

What's Inside

Nelly Childress

President of Council **Paul Coyne** recapitulates the problems and work involved in the necessary renovation of the Front Plaza. It took longer than anticipated, and he thanks the residents for their patience. It is important to read further to be cognizant of what is going on in the building.

Judy Forte announces the Hopkinson House Annual Meeting and Election scheduled for April 16th. She warns that the work on the support beam in the garage will cause noise and vibrations through parts of the buildings. She reminds you to complete entry permits for guests, etc., and not to use emails for that task, and much more of great importance. Please read her column.

A profile of an extraordinary resident by **Susan Tomita**; and a nostalgic reminiscence of childhood at Hopkinson House — you'll find out whose — by **Enny Cramer**.

The description of Dilworth Park by **Lynn Miller** will make you want to run over and dance on the skating rink.

The **Holiday Celebrations** included the unparalleled Agnes Irwin Bel Cantos choir, the tree lighting, and carols in the lobby both led by our incomparable Murray Savar, and the reception in the solarium transformed into Santa's fairyland; Murray Savar led the singing for the celebration of light. The lighting of the first candle of Hanukkah was followed by the beautiful reception with latkes and drinks, organized by Lisette Tarragano.

Weight and sugar is the subject of a column by **David Roberts**; read it if you are in a losing-weight mode.

For those interested, we are including the results of the 2014 mid-term elections

Chef Luigi's polenta recipe will make your mouth water. ■

on the HOUSE

The Newsletter of
Hopkinson House • Winter 2015



Message from Council

Paul Coyne



The plan was to divide the work into four areas:

- 1 the west side behind the gate
- 2 the north side in front of the gate — the area in front of the KellerWilliams office
- 3 the east side including the front door area
- 4 in front of the Market

The project was to start on the area behind the west gate. The bricks, sand bedding, and the underlying fifteen-year-old waterproofing were to be removed before the installation of concrete paving, the original paving. Simple enough, you would think. But no, the Philadelphia Historical Commission intervened in the matter of the color of the concrete — it had to work with the surface of the building according to the original vision of architect Oskar Stonorov. It took three pouring samples of concrete to obtain the approval of the Commission. It was a question of colorant used. continued on page 2

To recapitulate on the Front Plaza renovations:

We were experiencing leaking from the two front planters and from areas along the expansion joint running along the curb across the front of the building. These leaks caused significant structural damage to the underground beam running along the front of the building and into the garage, and to one structural beam below the garage.

The work was scheduled to begin in June and be completed around August, leaving time to install the new planters.

An Occasional Photo



Photos by David Roberts

Happy New Year!

*The Newsletter Committee Wishes
Hopkinson House Owners and Residents
Peace, Love, Joy and Good Health
for 2015.*

on the HOUSE

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

Message from Council

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Now, a month into the project and only the bricks had been removed, the site prepared, the color of concrete ordered and the surface of the sidewalk coated and sealed.

There were forty days of rain.

There were problems working with multiple tradespeople who are often dependent on the weather and on their schedule as well as the difficulty in coordinating simultaneous multiple tasks.

There were discrepancies in the blueprints such as the interior of the planters, coupled with the order of a new specially designed expansion joint running under the south wall of both planters.

Pouring concrete is a demanding operation. Resultant surfacing may be compromised by rain and dampness.

In many ways it was not unlike a ballet performance — each group of tradespeople working

with other tradespeople to produce a well-coordinated ensemble.

Our thwarted project, that began in early June and ended with the final pouring of concrete on December 11th, took seven months of work.

The planters' marble installation is progressing well and will probably be completed by the time you read this article. We are now waiting for the concrete to cure (it takes about 26 days) so that our engineer, Theresa Shephard, can approve the work. Please remember we have had multiple pours so we will not have the final picture for months.

We anticipate that the beam that was compromised will be restored sometime in February. Thank you for your patience and interest in this important project.

Council has been working hard this month:

The contract with The Arrimour Group to maintain our landscaping for 2015 at no increase in cost has been approved.

The full preventive five-year maintenance contract with Elite Elevator with no provision for automatic renewal was approved.

Gary Krimstock, our attorney, will present regulations regarding terms and conditions for accommodating therapy/service animals for Council's consideration.

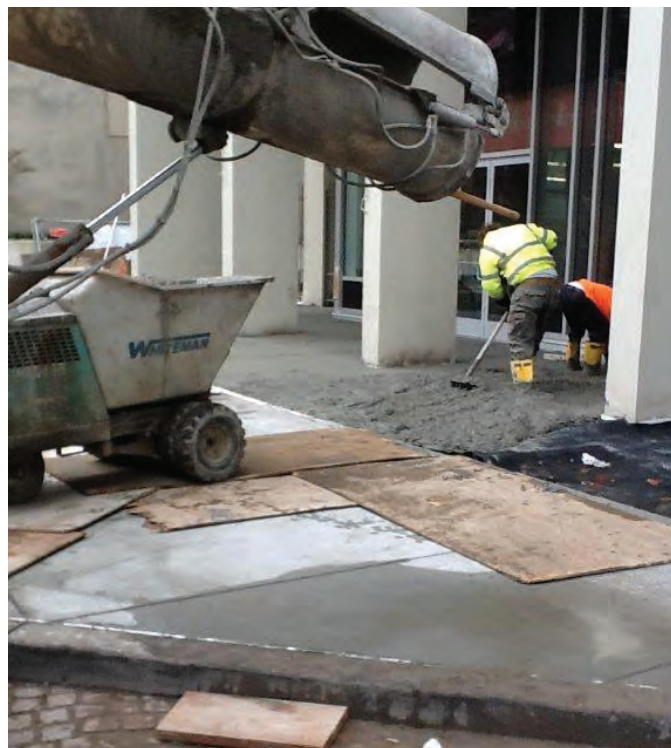
The Website Committee is in the final stages of updating our website.

