

## What's Inside

Lynn Miller

**G**ary van Niekerk, the new General Manager of Hopkinson House, joined us shortly before this issue went to press. So, no column from his pen appears here, although we will count on hearing from him in future issues of our publication. But I introduce you to Gary in a brief article that follows this one.

**Sarah Kelly**, president of our Council, reviews the process that led to this summer's hiring of a new management company as well as our new general manager, whom residents can meet at an event on October 9. She explains the increase in insurance premiums for owners, and invites us to an update on the HVAC process to be held on October 17.

Resident **Jim Campbell**, with the assistance of Council member Robert Parsky, gives us a report on the status of providing electric charging stations in our garage for the convenience of residents who own, or will own, electric cars.

**Larry Meehan** reminds us of what's at stake in the midterm election on Tuesday, November 7. Hopkinson House's Washington Square Citizens League is sponsoring voter registration in the main lobby on Friday, October 20, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., and Saturday, October 21, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. At the help desk, required forms and assistance will be available. The deadline for voter registration is Monday, October 23.

Our regular contributor, **Joseph Quinn**, reviews a recent book that reminds us of all the beloved restaurants in Philadelphia that are no more. If you're a long-time resident, his article will be a trip down memory lane. Newcomers may gnash their teeth to learn what they missed.

A long-time resident, **Curt Johnson**, gives us a lifetime of reminiscences about the pleasure he has had around the baseball diamond, both playing and watching the game.

It's the time of year, **Michael Neff** assures us, when girl-sprites get busy painting the trees in dazzling color to celebrate the change of season. Michael has used his own paintbrush to catch those girls at work, evidently right here in our square.

# on the HOUSE

The Newsletter of  
Hopkinson House • Fall 2023



Another long-time resident, **Dan Rothermel**, enlightens us about the early 19th-century residence in Philadelphia of a sometime friend of Beethoven who invented that essential tool for all serious pianists, the metronome.

If you thought bee-keeping was a strictly rural endeavor, you haven't yet read **Martha Cornog's** exploration of the hive-minded goings-on all around us. Maybe you didn't even know about our own pollinator garden right here at Hopkinson House.

My own essay takes a look at some of the history of

the square that constitutes our front yard. It was a gift from William Penn to the future Philadelphians he sought to lure to this neighborhood. More than three centuries later, Washington Square is a gift that keeps on giving.

Fall is in the air as well at our Chef's Corner. **Johanne Lamarche** shows us how to indulge in several culinary treats that match the season, containing such ingredients as pumpkin, sweet potatoes, and turkey, but not at all in their familiar holiday banquet guise. ■

Occasional Photo by Lynn Miller



Hopkinson House residents have a beautiful view of changing leaves in our front yard, Washington Square Park.

# on the HOUSE

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Find past issues of  
*on the House* at  
[www.thehopkinsonhouse.com](http://www.thehopkinsonhouse.com)

## Meet Our New General Manager

Lynn Miller

I had the pleasure of sitting down with our new General Manager, Gary van Niekerk, soon after he began his duties early in September. A native of South Africa, Gary emigrated to the U.S. and settled in the Philadelphia area some twenty years ago. What brought him here initially was employment at a golf course in King of Prussia, where he was an instructor. That position came to a close when the property was sold. Having had a taste of managing a golf course, Gary then turned to the management of buildings—apartment buildings, in particular. He has had extensive experience over the past fifteen years managing condominiums. He became well acquainted with Washington Square when

### Join Us for a Welcoming Reception

Our Council has planned an event for residents to meet Gary van Niekerk, Hopkinson House's new General Manager. A small reception will be held in the South Lobby and Courtyard (weather permitting) on **Monday, October 9, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.** We hope you'll join us in welcoming Gary in person.



he served as manager, first, of the Ayer condo building to our left on Seventh Street, and then the Lippincott facing the square to our right on Sixth Street. He looks forward to working with residents to continue to make Hopkinson House a great place to live.

Along the way, Gary married a Pennsylvania gal, a native

of Susquehanna who had also moved to Philadelphia. They are now the parents of two daughters, aged ten and thirteen.

