

What's Inside

Lynn Miller, www.lynn-miller.net

Melissa Port, our manager, takes the summer season as her theme. Now that we're welcoming in fresh outdoor air, she reminds us how to ask for repairs, where needed, to damaged window screens and door. She also comments on the improvements to our beautiful rooftop swimming pool and reminds us how to treat our neighbors when tending to our balcony gardens.

Sarah Kelly, our new—but also returning—president of Council, reminds us who else was chosen in our Hopkinson House elections this spring, as well as who now holds which offices. She provides updates and news on various activities and projects in our building, and urges residents to volunteer for one of the committees that serve our community.

Speaking of our pool, **JoAnna Farber** reports on the happy social event at sunset early in June in our solarium. Sponsored by our Pool and Social Committees, more such events will follow.

Concha Alborg reminds readers that they are invited to use our library, also on the solarium level, which is now under the excellent care of resident Diane GaNun. No library anywhere has a more generous lending policy. What's more, the room where it's located is due for an upgrade soon.

Resident **Annette Linck** tackles a subject that is familiar to, if seldom

acknowledged by, every resident of Hopkinson House: while riding the elevator up or down in our building, what kinds of conversations should one have with one's lift-mates? A show of friendliness is, of course, to be encouraged, but small talk is the happy norm.

Modesty doesn't prevent me from announcing that this periodical won a national award this spring. Read all about it and my thanks to the people who made it possible.

Those who have been Hopkinson House residents for more than a little while are likely to find that they have accumulated "stuff" over time that they no longer want or need. Our neighbor, **Jean Papaj**, has contributed an article on responsible recycling that is immensely helpful when it comes to decluttering.

Joseph Quinn takes us on an architectural tour of the three successive head-quarter buildings of the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society. The first, dating from 1840, still stands not far from us on Walnut Street. The other two, built in 1868 and 1932, are visible from Hopkinson House.

You may be reading this days after the nation celebrates Independence Day, and in that spirit I share with the reader my recent trek around our immediate neighborhood—Independence National Historical Park—with a number of tourists, all of us under the direction

on the HOUSE

The Newsletter of
Hopkinson House • Summer 2023



of a tour guide. I found my jaunt enlightening and hope you'll find my account of it is, too.

Also in a patriotic mood, **Michael Neff** gives us a delightful update of the familiar portrait of our founders gathered inside Independence Hall to sign their names to the Declaration of Independence. He imagines how that scene would—or at least should—look if it happened today.

Summertime means cold drinks of every variety, and

Martha Cornog therefore takes us on a wonderful historical tour of how the ice cube got to be the way it is today. You may be surprised to learn that its pedigree is ancient.

You can taste some of the wonderful flavors of summer when you visit our Chef's Corner. **Johanne Lamarche** gives you a yummy cocktail dip to accompany all your icy drinks, followed by a caprese salad and a peach upside down cake. Let the good times roll! ■

Occasional Photo by Bari Shor



Residents enjoy the opening of the pool for the summer season. Read more on page 2.

on the HOUSE

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

Message from Management

Melissa Port

Well, Hopkinson House residents, there is no doubt about it: summer is finally here! The sun is shining (most days), and the breeze is warm. Residents can finally take advantage of our beautiful pool during the day and enjoy the stunning city views from our sundecks in the evenings.

For our residents who enjoy their balconies throughout the summer-time, please remember to be considerate of your neighbors when taking care of your seasonal blooms, by not overwatering or spilling onto people below. Additionally, if you need any screen repairs for your windows or balcony doors, please visit the Front Desk and place a work order for Housekeeping. You can also reach out to the Management office (215.923.1776 x115) and we can provide details, including pricing, and schedule your repairs.

If you have not already been to the pool this

season, I encourage you to visit and see the wonderful additions our Pool Committee has made. There is a new outdoor shower, convenient for a quick rinse before and after a swim, as well as the new, colorful accent wall, designed by our very own Councilman, Joe Salerno. A special thank you to our Pool and Social Committees for collaborating on our first, and very successful, pool party of the season! We hope to see you all on the roof throughout the summer for more community events. For anyone interested in pool membership or daily passes, please contact Stephanie McCool in the Management office, or visit our Front Desk for more information.

Summer is also gearing up to be our busiest time of the year, with many move-ins,

move-outs, and twice as many deliveries. With the HVAC project ongoing, use of the freight elevator on weekdays needs to be scheduled in advance with Management. If you need to schedule a move or have an upcoming delivery, please contact Stephanie McCool in the Management office to reserve your preferred date and for all the necessary details to make your move as smooth as possible.

This season can be hectic, with vacations, summer camps, moves, and of course, the HVAC project, so please contact my office if you need any assistance or have any questions, at 215.923.1776 x112. The Management wishes our residents a very happy summer, whether you spend it on the sand at the shore, or poolside here at Hopkinson House! ■



Melissa Port is the General Manager at Hopkinson House and has happily served this community since 2021.

Residents' Corner

Socializing on Our Roof

JoAnna Farber

What better way to cap off a perfect first week of pool season than by celebrating at a sunset social? Jointly sponsored by the Social and Pool Committees, the June 3rd party buzzed with 50 or so longtime and new residents enjoying great conversation and delicious food together. Two indisputable facts about Hopkinson House: the pool is a delight and our community loves a party. We hope you attend the next one! ■

If you want to share feedback or ideas with either committee, contact the committee chair via email:

L J Steinig (Social)
ljsteinig@gmail.com

Toni O'Neil (Pool)
oneil.toni@gmail.com



Hopkinson House residents gather on the roof for a sunset social celebrating the start of summer.

Photo by JoAnna Farber

Message from Council

Sarah A. Kelly

Greetings, owners and residents. This is my first message, or at least my first in a very long time, as the new (and once-again) President of the HHOA Council. By now I hope everyone has enjoyed the first few long weekends of the summer.

Recent Council Elections

For those of you who may have missed prior messages and signage, two new Council members (Millie Korn and I) were elected in April, and one member (Larry Meehan) was re-elected. Council held a special meeting shortly thereafter for the purpose of electing officers. Your current Council and officers are:

- Sarah Kelly, President
- Larry Meehan, Treasurer
- Rob Krebs, Secretary
- Joe Salerno
- Bruce Chamberlin
- Bob Parsky
- Millie Korn

Council Committees

You may expect to hear shortly from management about a call for those interested in joining a committee. We especially need members on the Finance Committee. Council is also working to establish a new “green building” committee. Please raise your hand if you’re interested in performing this type of service to our community.