A lease agreement for the garage has been signed by a new company and will have become effective on January 1st, 2015. More information will have been provided before that date.

Special thanks to all who made our holiday celebrations so wonderful. ■



First load of concrete at the west side of the building



Pouring the last concrete

Pictures by Paul Coyne

Message from Management

Judi Forte



The Hopkinson House Annual Meeting and Election is scheduled to be held on Thursday, April 16th, 2015 in the Solarium at 7 p.m. If you would like to be a part of the future planning of Hopkinson House, complete a nomination form, which will be mailed out to you in March, and put your name on the ballot. Council terms are for two years and Council members must be available to attend one meeting per month. All nominees must be in good standing with the Association.

Now that the renovations in the front of the building are complete, repairs are planned for a support beam in the garage. The garage will remain open during these repairs,

but repairs will entail the use of a jackhammer, which will cause noise and vibrations through parts of the building. These repairs are expected to take several weeks to complete. We will keep you updated as to when this project will begin.

Winter is the time for colds, flu and other types of illnesses, which sometimes means a staffing shortage. Please bear with us if our service is a little slow during times when we are short-handed. We encourage the staff to stay at home when they are not feeling well to protect the residents and the other staff members. We also ask that the residents follow the same procedure.

Residents who use the elevators and interact with the staff while they are obviously in some stage of contagion are putting the very young, the elderly and those with compromised immune systems at risk. If you are unfortunate enough to be suffering from the flu, shingles, bronchitis or other incapacitating illnesses,

please do yourself and your neighbors a favor and stay home-bound until you are no longer contagious. Everyone will thank you for it.

Our staff is very friendly and they enjoy shaking hands with the residents. They have been asked to get into the habit of fist bumping instead of shaking hands to keep down the incidence of spreading germs. We also request that residents do not use the staff phones. Besides the possibility of spreading illnesses, this practice prevents the desk staff from performing their job properly. We sincerely thank you for these courtesies.

It is the responsibility of every resident to complete an entry permit for your guests, contractors and anyone you wish to have access to your unit. Faxing and e-mailing permission may prevent that person's entry to your apartment. The fax machine is on from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Faxes will not be received after hours

continued on page 5



Feeling under the weather? We encourage both staff and residents to stay home until you are no longer contagious.



2015 Holiday Dates: No Move-Ins or Move-Outs

Contractor work, deliveries and moves are not permitted on Sundays or legal and religious holidays throughout the year.

We are posting these 2015 holiday dates for your convenience. No exceptions can be made.

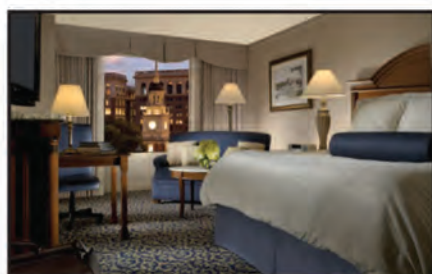
New Year's Day	Thursday, January 1	Labor Day	Monday, September 7
M.L. King, Jr. Day	Monday, January 19	Rosh Hashanah*	Monday, September 14
Presidents' Day	Monday, February 16	Yom Kippur*	Wednesday, September 23
Good Friday	Friday, April 3	Thanksgiving	Thursday, November 26
Passover*	Saturday, April 4	Hanukkah*	Monday, December 7
Memorial Day	Monday, May 25	Christmas Eve	Thursday, December 24
Independence Day	Friday, July 3	Christmas Day	Friday, December 25
(Staff Holiday)		New Year's Eve	Thursday, December 31
Independence Day	Saturday, July 4	New Year's Day	Friday, January 1, 2016

*Holiday begins at sundown the day before it is listed.

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Message from Management

continued from page 3

or on weekends. E-mails are not a reliable method of sending an entry permit. The person you send the e-mail to may be on vacation or out sick, and this may prevent your visitor from gaining access to your apartment.

Now that we have your homeowner's insurance information on file, please be sure to have your insurance carrier send us a certificate of insurance when your policy renews each year. The certificate can be e-mailed to cathyhhoa@comcast.net or faxed to us at 215-829-1510. Please remember that your homeowner's policy is responsible for the first \$25,000 in any damages that occur in your unit regardless of the cause.

If you are planning any renovations to your unit,

regardless of how large or small, remember to pick up a Renovation Requirement Package at the front desk. Owners and contractors must complete the forms in the package, and the contractor must provide an insurance certificate with a minimum of \$2,000,000 liability coverage.

Contractors may not begin work in the units until the renovation package has been approved by Tony Kelly, the building's Chief Engineer. Please contact Tony if you have any questions regarding renovations to your unit. He can be reached through the Resident Services Desk at 215-923-1776 ext. 110.

Work orders must be processed through the Resident Services Desk.

