



## Message From The President:

## The Cynwyd Train Station Is Back On Track

I am delighted to report that the stabilization of this historic structure has begun in earnest. A collaboration is in progress among SEPTA, Montgomery County, the Township of Lower Merion, The Lower Merion Historical Society, JECB Construction, Broadlands Financial Group, Kaplan Stewart Attorneys at Law, The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd, and many other volunteers. The purpose is to restore the 1886 Cynwyd Train Station to active use as a multi-purpose facility and trail-head for the Cynwyd Trail. A brief synopsis and timeline of events is outlined below.

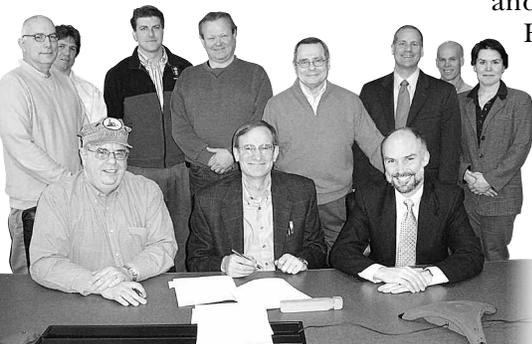
Restoration Grant Funding for *Phase One* of the project has been completed. In late October 2007, the Montgomery County Commissioners authorized \$225,000 for improvements to the Cynwyd Station. Earlier this year, the Township of Lower Merion Commissioners approved a matching grant for \$225,000.

In November 2007, the lease agreement between SEPTA and the Township for the Cynwyd Station gave lessee responsibilities to the Township. The final piece of the transaction took place in December 2007 when the Township



The Cynwyd Train Station as it looks today. View is of the west side facing Conshohocken State Road

and The Lower Merion Historical Society signed the paperwork sub-leasing the Cynwyd Station to the Historical Society.



Lower Merion Township and Historical Society representatives signing the sub-lease agreement for the Cynwyd Train Station. Front Row: Jerry Francis, Doug Cleland, Bruce D. Reed. Back Row: Ken Brier, Chris Leswing, Brian Fortay, Jim Easter, Leon Levine, George Broseman, Bob Duncan, and Joanne Murray.

Having the funding and the lease in place, the Historical Society began a two year *Three Phase* revitalization of the station. In January 2008, we began the initial construction work of reviving this dilapidated building. *Phase One*, stabilization of the building, started with the demolition and clean-out of the interior walls and debris. In early March, the Society was issued a permit to begin work to rebuild the interior structure. Because of water intrusion, fire damage and termite infestation, this will require the removal and replacement of rafters and the first and second floor joist beams and flooring. Where possible, we will salvage and re-install the

lumber, but if some of the materials are not re-usable, we will replace them with in-kind, full-cut lumber. In the fall, we will move on to the repair and stabilization of the exterior walls, the roof, and the addition of a dormer on the west side.

In 2009, we will begin *Phase Two* which will involve leasehold improvements performed by a tenant(s). Also, *Phase Three* will re-introduce the ornamentation features on the outside of the building.

The next two stories will give you an update on the Cynwyd Trail, and the research in progress of discovering our lost history along this transportation corridor.

Jerry Francis

## The Cynwyd Trail

This winter sure has been a busy time for the Cynwyd Trail since SEPTA granted the Township an easement to convert the unused rail corridor into a multiuse recreational trail last fall.

In February 2008, the Township received a recommendation from the Montgomery County Open Space Board to the

Montgomery County Commissioners to purchase the 6.5 acre Spaventa switchback, which will extend the trail one-half a mile to the intersection of Belmont Avenue and Rock Hill Road. The Township is still negotiating with Westminster Cemetery to purchase approximately 9 acres for additional recreational space along the trail.



Early view of the Barmouth Train Station that was located along the Cynwyd Trail. It was abandoned and is now demolished.

Later this spring the Township will be soliciting proposals from landscape architects to work with the community to design the Cynwyd Trail. It is anticipated that the design process will wrap up sometime over the winter and that formal trail construction can begin by next spring.

