

What's Inside

Lynn Miller

All our lives have been much rearranged in this time of the coronavirus. That is reflected in what you will read in this issue, starting with the report from our Council president, **Theresa Kowalski**, who reminds us of essential behavior for us all, both to prevent infection and, should any of us become infected, to prevent its spread to other residents. Her advice is followed by that from **Erica Alles**, the manager of Hopkinson House, who provides useful information on what is being done to keep our community safe, while showing management's appreciation for the help and understanding of our residents and staff during this crisis.

Just as Pennsylvanians were preparing for our primary election later this month, COVID-19 played havoc with that schedule, too, pulling the nation's attention away from our political contests. **Larry Meehan** considers all of that and what it may portend for our critical general election in November.

Concha Alborg regrets that she is not able to deliver Welcome Baskets from the Society Hill Civic Association as long as we're practicing social distancing. But you'll enjoy her profile of two new residents who have actually been fixtures in our neighborhood for many years.

It may be optimistic at the moment to plan a museum trip to New York, but **Jane Hickman** gives us a tantalizing taste of an exhibition that carries visitors back to one of the earliest civilizations on earth, the Babylonian. It's a fascinating show and reassuring reminder of humanity's great accomplishments—and endurance—over millennia.

My little valentine to our own front yard, Washington Square, reflects my gratitude for its availability to us always, but especially in this time of unusual stress. You'll also read there about plans for the biennial Washington Square Affair, now postponed until the fall.

In his informative article about the remarkable Rebecca Gratz, **Joseph Quinn** again reminds us how rich is the history of our neighborhood, and how endlessly fascinating it can be to explore those riches. You can savor the story behind a house we (used to) pass daily, little more than a block away from Hopkinson House.

Finally, in her Chef's Corner, **Jane Hickman** assures us that the best things in life are sweet. She offers two examples that should inspire many stay-at-home cooks among us.

We thank Robin Siddall of Parallel Design, Inc. for her design of this issue. ■

on the HOUSE

The Newsletter of
Hopkinson House • Spring 2020



Message from Council

Theresa Kowalski



I write this on the first day of April 2020. Instead of enjoying the daffodils and the weeping cherry and dogwood trees, Hopkinson House residents, like all other Pennsylvanians, are living under a stay-at-home order from their governor. We live now under coronavirus lockdown. As I began writing, numbers from

Johns Hopkins indicate that the USA has surpassed all countries in the world with more than 200,000 coronavirus cases diagnosed. 6,000 of those are in Pennsylvania, and about 1,500 in Philadelphia County alone. By the time anyone reads this, the numbers will be much higher, and we'll all be hoping that we've finally reached the apex, flattened the curve, or whatever it takes to make those numbers start to go down. And even though we now have to isolate or self-quarantine and never get closer than six feet to anyone for at least another 30 days,

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Occasional Photo by Dennis McGlade



Helleborus niger (Christmas Rose)

Message from Council

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we must do it because it's the only tool that most of us have, our behavior, and it works. So on that note, following are some important announcements.

Other condominiums in Center City have already reported active cases within their buildings; therefore, Council and management have decided to develop and share plans and policies that will be practiced, now and when Hopkinson House will be dealing with its own active cases.

on the HOUSE

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on the House at
www.thehopkinsonhouse.com

In all cases, follow the guidance of your healthcare provider and local health department.

Because Hopkinson House expects to have active cases at some time, a protocol has already been developed to deal with extra and specialized cleaning and disinfecting.

Specialized Cleaning and Disinfecting

Outside professional cleaners have already been retained to clean and disinfect, using CDC recommended products, areas that are used more regularly by our residents, such as the laundry room. Additionally, they will be called in to disinfect any areas where

a resident who has become infected may have been. The cleaners will be following a protocol for the cleaning and disinfecting that was provided by CAMCO and developed by a consulting workplace hygienist.

To wrap up with an update on one of our more usual projects...

The HVAC Project

The Engineering Committee has selected and recommended one of the final two firms competing to provide project management services for the HVAC project. HHOA is in the process of developing a final scope of work to be agreed upon

between the two parties. As soon as the coronavirus incidence rate becomes low enough, and Governor Wolf lifts the stay-at-home order, work can commence on the catwalk and design section of the HVAC.

I urge all of you to please take care, follow the CDC guidelines for maintaining safe social distances, wash your hands for at least 20 seconds, try to get enough sleep and remember to order your groceries at least five days ahead. Be kind to yourself and your neighbor, and hopefully when the next issue of *on the House* comes out in three months, the world will be in a better place. ■

If You Are Diagnosed With COVID-19

- 1 Due to the seriousness and infectious nature of COVID-19, sick residents or anyone having been diagnosed with COVID-19, if under self-quarantine or in isolation, is asked to notify management. Please do this for the sake of your neighbors and the community.
- 2 Federal, state, and local privacy laws prevent the disclosure of either a resident's or employee's medical condition or information that would identify anyone diagnosed with COVID-19.
- 3 We're asking that you not leave your unit for at least 14 days. Building staff can help with deliveries, for the sick or for residents who are self-quarantined with suspected COVID-19, by leaving delivered packages and mail at your door.
- 4 If you must leave your unit because of medical reasons, notify management so that you can be escorted on a separate elevator that will be disinfected afterwards. However, in the event that you are diagnosed with COVID-19, probably you will be in the hospital. But, if you test positive and isolate in your unit, we ask that you follow the recommendations from the CDC listed to the right when you have finished your 14-day isolation.

