THE WASTE APPROPRIATELY**

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. In addition, please dispose of your dog’s waste at your home.



A number of people throw dog waste in the trash cans at the Train Station which makes for a pungent wait for trains, especially in the summer months. ■

**NEW MERION ROAD SIDEWALK
[1921, Eighth Year Book]**

A Township ordinance was introduced and passed calling for the laying of a new sidewalk on the south side of Merion Road, from Sycamore Avenue to Bowman Avenue. ■

CITY AVENUE ZONING

Continued from page 1

This comprises an outstanding body of work, it should not be taken lightly, and anyone who is serious about understanding the zoning proposal and the process that led to it should read this material.

Ordinance as a development driver

Many residents seem to believe that the objective of the ordinance is to create development. That is absolutely not the case. Development will occur, with or without the rezoning (more about that later). The reason for rezoning is to promote appropriate development, because without the new zoning, development must follow the direction it has been taking — a direction that, studies show, is neither necessarily appropriate nor in the best long-term interests of the Township and particularly of the Merion and Bala Cynwyd neighborhoods.

Ordinance as a traffic generator

While it is true that additional traffic will be generated by future development, since future development will take place one way or another, it is inevitable that — barring a major cultural shift — additional traffic will be generated anyway. The proposed new zoning does nothing to exacerbate that. To the contrary, it is the only process currently in place that actually attempts to do something about it, by way of the creation of the Transportation Service Area (the “TSA”), and that is only made possible by the proposed rezoning initiative. The TSA process develops measures that are intended to reduce bottlenecks, minimize chances for gridlock, and promote smooth traffic flow as future development takes place. It makes it possible to levy a fee on developments within the TSA district that help pay for the necessary traffic-related improvements. It is the only mechanism that the Township can employ to achieve that end — otherwise the Township would have to pay the cost of all improvements not funded by other governmental agencies.

Things should just be left as they are

This is a popular view. This is the way things are: the Adams Mark Hotel was torn down and a Target retail center was built in its place. Most portions of the former Presbyterian Home for the Aged were torn down and replaced by the hulking Mansion at Bala. A college dormitory with parking on the first floor under the building, adjacent to the sidewalk, was built at City Avenue and 54th Street. A 62-unit condominium was approved for an open site on Union Avenue (this is actually a positive

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CITY AVENUE ZONING

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development). 580 new apartment units are proposed for a site that was formerly an industrial site at the foot of Righters Ferry Road. Over 200 new apartment units are proposed for a site on Rock Hill Road. A drive-through bank and a one-story retail building of 9,000 square feet is proposed for a shopping center on City Avenue. A drive-through fast food facility is proposed for the former Lukoil site at City Avenue and Conshohocken State Road. All these new and proposed developments are either already built or applied for under existing zoning codes.

This annihilates the belief that "there is no room for development" and discouragingly forecasts what will continue to happen if "things (meaning zoning codes) stay as they are." Our residential neighborhoods are not immune to the effect of current development schemes. We may not think of it in these terms, but they are in fact subservient to them. As the quality and appropriateness of development declines, so will the value of our residential properties. They cannot, in the long term, withstand the inevitable encroachment of the values inherent in the development taking place around them.

The best, and possibly only, way to reverse this is to reinvent the codes that inexorably lead to it. That is the driving force behind the rezoning initiative. By introducing measures that permit additional commercial activity where it can be absorbed without harming our residential neighborhoods, that enhance the physical environment, that move development away from dependence exclusively on cars, and that encourage the creation of environments that are vibrant and attractive, rezoning can arrest the decline and guide development in a more appropriate and less corrosive direction. With appropriate development standards can come high quality tenants, high quality workers and the attendant economic, functional and social diversity that is so crucial to maintaining the vitality that in turn is so important to our region. This once began to happen along "the golden mile." Now the gold has begun to lose its luster. It is time to start polishing it up again, so that we residents can all enjoy the values that our residential neighborhoods possess and maintain our quality of life.