Also, this spring SEPTA has indicated that they will be removing the remaining tracks and ties from Cynwyd Station to Barmouth Station. This will effectively make the trail walkable from the Cynwyd Station to the Manayunk Viaduct Bridge. There have even been positive conversations between Lower Merion and SEPTA about extending the trail over the Viaduct.



Early view of the West Laurel Hill Train Station that was located along the Cynwyd Trail. It was abandoned and is now demolished.

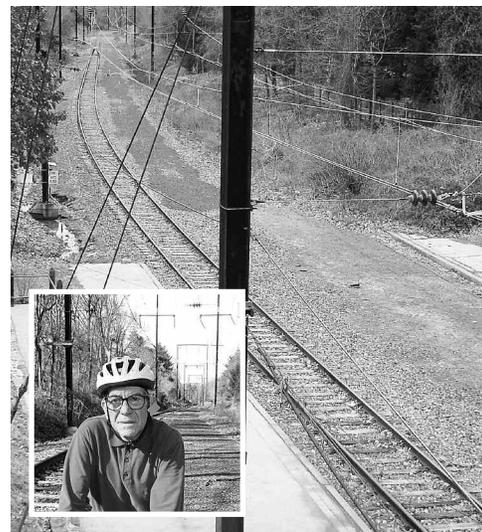
The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd is working with the Township to develop a non-profit, *Friends of the Cynwyd Trail*, to help coordinate volunteer clean ups and fundraise for additional improvements.

As you can see there is a lot going on. As the weather warms, we will be scheduling a few more walks. See you on the trail.  
Christopher Leswing, PP, AICP  
Assistant Director, Building and Planning,  
Planning Supervisor  
Lower Merion Township

## Cynwyd Trail Historical Research

We are preparing for the Cynwyd Trail and the River Trail by researching the area along the Schuylkill River. We've talked to old time residents, been to the Free Library of Philadelphia and the Lower Merion libraries and mined the resources here at the Historical Society. We have put Google through its paces, finding drawings of the mill buildings along the river, an unknown railroad, even borrowing photographs. Research is in progress and in future issues we will share with you what we have learned. For example, we are discovering the history of Vine Creek...more later. All this to produce informative signs for the historic sites along the trails. Exercising your mind will be as much fun as exercising your legs!

— Max Buten



View from the Cynwyd Train Station looking down the trail towards the Manayunk Viaduct Bridge. Max Buten (inset), out and about, on his bike researching the Cynwyd Trail.

### How much do you know about Lower Merion?

1. Three companies, each the largest (one at a time) company in the world, had substantial operations in Lower Merion next to each other. What were they?
2. What was the original roofing material for the Cynwyd station?
3. Have you ridden the Pencil & Philadelphia Railroad – or walked it?
4. Where were the boxing matches? *Hint: on Rudolph's Row, but where's that?*

Answers to these questions are found on the back page.

## Annual Meeting and Election

Sunday, April 6, 2008 from 1:00 to 2:00pm  
at the Lower Merion Academy

This year's Annual Meeting will be **BEFORE** the *Open House*. There will be two items on the Annual Meeting agenda: *Report from the President* and *the Election of Directors*. After the Annual Meeting, we will join the public for our *Open House* that is scheduled from 2:00 to 4:00pm.

The Lower Merion Historical Society Report from the Nominating Committee, Ted Goldsborough, Chairperson

**The Committee Nominates the Following Directors For a Three-Year Term to Constitute the Class of 2011**

Andrew Amsterdam, Denise H. Francis, Bruce D. Reed

**To Fill the Unexpired Two-Year Term of S. Hamill Horne, the Committee Nominates the Following Director**

Max Buten

*Under the Society's By-Laws, additional nominations shall be accepted from the floor during The Annual Meeting (Article IV, 3)*