Ending Home Isolation

People with COVID-19 who have stayed home (home isolated) can stop home isolation under the following conditions:

If you will not have a test to determine if you are still contagious, you can leave home after these three things have happened:

- 1 You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers) AND
- 2 other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved) AND
- 3 at least 7 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.

If you will be tested to determine if you are still contagious, you can leave home after these three things have happened:

- 1 You no longer have a fever (without the use of medicine that reduces fevers) AND
- 2 other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved) AND
- 3 you received two negative tests in a row, 24 hours apart. Your doctor will follow CDC guidelines.

Message from Management

Erica Alles



It is challenging to write something for future publication during a time when news changes hourly. Normally for spring I would write something about our beautiful daffodils and tulips in the beds outside, as they burst into life right on time. However, in early March, the coronavirus COVID-19 and related global pandemic became the biggest focus of HHOA for Council, residents, staff. Together, we establish temporary and evolving policies and procedures in our effort to comply with government requirements and industry standards to protect people and property. I sincerely appreciate our staff team members who have been working around the clock to keep operations moving for our residents and have adapted to changes in

routine. The maintenance department scours the globe to maintain our supply of disinfectants, which we all know are in short supply, and showed off some talent when they quickly constructed the sanitizer stands and plexiglass shields at the resident services desk. The housekeeping department created a sanitizing cart which they use to carry supplies around the building, as they sanitize frequently touched surfaces. The desk and door employees smile and greet our residents (albeit through a mask!) as they return home from a walk or needed trip to the store. On a human level there is some shared comfort coming home—or going to work—and seeing familiar faces, knowing we are all going through this momentous time together. I want to extend a warm thank you to our Council members who are responsive day and night. Navigating a pandemic is not in the governing documents, so we collaborate with a myriad of outside experts, including some residents

who have professional knowledge and understanding about the virus and its transmission.

In general, residents have been so supportive of the staff and have been understanding as well about the changes we've had to implement. It's been difficult to tell someone that their friends may not visit for a social call, during a time when many people could use some cheer, or that their contractor may not work at this time. We are told there is a larger purpose in the small sacrifices we are all making, which is we may help ourselves or someone else stay healthy. During several recent conversations with residents I've heard them say, "That's right. I live in a community. I understand the reason I need to make a sacrifice now for the greater good of my neighbors." And the neighbors who reached out to HHOA almost immediately to offer help have proven essential to allow some of our residents to stay home in safety.

Previously, perhaps I took for granted that I could invite people into my home, stand close to someone for a conversation or share belongings without wearing gloves and sanitizing! I now long for those simple acts and will try to remain appreciative of those freedoms. Please stay safe.

A few notes:

- Please enroll in auto debit to pay your monthly association fees. Some residents have found themselves

out of town, out of state, or further away due to the sudden impact of the COVID-19 virus. Auto debit will deduct your fees each month so you do not have to remember to mail a check. Enroll at www.camcomgmt.com, or email a blank voided check to Stephanie McCool at stephaniehhoa@camcomgmt.com and she will help you enroll.

- Pest control services continue in the building every Tuesday as exterminating is an essential service. Contact the residents services desk to be added to the list. Most services are at no extra charge to residents.
- Please refrain from ordering non-essential items (if possible) during this time, which will allow staff to focus on processing other important packages, and will give us room for necessities as they come in.
- On any given day right now, the building is probably more occupied than ever. That means people are making more noises, smoking more and cooking more than ever! Please have some patience and understanding with neighbors. However, remember, even during the day you should not let noise from your unit disturb neighbors. HHOA remains a non-smoking building which means that no one may smoke on a balcony or in the common elements. Thank you. ■

Residents Corner

Residents wishing to make comments or observations on the current issue may send them to: "The Editor," lynnm3@comcast.net. Those who do not have a computer can place their comment in an envelope addressed to "Editor, *on the House*" and give the envelope to the employee at the Resident Services Desk. Your comments will be published in the next issue of the newsletter. Anonymous comments will not be accepted.

The editor reserves the right to reject opinions/comments, etc., if they are deemed inappropriate or can involve the association in legal troubles.

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What Election!?

Larry Meehan

As of the end of March, the coronavirus death toll in the United States has exceeded 3,000, more than the number of fatalities from the attacks on September 11, 2001. More than 800,000 infections have been reported worldwide, including more than 175,000 confirmed cases in the U.S. Our communities have shuttered, unemployment has surged, and *The Wall Street Journal* reports, “U.S. stocks turn in their worst quarter since 2008.” Discussing the coming elections in this environment, never mind predicting outcomes, may be the height of folly, but here goes.

The Pennsylvania Presidential Primary

Our primary was scheduled to be held on April 28th, but Pennsylvania is one of six states to postpone voting until June 2nd. With primaries for five other states already planned on June 2nd, now voters in 11 states will take part in yet another Super Tuesday.

In Pennsylvania and elsewhere, there is no contest on the Republican side of the ballot. Polls show President Trump leading former Massachusetts Governor Bill Weld by 80 points here. For the Democrats, former Vice President Joe Biden, with 55 percent, has an apparently insurmountable lead over Senator Bernie Sanders, who polls at 29 percent. Biden has substantial leads in the polls for most of the remaining primaries. Accordingly,

it was hardly surprising to hear Mark Shields and David Brooks agree last week that Biden “...doesn’t have to do anything” to secure the nomination.