If you should run into him someplace in our building, be sure to say "hello." Keep an eye out for his "Message from Management" in future issues of *on the House*. ■

### A Correction

In the last issue of *on the House* (Summer 2023), my article, "(Re-) Visiting Our Historical Neighborhood," said that the entirely refurbished First Bank of the United States

would be open to the public "in a matter of months." In fact, it is now clear that the opening of the bank is not expected until 2026. Although a considerable amount of money has

already been raised, the Independence Historical Trust is leading a campaign to raise an additional \$6.6 million for the fabrication, programming, and installation of exhibits.



### Residents' Corner

Residents wishing to make comments or observations on the current issue may send them to: "The Editor," [lynnm3@comcast.net](mailto: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.



# Message from Council

Sarah A. Kelly

As we move into fall, there have been many changes since the last newsletter article from the Council. As you all know by now, we spent much time over the summer interviewing and vetting management companies and potential new general managers. The purpose of our process was to determine the best management team for Hopkinson House, and that led us to choose a highly experienced manager in Gary van Niekerk, who is supported by First Service Residential, a management company with a well-established local presence and ample resources. See page 2 for Lynn Miller's introduction to Gary and details of an upcoming welcome reception.

## Insurance Issues

Like many other condominiums, along with homeowners across the country, Hopkinson House has experienced a very significant increase in its insurance premiums for this insurance year, which for most of our policies renewed on September 1. To some extent the increases are due to market forces beyond our control; it is national news that property insurance rates have skyrocketed because of the many, historically unprecedented natural disasters which have occurred over the last few years. To a greater extent, though, the increases are due to the unfortunate claims history the Association has had in recent years. The bad news is that this year's total

insurance premiums more than quadrupled over last year's, for similar coverage. The good news is that we hope to have some excess in our 2023 operating budget to help cover some of the cost of that increase. However, although the 2024 budget has not yet been prepared, there will in all likelihood need to be either a special assessment or an increase in monthly assessments in part to help cover the increase in our insurance premiums.

On the topic of insurance claims, some of our owners and residents recently have experienced damage to their units from three separate sink overflows in units above them. We remind all owners and residents to exercise care regarding this type of preventable oversight. Aside from the inconvenience and damage to neighbors, these issues take the valuable time of our maintenance and housekeeping staff, and also impact individual owners' insurance (HO-6) policies. And if you are the owner determined to be responsible for the incident, your own liability insurance likely will be impacted by others' claims.

Staying on the insurance topic for one more point: we remind all of you that because of the increase in the Association's deductible to \$50,000 per unit effective September 1, 2023, owners must increase their own HO-6 coverage to cover up to the first \$50,000 in related damage. If you have questions about the change

in HO-6 coverage, please contact the management office, and please also remember to provide the management office with a copy of your new HO-6 certificate, with evidence of your increased level of coverage.

## Finishing Touches on Solarium Renovation

The Solarium is close to the completion of its renovation, but while we wait for some new materials to arrive (specifically the installation of the shades, the new audio-visual system and the moveable wall separating the upper and lower Solarium), we finally will have an in-person town meeting in the mostly completed space.

We encourage you all to come on the evening of October 17 for an update on our HVAC project. That project is also close to completion, thanks to the hard work of all of those who served on Council, beginning from the time of the project's adoption in 2019, through its inception in 2021, and through today. We owe an exceptional thank you to our Council member Bruce Chamberlin, who has ably chaired the HVAC Steering Committee and guided the project and our contractor partners.

On October 17, you will hear from Bruce, from our treasurer Larry Meehan, and from our project manager at Northstar,

## Save the Date

**October 17, 7 p.m.  
Solarium**

**Town Hall Meeting  
HVAC Project Update**

Ron Street, and have an opportunity to have your questions answered. The good news is that the project is still running on time and under our guaranteed maximum price, and the entire team anticipates it will be completed by March 2024.

Most of you know that we have vacancies in our maintenance department and in the management office. Gary and our assistant manager, Jason Love, are working diligently to fill these, and we hope by our next newsletter we will be able to introduce you to some additional new staff. On the commercial leasing front, we are negotiating for a change in the leaseholder of the dental office, and you will see some changes there shortly.

