



# Milestones

Preserving Our Past for the Future

FALL 2009

## Message From The President:

## Cynwyd Train Station / Cynwyd Heritage Trail Update

While it seemed like Lower Merion had slowed down over the course of the summer, there was actually a consistent flurry of activity at the Cynwyd train station and on the trail:

- We are making great strides with revitalization of the station: it is now fully stabilized, with new windows, doors, and a roof. The pillars on the trackside were rotten, and had to be jacked

unteers. Also, a variety of our Lower Merion Boy Scout and Cub Scout Troops trail-blazed and camped out on the trail.

- A collaboration between two studios, Studio Bryan Hanes and Studio Gaea, has been named the landscape designers for the Cynwyd Heritage Trail. Known not only for their elegant designs, but also for their commitment to sustainability and civic engagement, Studio Bryan Hanes/Studio Gaea



up and replaced. Volunteers are working on scraping down the old paint, and SEPTA is generously donating services to install a new sewer line. Our contractor, Stumpo Construction is making sure that every detail gets proper attention. We plan to have a new and improved station by this winter and a re-dedication celebration in the spring.

- The Friends of the Cynwyd Heritage Trail and the Township of Lower Merion were awarded a contract with the Philadelphia office of the Student Conservation Association for a crew of 20 students to work on the Cynwyd Heritage Trail for 6 weeks from July to August. The Association works to engage kids of High School age into leadership and environmental stewardship training by having them gain hands-on experience under the supervision of crew leaders. Check out the new gardens at Cynwyd Station, the new fence along Belmont Avenue, and the paths through the Connelly site that they completed. Their work was greatly supported by the Township's new Cynwyd Heritage Trailer, a landscape trailer filled with dozens of assorted tools to be used by vol-

unteers. Also, a variety of our Lower Merion Boy Scout and Cub Scout Troops trail-blazed and camped out on the trail. will be integral in developing the Trail so that it becomes a premier 21st century linear park and trail. They are currently compiling a list of stakeholders and scheduling a series of design focus groups for this fall. The Historical Society plans to host some of the focus groups at our headquarters at the Lower Merion Academy.

- Also, we have expanded our coverage of the trail to also include a Past, Present and Future website about the trail. Go to [LowerMerionHistory.org](http://LowerMerionHistory.org) and select the *About the Cynwyd Heritage Trail* link on the right of the page, or visit the page directly at [www.cynwydheritagetrail.com](http://www.cynwydheritagetrail.com). The website was created to disseminate background information, press coverage, and photos of the trail and the Cynwyd train station. Over time, the website will also showcase the interpretive historical and way finding signage that is now being jointly developed by the Historical Society and the Township that will be placed along the Heritage Trail. The website is partially funded through the *Preserve America Grant* that was awarded to the Township last year.



[www.cynwydheritagetrail.com](http://www.cynwydheritagetrail.com)

# The Russell Byerley Memorial World War II Collection

The *Russell Byerley Memorial World War II Collection* consists of original letters and photographs that were sent during the war to Russell Byerley, a shop teacher and coach at Lower Merion High School from the 1930's-1950's. When World War II broke out, he continued to be in contact with his former students and requested that they tell of their experiences in the war. Over time, he

address, and mail the newsletters. When the project became overwhelming, Mr. Byerley asked the local newspapers, including the *Main Lines Times* and the *Arlmore Chronicle*, to publish his newsletters, which they did.

At first, the Historical Society only had a few of Mr. Byerley's newsletters and photographs, but when his son, David Byerley, a LM '46 alumnus, learned of our interest, he generously donated the orig-

wartime censorship, not much is said about jobs or what ended up happening to many of the veterans - just about Lower Merion and reading news of former classmates as a way of getting a taste of home.

Thanks also to another volunteer, Eliza Reiss, who compiled a list of the veterans for whom we have photos. We would like to thank all concerned with the preserving and sharing of the artifacts related to this project. We named the collection the

MAY 25, 1945

Dear Mr. Byerley,  
 It has been like it ..... you freedom at last.  
 after working faithfully for fourteen months for the Nazi  
 cause we were awakened one Sunday morning (Feb. 18) at  
 the most ungodly hour (4:30 A.M.). We were told to pack  
 up & get ready to leave as the Russians were breaking our  
 town. We assembled with 900 other American soldiers &  
 started toward the western front; a trip on foot which  
 lasted 73 days. As we neared the American front  
 we had no alternative, but to move in circles till the



A letter from and photo of Mario Barone, LM 1937, who was a prisoner of war. Now deceased, when he returned to Lower Merion he became co-owner of Richlin's Hardware in Narberth.

compiled more than 2,000 letters and pictures, from many Lower Merion High School graduates who had served in the armed forces. To share the hundreds of letters he received, he edited a series of wartime newsletters, which were mimeographed and mailed to hundreds of service men and women. He enlisted help of the Girls' Service League at the high school to copy, fold,

inal letters, which number in the hundreds, to the Society. He had saved them for over fifty years.

About a year ago, a longtime Historical Society volunteer, Farilyn Leopold, agreed to go through all the letterboxes, putting all the letters in alphabetical, and then chronological, order. She's made wonderful progress and says that she enjoys reading the letters. Because of

*Russell Byerley Memorial World War II Collection* in honor of the dedicated teacher who cared about his students in uniform and for leaving us this tremendous legacy.