Could the Pandemic Derail Biden’s Nomination?

Bernie Sanders has warned us for years about inadequacies in our healthcare system. In *The Independent* recently, Carli Pierson compared the responses by Sanders and Biden to the pandemic. “Like many Americans, the former VP decided to hunker down during the crisis to avoid exposure... Meanwhile, Bernie Sanders has been front and center, fundraising \$2M for working class Americans hit hardest... while also fighting for a relief bill in the Senate... In the face of an economic downturn the likes the world has never seen before, I wonder how radical Sanders’ ideas seem now?”

Nevertheless, it is probably too late for Sanders to gain ground. Biden’s supporters point out that he has consistently beaten Sanders in recent primaries, and that nowhere was his dominance more obvious than in Michigan, where Sanders stunned Hillary Clinton in 2016. Biden not only won convincingly; he won every county, a result he duplicated in Florida a week later. In those elections, Sanders’ vaunted voter-turnout capabilities fell short of expectations. Alex Thompson and Holly Otterbein recently reported

in *Politico* that Sanders’ longtime ally and likely heir, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, has been distancing herself from Sanders and adopting a more accommodating stance toward moderate Democratic leaders. They quoted Max Berger, the former director of progressive outreach on Elizabeth Warren’s campaign: “She’s speaking in a way to create a majority in a way that Bernie is not interested in doing.” Thompson and Otterbein went on to note, “Some progressives have questioned whether Sanders should have softened his anti-establishment rhetoric and tried to build bridges with mainstream Democrats who voted for Hillary Clinton in 2016 rather than betting big on turning out disaffected and first-time voters.”

Another potential player is New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, who has suddenly become the darling of some Democrats. Even those who couldn’t stand the man a year ago award grudging approval. Cuomo has been described as “a hammer who treats everyone like a nail,” but his no-nonsense approach and coherent explanations of the problems facing New Yorkers have won him new fans. Even the President, in his never-ending effort to stir the pot, has declared Cuomo “a better candidate than Sleepy Joe.” Cuomo, however, was an early Biden supporter, and stated clearly that he is not a candidate for President.



Editor’s note: This article was submitted on March 31, eight days before Bernie Sanders suspended his campaign.

Coronavirus and Campaign Finance

Assuming Biden is the Democratic nominee, his presidential campaign will begin at a considerable financial disadvantage. Donald Trump has been squirreling away money for almost three years, and he now has about ten times as much cash on hand as Biden. Financing rules have enabled Trump to raise considerable funds through committees shared with the Republican National Committee. Biden won’t be able to take advantage of those rules to the same degree until he wins the nomination.

After the first Super Tuesday in early March, Biden claimed that he had won the day with a minimal ground organization and no money. To be sure, money poured in the following week, but the pandemic has slowed the flow of contributions to Act Blue and other democratic supporters. One imagines that Joe Biden is spending much of these days at home on the phone dialing potential contributors.

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ANTHONY WORE HIS HEART ON HIS SLEEVE.

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What Election!?

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The Latest Polls

To the surprise of Trump's critics, his poll numbers have improved since the pandemic began. A *Washington Post* poll found that 51 percent now approve of Trump's crisis management. On January 1st, the well-regarded FiveThirtyEight poll of potential voters indicated that 52.7 percent regarded the President unfavorably, and only 43.4 percent rated him favorably. By March 30th, the favorable vs. unfavorable gap had closed to 50.4 to 46.

Nate Silver, who heads FiveThirtyEight, warned that current polling figures are highly suspect. He went

so far as to call the numbers meaningless until the line of the "pandemic curve" begins to decline or at least flatten. We must first get beyond a situation where we have so little understanding of COVID-19 data and its implications.

While there has been a "Trump bump" recently, it is much smaller than the increases in the poll ratings for other world leaders during the pandemic, and also lower than those for state governors. The reason may lie in the nature of the crisis. Immediately after the first Iraq War in 1990-91 and the 9/11 attacks later, approval ratings for Bush

41 and later Bush 43 were extraordinarily high. Remember, however, that there was little objection to those administrations' policies during those periods; there was almost no open dissent. The same cannot be said of the public's response to the matter at hand, so the limited "rally 'round the flag" support for the administration could evaporate.

What Next?

Much could depend on how the President responds to the governors' requests to use the Defense Production Act more effectively. This 1950 federal act was a response

to mobilization needs in manufacturing and distribution at the onset of the Korean War. American manufacturing is not the behemoth it was 70 years ago; we now purchase most of these products abroad. (Witness the recent massive imports of medical supplies from China and elsewhere.) However, the distribution powers of the act could be useful. They would apply to the states' pleas for centralized coordination in distributing critical resources. At present, the states compete with one another, as well as federal agencies, to meet those needs. ■



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Getting to Know Our Neighbors

Annette and Robert Linck: From a Hopkinson Townhouse to the Hopkinson House

Concha Alborg (www.conchaalborg.com)

On a snowy January Sunday in 1965 Annette and Bob Linck went to the open house of the Hopkinson Townhouses on 7th Street. From the moment they stepped in, Bob knew this was going to be their home. In fact, he took off his galoshes so as not to soil “his” parquet floors. Built alongside the high-rise Hopkinson House and its back garden, the ten houses on Spruce Street and eight on 7th were designed by the same modernist architect, Oskar Gregory Stonorov (1905-1970). They shared the same fixtures and the same specifications. Bob, who has a civil engineering degree from Lehigh University, remembers seeing the blueprints of this urban renewal project with the high-rise and the surrounding townhouses.