Lastly, but importantly, as I wish you all a happy and colorful fall, please join me in sending all of our best wishes to our valued doorman, Cliff Harris, the first face we are used to seeing as we walk through our front door. We are hoping for his full recovery and return to Hopkinson House before long. ■



**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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# Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging at Hopkinson House

Jim Campbell

Starting, we hope, in October, Hopkinson House will be offering the possibility to charge electric vehicles. Providing this service will be an additional step toward making the building more environmentally friendly and attractive, and more convenient for EV owners as transportation technologies evolve.

## So, what has Hopkinson House accomplished?

We have installed at the base of the entrance ramp four EV charging locations. The two pieces of EV service equipment installed at these locations are what are commonly known as Level 2 chargers.

These new Level 2 chargers can provide a maximum of 16 kW of power to one of our EV charging locations. (Think of this as being the power of 16 toasters.)



Each of the chargers seen in the photo shares this power between two locations, each with a cable and connector to plug in an EV. The power distributed is based on the need and capability of each EV being charged.

## How long does it take to charge an EV?

Much like one's cellphone, it depends upon the state of an EV battery—i.e., how discharged it is. However, we have seen reports that when connected to a Level

2 charger, assuming that the typical US driving is about 30 miles per day, consuming about 10 kWh, these chargers would refill this amount in about an hour and a half. A car coming in “empty” might take from four to ten hours to achieve a full charge.

## How much does it cost to recharge an EV?

First, a bit of information. The cost of electricity is generally cheaper than buying gas. At Hopkinson House our electricity rate for EV charging is about the cost per mile equivalent of gasoline at \$1 per gallon. This is because we buy our electricity at a wholesale rate, but then need to provide and maintain our own electrical equipment including switch gear and transformers.

Hopkinson House will be providing charging through our valet service.

As everyone probably knows, the garage is valet controlled and operated with very few exceptions. Thus, the valet staff will control EV charging.

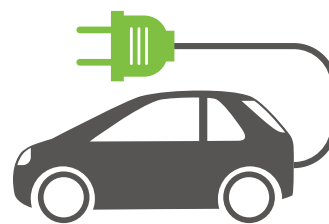
While we are in the process of fine tuning the EV charging operations and procedures with our parking operator (Park America), we anticipate that the process will work as follows: An EV owner will ask to reserve a time slot. If the owner doesn't reserve, they may need to wait for an available time slot. Initially time slots will be scheduled and sold in a minimum of four-hour increments. Assuming that

a time slot has been reserved or is available, it is the valet's responsibility to park the EV in one of the available charging locations and to begin the charging session. The cost for a four-hour time slot for now will be \$5 and will be collected by Park America with a certain amount returned to Hopkinson House to pay for the installation and energy cost.

The cost of parking is not included in the cost of charging. Thus, those who choose to park by the hour or day will also need to pay additionally for parking. For now, charging will be limited to resident monthly parkers. Upon completion of the 4-hour reserved time session or upon the EV being charged, the valet will unplug the vehicle and move the EV to an available parking space to allow for the next charging session.

Hopkinson House is in discussions with Park America as to how best to collect for EV Charging.

Environmentally, transportation accounts for 28% of climate-changing emissions in the United States. While the operation of EVs results in almost zero emissions, carbon emissions and criteria pollutants are created in both the production of electricity, and in the production of batteries (making the total for car manufacturing higher for



EVs). When all these factors are summed up, even if current electric generation and battery technologies stayed the same, it appears that each EV would contribute 52% less to climate change over its life cycle than a gas car, according to the Union of Concerned Scientists. Obviously, this represents a substantial drop in emissions!

## Additional Good News!

We have received notice of possible financial support from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to help cover a portion of the cost of installation of our charging stations, if and when we are able to meet all of the requirements.