The maintenance department and the management office cannot accept work orders. The Resident Services Desk is manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There is always someone available at the Resident Services Desk to complete a work order for you.

Please make arrangements to pick up your UPS, FedEx, overnight packages and all other deliveries within 24 hours of their arrival. Large packages will be taken up to your unit by staff members if they are not picked up within eight hours.

Holiday decorations are permitted to be hung on the apartment doors from Thanksgiving through January 6th. Please remove them in a timely manner. ■



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She Makes a Dramatic Difference!

Susan Tomita

Given a deep, rich voice, she could be an actor. Instead, Ruth Rovner is more likely to interview thespians than to appear on stage. In a different role in a different scene, this freelance writer and retired professor dramatically affects people's lives.

Ruth has called Hopkinson House home for 14 years. She lives on the building's sunny south side, which suits her temperament. A graduate of Overbrook High School and the University of Pennsylvania, she taught in Ithaca, New York, before earning her Master's degree in English and American Literature at New York University.

When Ruth returned to Philadelphia, she became a part-time English and communications instructor at the Community College of Philadelphia. Twenty-three years later, she retired as a full-time professor. Little did she know that her relationship with the college would proceed to Act III.

"You don't have to be Bill Gates to do this."

It doesn't take long to see in Ruth the energy and stamina of women half her age — she proves this regularly at the neighborhood gym. After retiring from teaching, she began to mentor low-income, first-generation-to-college high school students. "I think you would be good at this," suggested a niece who worked as a volunteer and as a professional at Philadelphia Futures.

Through its Support-a-Scholar program, Philadelphia Futures matches each prospective mentor with a college-bound high school student. Through two high school years

and the first college year, "you make this commitment... talk to them once a week, see them once a month, and just be supportive." As Ruth explained, the understanding is that Philadelphia public schools are substandard, so we "give these kids an equal playing field, find the most promising ones and the ones who would be at risk not to go to college, and give them this enrichment."

The successes and the lasting friendships with Philadelphia Futures' students gave her an idea. She continued to give money to the Community College Foundation, but realized that creating her own scholarship program would provide the one-on-one connection with students that was so personally rewarding. As Ruth pursued this idea, someone in charge of the school's scholarship program assured her, "You don't have to be Bill Gates to do this."

The Ruth Rovner Scholarship started in 2009 and has provided four students annually with a cash award. She hesitated to give the award her name — "People might think I died!" — but eventually appreciated the identification. When reviewing the applications, Ruth looks especially at the challenges students have overcome and their academic record.

Framed photos of her scholars grace her apartment. The backgrounds of this year's recipients are particularly dramatic: an abused teen housed in a psychiatric ward; a single mother of four in her 50s; a performing musician and single parent of teenagers; and a 20-year survivor of a Bhutanese refugee camp. Invited to Ruth's first meeting



Picture by Susan Tomita

with them in person, her sister Daisy Friedman wrote a moving tribute in the *Burlington County Times* last October.

Ruth is delighted when her worlds of writing and mentoring intersect. She shares her love of the theater with her students, including live play performances — the first for some. Doing a story about an AIDS walk, she ran into one of her students volunteering at the event. Meeting for coffee and visiting museums together, her embrace does what cash alone cannot do.