## What a Staggering Gift

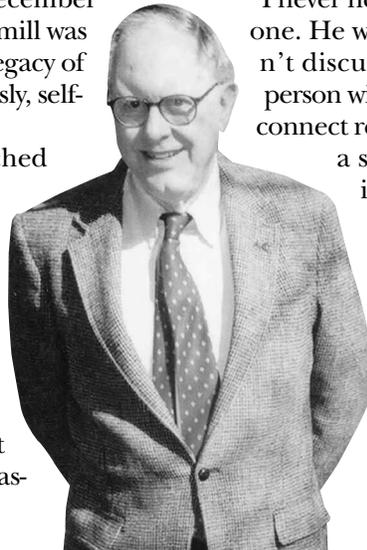
Smith Hamill Horne was born in Bryn Mawr, PA on August 7, 1929, graduated from Episcopal Academy, and the University of Pennsylvania. He received a Master of Social Science degree from Bryn Mawr College. As a child he attended Camp Choconut in upstate Pennsylvania where he learned to love nature and served as a counselor and later, for 25 years, as Camp Director.

Hamill's passions included genealogy, local history, culture and civic associations. He served on several boards, including The Lower Merion Historical Society, the Gladwyne Civic Association, the Gladwyne Free Library, the Merion Square Scout House and the Riverbend Environmental Center. His research and writing projects often merged with the genealogy and history. He compiled and annotated the 19th century diaries of his ancestor, J. Warner Erwin and compiled a burial database of Lower Merion Burial Grounds for the Historical Society's website, including St. Christopher's Church, Church of the Redeemer, Gladwyne United Methodist Church, International Order of Odd Fellows, and the Llewellyn Family Cemetery located in Gladwyne.

After a standing room only memorial on December 1, 2007 at Old St. David's Church in Wayne, Hamill was buried alongside his parents. He left behind a legacy of worthy causes to which he contributed generously, selflessly and often anonymously.

Recently the Historical Society was approached by the Trustee of *The Smith Hamill Horne Charitable Trust* and notified that the Society was designated as one of the Beneficiaries of Hamill's Trust in the amount of \$165,000.

This donation is one of the major events in the 59 year history of the Historical Society. Having such funds at our disposal will secure the future of our Society. How wonderful that Hamill will have such a lasting effect, beyond that which he would have enjoyed through our pleasant memories of him.



## A Remembrance

I first met Hamill when he gave a walking tour of historic Gladwyne about fifteen years ago. Hamill was so gentle and considerate, knowledgeable yet modest in sharing information on that tour that I was immediately impressed by him and pursued getting to know him as a friend and fellow history buff.

Over time, I visited his Rose Glen house and the office in his garage several times, petting his barking yet friendly dog. He became a member of the Board of The Lower Merion Historical Society, faithfully attending our meetings, participating in our lectures and tours and open houses. He didn't say much, but after the meeting he would follow up with questions and comments to participants. That was his way, quietly, behind the scenes.

In the last few years, driving his little red car, he would visit the Historical Society's library in Bala Cynwyd on Wednesday nights and chat with us, almost like visiting the country store and sitting around the potbelly stove. We enjoyed sharing stories related to history and his companionship. Any questions about Gladwyne were saved for Hamill's visits.

I never heard Hamill swear or say an unkind word about anyone. He was respectful and interested in all people. He didn't discuss his life or accomplishments. He was a *private* person with a wide circle of friends. In his quiet way, he would connect resources so they could help one another. He'd keep a small spiral notebook in his shirt pocket to write ideas which he'd often pursue to help others in their research.

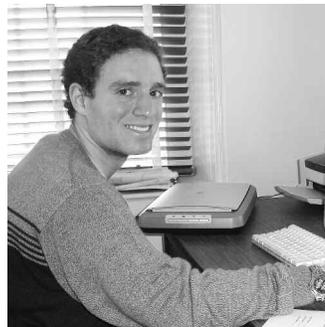
I am honored to have known such a genuine, gentle soul.