HVAC Project

I’ve been spending a good deal of my time in meetings learning about our ongoing project. We are currently on track to finish on time by the end of February, 2024.

Because it’s been awhile since our last building-wide update meeting on the progress of the project, we are planning an in-person meeting (a Zoom link will also be available for those who can’t or prefer not to come in person), later this summer, when work on the Solarium is closer to completion. At that time we will update you on the construction progress, loan status and financial status, and answer your questions as best we can.

Capital Project Reserve Study

Earlier this year, Council received a report from KIPCON, an engineering consulting firm, updating the Association’s existing capital reserve study. Council is reviewing the report and will meet with the KIPCON engineering consultants later this month to ask questions and delve into the study in more detail. After that, we plan to schedule another meeting with owners this summer or early fall (separate from the HVAC meeting, but also in person in the Solarium, with Zoom access available), to present the findings of the study and answer your questions.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

You may have noticed the installation of several EV charging stations on the upper level of the garage. Council is still considering rules and charges for use of these stations, and our management needs to coordinate those issues with Park America’s management. Expect

to hear more about how we will make these stations available to resident parkers later this summer.

June 6th Fire Department Incident and Follow-up

Many of you who were home in the late afternoon of June 6th are aware of the Fire Department’s arrival and the discovery of smoldering rags and the smell of smoke in a closet within the construction office being used by our HVAC contractors. As a result of that incident, we retained a safety consultant to review the areas used by our contractors and to ensure the proper storage, handling and disposal of hazardous materials, and also to inspect all of those areas every 30 days until project completion. Since the construction office has sprinklers, it’s not required by code to install smoke detectors. However, we’ve asked Siemens, our fire alarm company, to provide us with a proposal for adding smoke detectors in that space, which we hope to have installed by mid-July. Please know that we are staying on top of this issue with every concern for your, and our own, safety.

Taylor Management

Melissa Port, Larry Meehan and I recently had a productive meeting with the president and senior management of Taylor, our retained professional property managing agent, to discuss expectations and areas

in which Taylor can help us enhance our building management. Highlights of the topics we covered include, among others, assistance with our commercial leases; help with evaluating and placing our insurance coverage; financial reporting and planning, including with respect to our capital budget and reserve funding in light of the KIPCON study; assistance with the bidding and management of capital projects; and a building security assessment and related recommendations. As we make progress on these topics, we will keep you updated.

Union Negotiations


Active in-person negotiations have begun with the union representing our maintenance employees, whom you may recall voted unanimously to unionize in January of this year. We will let you know when we have reached an agreement with the union on behalf of the employees.

Thank you for the good wishes I have received from many of you. Please be on the lookout for notices of the meetings I have mentioned. For the sake of those of you whose air conditioning will be offline this summer as the HVAC work proceeds in your units, we will keep our fingers crossed for cooler than usual weather, but one way or another, I hope you all enjoy the rest of the summer. ■

Sarah A. Kelly is a retired lawyer, who is serving her second stint as HHOA Council president, almost 20 years after the first time she served in that capacity.

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Getting to Know Our Neighbors

Diane GaNun: The Restoration of Our Library

Concha Alborg

Diane GaNun and her husband, Bob Zwart, moved to Hopkinson House during the COVID-19 epidemic, in March 2020. In fact, their movers arrived on the last day before everything closed down. They were always fond of Philadelphia and, since Bob is a veteran, the city also seemed like an appropriate place to call home. Another attraction is that their son lives in New Jersey. But the real selling point was our beautiful rooftop pool. Diane always wanted to live in an apartment with a pool!

Diane was born in Queens, grew up in Long Island and has lived in numerous places from New York City to Tampa, from San Francisco all the way to Australia, where she taught high school art in Sydney during the 1970s. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Hunter College. She was the director of several art galleries in New York City, as is evident from the beautiful art pieces in her apartment.

During the pandemic, our library was in a state of disarray; often closed, the books were piled up inside and outside its door. Although Diane is not a librarian, being an avid reader, she started organizing the books, following the Dewey Decimal System, and separating them by themes and genre such as fiction, non-fiction, mystery, travel, religion, etc.

As our readers know, the library is currently closed for the HVAC renovations. It is scheduled to be open by the end of the summer. Diane has various plans for its restoration. She would like to see it freshly painted (not in pink this time, please), with added shelves to accommodate the more than 3,000 books currently in the collection and with room to grow. She will follow our tradition of open borrowing for our residents: feel free to pick up any book to read there or take home with you. Just place the books in the basket by the library front door,

provided for reshelving, when you are through reading them.

According to Diane, current fiction titles are the most popular, and she would welcome any books our residents would like to share. Art books are also popular and will be a wonderful addition to the many beautiful ones we already have. You may bring travel books and puzzles, but no slides or textbooks, which become cumbersome and obsolete. The library may be used for private meetings. Be sure to make a reservation with Stephanie McCool by email at stephaniehoa@outlook.com. Since there are several authors in Hopkinson House, Diane would love to have a section dedicated to "Local Authors." I promise to bring copies of my books, I know they will be in great company!



Photo by Concha Alborg

Diane GaNun is planning for the library restoration after HVAC construction finishes.

Diane is a very friendly neighbor and, of course, she serves on the Pool Committee. In addition to swimming, reading, and traveling, Diane is interested in the Hopkinson House History Committee, which is investigating the numerous artifacts from the building's birth housed in different hidden spots. Did I say that Diane loves mysteries? You can see her in the mysterious photo! ■



Concha Alborg, PhD, is a retired academic and author originally from Spain. She writes fiction, creative non-fiction and a blog, "Epilogues / Epilogos." www.conchaalborg.com

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Small Talk Gives Us a Lift

Annette Linck

Small talk may seem trivial, but it is a natural way for people to connect in social interactions. Sometimes small talk is made just to fill in silence when two people find themselves together. It can also be a means of assessing whether the conversation is worth carrying on. It can make us vulnerable because it reveals the outer layer of our personality, so we seldom use it as soon as we meet someone. Instead, we choose universal topics and light banter.

Most residents of high-rise apartments like Hopkinson House are thrust into the small talk dilemma upon entering an elevator with other passengers already inside. Some people may initiate small talk, while most young people are more eager to get where they are going. Occasionally, one might initiate small talk with a younger person only to realize that they are listening to music through their air pods and don't even hear us. The COVID pandemic, when mask wearing was mandatory, presented unique situations in the elevator. Should we

speak, no one could see if we were smiling at them. How did one cough or sneeze in the elevator without folks thinking we had COVID-19?