At that time Annette and Bob had two children, 4-year-old Vanessa and 3-year-old Rob. The house had ample room for the family: three bedrooms, three baths, living room, dining room and a library; five levels in total—including a basement—and a garage. One of their favorite features was the brick patio, which they filled with red geraniums every summer.

Red geraniums came naturally to Annette because they are ubiquitous in Spain, where her maternal family, the Iglesias, came from. They settled in Philadelphia at the turn of the twentieth

century. She jokes that her first words were “No Pasarán,” (they will not go through) the Spanish Republican war cry. No wonder Annette was a serious dancer of flamenco and classical ballet. She studied dance in New York City and Madrid and performed while a student at the University of Pennsylvania.

When Annette and Bob met as members of Plays and Players on Delancey Street, she was engaged to be married to someone else. She played the ingénue and Bob, the leading man, in *Portrait in Black*, which later became a film with Anthony Quinn, Lana Turner and Sandra Dee. Bob drove Annette home after rehearsals and after the final performance he asked her out for the first time. They were married six months to the day they met!

During their fifty-four years in their Hopkinson Townhouse, Bob and



Bob and Annette Linck

Annette were dedicated members of the Philadelphia cultural scene. Bob retired from the family business and flying as a military transport pilot, and he enjoyed climbing in the Canadian Rockies, Grand Tetons, French and Swiss Alps. He served on boards of the Wilma Theater and the Athenaeum of Philadelphia; he was the Athenaeum’s president from 2015 to 2018. Annette served on the board of the Prince Music Theater and is an emerita board member of the Pennsylvania Ballet.

The Lincks had many friends in Hopkinson House, including Gail and Roger Moss, Tony Di Donato, and Wayne Thomas. When all the stairs in the townhouse were not fun to climb any more, the Lincks knew that they would move to Hopkinson House. They have been our neighbors since October, 2019. They love it here! Bob brags about being able to see 25 miles south to the horizon from the 24th floor. Annette made her “arroz con pollo” recipe at the last potluck dinner. The Lincks have five grandchildren who live all over the world, from Tokyo to Munich, and from Amherst and New York City to Palm Beach.

Their townhouse sold to a family with two children of similar ages as theirs when they moved there. They can see it from their balcony, but it looks empty right now, because it is being remodeled and the red geraniums are not blooming in the brick patio yet. ■





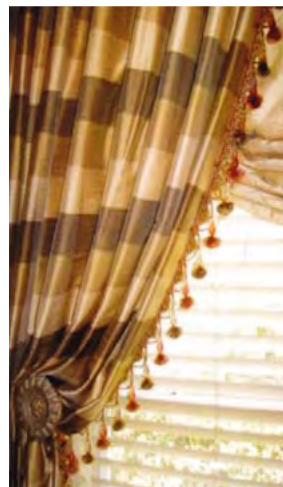
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New York Exhibition on Ancient Babylon

Jane Hickman

Hopkinson House residents may be interested in visiting an exhibition currently at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World (ISAW) in New York. *A Wonder to Behold: Craftsmanship and the Creation of Babylon's Ishtar Gate* offers a fascinating look at various classes of ancient objects and shows in detail how they were made. This exhibition goes beyond a traditional display of artifacts and successfully places each piece within the context of Middle Eastern art and craftsmanship.

The first gallery focuses on the archaeology associated with the Ishtar Gate, including a wonderful reconstructed panel of bricks depicting a striding lion, excavated in Iraq in the late 1880s. The Gate was named after Babylon's patron deity, Ishtar, and was part of a Processional Way built during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II, 604–562 BCE. We learn how the molded, glazed mudbricks were made

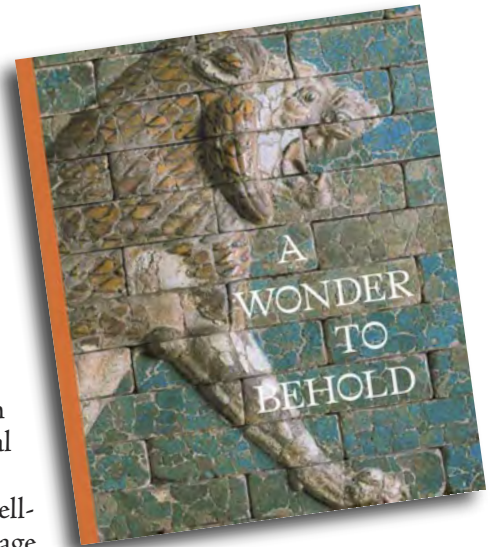
and how the Gate was constructed and later reconstructed by archaeologists. Finely detailed archival drawings, photographs, and watercolors created shortly after the discovery of the Gate reveal how this iconic monument appeared in Western imagination. This gallery includes many types of objects that were made by local and regional craftspeople, from marble bowls to cylinder seals to cuneiform tablets.