—Ted Goldsborough  
*Immediate Past President*

## A Sampler of Volunteers



**Allie Cade** has worked with **Liz Bruss**, both sophomores at Lower Merion High School, in photocopying and filing copies of *The Merionite*, Lower Merion High School's student newspaper. We are making photocopies on acid-free paper so that, unlike the originals, the copies should not deteriorate. Both volunteers have also filed elementary school artifacts such as 6th grade annuals from the Merion Square Elementary School from the 1940's.



**Matt Gabalawi**, a senior at Lower Merion High School, has been creating computer finding aids for hundreds of Bala Cynwyd Junior High and Middle School papers, pamphlets, yearbooks, etc., so that we know what we have. In addition, he is interested in the renovation of Cynwyd Train Station, which he has visited several times with Jerry Francis.



**Eliza Reiss**, a sophomore at Haverford College, has worked with us for two years. Using her Mac laptop computer she created a finding aid of many plot plans given to the Society by Yerkes Engineering. Her second project continues. It's a massive job of listing hundreds of photographs and letters in the Russell Byerley World War II Collection.



**Julia Fleekop**, a senior at Lower Merion High School, has volunteered for two years. She is currently working on entering identifications for hundreds of photographs from Ardmore Junior High, which date from 1923 to 1978. She completed a similar project for photographs from Bala Cynwyd Junior High.



# The Lower Merion Historical Society

Lower Merion Academy  
506 Bryn Mawr Ave., Box 2602  
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

## LowerMerionHistory.org

### We Gratefully Accept Donations

Our library holdings continue to grow thanks to the generosity of the local community. During these past six months, the following groups/people have made a donation to the Society to help enlarge our Special Library Collection of books, manuscripts, photographs and maps:

|                    |                   |                      |
|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Dr. Joseph Betz    | Lower Merion      | Vicky & John Rodgers |
| Frances L. Denson  | School District   | Stephen P. Selinger  |
| Margaret DePiano   | Joseph McClenahan | St. Matthias Parish  |
| Franklin Maps      | Merion Meeting    | Township of          |
| William Gallagher  | Religious Society | Lower Merion         |
| Dr. Edward Huth    | of Friends        | Wynnwood Civic       |
| Fran Keilt         | Martha Moffat     | Association          |
| John Kiker         | Sylvia Myers      |                      |
| Alan Leibensperger | Patrick O'Donnell |                      |
| Lower Merion       | Radnor Historical |                      |
| Conservancy        | Society           |                      |

# The Lower Merion Historical Society

#### Location:

Lower Merion Academy  
506 Bryn Mawr Ave., Box 2602  
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

#### Contact:

Phone and Fax: 610-664-3216  
E-mail: LMHistory@comcast.net

#### Library Hours:

Wednesday evenings, 7:00 to 9:00 pm  
Saturday afternoons, 2:00 to 4:00 pm  
Also by appointment

#### Our Mission:

*The Lower Merion Historical Society is an organization dedicated to "Preserving Our Past For The Future." This is accomplished by stewardship of local history, education of the community, preservation of historic resources and outreach to promote awareness of the cultural heritage of the Township of Lower Merion and the Borough of Narberth.*



## LowerMerionHistory.org

### Answers from page 2

1. The Reading Railroad and the Pennsylvania Railroad both served Pencoyd Iron Works, a division of U. S. Steel. Each took its turn as the largest company in the world.
2. The Pennsylvania Railroad's specification for roofing material called for a slate roof, but we don't know if that was used on the Cynwyd Station when it was built in 1884. We'd like to hear from you if you can help answer this one.
3. The Pencoyd & Philadelphia Railroad is a spur that enabled the PRR to connect to Pencoyd Iron Works. Some of the rail can still be seen along the Schuylkill River on either side of Righters Ferry Road.
4. Rudolph's Row, with its boxing matches, was adjacent to Belmont Avenue, close to the Schuylkill River. Sebastian Rudolph lived on one side; a dozen of his workers lived in row houses on another side. Rudolph owned the Ashland Paper Mill across Belmont Avenue.