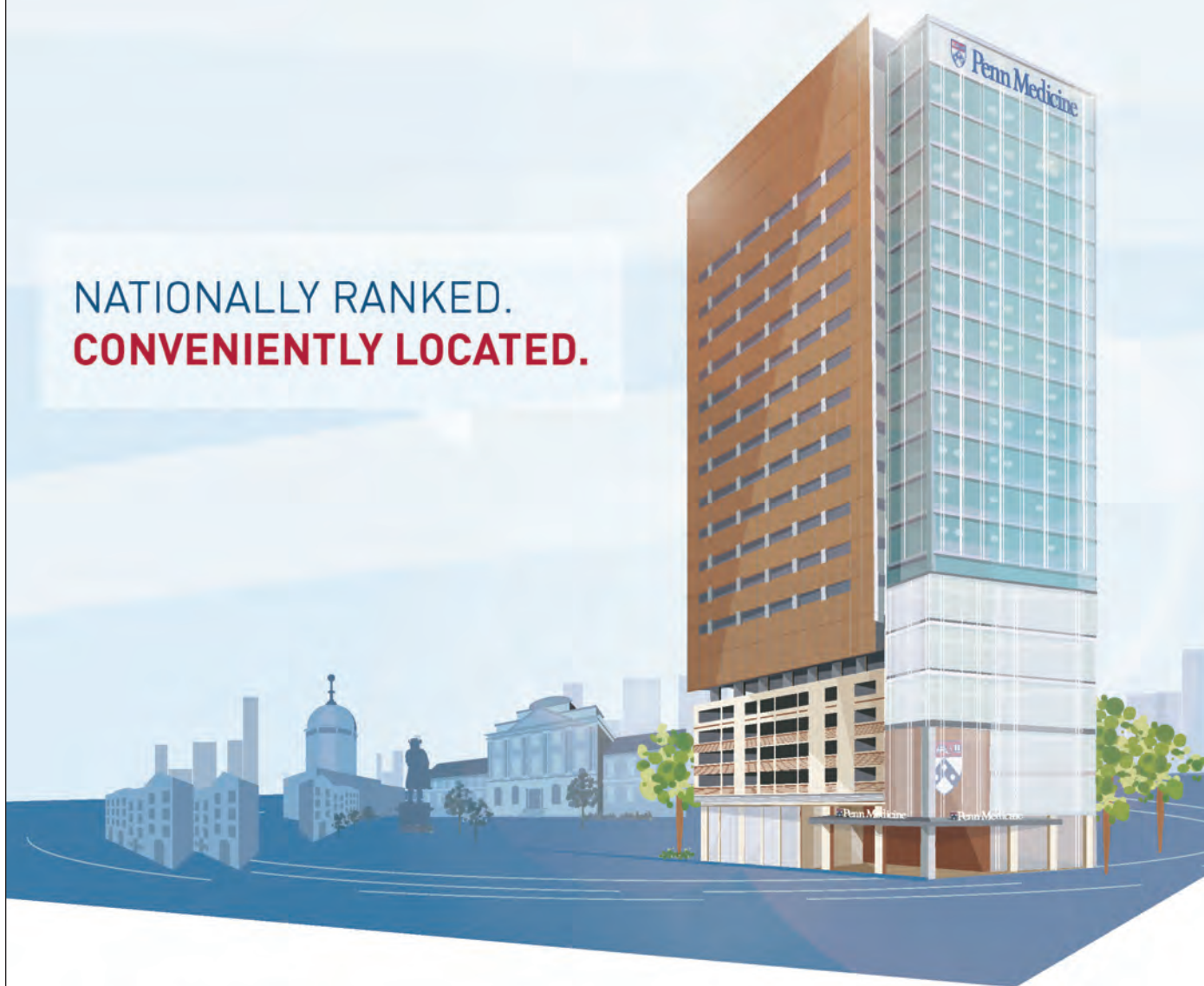
As an occasional travel writer, Ruth spots interesting places which she covers from a distinctive angle meriting attention. The "other Hollywood" (in Florida) and her first visit to Germany (still available through Amazon.com) are examples. Similarly, when her subject is people, she spots and highlights special talents, whether virtuoso actors or gifted students. One of her mentees won a Lenfest scholarship, which covers full tuition, room, and board at Penn State for four years.

From many perspectives, Ruth Rovner is a curtain riser. ■

Ruth Rovner with pictures of herself and her students

Ruth's scholarship program provides the one-on-one connection with students that she finds so personally rewarding.

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Dilworth Park: A Transformed Public Space

Lynn Miller

Philadelphia welcomed the rebirth of its most central public space last September with the opening of Dilworth Park on the west side of City Hall. In its previous incarnation as Dilworth Plaza, the space had stood since 1977 as a kind of granite canyon whose most prominent feature was a cavernous opening with staircases that led down to public transit. Even though it had been designed with the idea that its below-ground oval might host public functions, the space was more forbidding than welcoming, and for decades the plaza was a place to hurry through, past the homeless who sometimes took shelter there. Now, after a thorough make-over, the space lives up to its new name as a park while still providing entrances to subways below.

First, those new staircases! They are capped by nearly transparent head houses with roofs like ski slopes. They sparkle in the sun. If you approach the park from Market Street on the west, those structures seem to slide right under the grand portal into City Hall's courtyard. Now enclosed, the stairs themselves lead down to reconfigured transit space that has straightened out the snarls and made the prospect of a subway journey almost enticing.

The rest of the former plaza is definitely enticing, a welcoming but understated complement to the massive French Renaissance spectacle that is City Hall's façade. The park is now 21% larger than before the renovation, with more than 120,000 square feet of space open to the public. At the south end, a green lawn is surrounded by elegant seating on curved stone benches.

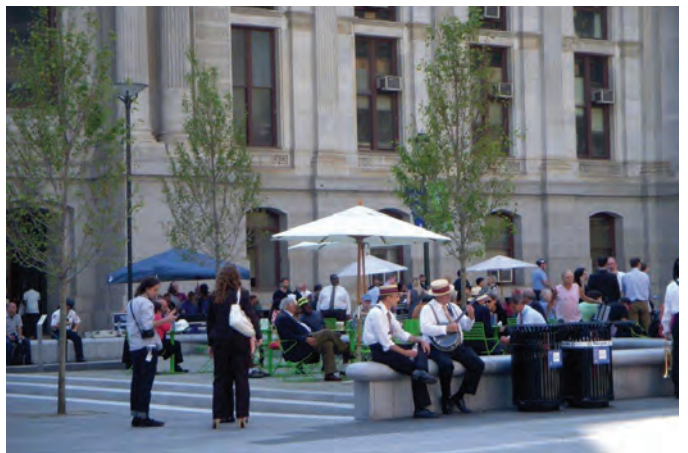
To the north, a set of spouting jets provide a delightful, constantly changing water feature in summer, one that draws young and old to splash there without fear of stubbing toes on curbs (there are none). In winter, that spot is transformed into an ice-skating rink. For a fee that includes skate rental, beginners can take lessons on four successive Sunday mornings. On the north apron, the Rosa Blanca café provides Cuban fare by Jose Garces to enjoy in fine weather at the ice-cream-colored tables and chairs arrayed under groves of trees in plots near the park's street sides.