The second gallery concentrates on how the makers of various objects interacted with different raw materials. The origins and properties of stone, glass, gold, semi-precious minerals, and clay are described and illustrated. Many materials are displayed as they appeared in their original state before they were transformed into both practical and magically potent objects. The range of objects exhibited, including beautiful necklaces of carnelian, agate, and rock crystal jewelry, illustrates

the movement of people, raw materials, and manufacturing techniques throughout the region.

Over 180 artifacts are featured in the exhibition, with object loans from nine international and domestic institutions. A well-illustrated 186-page color catalog, with 13 essays and excellent color photographs of the objects, is available for purchase.

The Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University is an independent center for advanced scholarly research, graduate education, and exhibitions. It is located at 15 East 84th Street, New York City, New York 10028. The exhibition is scheduled through May 24th, 2020. Call 212-992-7800 for more information. ■



Show catalog for *A Wonder to Behold: Craftsmanship and the Creation of Babylon's Ishtar Gate*

Editor's Note: The ISAW galleries are now temporarily closed because of the coronavirus epidemic. Check to see if they will reopen in May or whether the exhibition discussed here will be extended. See the phone number at the end of this article.

To order the catalog online, go to <https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691200156/a-wonder-to-behold>.



[Fig 1] Reconstructed panel of bricks with striding lion, part of Ishtar Gate. Babylon, Iraq, 604–562 BCE. H. 99.7 cm; W. 230.5 cm. Image courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

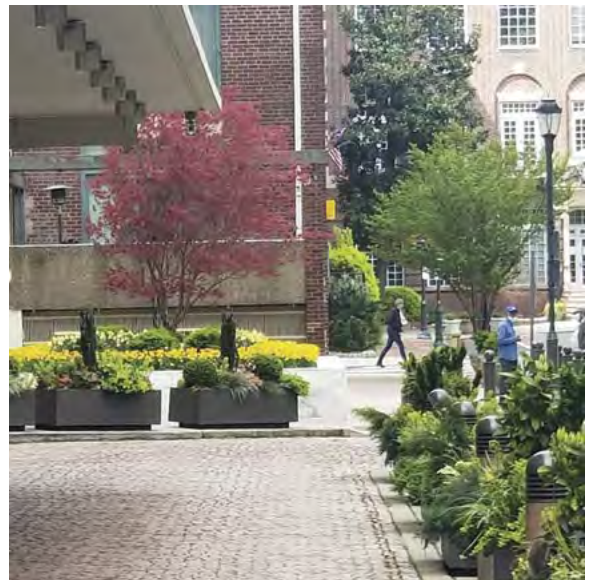


[Fig 2] Marble bowl with procession of bulls, Early Dynastic Period, probably Iraq. Image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY.

Hopkinson House Planters in Full Bloom



Photos by Lisa Schwab



Appreciating Washington Square at a Time of Crisis

Lynn Miller (www.lynn-miller.net)

This was meant to be an article on this spring's Washington Square Affair, the event sponsored by the Society Hill Civic Association (SHCA), which takes place in our front yard every two years early in June. But, like almost everything else in our social calendars since the coronavirus upended our lives, the Affair has been postponed from June 3rd until the fall. For those who don't know the event, this evening of camaraderie is the major fundraiser to benefit the square. While raising substantial funds to help maintain one of Philadelphia's jewels, it brings neighbors together from throughout Society Hill to socialize over food and drink contributed by a number of nearby restaurants and watering holes. A giant, open-sided tent on the lawn is the venue. There is music, lively conversation, and perhaps an historical figure or two to accompany the festivities. Yes, such activities will return later this year, so I'll come back

to this spring's postponed affair in a moment.

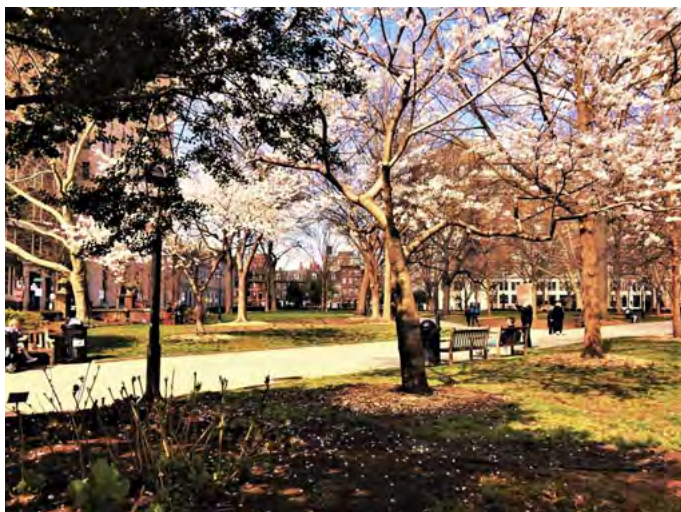
What's been striking throughout our recent upheaval is how Washington Square is serving once again as a place of refuge. That is a role it has played over the course of three-plus centuries, although we may not be so aware of that in "normal" times. But in recent weeks, people have been congregating there in what seems to be an inverse relationship to the social restrictions on their lives. Some of this can be accounted for by the arrival of pleasanter weather and the visual delights in watching springtime renew the park. But for many of us, a visit to the square has also relieved the tedium of self-isolation at home, allowing for fresh air and a bit of exercise while maintaining social distancing right in the heart of Philadelphia.

