

What's Inside

Nelly Childress

Paul Coyne describes what is going on hidden behind the barriers in the front of our building. The Plaza project encompasses the installment of a mandatory handicap ramp, the repair of deteriorating underground structural beams and expansion joints. But it will also give the front plaza an attractive face lift.

Manager **Judi Forte** shares a welcoming reminder of what is recycled in the City of Philadelphia.

Two articles, one by **Lynn Miller** and the other by **Susan Tomita**, on the successful revitalization of and easy access to the Delaware riverfront, describing the Race Street and the Washington Avenue Piers, and the pop-up Spruce Street Harbor Park.

Enny Cramer is sad to report that one of the dogwood trees planted in memory of Richard Binder has died of unnatural causes, as did the Cherry Blossom tree in memory of Steve Weixler — both gentlemen were residents of Hopkinson House.

David Roberts endorses a view of climate change seldom reported in the press — anyone for a rebuttal?

Chef Luigi gives two recipes for his delicious Ragù Bolognese. Incidentally, if anyone is interested in sharing a recipe, send it to the Chef at louisd53@gmail.com.

And read **Bob Devoe's** description of his encounter on the sundeck with "Pidge." ■

"Autumn"

*Autumn winds begin to blow;
Colored leaves fall fast and slow.
Twirling, whirling all around.
Till at last, they touch the ground.*

[Author unknown]

An Occasional Photo



Incidental Photo by David Roberts

on the HOUSE

The Newsletter of
Hopkinson House • Fall 2014



Message from Council

Paul Coyne



The August Council meeting included a tour of the laundry room, the bicycle storage room, the trash containers and compactor and the public areas of the garage. The tour was intended to insure that all councilors refresh their perceptions and their roles in the day-to-day life of the building. The need for a plan to maintain these spaces as safe, secure and appropriately managed was stressed.

The cost of the Hopkinson House insurance package was reported, at the August Council meeting, to have increased 2.5% over the past year's charge. This was partly owing to our increasing the unit deductible to \$25,000 in a market that had escalated to as much as 10% over the previous year.

The Plaza project in front of the building is now on schedule. The concrete was poured on August 27, even

though 17 days of work had been lost due to weather conditions, awaiting approvals from the various government agencies, delays in the delivery of material and to some omissions in the blue prints.

Here is what was unexpectedly encountered:

- A drain on the north side of the west planter.
- The planters were not of uniform depth.
- The expansion joint, which runs across the front of the building, just under the curb, goes under the south faces of both planters, requiring several inches of the south faces' planters to be removed by hand.
- A slab of concrete, appearing to be relatively new, obstructing access to an expansion joint.
- Damage to the top edge of the structural beam, requiring repair.
- Removal of the bricks on the west side of the building had to be done by hand, because they were too tightly packed.
- The role of the Design Committee of the

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on the House

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Find past issues of *on the House*
at www.thehopkinsonhouse.com

Grateful Thanks

My grateful thanks to the Editorial Committee and particularly to David Roberts for the excellent summer issue of *on the House* during the time I was unable to fulfill my duties. I also want to acknowledge the great help provided by Judy Lamirand, our graphic designer.

Thank you all for your support and for a great job.

Nelly Childress,
Editor

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Message from Council

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Philadelphia Historical Commission in the decision process was as varied as requiring a certain color for the concrete replacing the sidewalk bricks, to their approval of the grout for the pavers in the driveway.

- ✦ The level of regulation and number of meetings needed to keep this project going!

The first pouring of concrete to the west side of the building up to the front door is completed. At the present

time we anticipate finishing the east side around the end of October or at the beginning of November.

The final plans for the planters were approved by the landscape committee and submitted to three qualified landscape companies for three separate bids for: the planting material following the landscape architect's specifications, root preventer mats, and stone to cover the drain and a drain cover.

Responses are pending. We hope to install the planting material before the new marble is set around the planters.

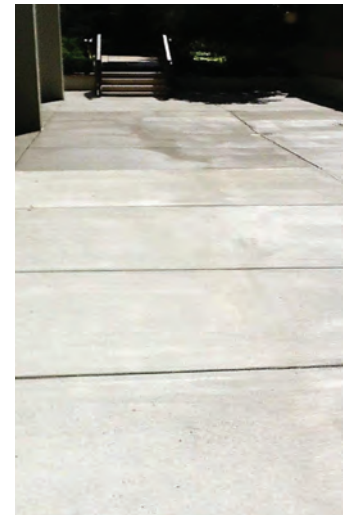
One of the most interesting jobs was the air hammer removal of the grout between pavers in the driveway — tedious and noisy; the cleaning up and sweeping the mortar between the pavers and, finally, with gloved hands, pressing the mortar down with the sides of the hands — like olden times! ■