The new Dilworth Park returns at least a piece of one of William Penn's five public squares to the green space he designed it to be more than three hundred years ago. At the western edge of the city as it had grown from the Delaware at the time of the Revolutionary War, Center Square was the campsite on September 3rd, 1781, for Rochambeau's French army on its long march from New York to Virginia. After a trek of 37 days and 548 miles, the army of 6,000 marched up Chestnut Street to the delight of Philadelphians. The next day the men continued south to join the armies of Washington and Lafayette at Yorktown, and the final victory, on October 19th, over the British forces.

In 1799, Center Square became the site of Philadelphia's first public water works. Its neoclassical engine house, designed by Benjamin Henry Latrobe, quickly became the centerpiece of a landscaped park. The park, though not the engine house, remained as such, long after new and larger water works were constructed



Pictures by Lynn Miller



Dilworth Park one beautiful day

at the foot of Fairmount a dozen years later. But after the Civil War, Philadelphia's voters decided in a referendum that the new City Hall should be built on Center Square — and not, as city fathers had earlier proposed, on our own Washington Square. As a result, the square ceased to live as a green space. In fact, the western apron soon became the terminus of the enormous Broad Street Station, which deposited tens of thousands of Philadelphia commuters daily to within a few feet of City Hall's west portal for nearly a century. It was after demolition of the station and its "Chinese Wall" of elevated tracks running west to the Schuylkill that Dilworth Plaza came into being in the 1970s.

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Penn Medicine

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Dilworth Park

continued from page 9



Dilworth Park happy skaters



Dilworth Park skating rink

Pictures by David Roberts

The architects of the new Dilworth Park have paid homage to the site's early role as the engine house and water supply system for the city. Rainwater is collected, purified, and stored in a reservoir below the park's lawn. The water is then redistributed to irrigate the surrounding trees, plants, and grass.

Finally, the greening of Dilworth Park also brings a ribbon of Fairmount Park, the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, to the virtual doorstep of City Hall for the first time. That will become even more apparent once LOVE Park to the

northwest undergoes a planned makeover. That is also expected to replace some of its hardscape surfaces with greater stretches of green. Meanwhile, Dilworth Park has become a delightful new destination for Philadelphians. ■

*This article is adapted from a section of a forthcoming volume, **City in a Park: A History of Philadelphia's Fairmount Park System**, by James McClelland and Lynn Miller, which will be published by Temple University Press later this year.*

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Holidays at Hopkinson House

Nelly Childress

There was joy, music, good cheer and mixing with neighbors during the holidays at Hopkinson House. Although Hopkinson House is a high-rise building, it is also a well-knit, giving community. Partying and enjoying music were not the only concerns of this community. It responded to the Salvation Army Christmas toy drive by donating over one hundred toys, games and stuffed animals. Thank you all.

Agnes Irwin Bel Cantos Choir

The Agnes Irwin Bel Cantos choir delighted the residents with carols on Saturday the 14th of December in the afternoon. Their wonderful young voices resounded in the lobby, led by a happy Murray Savar at the piano (they are his students — some he taught from kindergarten.) A few children in the audience joined enthusiastically in a chorus or two. Thank you, Murray, for the lovely music.

Christmas Tree Lighting & Party

The Hopkinson House Christmas tree lighting event to the sound of Murray's music was on Monday, December 16th, followed by a delighted audience singing once more their beloved traditional Christmas carols. Festivities then moved to the artistically decorated Solarium for the reception, sponsored jointly by Hopkinson House and Washington Square Citizens' League, featuring refreshments door prizes.

Hanukkah Celebration

On Tuesday, December 17th, Hopkinson House residents celebrated the lighting of the first candle of Hanukkah. The "Shamash," or "helper" candle, was lit first, and then used to light the one other candle after the blessings were recited. Following the lighting of both candles, a burst of songs erupted, led by Murray, and the joyous party started with latkes and more to eat and drink. Thank you Lisette. ■

Happy New Year!

Christmas Tree Lighting



Bel Cantos Choir Caroling



Christmas Tree Lighting Solarium Reception



Menorah Lighting and Hanukkah Celebration



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In Appreciation

Larry Meehan

Thanks to those who made the holidays festive:

Nelly Childress

Scott Childress

Paul Coyne

Enny Cramer

Lou DelSoldo

Mauriel Holland

George Koch

Lynn Miller

Roger Moss

Connie Pearlstein

David Roberts

Murray Savar

Bari Shor

Lisette Tarragano

Susan Tomita

Gail Winkler

and the wonderful Hopkinson House staff.



November 2014 Voter Turnout

This note is for those interested in how we at Hopkinson House performed our civic duty by voting in the 2014 midterm elections in November. Hopkinson House residents make up the majority of eligible voters in the polling place for the 3rd Division of Philadelphia's 5th Ward.

Reports indicate that 2014 midterm turnout of voting eligible population (VEP) decreased in all but 12 states, but the VEP turnout for Pennsylvania and Philadelphia was reported to be 36% vs. around 11% in 2013. Our Division reported a VEP turnout of 52% in 2014 vs. 27% in 2013. ■

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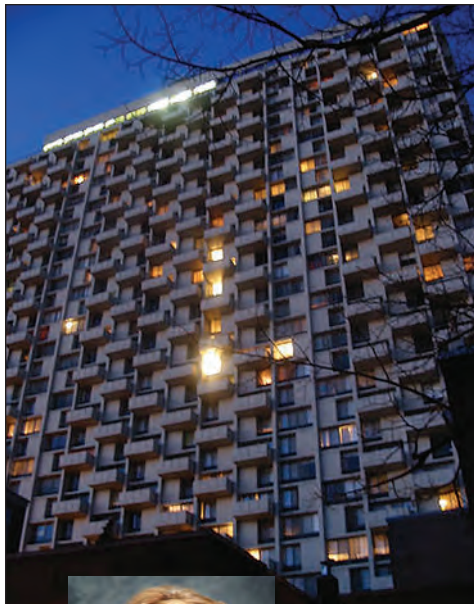
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— A FEW 2014 —
SALES NOT ON MLS*

UNIT	SOLD PRICE
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What is it Like to be a Child in Hopkinson House?