When no one speaks on a long ride, most eyes are looking downward at the array of shoes, sneakers, and scruffy house slip-ons. Speaking of foot apparel, I was on an elevator with several women residents when one asked me where I bought my slip-on shoes. I answered, "They're called Bzees and are available online. They have all the support of a good sneaker and have a padded arch support too." I felt as if I was doing a commercial for the shoes. (Note to self: TMI!)

One Valentines Day I was at the front desk struggling to carry a large floral box to the elevator bank. A woman asked if I had a secret admirer and I answered that the delivery was from my son who lives in Florida, and it was roses for my birthday. When she reached her floor, she asked me for my apartment number and I was perplexed but I told her. A while later an envelope appeared under my

door. It was a lovely birthday card which included her name and phone number. I phoned to thank her and we set up a future date for her to join my husband and me for cocktails.

Now if dealing with small talk weren't enough, we may also have to deal with personal space. Called personal space in psychology; the brain computes a buffer zone around the body which is very flexible, changing size depending on context and computed in a way that's largely unconscious. We can't help it, it's part of the scaffold of how we interact socially on which all of our social interactions are built.

Psychologists say that personal space has a huge impact on the way we react to each other, understand each other, and feel about each other. The invisible second skin is primarily protection because invasions of personal space can provoke fight or flight. As adults we may feel a certain

vulnerability when a stranger stands too near. To wit: a synchronized step by all passengers to move backward, forward, or sideways whenever a person departs a crowded elevator, is akin to a silent minuet.

Back to small talk: it's very common for many of us to feel uncomfortable or nervous in social situations because people fear the possibility of rejection. Dr. Justine Copeland is an expert in the field of social linguistics, and in her book *Small Talk* she writes: "Small talk cannot be dismissed as peripheral, marginal, or minor discourse. Small talk is a means by which we negotiate interpersonal relationships."

My daughter lives on the second floor of another high-rise and laments that her elevator ride is too short for anything but a cordial greeting. She regrets not having a longer ride to meet her neighbors. Happily, small talk will never be passé! ■

Annette Linck is a Hopkinson House resident. She has attended the Writing Workshops with Concha Alborg for two years. Those interested in joining the group starting in September 2023, contact Concha: calborg@comcast.net.

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on the House Is a Winner!

Lynn Miller, Editor

We're pleased to announce that your newsletter, *on the House*, has won an award from a national organization, NUSA: Neighborhoods USA (www.nusa.org). That breathtaking news was announced in NUSA's press release of June 5th following their 48th annual conference, held this year in El Paso, Texas. NUSA presents annual awards to community groups across the nation in a number of categories. They include Who's Who among individual neighborhood volunteers, neighborhood organizations in three categories: physical and social revitalization, as well as multi-neighborhood partnerships.

Our award, not surprisingly, is in the category for printed neighborhood newsletters. We came in third, after first-place winner *Connection News*, produced by Highlands Council in Issaquah, Washington; and second-place *Floral Park Neighborhood Gazette* from its eponymous neighborhood organization in Santa Ana, California. Your editor is pleased to confirm that there were indeed more than three entries in that newsletter category in which we scored third prize!

This award was made possible by the superlative work of all our newsletter contributors, including those whose names are



Photo by Lynn Miller

Concha Alborg proudly holds our third place plaque from Neighborhoods USA.

listed on the masthead in every issue, as well as those individuals who provide us with articles from time to time. Thanks go also to our marvelous designer, Robin

Siddall, whose artistic pedigree is without compare. She just happens to be the great-great-great-great-great-granddaughter of Charles Willson Peale! ■



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Beyond Responsible Recycling

Jean Papaj

Though Hopkinson House participates in Philadelphia's single stream recycling program, many residents want to do more.

According to Larry Meehan, our Council is exploring the Green Multi-Family Building Group. This association is made up of multi-family building representatives who meet to discuss the value of

collaborating to share information about how to make buildings more sustainable. Their goals include the following: save money on energy and water costs; receive confidential building-level performance reports; get one-on-one technical support; find federal, state, and local financial sources; motivate residents to use smart strategies; and use

networking opportunities with other multi-family buildings, Green Building United, and government agencies, to learn how to improve our building's operational and financial efficiency. Learn more at: greenbuildingunited.org/initiatives/philadelphia-2030-district.

But what can residents do right now? How do we

responsibly donate and discard things we no longer need and share what we have with local groups that are providing goods and services to people in need?

I reached out to community members and Hopkinson House residents and learned of the following resources, centers, and services.

Thanks to all who generously contributed to this article. ■

Fee Based Services

Retrievr

retrievr.com or text PICKUP to 757.703.3824

Hopkinson House resident Bruce Chamberlin uses Retrievr, a service that will take clean clothing, shoes, handbags and small electronics like mini-fridges, old boxy TVs and more and recycle it responsibly. They will come and pick up your items for a fee.

Bennett Composting

bennettcompost.com

Hopkinson House resident Marie Nowak uses Bennett Composting. "Composting, besides being good for the environment, would lessen the amount of trash and relieve the strain on garbage disposals and drains," said Marie. They also sell soil and other materials made from compost.

Rabbit Recycling

rabbitrecycling.com/pricing

Rabbit takes a large variety of items and assures that what they collect goes to good use. They collaborate with local businesses and organizations by donating materials and giving them a second chance. They will pick up on demand or on a regular schedule. Visit their website to learn more about how it works and pricing.

Accepted items (must be new or clean):

- Kitchen items
- Bed, bath, shower items
- Cleaning supplies
- Clothing
- Office supplies
- Arts/Crafts
- Outdoor sports equipment
- Electronics
- All plastics #1-7
- Mailers, shipping/packing materials, packing peanuts
- Foam/styrofoam



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Beyond Responsible Recycling
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Free Drop-off Locations

City of Philadelphia Recycling Centers
phila.gov/recycling-donation-finder
Six sanitation convenience centers are open Monday through Saturday, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., not including holidays. Some centers may only take certain items, so you will want to check for the location that matches your needs on the city’s recycling finder. Residents can drop off regular household items once a day and oversized items once a week. You need to present proof that you live in Philadelphia in order to use the centers. Construction debris is not accepted.