The mysterious slab that needed trimming



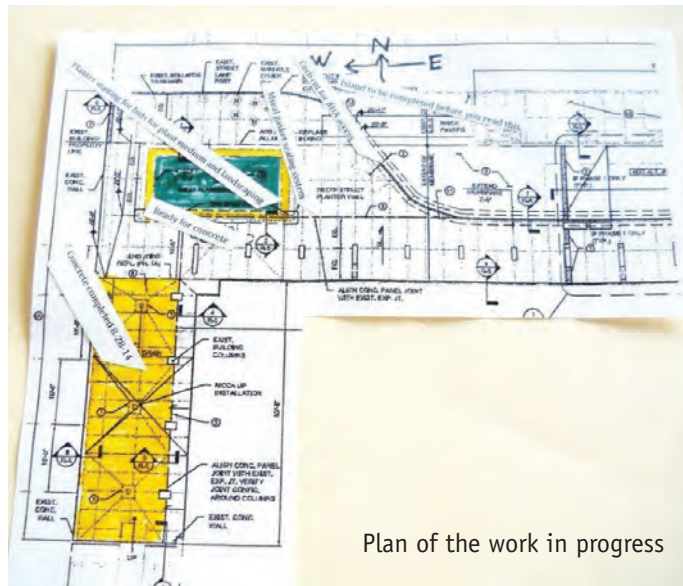
First load of concrete at the west side of the building



West side completed



The brick pavers had to have grout patted down manually



Plan of the work in progress

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Message from Management

Judi Forte



Many of us are sorry to see summer come to an end, while others welcome the coming of cold weather with the icy rain and snow that winter brings. While the seasons continue to change, Hopkinson House will continue with its projects to upgrade the building and enhance its value. By the end of October or early November we hope to see the completion of improvements to the appearance of the front of the building. The removal of the paver bricks and the return to concrete will bring Hopkinson House back to its original

look. The new marble planters and the floral design created by Orsatti & Stuart Landscape Architects will complete a wonderful visual effect for the front of the building. After the completion of that project we will concentrate on the lobby design so work can get started after the first of the year.

Recycling and Trash

The City of Philadelphia participates in single-stream recycling. This means that all recycled items may be comingled and are picked up by one truck. The separation of the recycled items is done at the recycling plant.

You may put your recycled items in any of the bins in the trash rooms. Please be sure that no food (pizza boxes) or non-recyclable materials are placed in

these bins. All regular trash should be bagged and tied and put in the trash chute. Cat litter should be double bagged and tightly tied before being put into the trash chute. Non-fibrous foods should be discarded through your garbage disposal. The trash room can be a breeding place for insects and rodents if trash is not disposed of properly. It is the responsibility of every owner and resident in the building to be sure that their trash is handled properly. Please report spills, open trash containers or any abuse of the trash room to the Resident Services Desk immediately.

Below is a reminder of what you may and may not recycle in the City of Philadelphia. The items which can be recycled have changed since August 1, 2010.



What You Can and Cannot Recycle

You Can Recycle

Plastic Containers

- #1 Soda, water bottles
- #2 Milk jugs, detergents, shampoo bottles
- #3 Rigid plastic containers and juice bottles
- #4 Plastic tubs and lids from butter, margarine or similar products
- #5 Yogurt containers and deli trays
- #6 Plastic cups, plates and to-go containers
- #7 Many mixed plastic containers & plastic products

These are just some examples of what you can recycle, so look for the number on any plastic container to be sure.

Metal

Tin and aluminum cans, empty aerosol cans, empty paint cans

Glass

Jars and bottles

Mixed paper

Newspaper, magazines, mail (junk and personal), phone books, food boxes (remove plastic liner), paper or boxes not soiled by food, computer paper, flyers, wrapping paper (no foil or plastic wrap), soda and beer cartons

Cardboard

Empty and flattened

You Cannot Recycle

Metal

Aluminum foil, pots/pans, paper clips

Glass

Light bulbs, window glass

Mixed paper

Hard back books, tissues, paper towels, napkins, wax-coated cups or containers, food soiled paper, file folders

Plastic

Styrofoam, plastic bags, PVC pipe, packing inserts or "peanuts"

Other

Chemicals, rubber, wood, and ceramic or porcelain plates and cups

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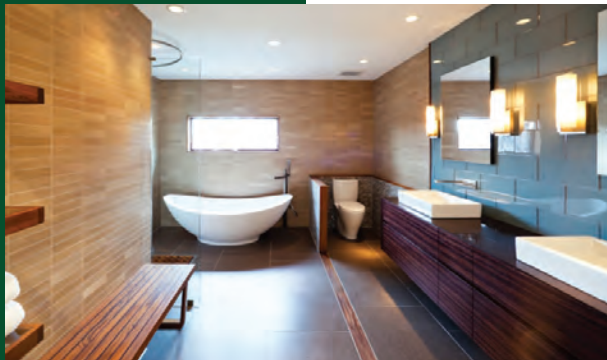
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Message from Management

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Smoking Ban

Even with the smoking ban having been effect for a year, the Management Office still receives complaints from residents with balcony units about cigarette butts or filters being found on their balcony. Smokers who flip their cigarettes from their balcony create a dangerous situation. The butt or filter becomes airborne and can land on any balcony, creating a burn problem for other residents or a fire hazard by landing on patio furniture.