The city owns the square, which of course is one of five that William Penn had drawn on the map of the city he dreamed up in the

1680s. Yet it took some time for our square to become a park. It served as a potters' field and burial ground for soldiers from both sides during the Revolutionary War. In 1793, when Philadelphia was the nation's capital, George Washington was living nearby on Market Street in his second term as president. In August of that year, yellow fever came to the city from a ship docked in the Delaware. The president and his household soon fled to the relative safety of Germantown, just as most other well-off citizens also moved out of the city. That first great epidemic in the new nation only subsided months later after killing up to 5,000 residents, or ten percent of the city's population at the time. The bodies of some of the victims joined those of the soldiers who were buried in trenches along the perimeters of the square.

In the 1820s, Washington Square was first landscaped (and named for our first

president) in the general configuration you see today. It remained an attractive oasis while the city thrived and grew. But by the last decades of the 20th century, Philadelphia's parks budget wasn't sufficient to keep our green space from looking ever more bedraggled. Then, in 2005, Philadelphia gave the National Park Service (NPS) the responsibility to maintain our patch of Penn's heritage, bringing it under the control—though not the ownership—of the adjacent Independence National Historical Park. We've seen improvements ever since. Our current need for respite in our 6.4-acre park has happily occurred at just the time its caretakers have been enhancing its beauties. Late last winter, the NPS engaged in major pruning of the square's trees, encircling them at the base with the resulting wood chips as a way of improving the control of moisture and minimizing weed growth where the grass is reluctant to grow. continued on page 15



Washington Square, early spring



Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers, Washington Square



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Appreciating Washington Square

continued from page 13

Because substantial funds have been raised from its previous Washington Square Affairs, the SHCA has been able to field a remarkable group of volunteers to maintain and improve the park's plantings in cooperation with the NPS. Directed by Sherley Young and her advisory board, their goal is to create a master plan that will begin by identifying all the park's trees and ultimately make Washington Square a nationally recognized arboretum, albeit one with an important history apart from its plantings. Thanks to the work of today's volunteers, visitors

are sure to be impressed this spring and summer as never before by the range and beauty of new plantings.

In recent months, volunteers have worked with NPS staff to repair and clean park benches. The monument to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers of the Revolutionary War has been steam-cleaned. That memorial was created in the 1950s, soon after the rejuvenation of Society Hill got underway, shortly before Hopkinson House was built. The monument features the life-size statue of George Washington by the great 18th-century sculptor, Jean-Antoine

Houdon, who in 1785 traveled from Paris to Mt. Vernon at the behest of Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin to create this likeness of the future president (this bronze copy was cast from the marble original, which stands in the Virginia statehouse in Richmond).

Now that you've had a taste of the park's history, what about this year's delayed Washington Square Affair? It is set to take place on October 8th, with fingers crossed that we will be back to normal by then. The patron party will precede it on September

24th. As always, the event is limited to 500 participants, since that is the number that can be accommodated under the tent. Planners are looking for a sell-out again this year, hopefully to raise some \$80,000, as they did in 2018, to continue to make Washington Square a beautiful and spiritually uplifting oasis for our neighborhood. Happily, that oasis, a gem in Philadelphia's crown, is also the front yard for Hopkinson House, reassuring us all that this treasure still endures and serves us and our fellow-citizens through times of upheaval just as it has for centuries. ■



A view of Washington Square



Washington Square Affair, 2018

Photos by Lynn Miller

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Rebecca Gratz and Her Legacy

Joseph Quinn

On Spruce Street, between 5th and 6th, one building stands out among the traditional Society Hill row homes with their marble stoops and red-brick façades. Number 532 resembles a Renaissance-style Italian palazzo of the kind seen on the streets of Florence or along the canals of Venice. It's four stories tall and twice as wide as other homes on the block. It features a portico with a graceful arched gateway of ornate black iron work leading to a small courtyard. Enclosed there you will find the gracious private entrance, an imposing doorway capped with more filigreed iron work, and, a few steps beyond, a charming small garden.

The top three floors are plain white stucco, but the street level is faced with a symmetrical arrangement of gray stone panels. Inset below the first-floor windows are fanciful carvings of mythological griffins. The second-floor windows are outlined with the same gray stone and graced with decorative balustrades. At the top is a modest cornice and four oval plaques featuring delicately carved cherubs surrounded with garlands of flowers. Closer examination reveals other exuberant touches that set this address apart from its staid, uniform neighbors. Over the gate are inscribed three words that are sure to invite the curiosity of passersby: REBECCA GRATZ CLUB.

Who was Rebecca Gratz? She was a member of a

distinguished Philadelphia family that had a significant influence on the educational and cultural institutions in our city during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Gratz family members established and supported several Jewish philanthropic agencies that helped improve the lives of thousands of citizens in need.

Gratz was born on March 4th, 1781 in Lancaster. Her father, Michael Gratz, was a wealthy merchant who moved his family to Philadelphia to take advantage of its rich cultural life. They moved in an elite circle of society, but also devoted their time and wealth to helping the less fortunate. They honored traditional Jewish customs and were prominent members of Mikveh Israel Synagogue. At a time when anti-Semitism was common even among the educated upper-classes, Gratz family members immersed themselves in the secular life of the city and actively promoted social integration of Jews and Christians. In particular, Rebecca Gratz chose to confront and counter prejudice through her involvement in various charitable causes.