Please feel free to contact me for a deeper look into the details of the proposed ordinance as I would be happy to meet with you either individually or as a group to discuss it. ■

THE ROCKLAND ROAD BRIDGE [1936, Twenty-third Annual Report]

Your Directors have been endeavoring for several years to eliminate the dangerous condition on Rockland Road Bridge; it is gratifying to report that through the co-operation of the Township Commissioners, the Borough of Narberth Council, and Officials of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, plans for the improvement of Rockland Road Bridge are progressing rapidly. ■

POSTAL SERVICE [1927, Fourteenth Year Book]

The residents of Merion have enjoyed the privilege of free delivery of mail for a year. With few exceptions they have availed themselves of this service and are receiving two deliveries a day. Although the sale of postage stamps at Merion Post Office has met the requirements of the Department, your directors would remind you of the necessity of giving to Merion the full measure of business which properly belongs to it in order that this valuable service may be maintained. ■

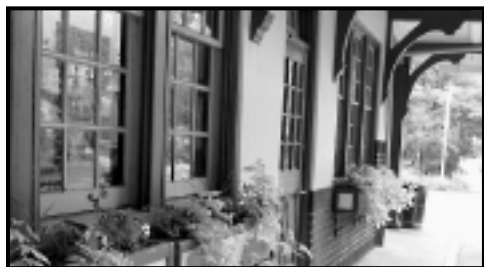
MERION TRAIN STATION NOMINATED FOR GREENING AWARD

By Carol Lavoritano, Director

Community gardening excitement! The Merion Train Station was nominated for a Community Greening Award from the Philadelphia Horticultural Society (PHS). The Community Greening Award celebrates public green spaces in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware. The annual award is a joint project of the PHS and Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, a nonprofit that promotes and protects Pennsylvania's natural and community environments. It recognizes those who have made a difference by planting and maintaining quality green spaces that are open to the public.

After notification of the competition, Scott Feuer, Sylvia Lefkowitz, and Helen Guy made a valiant attempt to clean up our station garden spaces, which were pretty fried after the hot, dry summer we've had. They did a great job trimming away dead growth from the flower boxes and the flower beds. For more information, go to: <http://www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org/events/subgreen-winners.html>

Although we did not win the award, it is the creativity and community spirit of our neighbors, as well as the pleasure of gardening, that is the real fun ■



FIRE COMPANY SERVICE IN MERION

By Kevin Murphy, Director

I have been fortunate to serve on the Board of both the Ardmore and Narberth Fire Companies for the past seven and ten years, respectively, and have seen first hand the dedication that our local firefighters have to the community. These men and women are volunteers: they are not running into burning buildings or assisting others to achieve personal recognition or for the money. The firefighters work as a team and there is a bond/brotherhood among the crew that is unlike any other workplace. They spend a significant amount of time away from their families devoting themselves to the safety and wellbeing of others. These emergency responders are highly trained and extremely professional. The typical response time for the firefighters is within three minutes of receiving the call.

What does that mean to us in Lower Merion Township? First, our homeowner's insurance is impacted by the rating of our fire service. Lower Merion Fire Department has consistently achieved high scores for their response within our community. In addition, the volunteer system saves the taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars annually compared to a "round the clock" paid system. The men and women on the trucks are the reason Lower Merion's fire companies are a success.

A well run Fire Company is a critical aspect of its success and the Chiefs of the Lower Merion Fire Department deserve kudos. In particular, the Chiefs at Narberth and Union Fire Companies that serve Merion.

- **Chief Bill Henderson**, a resident of Narberth with family roots in the fire service including his father, serves as President of Narberth Fire Company Board. Bill is a parent, husband, coach, and civic-minded individual. Bill is concerned about the safety and well being of Narberth and "Near" berth residents as he strives to set standards for assembly uses and public places throughout the Borough. In 2009, Narberth responded to 228 alarms.
- **Chief Jim Hornung** is a resident of Bala Cynwyd and also has family roots in the fire service. Jim's father, Carl, has been serving the community for decades at Union Fire Company and Jim's wife, son and daughter, are all involved in some aspect of the Lower Merion Fire Service. As an electrician, Jim integrates his career skills with firefighting to promote safety among the firefighters and the township residents. In 2009, Union responded to 277 fire calls.

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PROPOSED NON-DISCRIMINATION

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Non-discrimination against women was cynically added to the legislation at the last minute as a means to defeat it, but the law passed anyway!