Owners who smoke are grandfathered under the smoking ban and are not permitted to smoke on the balconies or cause distress to any other residents by having smoke or smoke

odors permeate other units or the halls. Smokers who violate this policy will be fined for each offense. Renters are not permitted to smoke anywhere in the building, including their units and balconies. The grandfather privilege for renters expired upon their first lease renewal. Anyone entering into a lease after September 2012 is not permitted to smoke in the building.

Annual Budget Meeting

The Hopkinson House Budget Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 11, 2014 at 7:00 pm in the Solarium. The 2015 Operating Budget will be presented at that time.

From Council, Management and staff at Hopkinson House, have a safe and wonderful coming holiday season. ■



A Reminder

For residents of Hopkinson House, going to the polls is only taking an elevator ride to the Solarium!

This is not a National but a Local/Municipal Election for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, U.S. House of Representatives, PA House of Representatives and two or more amendments to the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter.

The Election officers are looking forward to seeing you at the polls!

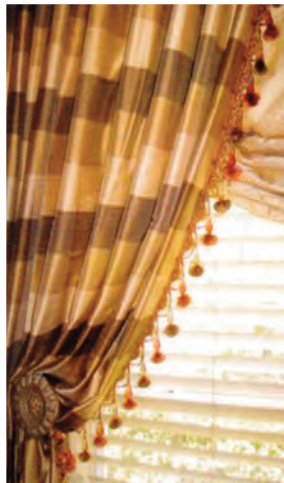
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New Parks Along the Delaware

Lynn Miller

It's now some six years since Philadelphia produced its Action Plan for the Central Delaware with its vision for revitalizing that stretch of the river that gave life to our city more than three hundred years ago. One of the plan's goals was to create attractive green spaces and parks every half mile along the riverbank, returning the land to its natural state wherever possible. At the same time, walking trails were to be created along the six-mile course of the Delaware through the city, while the grid of city streets was to be reconnected to the river.

The first and wonderfully successful result followed the opening of the Race Street Pier in 2011. A tumble-down structure crumbling beneath the Benjamin Franklin Bridge was transformed with an elegant design that provides a gently lush strip of green down the middle. To view the spectacular arc of the bridge directly overhead from the pier is to feel a distinctively urban thrill of the kind that makes you glad you live nearby. In addition to the view, it's a great place to relax at the end of a hike, or simply to spend an hour or two with a good book.

Soon after the pier was opened came the Race Street connector, which leads from Second Street at Race to a well-lighted walkway that passes beneath I-95 to Columbus Boulevard and the pier opposite. For the first time in more than half a century, it's possible to get from the gallery district of Old City north of Christ Church to the waterfront

in a matter of minutes, either on foot or by bicycle, without risking life and limb to cross the barrier of the interstate.

In September, the Fringe Festival opened its new headquarters in the old but handsome steam plant on that same corner of Race Street and Columbus Boulevard. With a small theater, chic bar, restaurant, and outdoor terrace, that repurposed building adds more to the mix of leisure-time attractions at this once-forlorn intersection.

A second out-of-use pier had its coming-out as a transformed park in August. From 1870 to 1915, more than a million immigrants first entered the United States at the end of Washington Avenue from Philadelphia's immigration station on Pier 53. In the 18th century, the site served as the city's first Navy yard.

Now renamed the Washington Avenue Pier, at the end of what will soon become the Washington Avenue Greenway, this is a different kind of destination from that at Race Street. Not only is it broader and longer, it also maintains many references to its own history. Visitors are led first through a wide planted area from which they can access an elevated boardwalk to view restored wetlands, which are gradually overtaking the remains of the site's earlier structures. It's also possible to walk down to the water's edge, perhaps to view the nesting grounds of turtles, or to fish.

A new piece of sculpture by local artist Jody Pinto is a landmark at the end of the



Pictures by Lynn Miller

pier. "Land Buoy" is a stainless steel staircase coiling in a spiral around a fifty-five-foot mast, with a lighted blue tip that is visible from across the river. Climbers are rewarded with a sweeping view of the Delaware through the city.

Washington Avenue Pier was a \$2.15 million project jointly funded by the Delaware River Waterfront Commission, Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the William Penn Foundation.