Enny Cramer

We have quite a number of young children in our building lately, babies, toddlers, preschoolers. What happens to them once they are of regular school age? Where are the six to twelve year olds? Do we chase them away? To find out I interviewed Marco De Martini, age 21, who lived amongst us between the ages of six and twelve, with his sister, three years his senior, his parents and grandparents.

Marco was born in Camden, and moved to Hopkinson House at the age of six. He had no friends in our building; there were no kids of his age. He did have friends in the neighborhood, his fellow schoolmates at St. Peter's School. When he turned ten, he joined the St. Peter's choir, another source of friends.

Marco's grandparents lived two floors above the younger De Martini's, and the children spent a lot of time with them. His grandmother, Alberta De Martini, is one of our earliest residents, known by most of us, as she is still an active participant in our social activities. Marco's parents, Alfred and Ninfa, both of Italian background, were eager to have their American children exposed to their language and culture. So Marco was enrolled at the Marco Polo School on



Picture by David Roberts

Marco De Martini with his grandmother Alberta De Martini

Ridge Avenue for two-hour classes on Saturdays.

In 2004 the family moved to Siena, where Marco entered Middle School. Attending school in Italy was quite surprising for this young American. In Italy, private schools are mainly for under-achievers whereas public schools are exclusively geared towards scholastic achievements, especially true for high school, which takes five years instead of the four years usual in the U.S. Students are asked to choose a specialized field of expertise. No extracurricular activities are offered — there is no time — for students are expected to study and attend school six days a week.

This summer the De Martinis returned for the holidays to Hopkinson House. Marco wanted to find a job since the Italian job market is far worse than the American one. He found a job as a draftsman, which will help him become a technical engineer. The other members of the family (mother and sister) are planning to return to Italy after the holidays, but not Marco.

It was interesting to speak with this multi-cultural and multi-lingual young man, who spent his youth in Hopkinson House. I hope many of the young kids currently living here will remain amongst us. According to Marco, this is a good place for a school ager. ■

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Diet and Health: Weight Control

David Roberts

Whether the purpose of your diet is weight loss or better health, you start with a major obstacle to overcome — the misconceptions that permeate our view of food, thanks to the anti-fat crusade and the adoption of its dogma by, first, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and, then, the medical establishment.

Depending on its temperature, fat is oily, greasy, or waxy, which makes it easy to plant in people's minds the frightening vision of fat clogging arteries and causing heart attacks and strokes. This vision is simplistic and false, but removing it from people's minds is very difficult, especially when many who should know better keep teaching it as though it was established truth.

When choosing foods for your diet you should keep in mind that the fats involved in arterial plaque are not the ones we eat. They are fats synthesized by the liver when we eat too much sugar. Similarly the fat that accumulates around our waists is not the fat we eat but fat synthesized from our blood sugar when the eating of carbohydrates and their digestion to sugars stimulates increased production of insulin. The increased insulin converts the excess sugar to fat. Protein and fat do not stimulate insulin production or the resulting conversion of blood sugar to fat and, therefore, protein and fat are not fattening.

USDA's advice and the obesity epidemic

The influence of the U.S. Department of Agriculture is nicely illustrated by a graph on page 328 of Nina Teicholz's splendid book, *The Big Fat Surprise* (Simon and Schuster, New York, 2014). The graph,

pictured to the right below, was prepared by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). It shows the changing incidence of obesity in adults aged 18 and over, divided into four groups by age, during the 36-year period, 1971-2006. In the first ten years, 1971-1980, the incidence of obesity was constant — the graph was flat; the "obesity epidemic" had not yet begun.

The USDA published its dietary guideline, recommending a diet low in fat and red meat but high in starch, in 1980, and that was the year the graph turned up; the incidence of obesity in every age group began to climb. In 1992 the USDA presented its advice in picture form, as the food pyramid, and the rate of increase for three of the four age groups then accelerated; the slope of the graph became steeper. In the fourth group, those aged 45 to 64, the incidence of obesity was already higher and increasing faster than in the other three groups.

Since each upturn followed publication of the same USDA advice, the association cannot be easily dismissed as coincidence. Moreover, if the advice had been sound, then the incidence of obesity would have been expected to decrease each time the advice was published. With obesity not recognized as a problem before 1980, the diet's purpose was simply to prevent heart disease. In practice its main effect seems to have been to increase obesity, hardly a surprise given the nature of the advice. Paradoxical as it may seem, USDA's low-fat diet evidently caused the epidemic of obesity in adults. The CDC survey did not address childhood obesity.