The circle of who is afforded the equal protection of the law is poised to expand once again — this time to protect people from discrimination based on sexual orientation. The reason that the Township Commissioners are considering this law at this time is that there remains a gap in our anti-discrimination laws. Presently there is NO protection under Pennsylvania or federal law from discrimination based on sexual orientation. Moreover, the politics at the state and federal level are such that protection from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation will not occur any time soon.

There is an anomaly, however, where local municipalities in Pennsylvania are empowered to prohibit such discrimination. Seventeen other municipalities in Pennsylvania, including Philadelphia, Reading, and Swarthmore have passed such laws.

A few months ago, a resident of Lower Merion organized a group called Equality Lower Merion and asked the Commissioners to take up this issue. In July, the Board of Commissioners authorized the Township Solicitor to look at the anti-discrimination codes of other municipalities and draft the best possible statute for this purpose. Several choices in drafting the ordinance must be considered. Should we follow the lead of Swarthmore and enact an ordinance which incorporates large sections of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, or should we enact a stand alone document which could be read without reference to other legislation? Should there be a mandatory mediation process? Experience has shown that a good mediator can often redress acts of discrimination with dialogue and understanding and avoid years of litigation. Should we create a volunteer Human Relations Commission to hear complaints as a required step before one may file a claim in court? This provision is significant because a law without an affordable enforcement mechanism diminishes its effectiveness. The experience of other municipalities has been that formal charges of discrimination are rare, but having the law on the books provides a sense of security to those within its protection.

If we pass a non-discrimination ordinance history will be made. This time instead of Montgomery or Selma, Alabama, or San Francisco being the site of the expansion of equality under law, Lower Merion will be the place where civil rights is significantly advanced. ■

FIRE COMPANY SERVICE IN MERION

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The safety of our area depends greatly on the firefighters who risk their lives to benefit others. The fire companies of Lower Merion are always looking to recruit individuals willing to do the same. While monetary donations are always welcome, there is always a need for volunteers. Any resident interested in volunteering or any questions or concerns regarding our local fire service can be sent to kmurphy@merionfireco.org. ■

MERION STATION [1927, Fourteenth Year Book]

To retain for the residents of Merion the privilege of parking at Merion Station, the Pennsylvania Railroad Company at the solicitation of your directors provided parking space on both the North and South sides of the railroad, to relieve the automobile congestion at train time.

The new waiting room, in which a public telephone has been installed and the extension of the train shed on the North side of the railroad have contributed greatly to the convenience and comfort of west bound passengers, especially in unfavorable weather.



Gallery of the Barnes Foundation, 1925. Photograph by Walter H. Evans. Barnes Foundation Archives.



Terrace above the perennial garden, circa 1930s-40s, looking much as it does today. Unidentified photographer. Barnes Foundation Archives.



The 1924 Lord & Burnham greenhouse, and experimental gardens where the current parking lot is located, 1933. Photograph by Nicholas Valle. Barnes Foundation Archives.

HISTORY OF THE BARNES FOUNDATION ARBORETUM

By Katy Rawdon, Archivist and Librarian, the Barnes Foundation

The arboretum, now part of the Barnes Foundation, was created by Captain Joseph Lapsley Wilson (1844-1928). Captain Wilson was a Civil War veteran who moved from Philadelphia to Merion in 1880, and established an arboretum on his property with over two hundred specimens of trees. A number of these are still present, including the Japanese raisin tree and the Japanese cedar in the “Wilson area” in front of the Gallery.

Dr. Albert C. Barnes who in 1905 built his own house, “Lauraston,” just down the road from Captain Wilson’s — purchased Wilson’s property in 1922 and constructed new buildings to house his art collection and his recently chartered educational institution, the Barnes Foundation. The sale agreement between Wilson and Barnes included the stipulation that Barnes would “conserve, increase and improve the arboretum already established upon the said tract of ground.”

It is not widely known that Dr. Barnes also built many of the other houses that line North Latch’s Lane, as well as Lapsley Lane, as part of his efforts to develop and preserve the Latch’s Lane neighborhood. As he told Captain Wilson in 1922, Barnes’s “sole object in wishing to obtain possession of these properties is to maintain the fine character of the land which you have spent your life developing and to prevent real estate speculators or politicians from defeating your wish to keep your property intact in its present state of beauty.”