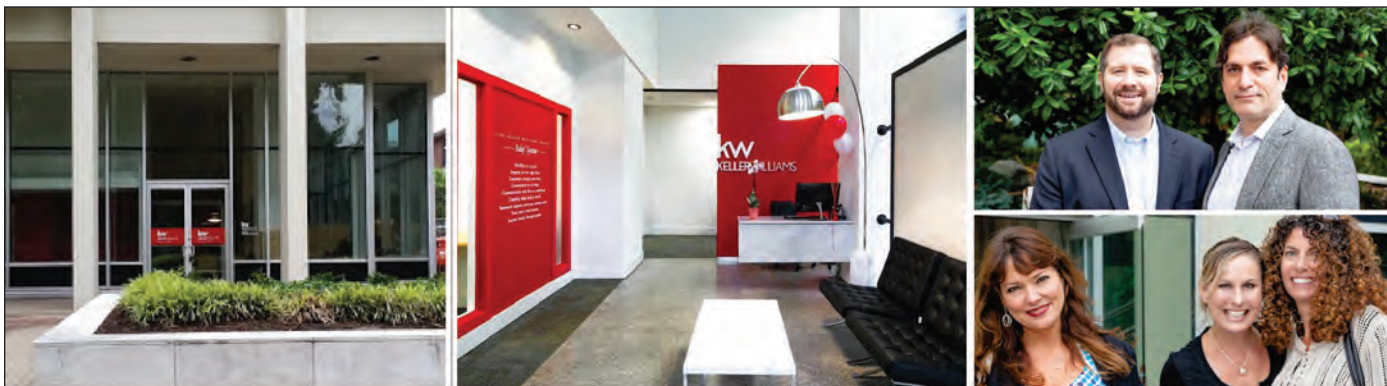
Even closer to us in Society Hill was this past summer's delightful pop-up park beside the boat basin at Penn's Landing. Spruce Street Harbor Park sprang up to provide hammocks swinging from trees, a bocce court and other games for the whole family, along with a boardwalk stretching past an arcade from which cotton candy, snow cones, and other summertime staples from the shore were sold. A piece of the basin was enclosed with floating docks, lounge chairs, a restaurant, and crow's-nest-style webbing where visitors could sprawl out over the water. The small lagoon these structures created provided

Race Street Pier is a popular destination directly beneath the Benjamin Franklin Bridge and across from the new Fringe headquarters.



For the opening of **Washington Avenue Pier**, visitors climbed the sculpture "Land Buoy." Mayor Nutter is near the top left, artist Jody Pinto, top right, has her hand raised; Hopkinson House resident Jim McClelland is below them in red shirt.

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New Parks Along the Delaware

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shelter for water lilies and other aquatic plants.

Throughout the park, brightly colored Adirondack and deck chairs, along with colored lights festooned from the trees overhead, turned what had been an easily overlooked piece of parkland into a new, if temporary, oasis. As with other pop-up parks (one near South and Broad Streets was another draw this past summer), Harbor Park created an unexpected new summertime destination in the heart of the city, delighting the public with its charm and easy accessibility. As a playground that was created and dismantled almost literally overnight, it also promised similar surprises in summers to come in the city.

The transformed piers, on the other hand, are meant to be permanent improvements to the waterfront. Next year will see the makeover of Pier 68 behind the Walmart shopping center farther south on Columbus Boulevard. That property will become another wetlands park. Already completed and open to the public is the Penn Street Pier to the north, which also connects to the riverfront trail. All were designed in the hope that the amenities they provide would in turn attract private investment to nearby waterfront property. That has already happened with the creation of the Fringe headquarters opposite the Race Street Pier. It's also in the works near the Washington Avenue

Pier, where new residential and commercial development is about to get underway.

The complete makeover of the Delaware riverfront will no doubt be the work of at least the next generation. But Philadelphians already have early indications of how that process may play out. We are beginning to see our city reconnected to our most important waterway, with new destinations and recreational spaces along its banks to draw us there. It no longer seems a crazy fantasy to imagine a day when Columbus Boulevard will be truly that, a beautiful street luring pedestrians, bicyclists, residents and shoppers to this riverbank that was Philadelphia's starting place. ■



