

April 2026

"April... Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing"

- William Shakespeare

Spring News

This past Sunday, we held our Annual Meeting at our location at the historic Academy Building in Bala Cynwyd.

Our President, Linda Tasker, gave an update on our many activities in 2025, and our vision for the coming year, as we continue to "Preserve Our Past for the Future." Our annual report is available [here](#).

We enjoyed a presentation by Denise Francis (*below, left*), wife of our late President Emeritus, Jerry Francis—and a history powerhouse in her own right—on Lower Merion's first library, Bala Cynwyd. The library has had several homes in a long history, beginning in our own Academy Building. The Woman's Club of Bala Cynwyd played a critical role in developing the library we know and love today.



Board Member Brad Upp (*above, right*) was instrumental in coordinating the installation and dedication of a new memorial bench in honor of Presidents Emeritus Jerry Francis and Ted Goldsborough, as well as longtime volunteer Max Buten, through the generosity of their friend Erik Panichi, another committed Historical Society volunteer.



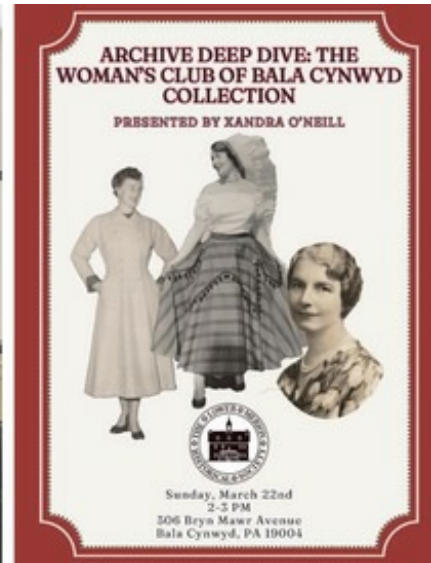
Board members of the Lower Merion Historical Society dedicate the memorial bench. At right are Denise Francis and President Linda Tasker

Our Woman's Club of Bala Cynwyd collection is now open for research!

We are pleased to announce that our intrepid intern Xandra O'Neill has completed her work processing and [cataloguing](#) over 100 years of records from the Woman's Club of Bala Cynwyd.

Last year, the Society was awarded a Historical and Archival Records Care Grant from the Pennsylvania Museum and Historical Commission to support this effort. In March, Xandra gave a presentation on her work, spotlighting

key aspects of the collection that highlight its research value for our community (*below, left*). Her recorded presentation is [here](#), and she wrote a blog about her experience [here](#).



Upcoming Programs

Saturday, May 2 | 12 PM - 4 PM

For the fourth year in a row, we will host an informational table at [NarbEarth Day](#) in Narberth Park.

Thursday, May 28 | 6:30 PM - 8 PM

Local author Julia Steinberg Agnew shares the research behind her newly published book, [Frank Miles Day: The Life, Works and Legacy of a Philadelphia Architect](#). Day designed numerous structures in Lower Merion and surrounding communities, including designs of the outbuildings at Stoneleigh and Oakwell in Villanova. Please join us for this free program! RSVP [here](#).

And in Case You Missed It...

Since our last Milestones, the Historical Society has hosted several programs showcasing our growing community collaborations.

On February 12, Lower Merion Historical Society Secretary and Collections

Committee chair Erin Betley (*below, left*) shared an inspirational journey through time at the Stoneleigh estate in Villanova, spotlighting the remarkable women who lived and worked there, creating a legacy that can now be enjoyed by all as a public garden. This program was presented in partnership with Natural Lands. A recording of this presentation is [here](#).



On March 31, Lower Merion Historical Society President Linda Tasker (*right*) represented the Society at PA State Representative Mary Jo Daley's Veterans Tribute Lunch. The invited exhibitors included governmental and nonprofit service organizations. Our table featured examples from the [Byerley Collection](#). During World War II, Russell Byerley, a shop teacher and coach at Lower Merion High School from 1928 until 1951, continued to be in touch with his former students. This collection consists of more than 2,000 letters and pictures, most from Lower Merion High School alumni, sent to Byerley over the course of the war.



On Sunday April 19, local author Sheilah Vance (*below, left*) vividly brought to life an untold chapter of Pennsylvania's Revolutionary War history. She shared key insights from her book on how six critical days in Gulph Mills shaped the Continental Army's path to Valley Forge and uncovered the struggles Pennsylvanians faced during this turning point in America's fight for independence. This program was presented in partnership with Bala Cynwyd Library.



Historical Society Rewind

Many of you have noticed a re-invigorated presence for the Society on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), thanks to the efforts of Board member [Jamie Singer](#). We found that many in our community, and far beyond, were interested in the intersection between women's history and Main Line Reform Temple in Wynnewood. Read on for her work:

Founded in 1952, Main Line Reform Temple (historic photo below) is housed in a distinctive-looking circular structure that was designed by Matthew B. Ehrlich and Ezekiel Levinson.

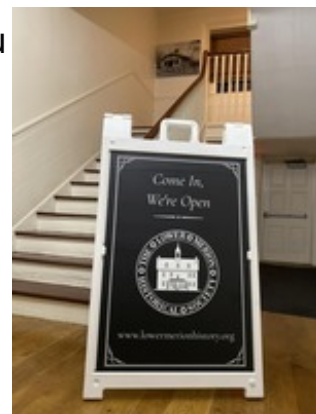
Women were instrumental in its founding: Early services were held at the Ardmore Women's Club, with a guest rabbi conducting services. It is the only Main Line congregation to have been founded by a woman, Mrs. Natalie Lansing Hodes (1911-1982), who headed an initial group of 16 families.



The stained glass windows were designed by Gabriel Loire, of Chartres, France. The Star of David, illuminated by the roof skylight, was designed by Joseph J. Greenberg, Jr., who also created the gold leaf ark and menorah in the interior.

You can learn more about this and much more when you visit during our Open Hours!

We welcome visitors every Wednesday evening from 7-9pm, at our location in the second floor of the Lower Merion Academy Building, 506 Bryn Mawr Ave in Bala Cynwyd, immediately adjacent to the entrance to Bala Cynwyd Middle School.



The Lower Merion Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) organization, and is 100% donor-supported, sustainable only through your generosity. Please help us preserve the unique history of our area by making a tax-deductible donation [here](#).



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***Mission Statement of the
Lower Merion Historical Society***

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.

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