- Accepted materials:**
- Automotive tires (limited to four per day)
 - Bulk items, large metal house-hold items or appliances, or items containing refrigerants (limited to two per day)
 - Christmas trees
 - Trash (up to six receptacles or 12 bags)
 - Electronic waste, including computers, monitors, and televisions
 - Latex/water-based paint cans (must be solidified by adding an absorbent material such as kitty litter or newspaper)
 - Mattresses and box springs, unwrapped
 - Yard waste (must be free of contamination and contained in paper bags only)
 - Fluorescent light bulbs, and lithium, rechargeable, and lead-acid batteries.

The Resource Exchange
theresourceexchange.org/donate
theresourceexchange.org/resources
The Resource Exchange, suggested by Hopkinson House resident Emily Farrell, is a nonprofit that describes itself as Philadelphia’s creative reuse center. Donated items are used by local artists who integrate sustainability into their creative process or sell through their store. You can shop online or in The Resource Center store at 1800 N. American Street. Visit their website for more information on accepted materials and how to donate. Since The Resource Exchange does not take everything, their website also includes a materials donation guide called *resourcePhilly*.

- Accepted items include:**
- Arts/Crafts/Maker Materials
 - Lumber/Sheet goods
 - Outdoor/Patio/Garden
 - Fabric/Textiles
 - Building Materials
 - Books/Education/Office
 - Decor/Housewares
 - Film/Theatre Props

MOM’s Organic Market
momsorganicmarket.com/recycle-center
Hopkinson House resident JoAnna Farber suggested the MOM’s location at 34 S. 11th Street. I visited the market and spoke to Julia Murry, Assistant General Manager. She pointed out the bins located near the entrance where you can drop batteries, shoes, eyeglasses, cell phones, and corks for reuse or recycling, and even a bin for compost. Julia explained that cell phones that are still useable or repairable can be used by the most vulnerable people to place calls to 911 for emergency help. MOMs also has blue jeans upcycle drives annually, and holiday lights recycling in January. This is a great place to “shop while you drop” off items.

Staples
staples.com/stores/recycling
You can recycle items at Staples for free and may even get a gift card to spend at their store when you do it. They take small electronics, printer cartridges, batteries, writing tools (pens, markers), phone and tablet cases, and more. Go to 1300 Columbus Boulevard or see their website for more information and locations.

Home Depot
homedepot.com/l/search/19106
The Home Depot Store accepts household batteries for recycling at no charge: alkaline, rechargeable, lithium ion (L-Ion), and nickel cadmium (Ni-Cd). Drop them off at the Customer Service Center, 1651 S. Columbus Boulevard or find another location on their website.

Bottle Underground
bottleunderground.as.me/glassdrop
Bottle Underground is a community-based glass recycling program dedicated to reducing glass waste by ensuring that your glass is recycled and used locally. Rinse and save your glass containers to be sorted and cleaned for reuse, upcycling and recycling. You can drop off your glass at the Bok Building loading dock between 8th and 9th on Mifflin Street. Drop-off hours are generally Tuesdays and Thursdays 11–2 by appointment and every other Saturday 12–2 open hours. Bring your glass containers in a cardboard box or cloth bag that you don’t need back.

Sponsored by Hopkinson House

Hopkinson House sponsors opportunities once or twice per year for all residents to shred documents and recycle electronics on site responsibly. The cost of these services is included in the operating budget. Residents who use some of the fee for services regularly asked if Hopkinson House would investigate a discount if more residents participated with the thought that it might encourage more people to recycle responsibly. A summary of those requests will be passed along to Council.

PSFS: from Greek Revival to Skyscraper

Joseph Quinn

PSFs. The letters, 27 feet high, stand atop a 36-story skyscraper that dominates the southwest corner of 12th and Market Streets, identifying it as the former headquarters of the Philadelphia Saving Fund Society (since 1998, it has housed a luxury hotel).

Designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1976, it has been recognized as the first American skyscraper constructed in what became known as the International Style.

Architects George Howe (1886-1955) and Swiss-born William Lescaze (1896-1969) created a building that, since its opening in 1932, has been considered one of most influential modern structures in the world. In 1969, it was hailed by the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects as the "Building of the Century."¹

How this astonishing architectural innovation came to pass in a city characterized by low-rise, red-brick row houses is a story for another day. This story is about how, in our own neighborhood, we can trace an evolution in banking architecture that took PSFS from antiquity to the height of modernity.

The establishment of the Philadelphia Saving Fund Society in 1816 was influenced by developments in Great Britain, and, according to its founders, was imported into the U.S. "as a child of benevolence and political economy."

It was owned by the depositors themselves: "ordinary, extraordinary, and honorary members. The ordinary members were the poor who deposited their savings."²

The founders were explicit in their debt to Benjamin Franklin's theories about the value of thrift. "The true art of saving," they counseled, "will be found to consist in the cultivation of moderate wishes." They even suggested that children, a labor force unto themselves, "might be early initiated into habits of saving" rather than "squandering their pennies in useless trifles."³

As the Society prospered, it kept outgrowing its various rental properties. In 1833, it bought a site on Walnut Street (now number 306) and commissioned a new building from Thomas Ustick Walter (1804-1887), which it occupied in 1840. As Society records show, Walter provided a building in the Greek Revival style with "a front of white marble from the Chester County quarries and a portico in the style of the Ionic order of architecture." As an Italianate flourish, Walter added a rooftop balustrade.⁴

Greek Revival was second nature to Walter, as he demonstrated with his designs for the Girard College Founder's Hall (1835) and the United States Capitol dome (1855). For them he took elements of the modest PSFS building and through repetition



Photos by Joseph Quinn

The landmark modernist PSFS building by Howe and Lescaze.

and gigantic scale, created works that secured his fame and endure as hallowed examples of the 19th-century Greek Revival aesthetic.

In 1868, "having attained colossal proportions," PSFS moved again to new headquarters on the SW corner of 7th and Walnut Streets, across from Washington Square. Addison Hutton (1834-1916) provided them with dignified headquarters in modified Italian Renaissance style. As the Society continued to expand, they commissioned Hutton to add additional space along Walnut Street. Finally, in 1898, the firm of Furness, Evans and Co. added a twin of Hutton's

original corner design, completing the Walnut Street frontage. All the additions used gray granite and Italianate design features, giving the structure a unified, harmonious appearance, as though it all had been built in one go.