As one of the first Jewish women in America to attend college (what is now Franklin and Marshall), she worked tirelessly to bring educational opportunities to underserved populations, especially young Jewish women, who were often overshadowed in a male-centric culture.



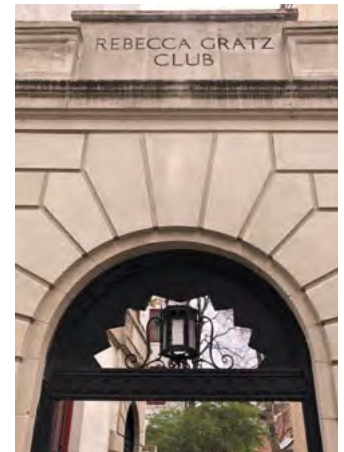
Portrait of Rebecca Gratz by Thomas Sully. Oil paint on wood. Courtesy of The Rosenbach

A list of organizations she founded during her lifetime (she was 88 when she died in 1869) gives some idea of her influence.

- The Female Association for the Relief of Women and Children of Reduced Circumstances in Philadelphia (1801)
- The Philadelphia Orphan Asylum (1815)
- The Female Hebrew Benevolent Society (1819)
- The co-educational Hebrew Sunday School (1838)
- The Jewish Foster Home and Orphan Asylum (1855)

She insisted that women populate the boards and staffs of these organizations and be placed in positions of leadership. Even today, thanks to the widespread impact of her determination and benevolence, she is cited as a model of feminist empowerment and enlightened social activism.

Rebecca wasn't the only Gratz family member who left a lasting mark on the area through distinguished



Rebecca Gratz Club entrance

service. Brother Jacob served in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and Senate. He was one of fifteen Jews who were early subscribers to the Athenaeum of Philadelphia. Brothers Simon, Joseph and Hyman were among the founders of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. In Rebecca's honor, Hyman Gratz left a trust fund for the establishment of a Jewish teacher's college that has since evolved into Gratz College, located in Melrose Park. Nephew Benjamin Etting was elected Secretary of the Philadelphia Mercantile Library. Nephew Isaac Hays was a staff surgeon at Wills Eye Hospital and a founder of the American Medical Association.

Gratz's personal life has been the subject of a good deal of sentimental speculation. As her portraits testify (two by Thomas Sully are in the Rosenbach Museum and Library collection) she was an exquisite beauty. Yet she never married, choosing to devote her life to the service of others. How continued on page 19

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Rebecca Gratz and Her Legacy

continued from page 17

could a beautiful, smart, accomplished woman not want to marry and settle down to a sedate domestic life? So went conventional thinking of the time. There are hints she formed a romantic attachment with Samuel Ewing, a non-Jewish Philadelphia lawyer, but it is believed her strong religious convictions made it impossible to consider an inter-religious marriage. She once remarked that what some called the “misfortune of single ladies,” was in her case “converted into a blessing,” giving her all the more time and energy to devote to her charities.

Then there is *Ivanhoe*. Much has been written about Rebecca Gratz being the model for a character in Sir Walter Scott’s 1819 novel. Rebecca of York was

considered one of the first sympathetic depictions of a Jew in English literature. Scott became familiar with Gratz through Washington Irving, who supposedly suggested to Scott that he give his fictional Rebecca the same qualities as the real Rebecca he knew, namely, enchanting beauty, intelligence, and a willingness to sacrifice for others.

The full story is told by (coincidentally named) Gratz Van Rensselaer in an 1888 article in *Century Magazine*: “The Original Rebecca of *Ivanhoe*.” Van Rensselaer calls Scott’s Rebecca “by far the finest and most romantic creation of female character that the author ever conceived.” And he quotes Scott, in a letter to Washington Irving, as saying: “Does the Rebecca

I have pictured compare with the pattern given?” Gratz was aware of the speculation. In a letter to her sister-in-law she commented about Scott’s depiction: “Tell me what you think of my namesake Rebecca.”

The building at 532 Spruce was designed by the firm of Hewitt, Granger & Paist and built in 1913. Its original use was as a home for unwed mothers under the auspices of the Jewish Maternity Society. Alterations were made by the firm of Silverman & Levy in 1928, after which it was occupied by the Rebecca Gratz Club. The club was founded in 1904 as a Federation of Jewish Charities agency. An article in the *Evening Bulletin* on February 2nd, 1954, headlined “Rebecca Gratz Club a Home Away From Home,” gives some insight into the club’s purpose.

The article describes the atmosphere as resembling “a university sorority house,” and run as if it were a college dormitory. It was a non-sectarian shelter for about 100 women from

Philadelphia and beyond, ranging in age from 18 to 25, who had no “suitable or available homes of their own.” Professional social workers supervised educational and social activities. The article reveals that some residents were “not so well adjusted as others,” but that all could benefit from the “therapeutic value in the friendly group life” offered by the club.

In 1985 the building was converted to a private apartment complex. It was placed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in 1999.

To complete the Rebecca Gratz story, stroll up to the 800 block of Spruce Street and visit her grave and those of several family members in the Mikveh Israel Cemetery, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

For their research assistance I wish to thank Paul Steinke, Executive Director, Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia; and Bruce Laverty, Curator of Architecture, The Athenaeum of Philadelphia.