In the near future, we hope to have this collection indexed and accessible on our website. ✪

## A Sampler of Volunteers

During the past 9 years, our volunteer, Phil Eidelson has added/inputted more than 20,000 records to our website database! Phil, thank you for your friendship and dedication these past years. Keep up the good work; it's appreciated by everyone. ✪



Farilyn Leopold is another of our long standing volunteers. Here she is diligently at work reading and archiving the letters from the *Russell Byerley Memorial World War II Collection*. When this project is completed, it will be a lasting tribute to our Lower Merion World War II veterans. ✪



For a number of years, Ann Bagley has enjoyed sorting through collections of papers given to the Society for safekeeping. The first collection that she organized was the Roberts family papers - a fascinating history of one of the Lower Merion's founding families. At present, Ann is cataloging documents which came to the Society from various groups which tell the story of the Lower Merion Academy building. ✪



## A Sampler of Recent Events

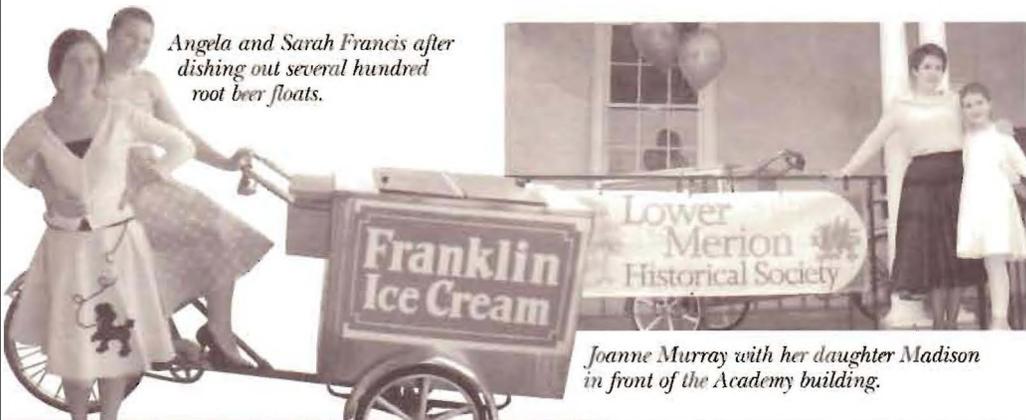
### 60th Anniversary Celebration

Our 60th Anniversary Bash in April was a great success – with over 250 people in attendance – some of whom took the party theme to heart and donned 1950s garb. We were able to raise over \$400 for the Cynwyd Train Station renovation through the sale of root beer floats made with donated ice cream from the Franklin Fountain. Thanks again to those who came and we hope to see you the same time next year! ♡

*Ryan Berley of Franklin Fountain in front of a 1919 Pierce Arrow.*



*Angela and Sarah Francis after dishing out several hundred root beer floats.*



*Joanne Murray with her daughter Madison in front of the Academy building.*

*Neighbors out perusing the 40 antique cars on display at the Bala Cynwyd Middle School circle.*



### Save La Ronda

The campaign to save this unique example of renown architect Addison Mizner is still underway at the time of this writing. On August 31st, over 100 concerned citizens held a rally in front of the threatened building requesting that Mr. Joseph D. Kestenbaum not demolish this architectural treasure. To find out more about La Ronda, and too see what you can do to help, visit [SaveLaRondaNow.com](http://SaveLaRondaNow.com) ♡



### Caroline Seebohm Lecture

Caroline Seebohm, a Mizner scholar and author of *Boca Rococo: How Addison Mizner Invented Florida's Gold Coast* spoke of the work of Mizner at a sold out event, so to speak, at the Academy on August 6th. The event was co-sponsored by Save La Ronda Now, the Lower Merion Conservancy, and the Historical Society. ♡

*Front row, from left to right: Lori Salganicoff, Kathleen Abplanalp, Caroline Seebohm, Jody Marcell, Bruce Reed. Back row, left to right: Jerry Francis, and Charlie Douglas*



### Uncovering Clegg's Mill

Max Buten and Steve Selinger enlist the Student Conservation Association to help clear paths into the site of Clegg's Mill, a 19th century cotton mill along the Cynwyd Heritage Trail that had become victim to mudslides over the years. In the process, the kids get a history lesson. ♡



# 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/individuals have made a donation to the Society to help enlarge our *Special Library Collection* of books, manuscripts, photographs and maps:

Karen Lyle Burns  
Penny Paul Deleon  
Dorothea R. Endicott  
First Presbyterian Church of Ardmore  
Laurie Hull  
Robert Mc Cormick  
Menke & Menke Landscape  
Architects & Planner  
Dede Perry  
Davis R. Reese  
Caroline Seebohm  
Barbara Wellcok

# The Lower Merion Historical Society

## Location:

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

## Contact:

Phone: 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

## Officers and Directors Effective April 2009

### Officers:

**President** – Gerald A. Francis  
**Vice President** - Ross L. Mitchell  
**Treasurer** – John B. Hagner  
**Corresponding Secretary** - Stephen P. Selinger  
**Recording Secretary** – Barbara McElroy  
**Immediate Past President** - Edmund L. Goldsborough

### Directors:

**Class of 2010** - Max Buten, Alison Graham, Leon Levine  
**Class of 2011** - Andrew Amsterdam, Denise H. Francis, Bruce D. Reed  
**Class of 2012** - Dennis Montagna, Joanne Murray, Anna O'Hora

*The Historical Society is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization serving the community since 1949. For more than 60 years, our volunteers have provided educational programs to the public. Thousands of students, residents and scholars have worked with the Society's extensive resources. The Historical Society is a vital force in preserving the rich history of the Lower Merion community.*