The USDA diet is very high in starch, virtually ensuring much obesity and diabetes, but it is low in sugar and therefore, if followed faithfully, could help prevent heart disease. But why does the medical establishment depend for dietary advice on USDA, an agency whose real expertise is in the production and marketing of cereal grains? There is no valid research to support a low-fat diet and there are many studies that refute it. The low-carbohydrate diet, by contrast, is based on 200 years of astute clinical observation and sound medical research. Individual physicians have at last begun to acknowledge this definitive work of their own science.

Low-fat diets have been shown to cause people to lose lean body mass (muscle) while gaining body fat. This is an unhealthy outcome and completely futile because the dieter's objective is to shed fat; any weight loss is incidental. Nonetheless, weighing yourself when dieting is a convenient way to check your progress. You can validate the result by measuring your waist. If weight loss is accompanied by a reduced girth, you will know that you have lost fat.

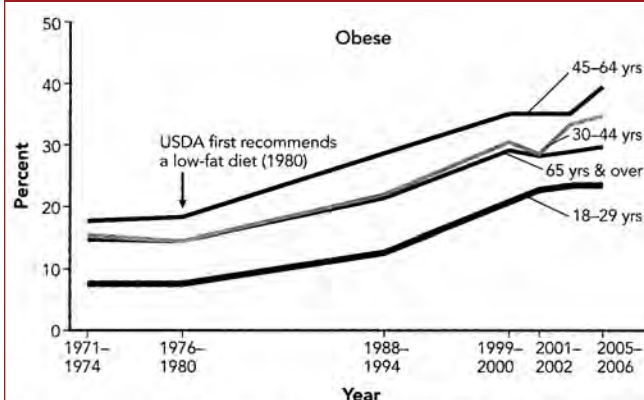
continued on page 21



Serve yourself slices of food that are nutritious, satisfying, enjoyable — and slimming!

Paradoxical as it may seem, USDA's low-fat diet evidently caused the epidemic of obesity in adults.

Rates of Obesity in the United States, 1971-2006



Source: CDC/NCHS, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey; adapted from "Health, United States, 2008: With Special Feature on the Health of Young Adults," National Center for Health Statistics.

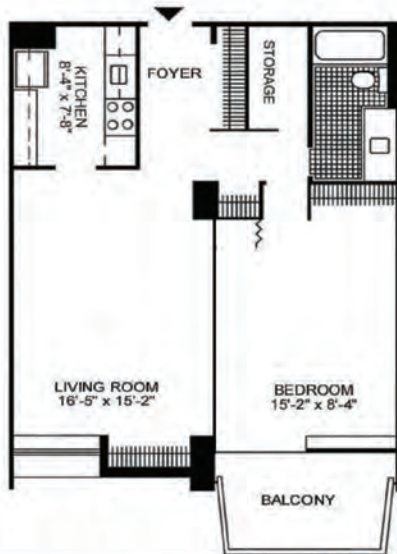
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Diet and Health

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Your diet

Excess weight is part of the metabolic syndrome. It has the same cause, the same prevention, and the same cure as the rest of the syndrome. The diet that keeps you healthy will also keep you slim. As you may recall, the metabolic syndrome consists of obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, and it is caused by the excessive consumption of digestible carbohydrates — starch and sugar.

Whether you are concerned more about health or weight, there are nutrients you should limit and those you should enjoy to the fullest. The nutrients to limit are, of course, the carbohydrates. To obtain the carbohydrate content of various foods you will need a carbohydrate-counter book. These books are readily available online and in bookshops. Online (Google, Bing, etc.) you can also find and print useful tables showing the content of carbohydrates and other nutrients in various foods.

If you buy packaged foods, read their labels carefully. Find the serving size and then the number of grams of carbohydrates in one serving. Many chocolate bars, for example, have a serving size of six squares. If the amount of sugar in a serving of such a chocolate is 12 grams you can divide 12 by six to find that each square contains two grams of sugar.

Two ounces or 60 grams

The objective is to limit your total daily carbohydrate intake — starch and sugar — to about two ounces or 60 grams. If you are being treated for diabetes, you should consult your physician before beginning

Sample Carbohydrate Table						
Food	Total carbs.	Fiber	Net carbs.	Protein	Fat	Calories
Boiled potato (half cup)	15.6 g	1.4 g	14.2 g	1.3 g	0.1 g	67
Small banana (half cup)	23.7 g	2.4 g	21.2 g	1.0 g	0.5 g	93
Beef prime rib (6 ounces)	0.0 g	0.0 g	0.0 g	37.0 g	56.4 g	667

a low-carbohydrate diet. He or she may wish to monitor your blood sugar more closely and, if necessary, modify your drug dosage. If you stick to the diet, and your diabetes is type 2, the diabetes and the need for the drug should eventually disappear. You will have removed the cause!

Using carbohydrate tables

I have put together a limited table by extracting three entries from the carbohydrate-counter book that I use — one for a vegetable, one for a fruit, and one for a meat (see above).

Obviously this particular table gives more than carbohydrate content. The column that most concerns us is **Net carbs**. This is the digestible carbohydrate content — total carbohydrate minus fiber. The potato and especially the banana are high in digestible carbohydrate and therefore fattening, although they contain negligible protein and fat and have few calories.