Rows of tall, curved Palladian windows and pilasters provide most of the design interest on the façade, which has a mid-height cornice. The roofline is highly embellished with a dentilated cornice, pediments, balustrades, and round decorative finials. Yet it's the ornate wrought-iron grills covering the street level windows that catch the eye. continued on page 13

PSFS: from Greek Revival to Skyscraper

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The PSFS building at 7th and Walnut Streets, its exterior virtually unchanged since 1898.

our eye as we pass, adding a touch of Renaissance flair.

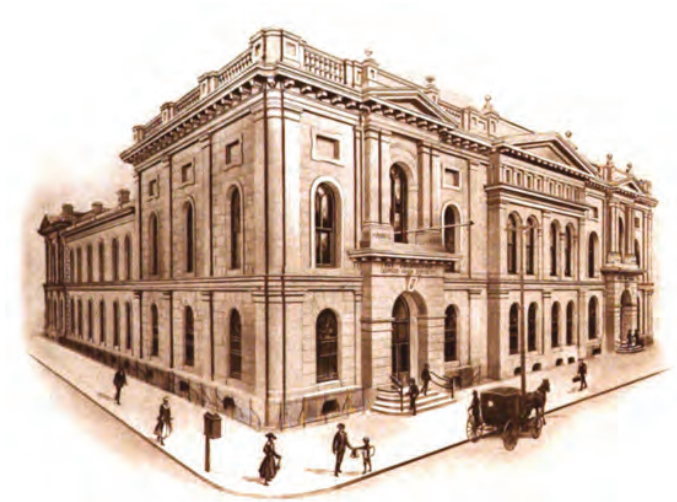
The building is now occupied by offices and an urgent care center, but the words Philadelphia Saving Fund Society and the dates associated with the Society's founding and the building's creation are plainly visible on the façade.

Thanks to tumultuous economic upheavals, the

Philadelphia Saving(s) Fund Society no longer exists as a financial entity. But it has left our city with three permanent cultural landmarks that track its evolution through several architectural epochs: a Greek temple, an Italian villa, and a modernist skyscraper, the latter crowned with four red letters that keep its original spirit alive: PSFS.⁵ ■



Joseph Quinn is a retired technical writer who likes to write about architectural treasures in our neighborhood and his travel adventures.



Vintage print showing the Italianate elegance of the PSFS building as it looked ca. 1898, after additions made by Hutton and the firm of Furness, Evans and Co. *A History of the Philadelphia Saving Fund Society 1816-1916* by James M. Wilcox.



Thomas U. Walter's 1840 original white marble design for PSFS combined Greek Simplicity with a Italianate balustrade at the roofline. Image source: Library of Congress.

Footnotes

¹ Following WWII, the International Style emerged from the European ateliers of architects such as Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. The main characteristics were modular or grid patterns, the absence of ornament, and a stripped down "form follows function" aesthetic. The PSFS building was featured in an exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art in 1932 that introduced the International Style to the US.

² Since its founding, the name was always Philadelphia Saving Fund Society. "Saving" became "Savings" in 1990 when the PSFS name and assets were acquired by Mellon Bank. In 2001, Mellon PSFS was folded into Citizens Bank.

³ All quotes are from *A History of the Philadelphia Saving Fund Society 1816-1916* by James M. Willcox, J.B. Lippincott Company, 1916.

⁴ In 1881, the building was acquired by the Royal Insurance Company of Liverpool, and the balustrade was replaced with a triangular pediment embedded with the company's coat of arms. Eventually the coat of arms was dismantled, leaving an unadorned pediment that enhances even further the building's resemblance to a Greek temple. It's now occupied by a legal firm.

⁵ In 2015, the red neon PSFS letters, long considered a defining element of the city's skyline, were converted to a Light Emitting Diode (LED) system.

(Re-)Visiting Our Historic Neighborhood

Lynn Miller

It had been many years since I'd joined a guided tour to explore any of the historic structures in Independence National Historic Park (INHP), which was created on June 28th, 1948—75 years ago this very summer. Because the park and its treasures more or less surround us, their familiarity had bred in me, certainly not contempt, but a kind of complacent assumption that guided tours are for tourists, not for decades-long residents like me. But on a recent beautiful evening, I joined a tour guide at Welcome Park to hear what she had to say about what lies within this (as the guidebooks tell us) most historic square mile in America. To my pleasant surprise, our fellow resident and contributor to *on the House*, Joe Quinn, another longtime Philadelphian, also joined the tour.

Over the course of an hour, our little group checked out Carpenters' Hall, City Tavern, the Merchants' Exchange, and both the First and Second Bank of the United States. Although I may not have learned much I hadn't known before about these sites, the walk-about served as a wonderful refresher course on the historical importance of much that has gone down in this neighborhood. I was reminded of the enormous legacy left to us Americans, and, indeed, the world, by what was accomplished here in our nation's early history.



Second Bank of the United States, south portico

I was reminded, too, of the banking wars during the first decades in the life of the young republic. The First Bank was chartered by Congress in 1791, but died when its Congressional opponents refused to renew its charter in 1811. The Second Bank had a similarly brief life, from 1816 to 1836. The differing political views of the Federalists and anti-Federalists, i.e., Hamiltonians and Jeffersonians, produced the opposing sides in the battles over a national bank. Federalists saw a national bank as an important tool for a strong central government, while their opponents feared too much centralized power in the nation's capital. Not until the early 20th century with the creation of the Federal Reserve Bank did we finally come to a

more or less Hamiltonian resolution of that battle.

Even so, there is this for Philadelphians: although neither the First nor the Second National Bank lasted for more than a few years, we can at least be grateful that the banks' brief lives left our city with two gorgeous architectural reminders of their existence.

The Second Bank has long housed the National Portrait Gallery, where the portraits of many of our founders, mostly by Charles Willson Peale, are exhibited. Recently closed for upgrades, it will reopen at about the time this newsletter is published, in early July. But the First Bank, which is the nation's oldest surviving federal building, has been closed to visitors for many years. That is about to

change, however. After a multi-year campaign to raise the substantial funds needed to bring the building's infrastructure up to contemporary standards, as well as fit it out with galleries, classrooms, and office space, the building will reopen in a matter of months to greet visitors. Both permanent and changing exhibitions will then be scheduled.