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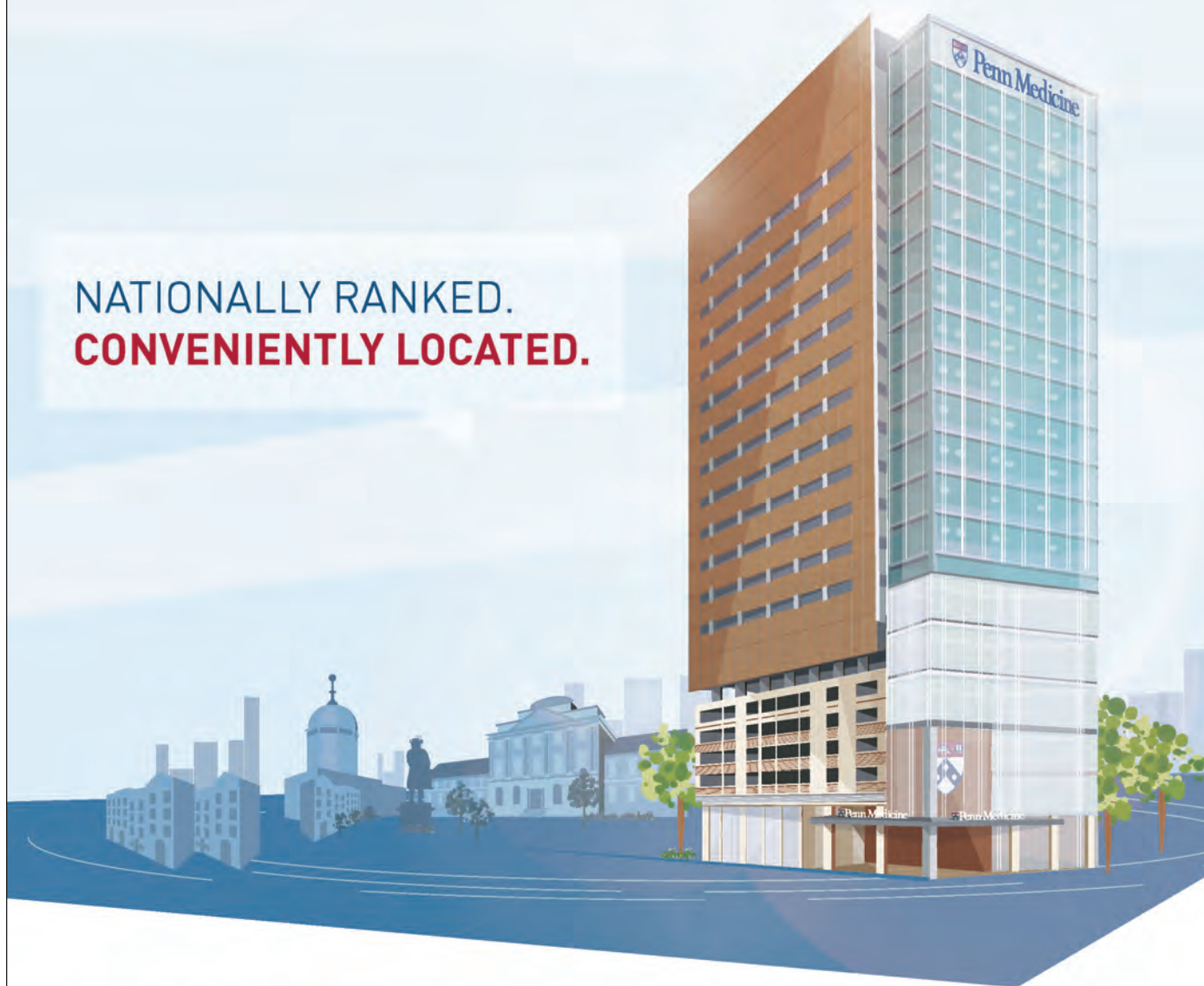
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Popping Up for the Summer and Beyond

Susan Tomita

“Pop-ups” received much coverage in the media this past summer. Timely for many reasons, including blissfully fine weather, pop-up parks and pop-up beer gardens hit Philadelphia like a fever. The success of our neighborhood Independence Beer Garden and Spruce Street Harbor Park assures a place for pop-ups in the foreseeable future.

What is a Pop-up? Where did it come from?

Today’s pop-up phenomenon can be traced to 2004 “guerilla-style” retail that opened temporary shops in dynamic settings. They engaged customers with a sense of fun and surprise, as well as desirable products. The Philadelphia twist? Do the same in targeted dead zones, and learn how-tos from what-ifs. With the fastest growth in millennials of any major U.S. city, Philadelphia has shown an increasing public appetite for fresh urban experiences.

ArtPlace’s grants presented the opportunity to show that a well-known but underused space could become a vibrant

destination. Penn’s Landing transformation was astonishing. As a two-month experiment, Spruce Street Harbor Park attracted all kinds of people — in tattoos, strollers, wheelchairs, and a good mood — by the thousands. The potent mix of alcohol, sun, crowds, and late hours reportedly fueled little trouble in or around Spruce Street Harbor Park. Its popularity won it an extension through September.

The *Huffington Post* ranked Spruce Hill Harbor Park among the World’s Best Urban Beaches. *Travel and Leisure* named The Blue Anchor as one of the Coolest Floating Restaurants. Blue Anchor Restaurant and Bar, run by the Garces Group, took its name from the city’s first tavern.

Blue Anchor tavern, which was nearing completion, greeted William Penn when he landed at the tidal basin below Spruce Street in 1682. It may pop up again when the Park returns in some form next summer.