As part of the Barnes Foundation, Wilson’s arboretum was expanded and plants were gathered from different sources within and outside the country, with a striking diversity of species and varieties. Although the Arboretum School did not begin giving classes until 1940, the living collection, like the art gallery, was envisioned from the start as part of the Foundation’s experiment in education.

While Dr. and Mrs. Barnes were both intensely involved with the development of the arboretum, horticulture was more Laura Barnes’s passion than her husband’s. Laura Leggett Barnes was described by her colleague (and Director of the Arboretum from 1966-79), Dr. John M. Fogg, as “only a little over five feet tall, weighed about seventy-eight pounds soaking wet ... She had a marvelous sense of humor, ... a wonderful smile, wonderful piercing blue eyes, and just a magnetic personality.” She was well-respected in the field of horticulture, receiving the Schaffer Memorial Medal from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society in 1948, and an honorary doctorate of horticultural science by Saint Joseph’s University in 1957.

HISTORY OF THE BARNES FOUNDATION ARBORETUM

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The arboretum was expanded, changed, and redesigned over time by many noteworthy horticulturalists and landscape architects. In 1934, Dr. and Mrs. Barnes commissioned a formal garden plan from landscape architect Frank Andrew Schrepfer, University of Pennsylvania professor of Landscape Architecture. Schrepfer's work included the rose garden and the Wisteria arbor. Frank Schrepfer also taught the first horticulture course held at the Foundation, offered from 1934-35. In 1940, with the assistance of Dr. Fogg, Laura Barnes established the Arboretum School. Instructors included Laura Barnes and Dr. Fogg, as well as Frederick W. G. Peck.

As is the nature of all living collections, the arboretum has continued to evolve and change over the years. One constant, however, is the Arboretum School, which has offered its educational program in horticulture continuously from 1940 through the present day. During the 2009-10 school year, thirty-four students participated in the school, with thirteen graduating from the three-year program this past May.



Laura L. Barnes in the New Jersey Pine Barrens, 1956. Unidentified photographer. Barnes Foundation Archives.

MERION CIVIC ASSOCIATION

"To be nation right and state right we must first be community right."

—EDWARD BOK/Founder, 1913

97 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE MERION AREA COMMUNITY 1913-2010

PLEASE JOIN THE MERION CIVIC ASSOCIATION. WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT. WE'RE THERE FOR YOU!

Enclosed are my/our dues for 2010:

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

Name _____

Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

Phone Number / Email _____

Please make checks payable to MCA and return with this form to: Merion Civic Association, PO Box 263, Merion, PA 19066

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



MERION CIVIC ASSOCIATION

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Merion Station, PA
19066
Permit No. 86

THE MERION CIVIC ASSOCIATION

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1st Vice President	Kevin Murphy
2nd Vice President	Renee Hill
Treasurer	Bob Marmon
Secretary	Helen Guy

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Helen Guy, Michael Seiden

MEETING TIMES

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.

Send to: Merion Civic Association
PO Box 263, Merion, PA 19066
P 610.664.0441
E mca.secy@merioncivic.org
www.merioncivic.org

COMMUNITY CALENDAR



SUNDAY OCTOBER 17, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

Merion Civic Association (MCA) Fall Cleanup
Merion Train Station, inbound side (Ticket Office)
Bring clippers, loppers, other garden tools, and gloves.
Open to the public. Refreshments provided.

SUNDAY OCTOBER 24, 4:00-7:00 PM • MCA ANNUAL MEETING

Merion Tribute House, 625 Hazelhurst Avenue, Merion
This is the Annual Meeting for annual reports of operation and the election of Directors.
Featured Speaker: Dr. Christopher McGinley, Superintendent of the Lower Merion School District. Light food and refreshments will be served following the meeting.

TUESDAY OCTOBER 26, 6:30 PM • MCA HISTORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Merion Tribute House, 625 Hazelhurst Avenue, Merion • Open to the public.

TUESDAY OCTOBER 26, 7:45 PM • MCA OCTOBER BOARD MEETING

Merion Tribute House, 625 Hazelhurst Avenue, Merion • Open to the public.

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 23, 7:45 PM • MCA NOVEMBER BOARD MEETING

Merion Tribute House, 625 Hazelhurst Avenue, Merion • Open to the public.

Go to www.merioncivic.org for the Community Calendar, which includes information on Lower Merion Township activities and other important dates.