Yes, I'm eager to see the inside of the First Bank for the first time ever, and look forward to checking out its exhibits. But meanwhile, I'm delighted to be able to explore many aspects of Independence Park while seated in front of my own laptop. The National Park Service has created a number of brief videos—

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(Re-)Visiting Our Historic Neighborhood

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available for free—that let you wander about Independence Hall, visit Peale's long-ago museum on the second floor of that building, learn how fugitive slaves were held there for hearings before the Civil War, get acquainted with Lucretia Mott and other women suffragists, tour Congress Hall, and examine the fascinating story of how these buildings came to be preserved, plus much more. See for yourselves! www.nps.gov/inde/learn/photosmultimedia/videos.htm

Should you, dear reader, happen to be a stranger in our city, you need to know that the First Bank is on 3rd Street just below Chestnut and the Second


Bank's front colonnade faces Chestnut between 4th and 5th Streets. They are, of course, just two of the many landmarks nearby, all surrounded by beautiful trees and gardens, nestled in leafy lawns. Independence Hall itself is only two blocks from our front door. But no matter how long many of you may have lived in this most interesting neighborhood in America, I suggest that, on the next beautiful day when you want an excuse to be out and about, you really look at its treasures. Your brain will be stimulated and your senses satiated. You will be glad all over that you live where you do. ■



First Bank of the United States, tympanum



Lynn Miller is a professor emeritus of Political Science at Temple University, now a sometime writer and painter. www.lynn-miller.net



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Independence Hall, The Declaration, and a Painting Fantasy

Michael Neff

When I was a kid, some seventy and more years ago, my grandparents lived at 10th and Locust Streets. They were tailors; their shop and the house behind it were headquarters for a large array of aunts, uncles, cousins, and neighbors. Daily, an eclectic group of old codgers gathered around my grandfather's sewing machine to philosophize and comment on the passing scene as observed through the large window facing Locust Street. The sewing machine was like the pot-bellied stove in a Norman Rockwell painting. Grandmother ran between the store and the kitchen at the back. Customers who appreciated the aroma of her cooking—and who brought in some business on Friday: bread-baking day—got a miniature loaf to take home.

Center City was different in the days before urban renewal. There was a lot more retail and manufacturing, big department stores and cheap, good eats, pool halls and cigar shops, movie



John Trumbull, *The Declaration of Independence*, 1818, 12 ft x 18 ft



Michael Neff, *Frederick Douglass Signs the Declaration of Independence, A Historical Fantasy*, 2023

theaters and used bookstores. It was culturally, economically, religiously, and racially diverse. My younger brother and I roamed the city, unaccompanied and unsupervised by adults, from the time I was eight and he was five. We never felt a danger and never had a threatening incident.

One place we ran through regularly was Independence Hall. Those were sleepy days for the grand old building. Philadelphia hadn't yet been branded as a tourist destination. Years before, native son and comedian W.C. Fields had remarked that he entered a contest in which first prize

was a week in Philadelphia and second prize was two weeks in Philadelphia. Justifiably or not, that reputation still stuck. The enormous new civic spaces of Independence Mall and Constitution Mall hadn't been carved out of the old houses and businesses which then stood in those blocks. Substantial tourism began with the Bicentennial of 1976. Those were also the days long before the high security culture that came after 9/11.

So, a couple of non-threatening little kids could short-cut through Independence Hall. In the front door and across the worn wooden floors, we could peek into the hallowed meeting rooms, pat the patinated bronze of the Liberty Bell which sat

in the foyer, and go out the back into the Square where Franklin, Jefferson and the whole gang of Declaration and Constitution signers lolled between arguments.

In a sense, although my grandparents were immi-
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Independence Hall, The Declaration, and a Painting Fantasy

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grants, the early history of the country seemed very local and neighborly. There was the big bank building that looked like a Greek temple, Betsy Ross's house, Carpenters' Hall where Ben warned that we'd better hang together or surely we'd just hang. In Washington Square we ran over the graves of soldiers who'd fought over Philadelphia. Early American history seemed intimate. Ben founded the first hospital, on Pine Street. Its original buildings sat behind the beautiful gardens. Dolley Madison lived on Spruce Street. William Penn landed at Dock Street.

We owned the favorite souvenir: a faux parchment copy of the Declaration of Independence. (One of the

writers for this paper says she still has hers, and the quill pen with which it was "written.")

There was an old painting that fascinated me, *The Declaration of Independence*, by John Trumbull. (Check the back of a \$2 bill.) John Hancock sits in the presiding chair. Franklin, Jefferson, and Adams are about to sign. And every delegate—those who opposed as well as those who favored, those who attended and those who were absent—is witnessing, all in their white wigs and high socks.

In those days I didn't wonder if "my people" were represented in that group. It wasn't a question that was asked. I assumed that, their eccentric clothing

aside, they represented me. Gradually, I learned about the tragedies of enslaved people, the exclusion of women, the mistreatment of Native Americans, and all the other things that kept us from being as perfect as I'd assumed. And I really don't know what to say about all that, but something occurred to me as a painter: and that was what you might call a dream or a fantasy. Or a wish? Through the medium of an imaginary image came an idea for a painting, perhaps a gift of the muses? I saw Frederick Douglass

signing the Declaration of Independence, accompanied by a supportive African woman, Jefferson and Franklin standing by, smiling approvingly. In the chair is a Native American chief, and the audience is as diverse a group of onlookers as I had the ability to draw.

One can't rewrite history. But perhaps a fantasy image based on history might help move it on?

That's my story about the painting, *Frederick Douglass Signs the Declaration of Independence, A Historical Fantasy*. ■



Michael Neff has been painting and teaching for more than fifty years.



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The Clink in the Glass

Martha Cornog

Sweating heavily, Lucius sticks a suspicious finger in his wine. Yes, chunks of slushy ice make it refreshingly cold, despite the steamy evening. He throws half the beverage down his throat—*ahhh!*—and nods to his slave-server.

It's the fifth century BCE: the imaginary Lucius is drinking at a Roman bigwig's party. And what's cooling his wine began as snow, carried by slaves down from the mountains and hard-packed into straw-lined caverns.

Several millennia later, a couple of equally imaginary Hopkinson House residents—Robin and Terry—celebrate their mutual birthday on August 1st. That morning, Robin strolls into our Market and hefts a 20-pound bag of ice from the cooler back to their apartment. The ice goes into an ice bucket for drinks as well as into a tub holding bottles. Soon party-goers are sipping pleasantly cool libations, like Lucius, though they're gathered on the balcony where it's 89 degrees.

Such a simple ritual so similar across the centuries, with the connecting element of ice! In between times: a lot of sweat, money, and crystalized water.