NOTE: Philadelphia’s 2012 Master Plan for Delaware River



Early morning Spruce Street Harbor Park



Independence Beer Garden

development was derived from work by PennPraxis, the applied research arm of the University of Pennsylvania School of Design. PennPraxis worked with nearly 4,000 Philadelphians, including Hopkinson House participants, in a presentation hosted by the Washington Square Citizens’ League. ■

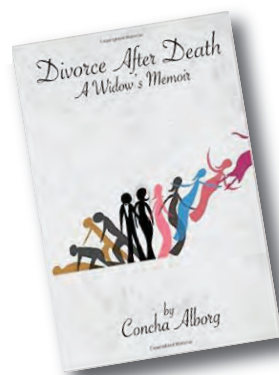
Resident Author Book Release

Divorce After Death. A Widow’s Memoir by Hopkinson House resident Concha Alborg has just been released by Shorehouse Books. The non-fiction work describes the tumultuous aftermath of the death of Concha’s husband.

Available on Amazon.com in print and Kindle formats.

For more information go to www.conchaalborg.com.

Note: Concha is also the author of *Beyond Jet-Lag: Other Stories* and *American Translation: A Novel in Three Novellas*. ■





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One Poor Little Tree

Enny Cramer

In the spring issue of *on the House* I wrote a short article entitled: "Two Little Trees," in which I described the planting of two trees in Washington Square in memory of Hopkinson House resident Richard Binder. I am sad to inform our readers that one of the trees, the dogwood on the east side of the park, died recently. It had been regularly watered by the National Park Service twice a week. Fellow resident Rosina Coltellaro, Richard's good friend, who was following the trees' progress and growth observed on July 16 that the tree showed sign of stress — the leaves were droopy — although it looked fine when watered on July 14 and 15. The tree died two days later.

Consultation with the Park Service arborist indicated that, based on the speed of its demise, the tree definitely died of unnatural causes. And so did the cherry-blossom tree planted nearby in memory of Steve Weixler, long-term resident of Hopkinson House

and President of Society Hill Civic Association.

Plans are underway to replace the dogwood tree. Rosina is pleased to announce that the second pagoda dogwood planted near the southern wall of the park is thriving. ■



The poor little tree



Surviving tree with Rosina Coltellaro

Pictures by David Roberts

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Climate Panic

David Roberts

A climate always changing

The planet Earth began as a molten mass with a temperature of many thousands of degrees. Over the ensuing billions of years Earth has been slowly cooling, not in an even and steady decline, but by fits and starts that many scientists believe are due to cyclical variations in the heat coming from the Sun. In the past million years, ice ages (glacials) lasting roughly a hundred thousand years have alternated with warm periods (interglacials) lasting about ten thousand years. Civilization began halfway through the current interglacial, which is known as the Holocene.

We know from geological estimates and the historical record that there have been shorter fluctuations during the current interglacial. It is estimated that the Holocene Climate Optimum, which lasted from about 9,000 BC to 5,000 BC, was the warmest period of the interglacial so far. Later came the Roman Warm Period, the Medieval Warm Period, and now the Modern Warm Period. These warm periods have alternated with cooler times, most recently the Little Ice Age, which followed the Medieval Warm Period and reached its lowest temperatures in about 1700 AD.

The current warming, which began about 300 years ago at the low point of the Little Ice Age, has been punctuated by shorter fluctuations. In the 20th century, for example, there was warming in the 1930s, cooling in the 1970s, and warming again in the

1990s. The cooling of the 1970s aroused concern because, after eleven thousand years of the Holocene interglacial, people feared that the next ice age was starting. Fortunately, however, all three fluctuations were minor and short.

Since 1998, both satellite and surface measurements indicate that annual mean global temperatures have been constant. There is no way to tell whether warming or cooling will follow this pause, or when the next change will begin. At the recent mean rate of increase — about 0.5 Celsius degree or one Fahrenheit degree per century — it would take another one to two hundred years of warming for the annual mean to reach the maximum of the Medieval Warm Period, when much of southern Greenland was free of ice and was being used for agriculture, including the raising of cattle, sheep, and pigs, and wine production. Winemaking equipment was recently found in Greenland under ice that evidently formed during the Little Ice Age.

Politics and science: the carbon dioxide hypothesis

In recent years, collaboration between politicized scientists and politicians has resulted in a campaign to regulate industries and individuals whose activities, they claim, distort the climate and destroy the planet through man-made global warming. The alleged cause of man-made global warming is carbon dioxide (CO₂), a product of human and

animal metabolism (we breathe it out) and of the burning of anything made of carbon — coal, gasoline, natural gas, ethanol, wood, etc. Technically CO₂ is a greenhouse gas, but it is a feeble one. Molecule for molecule, CO₂ is weaker than the main greenhouse gas — water vapor — and Earth's atmosphere, on average, contains roughly 50 times as much water vapor as CO₂. Has anybody suggested declaring water vapor a pollutant and regulating its release?