The beef prime rib is the opposite in every respect — totally free of carbohydrate but rich in nourishing protein and fat, and not at all fattening despite the huge calorie count, which you should ignore; calories are irrelevant and confusing. When you consult a carbohydrate-counter book you will find that fish, eggs, and cheese, and other meats,

are fairly similar in content to the beef rib meat, and they are all rich in vitamins and minerals. Because of their zero carbohydrate content you can eat as much of these animal products as you wish and not worry about your waistline.

The foods and drinks you will need to evaluate are fruits, vegetables, cereals, baked goods, and everything containing sugar. Let your carbohydrate-counter book(s) be your guide. These books generally use grams rather than ounces, so just remember to stay within 60 grams every day. When you consult your book, and food labels, you will see, for example, that 60 grams could include two slices of toast, a small potato, a peach, a serving of fresh strawberries and cream, and one or two squares of very dark chocolate (at least 70% cocoa). It is prudent to include a source of vitamin C that is low in carbohydrates — tomatoes, strawberries, cabbage, etc. You can safely add as much meat, fish, eggs, cheese, butter, and heavy cream as you wish without raising the carbohydrate total by a single gram.

I once lost 38 pounds in six months by eating this way and have never been healthier. Count and limit the carbohydrates for meals that are nutritious, satisfying, and enjoyable — and slimming! ■



small banana
21.2 grams net carbs



boiled potato
14.2 grams net carbs



Prime rib
0.0 grams net carbs

Buon appetito!

Polenta

Picture by David Roberts



The cold weather makes me wish for polenta, the versatile and ubiquitous Italian version of simply cooked cornmeal. An infinite variety of sauces can be served over boiled polenta, including the one with sausage and tomato sauce given below. Polenta can

also be mounded and left to cool, then sliced and sautéed in butter and/or olive oil and used as a base for vegetable sauces, including the mushroom ragout in the recipe below. It can also be broiled or baked with sauces, cheese and meat as a kind of lasagna. ■

Chef Luigi's Corner

Basic Polenta

- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 cups coarse grain cornmeal
- 6 cups of water

In spite of warnings about tireless stirring and frequent lumping, polenta is surprisingly easy to make. Measure out the water and put it in a large enough pot. Measure the cornmeal into a bowl and, right before heating, pour

enough water from the pot to cover the cornmeal. Then boil the remaining water, and after it has come to a rapid boil, dump in the wet cornmeal. Stir constantly until the cornmeal thickens. It will not take long, perhaps 5 to 10 minutes.

A note about the ingredients:

There are two types of corn meal, a fine-grained type that is best used for cornbread, and a coarse grain used for polenta. Bob's Red Mill sells delicious coarse cornmeal, but you can also use the corn grits sold loose at Whole Foods.

Polenta with Sausages

- 1 recipe of basic polenta
- 2 tbs. chopped yellow onions
- 3 tbs. olive oil
- 3 tbs. chopped carrots
- 3 tbs. chopped celery
- ¼ lb pancetta cut into julienned strips (optional)
- 1 lb. sausage in 3-inch lengths
- 1½ cups canned Italian tomatoes with juice. (I often put in the whole 28 oz. can)

Put the onion in a saucepan with the oil. Sauté until golden.

Add the celery, carrot and pancetta, if using, and sauté for three or four minutes.

Add the cut up sausages and cook for ten minute at medium heat, turning from time to time.

Add the tomatoes and simmer gently for 25 minutes.

The cooked polenta can be mounded on a large platter.

Make a well in the middle of the plate and pour the warm sauce into it.

Buon appetito!

A note about the ingredients:

A recipe in Marcella Hazan's The Classic Italian Cookbook inspires this dish. Use San Marzano tomatoes and any type of sausage you prefer pork, turkey or chicken. I think it works best with a mild sausage. The pancetta is optional, but it does add flavor.

Sautéed Polenta with Mushroom Ragout

- 1 recipe basic polenta
- 6 tbs. butter
- 6 tbs. olive oil
- 1½ oz. porcini
- 3 cups water
- 2 tbs. olive oil
- ¾ lb. oyster mushrooms, trimmed and thinly sliced
- ¾ lb. fresh shitake mushrooms, trimmed and thinly sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced through a garlic press
- 1 tbs. rosemary leaves chopped
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. fresh ground pepper
- 6 sprigs parsley chopped

Soak the porcini in warm water for 20 minutes. Lift mushrooms from the water and then drain the liquid, using a coffee filter or paper. Save drained porcini water. Roughly chop the soaked mushrooms.

Heat the olive oil and sauté the fresh mushrooms and the porcini in batches. When all have been sautéed, return them to the skillet with the porcini liquid, garlic, rosemary, salt and pepper, and simmer until the sauce has been reduced and thickened, about five minutes. Add the chopped parsley.

Set aside while you make the polenta.

When the polenta has cooked, mound it onto a cutting board into a long narrow rectangle. When it has thoroughly cooled, slice it in about ¾ inch slices and sauté it in the hot butter and oil. The polenta might soak up the butter and oil and you might need to add more. Arrange all the sautéed slices on a large serving plate or, better yet, place one sautéed rectangle on each individual plate which you will bring to the table. Spoon a generous amount of mushroom ragout over each serving.

A note about the ingredients:

Italian dried mushrooms are becoming more difficult to find as many of them are grown locally or even in China. I have been buying them at the cheese counter at Whole Foods. I believe they are domestic, but good nevertheless.

Reheat the mushroom sauce and spread the ragout over the sautéed polenta.



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