Ice: This delicate yet destructive substance underlies more of civilization than we probably realize. Delicate? Yes, keeping water in its frozen form has required, historically, all the ingenuity that humans can

muster. Destructive? Yes, where New York City stands was originally mountains, worn down over eons as rain froze in high crannies, then—since water increases in volume when frozen—expanded, causing peaks and crags to erode, fracture, and fall. What's left under Manhattan undergirds its towering buildings.

Ice houses, those insulated caverns for harvested frozen water, date back at least to 2000 BCE in Sumer (now Iraq). Classical Greece and Rome had ice pits for harvested snow (as per Lucius), as did China, northern India, Egypt, the Incas, and eventually most of Europe. England's snow and ice storage dates back to Blenheim Palace's ice house, built in 1707.

Naturally, America's Founding Fathers brought ice house technology here from Britain. Philadelphia's 2000 archaeological excavation of the President's House, where George Washington lived from 1790 to 1797, uncovered part of its ice house pit, once packed with frozen blocks from the Schuylkill River. Later, Washington built a similar ice house at his Mount Vernon estate, kept full from the Potomac by his slaves.

All that frozen stuff first had to be gathered, though. Initially, northern U.S. property owners used their own crews to cut family ice from nearby lakes. It was nasty, dangerous work. The ice had to be thick

enough—typically, 12 to 15 inches—and any snow scraped off. Then teams of men cut out blocks of ice with hand saws, floated them to shore, and packed them in wagons. Lots could go wrong. The ice could break, sending men into the frigid water. Tools could slip and wound flesh. Frostbite was a constant challenge in temperatures low enough to produce ice that thick in the first place.

Now, what happened in the north didn't stay in the north. As Americans got used to ice for chilling and preserving foodstuffs, the country developed collection and transportation networks to deliver ice to parts of the country without frozen lakes, and way beyond.

In 1805, the *Boston Gazette* jeered Bostonian Frederic Tudor's "slippery speculation": sending ice by ship to sell in the West Indies. Indeed, nobody in Martinique would buy, having never known coolth. But a decade later, Tudor had worked out shipping, storage, and marketing problems—and by then customers awaited. Harvesting had also improved, incorporating horse-drawn ice plows and other instruments for scoring and cutting. Ships packed with New England frozen water traveled not just to the Caribbean but also to the American South, South America, even to India. In 1846, Henry David Thoreau marveled at Tudor's crews harvesting ice from Walden

Pond. By the 1850s, numerous other entrepreneurs jumped in as ice morphed from luxury to necessity worldwide. When warm winters led to "ice famines," the *New York Times* ran alarmist headlines. Much of California bought ice from Russian-controlled Alaska, while the Russian city of Saint Petersburg collected ice from the Neva River. Other European countries set up their own ice trades as well.

But as cities grew, insulated ice houses didn't fit into people's lifestyles. How to bring the ice house inside? By the 1840s, Sears and other companies began selling insulated "iceboxes": compact standing appliances with compartments for ice on top and food underneath. Of course the ice melted, requiring regular deliveries from an "iceman"—or, during World War I, "ice girls"—who sold more blocks of lake-harvested ice to the housewife. One Hopkinson House resident remembers his mother talking of such an icebox in her family's kitchen. But iceboxes could not make ice themselves. Mother still had to pay the iceman to supply the necessary chills.

You need mechanical refrigeration to make ice on demand. Experiments with cooling machines began in the mid 1700s and continued through the 19th century's discovery of the vapor-compression cycle. The Civil War increased demand in the South for such devices, since the continued on page 19

The Clink in the Glass

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North cut off its ice shipments. Also, growing industrial pollution made much natural ice discolored, smelly, and toxic. In the 1880s, ice harvesting was banned from an increasingly green Schuylkill reeking with dead fish and factory effluvia.

The vapor-compression cycle requires a special gas (initially, ammonia) to be compressed and condensed using external power like electricity. The gas is then allowed to expand, which causes it to draw heat away from the air outside the gas conduit. Thus a refrigerator can chill food, and a freezer can make ice.

Early large cooling machines were used in breweries and

to ship and preserve food-stuffs. By the early 1900s, household refrigerators emerged with refrigerants safer than the hazardous ammonia. These 1916 home units actually boasted a super cold compartment for ice cube trays, setting a precedent for supplying drink-sized ice. But although these new-style cold boxes could fit into kitchens, their supporting mechanical parts required housing in an adjacent room—plus the configuration cost nearly twice the price of a Ford Model T! Pricey ice cubes, eh?

The first affordable compact home refrigerator was GE's 1927 Monitor Top, also with a tiny freezer

compartment to hold small ice blocks. Frigidaire produced a competing model in 1930, as drink-sized ice became easier and cheaper to make. Design of ice cube trays evolved also.

In the years between the World Wars, the natural ice market collapsed, except in rural areas still lacking electricity. Nearly all ice became machine-made, and still is, whether for the food industry, homeowners, bartenders, medical applications, or winter sports. Some ice used for ice sculpture, however, still comes from frozen lakes and ponds.

Ice sold in our Market comes from Martin's Ice, Ephrata, Pennsylvania,

which sells both cubed ice and large blocks "often bought by ice sculptors." Actually, the cube itself has become a craft medium, as bartenders and "icepers" have figured out how to produce completely clear ice chunks in a dazzling variety of shapes and colors—all to beautify designer cocktails and glamorize that "clink in the glass."

Alas, the refrigeration industry has substantially impacted global warming. But as solar and wind-powered electricity becomes more widespread, renewable energy ice-making may be the next frontier. Let us toast to the inventiveness of the human species.

Salut! ■

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Martha Cornog reviews graphic novels for Library Journal.

References & Further Resources

Antique Ice Tool Museum: antiqueicetoolmuseum.org

Of Ice and Men: How We've Used Cold to Transform Humanity, by Fred Hogge, Pegasus, 2022.

The Ice Book: Cool Cubes, Clear Spheres, and Other Chill Cocktail Crafts, by Camper English, Red Lightening Books, 2023.