The CO₂ hypothesis has serious problems: The concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere is very low; at 0.04% it is less than half the concentration needed for optimal plant growth, 0.1%. In the past seventeen years, mean global temperatures have been unchanged. This has been the period when the worldwide industrial output of CO₂ has increased most rapidly, boosted by countries with expanding industries, especially China and India. The mean global temperature was expected to rise sharply during those seventeen years, with disastrous consequences. Its failure to do that has so continued on page 19



Since 1998, both satellite and surface measurements indicate that annual mean global temperatures have been constant.

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Climate Panic

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embarrassed the devotees of man-made global warming that they have abandoned the term “global warming” and replaced it with “climate change.”

A more likely cause of warming and cooling

The failure of temperatures to rise during the last seventeen years, when CO₂ in the atmosphere increased by one-ninth (from 0.036% to 0.040%), casts serious doubt on the idea that CO₂ causes global warming. Changes in solar activity seem to be a more likely cause. The Sun, after all, is our source of heat. The differences in temperature between day and night, as well as summer and winter, are due entirely to changes in our exposure to the Sun, as Earth spins and orbits on its tilted axis.

In the Medieval Warm Period there were very few people and almost no industry to generate CO₂, but the pronounced warming occurred at a time of high solar activity known as the Medieval Maximum. In the recent seventeen years of increasing CO₂, by contrast, steady temperatures have coincided with low solar activity. Similarly, the Little Ice Age came in a period of sharply reduced solar activity known as the Maunder Minimum.

Clearly, CO₂ is neither needed for global warming nor likely to have caused it. Changes in global temperatures evidently depend largely or entirely on variations in the activity of the Sun. Moreover,

warming of the oceans by the Sun probably released enough dissolved CO₂ to account for much of the 20th century's small rise (0.01%) in atmospheric CO₂. Global warming may have caused increased CO₂!

Climate change

Global temperatures are well defined and measurable, but what does climate change mean and how is it measured? We have not been told. We hear alarming talk about devastating events including hurricanes, floods, droughts, and shifting glaciers, but we have been shown no evidence that these events have exceeded what one would expect under natural conditions. These destructive events have forever been with us, and their frequency and severity, which have always been highly variable, appear not to have increased.

If there is no evidence of unnatural or unusual climate change, there is no reason to seek a cause for such change. The alarmists point to melting ice within the Arctic Circle and on the long western peninsula of Antarctica but, after 300 years of natural warming, it would be puzzling if ice were not melting somewhere on Earth. Huge masses of ice remain, however, especially on Antarctica and Greenland, and some climatologists doubt that the Little Ice Age has ended.

Panic!

The occasion for panic will be the coming of the next real ice age. Nobody knows when it will begin but, once it is fully developed, human

and animal life will be possible only in the tropics. The rest of the planet's lands will be buried under deep ice or reduced to lifeless, frozen wastes. Apart from the relocation required, housing and feeding seven billion people in the tropics, with building materials and food produced only in the tropics, would be by far the most enormous task ever undertaken. For now, be thankful you were born during the slow transition to a warm period. ■



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Pigeon Attacks Hopkinson House (A True Story)

Bob Devoe

I was sitting on the sundeck one beautiful, late summer afternoon, reading a book, enjoying the calm but warm air, and minding my own business, when I happened to look at the stairway to the pool.

There, at the bottom of the steel stairs near the solarium door, stood a very large pigeon. He (she? it?) was trying to enter the building through the solarium door.

A man's condominium is his castle. No pigeon shall be permitted entry without going through the Residents Services Desk. That is our mantra, as well as a prime managerial directive.

Pidge slowly inched his way toward the big steel-and-glass door, contemplating this object which impeded his forward progress. I immediately realized his intention: to enter the sanctuary of the solarium within. On this, the 75th anniversary of the start of World War II, he was a lone scout out to scan the battlefield for prospective obstacles. The enemy has apparently developed a new form of radar: pigeon-drones.

Was this interloper possibly a spy for the army of electrical suppliers who occasionally call and ask to speak to "the person handling the PECO bill or account?" Possibly, but the immediate problem was to keep this bird out.

So, I decided not to get up from my chair right away. I would wait him out.

Close up, pigeons are not the ugly creatures they are portrayed to be. They have a fine bird-like structure, two piercing eyes, a colorful body, and a good wing-span. They hop around just the way humans do, scrounging for scraps of food.

When they land on strange surfaces, they cautiously hop around while looking for a point of entry to their likely destination: a free meal.

So, Pidge and I began a waiting game. NO WAY was I going to let him enter the building. I would stay in my chair as long as I had to, rather than get up and try a fast entry through the door.

I waited. He waited. Neither of us moved. Finally, he turned and walked slowly back towards the yellow brick wall. Then, he turned

north, and headed for the fleet of deck chairs.

As luck would have it, one of my many neighbors came out on the deck at this moment, seeking to sunbathe a bit.