Rebecca Gratz Club



Further Reading

Jewish Women’s Archive:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20060513092835>

<http://www.jwa.org/exhibits/wov/gratz/rgbio.html>

History of American Women: <http://www.womenhistory-blog.com/2013/07/rebecca-gratz.html>

Jewish Virtual Library:

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/rebecca-gratz>

My Jewish Learning:

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/rebecca-gratz/>

Rebecca Gratz: Women and Judaism in Antebellum America by Dianne Ashton, Wayne State University Press, 1997.

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In Memory

Citizen George Koch

Hopkinson House lost its longest living resident when George Koch passed away on March 1st. Since moving into the building shortly after it was built in 1963, George was a key contributor to our community and his beloved city. If a "good citizen" is one who is informed, actively participates, and enhances public life, then George's devotion to

religious, cultural, and numerous charitable institutions was exemplary. As we approach another election, it seems fitting to acknowledge the crucial role he played in the electoral process here.

A sincere believer in political engagement, George led many voter registration drives for the Washington Square Citizens' League. Upon arriving at the polling

place each election day, the first person one encountered was George Koch, the longtime Minority (Republican) Inspector on the Election Board. When illness prevented his serving on the board last November, the most frequent inquiry from voters was, "Where's George?" His Democratic Party counterpart for many years, Majority Inspector Judith Savitt, recalled

George's singular efforts to make sure that elections went smoothly. She noted, "he was so witty, but most important, he was just good company. I enjoyed the day just knowing he would be there."

We will miss George at Hopkinson House and we offer our deepest sympathy to his partner of more than six decades, Tony DiDonato. ■

Mauriel Holland's Hopkinson House Presence

Late last December, word came to her many friends at Hopkinson House of the death in Florida of Mauriel Holland. Mauriel was an important presence in our community until 2017 when she moved—very reluctantly—to a retirement home in Florida to be near her daughter and son-in-law. In her long residence in our

building, she was deeply involved in the life of the Washington Square Citizens' League, where she participated avidly in its discussion groups and took leadership roles, including serving as its president. She was a faithful poll-worker at election time, preparing the booths in the solarium for every voter. Nor did her

community involvement end at our front door. She loved her volunteer work teaching English as a second language, and was an avid participant in the city's musical and theatrical life.

To all who knew her, Mauriel's enquiring mind was perhaps her most enduring and endearing

quality. Her friend, Faith Abbey, recalls how often Mauriel would ask, rhetorically but with a sense of wonder, "How can one not be curious?" We remember with gratitude Mauriel's unquenchable enthusiasm for learning ever more about the world and her many contributions to Hopkinson House. ■

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Keep calm and eat dessert. The best things in life are sweet.

Jane Hickman

During these trying times, it is perfectly acceptable to indulge ourselves with a wonderful dessert. Thank you to our Hopkinson House neighbor Marie

Nowak for providing us with her recipe for a delicious Lemon Pound Cake. The second recipe is for a low-fat Crème Renversée or Caramel Custard. ■

Chefs' Corner

Note: If you have a favorite recipe, we would love to test it and put it in this column. Send your recipes or requests to jhickman@upenn.edu. Thank you!

Lemon Pound Cake

Cake:

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup unsalted butter (2 sticks), room temperature
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 eggs, room temperature and separated
- 1 cup milk
- grated zest of 2 lemons

Drizzle:

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup lemon juice

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Grease and line with foil or parchment a large loaf pan 10"x 5". A bundt pan may be used instead.

In a large bowl, beat butter with sugar until light. Add egg yolks, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add zest.

Combine flour, salt, and baking powder. Add dry ingredients to the butter/egg mixture alternately with the milk.

Beat the egg whites until stiff. Gently fold whites into batter.

Spoon batter into prepared pan. Bake 1 hour and 10 minutes or until cake tester comes out clean.

For the drizzle: Mix sugar and lemon juice together. Using a skewer or cake tester, poke holes into cake and drizzle lemon juice/sugar mixture over hot cake. Allow cake to cool in pan before removing.



Crème Renversée

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 3 large egg whites
- 1 14-ounce can low-fat sweetened condensed milk
- 1 1/2 cups skim milk
- 1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract

Directions:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

In a small heavy saucepan, combine sugar with 1/4 cup water. Bring to a simmer over low heat, stirring occasionally. Increase heat to medium-high and cook,

without stirring, until the syrup turns a deep amber color. (Swirl the pan if the syrup is cooking unevenly.) Immediately pour the syrup into a 1 1/2- or 2-quart souffle dish or casserole and carefully tilt the dish so caramel coats halfway up the sides.

In a large bowl, whisk together eggs and egg whites. Add condensed milk, skim milk, and vanilla, blending well.

Pour the mixture through a fine strainer into the caramel-coated dish. Set the dish in a larger, shallow pan, such as a roasting

pan. Pour enough hot water into the larger pan so it comes halfway up the side of the custard dish.

Bake for 60 to 70 minutes, or until the custard is set around the edges but still wobbly in the center. Depending on your oven, it may take longer.

Remove the dish from its water bath to a rack to cool to room temperature. Cover and refrigerate at least 4 hours or overnight.

To serve, run a knife around the edge of the dish and invert the flan onto a plate.





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