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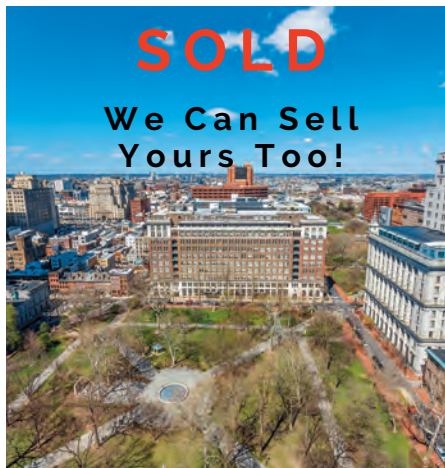
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Summertime and the Livin' is Easy!

Johanne Lamarche

Here are three tasty recipes showcasing in-season produce that make summer entertaining and eating easy. The peach caprese salad is a delicious

twist on the classic and comes together in minutes. The ingredients could even be threaded on a skewer to turn it into a finger food appetizer. The zucchini

dip packs a huge flavor punch and uses up a lot of this fresh summer veggie. The peach upside down cake is irresistible and a show stopper. Enjoy! ■

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 Johanne Lamarche, frenchgardener@comcast.net.

Peach Caprese Salad

Serves 6 to 8.

Simple perfection: a ripe juicy peach. A peach caprese salad is as fresh and welcomed as a summer breeze. It showcases the peach in all its glory. To make it, slice a couple of peaches, add some marinated fresh mozzarella balls, a drizzle of honey, a squeeze of lime and a handful of fresh basil.

Ingredients

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 2 ripe peaches, sliced into about 24 slices | 1 teaspoon of honey |
| 8 oz container of fresh mozzarella balls in oil | ¼ cup torn fresh basil leaves |
| | juice of half a lime |
| | freshly ground pepper |

Directions

- 1 In a shallow serving dish, spread the peach slices. Drizzle with the honey and season with a couple turns of the pepper mill. No additional salt is needed.
- 2 Toss the mozzarella balls in the marinade to coat with the seasonings. Remove from the marinade and

distribute evenly among the peach slices. The marinated cheese will bring a salty note to the salad. Reserve the oil marinade to make vinaigrette for another use.

- 3 Squeeze the lime over the salad and finish with the chopped basil. Do not toss. Serve at room temperature.



Photos by Johanne Lamarche

Middle-Eastern Zucchini Dip

Serves 6. Adapted from LCBO Food and Drink, Summer 2017.

Ingredients

- | | |
|--|--|
| 6 cups of grated zucchini, large seeds removed | 1 tablespoon dried mint (I let fresh garden mint dry on the counter for a couple of days, then crushed it, but you could buy it ready to go) |
| 1 teaspoon salt | |
| 1 tablespoon olive oil | |
| 1 tablespoon chopped garlic | |
| ½ cup Greek yogurt | sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste |
| ¼ cup tahini paste | ground cumin for garnish |
| ¼ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice | fresh mint leaves for garnish |

Directions

- 1 Toss the zucchini with salt. Transfer it to a colander set over a bowl and let it drain about a half hour. Reserve the water for making soup later.
- 2 Heat the oil in a medium saucepan. Cook the zucchini until tender, about three minutes, stirring frequently. Add the garlic and continue cooking another five or so minutes until the garlic is fragrant and the zucchini

is beginning to turn golden. Transfer to a bowl and let cool completely.

- 3 Stir in the yogurt, tahini, mint and lemon juice. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
- 4 Heap into a serving bowl and sprinkle with ground cumin and a fresh mint. Serve with warm pita wedges.



Summertime and the Livin' is Easy!

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Caramelized Peach Upside Down Cake

Serves 8–10. Adapted from *Southern Living and Frugal*.

While you can still get peaches, run and bake this cake! Made in a skillet, the peach slices are set in a quick rich caramel. The cake layer is spooned on top of the peaches. With added sour cream in the batter, it is super moist, fluffy and not too sweet: a lovely counterpoint to the decadent, oozing caramelized peaches. I spiked mine with some Amaretto liqueur. Similar to a tarte tatin, it is super easy to make.

Ingredients

For the caramel:	$\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon baking powder
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup granulated sugar	$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon baking soda
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick), at room temperature	4 medium peaches, peeled and cut into thick wedges just before using, about 10 slices per peach
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup firmly packed light brown sugar	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup granulated sugar
For the cake:	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter (1 stick), at room temperature
1 cup cake flour (or measure 1 cup of all purpose flour, remove one tablespoon and substitute with 1 tablespoon cornstarch)	2 large eggs
	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sour cream
	1 teaspoon of vanilla, brandy, or amaretto

Directions

- 1 Preheat oven to 350°. Line a sheet tray with aluminum foil to catch any drips.
- 2 In a small bowl, mix together flour, baking powder, and baking soda and set aside.
- 3 In a 10 inch oven-safe skillet, melt $\frac{1}{2}$ cup granulated sugar over medium heat, until sugar melts and turns a deep amber color. Remove from heat. Add the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of butter, broken up in pieces, stirring non-stop with the wooden spoon until the butter is melted. Stir in the brown sugar and mix until incorporated and the caramel coats the back of the spoon. Remove from heat and swirl around your skillet to coat the bottom evenly.
- 4 Arrange the peach slices in a concentric pattern working from the outside towards the middle in the caramel. Set aside until the batter is ready.
- 5 With an electric mixer, beat the remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ cup granulated sugar and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter at medium speed until smooth. Add eggs, one at a time, beating until blended after each addition. Add sour cream, beating until blended, then the vanilla or liqueur. I used amaretto.
- 6 Gradually add the flour mixture, beating at low-speed just until blended. Drop the batter over the peaches in dollops and spread to cover. Place the skillet on the prepared baking sheet.
- 7 Bake at 350° for 45–50 minutes or until golden brown and a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in the skillet on a wire rack 20 minutes. Run a knife around edge to loosen.
- 8 While holding onto the cake, pour out any syrup from the skillet into a measuring cup and reserve. Carefully invert cake onto a serving plate, and drizzle with any reserved syrup. You may or may not have extra syrup, depending on the juiciness of the peaches used. I found this hard to do even with a second pair of hands without risking breaking the cake and got very little syrup to run out. Once I flipped the cake, there was a lot of syrup in the skillet so I quickly turned it over and poured the syrup directly from the skillet onto the top of the cake.
- 9 Cut cake into wedges using a serrated knife. Serve with whipped cream or ice cream.



Sliced peaches are arranged in the golden caramel sauce, just before covering them with the batter. The cake will be flipped after baking to reveal the peaches on top.



Johanne Lamarche is a French Canadian who came to the U.S. to study periodontics, stayed for love, and is enjoying a second career as an artist.

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