I cautioned her that a pigeon had landed and was currently in the northwest area of the deck. She looked, saw the bird, and set herself in a chair away from the bird's area. The bird was now in her domain, and was her responsibility. She did her best to ignore the invader, but remained wary of his presence.

Finally, after a short wait which seemed eternal, the bird returned to the solarium door. Here we go again, thought I. But, luck was with me. The bird, probably now sensing the futility of his mission, hopped up on the south wall, flapped his wings, and flew away. And, by the way, he forgot to leave the pigeon's favorite calling card: a poop deposit.

Will he be back? What, truly, was his objective? And why is he picking on us? "Fools give you reasons; wise men never try..." Ah, the "smiles of a summer night." ■



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Ragù Bolognese

Louis DelSoldo

As the days get shorter and the weather, cooler, I begin to think of heavier sauces for pasta, and there is none more satisfying on a cool Fall evening than Ragù Bolognese. Originating in the city of Bologna at the center of the heartland of Italy, arguably Italy's premier food region, there are as many versions of Bolognese as there are Italian grandmothers. It is an easy and

convenient sauce to make. It can be kept in the refrigerator for five or so days and can even be frozen. Although not requiring much effort, it does require time as the sauce cooks for a minimum of 3½ to 4 hours, but during that time it only requires an occasional stir. You could even stop it, do an errand, and then start it up again.

Bolognese is an exceptionally versatile sauce. It can be

served over any shape pasta; my favorites are tagiatelle, tortellini, rigatoni and rotelle. Always served with freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, Bolognese can also be poured over pre-cooked rigatoni, topped with Parmigiano and baked in the oven at 400° for 10 minutes. Bolognese is also excellent layered in a lasagna with béchamel and Parmigiano cheese. ■

Chef Luigi's Corner



Picture by David Roberts

A Simple Ragù Bolognese

2 T chopped yellow onion
3 T olive oil
3 T butter
2 T chopped celery
2 T chopped carrot
¾ lb. ground lean beef, preferably chuck salt
¾ cup dry white wine
½ cup whole milk
⅛ tsp. nutmeg (optional)
2 cups canned Italian tomatoes roughly chopped with their juice

Use a heavy casserole, preferably a Creuset. Put in the chopped onion with all the oil and butter. Sauté until golden. Add the celery and carrot and cook for 2 minutes more.

Add the ground beef, crumbling it with a fork. Add 2 teaspoons of salt, stir and cook until the meat is light brown. Add the wine and turn the heat up to medium high and cook until most of the wine has evaporated. This takes patience, as the meat is slow to absorb the wine.

Turn the heat down to medium and add the milk and nutmeg if you are using it. Again I urge patience until the milk has been absorbed and evaporated.

Now the rest is easy. Add the chopped tomatoes (sometimes I add more than 2 cups if there are just one or two pieces left in the can). Stir and bring to the ever-slightest bubble. Cook uncovered for a minimum of 3½ to 4 hours.

A note about ingredients:

If you are using boxed pasta, I suggest DeCecco or an Italian artisan variety. The latter are more expensive but worth it. Talutto's at the Italian Market has fresh fettuccine, which is a good substitute for tagiatelle. Tomatoes matter in this recipe, and I recommend canned tomatoes, product of Italy, of the San Marzano variety.

Country-Style Ragù

3 T olive oil
2 oz. pancetta
1 medium onion chopped
1 medium stalk of celery chopped with leaves
1 small carrot chopped
4 oz. ground veal
4 oz. ground pork
8 oz. ground beef
1 oz. Prosciutto chopped
⅓ cup dry red wine
1½ cups beef broth
2 cups whole milk
3 canned tomatoes, drained salt and pepper

Heat the olive oil in a heavy casserole. Add the pancetta and chopped vegetables and sauté until onions begin to color. Add the meats and prosciutto. As the liquid given off by the meat evaporates, the meat will begin to brown. Turn heat to low and cook for 15 minutes. Put contents of pot into a strainer to remove any excess fat. Set the meat aside.

Add the wine to the casserole and cook slowly for 3 minutes, scraping up the brown glaze on the

bottom of the pot. Add the meat mixture and stir in ½ cup beef broth and let it bubble for 10 minutes. Repeat with another ½ cup of broth.

Finally add the last ½ cup of broth and the milk. Cook partly covered at a very slow bubble for 1 hour. Add the tomatoes, crushing them (I use my hands!) as they go into the pot. Cook uncovered for another 45 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve with grated Parmigiano-Reggiano.

A note about ingredients:

This is a much heartier ragù, with very little tomato. The ground meats can be purchased at Giunta's in the Reading Terminal and DiBruno has both pancetta and Prosciutto. You need not buy the most expensive Prosciutto for this dish as it cooks away and just adds flavor. DiBruno has a less expensive Canadian variety which is fine.



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