## The Project Team

The part of the Engineering Committee that has been involved with the design and implementation of charging consists of Jim Campbell, Bob Parsky, Joe Salerno, Willett Kempton, and Jerome Cloud. The charging effort has also involved members of the Hopkinson House governance, administration, maintenance, and engineering as well as members of Park America. ■



**Jim Campbell** is a managing partner of Campbell Thomas & Co., Architects, a company which handles architecture, preservation, community and transportation planning, and more.



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# Prepare for the November 7 Municipal Election

Larry Meehan

This fall Philadelphians will elect a new mayor, vote for their representative to City Council as well as council members-at-large, select among candidates for state and municipal courts, choose the commissioners for the Board of Elections, and vote for candidates for Sheriff and the Register of Wills. There also will be at least one ballot question to consider.

Keep these dates and deadlines in mind as the election approaches:

**October 23:** Last day to register before the election

**October 31:** Last day to apply for a civilian absentee or mail-in ballot

**November 7:** Election Day. Hopkinson House residents may vote in the Lobby.

It's also the last day for the Board of Elections to receive voted mail-in and absentee ballots. Voter ID is required only for first-time voters and for individuals voting for the first time at their polling place.

## The Next Mayor

The mayor's race is between two former city council members, David Oh (R)

and Cherelle Parker (D). Of the more than one million registered voters in Philadelphia, 75% are Democrats, and only 11% are Republicans. While David Oh has demonstrated some cross-party appeal in previous elections, he has little chance of prevailing.

## City Council: GOP vs. WFP & the Democrats' Kerfuffle

The council member for our own 1st Council District is Democrat Mark Squilla. He appears to be unopposed, so the contest of interest to voters in our division will be for the seven at-large seats. You may vote for up to five candidates. No more than five of the seven at-large members may be from the party with the largest number of registered voters. In other words, the Democrats will be limited to five at-large seats.

That leaves two seats to be contested by the Republican candidates and those from the Working Families Party (WFP). In the last election, WFP's Kendra Brooks stunned politicians by receiving more votes than any GOP candidate,

including David Oh. The Republicans appear to be better prepared this time and have united behind Jim Hasher and well-known civic leader Drew Murray.

Some progressive Democratic Party committee persons have said they wish to support the two WFP candidates and rid city council of Republican members. This development led Bob Brady, Chair of the Philadelphia Democratic Party, to remind members that the Philadelphia party rules, as well as the rules of the Pennsylvania Democratic Party and the Democratic National Committee, forbid committee persons from endorsing candidates of other parties.

## Judicial Elections

City party leaders have urged members to forget about the GOP/WFP council-at-large election and to focus instead on the critical races for statewide judicial offices, especially the one for the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

There is one open seat, and Carolyn Carluccio, a Montgomery County Republican, is running against Daniel McCaffrey, a Philadelphia Democrat. Expect both parties to pour considerable resources into this contest.

In addition to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, Superior Court, and Commonwealth Court, voters will choose from candidates for the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County and the Municipal Court. State and local bar associations rate judges, either Highly Recommended, Recommended, or Not Recommended. Closer to the election, check the following websites for those ratings:

**Pennsylvania Bar Association:**  
pabar.org

**Philadelphia Bar Association:**  
philadelphiabar.org

**Committee of Seventy:**  
www.seventy.org

See you at the polls on November 7! ■



**Larry Meehan**, a resident since 1991, is a Democratic Party committee person and treasurer on the Hopkinson House council.

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# Book Review: *Lost Restaurants of Philadelphia* by Amy Strauss

Joseph Quinn

If you're looking for a stroll down memory lane, and one that will get your gastronomical juices flowing, *Lost Restaurants of Philadelphia* is just the thing. Philly restaurants have been in the news lately, with several coming out on top in the 2023 James Beard Awards. But this recent prominence, and the many culinary traditions and talents that have made it possible, are the culmination of a long history of kitchen creativity in our city. Strauss's survey focuses on "culinary pioneers" from the free-wheeling '70s and '80s, ranging from old-school classics to quirky, innovative spots that satisfied every palate—from Le Bec Fin to Little Pete's.

Given pride of place are temples of French *haute cuisine*, such as La Panetière, that are recognized as forerunners of Philly's Restaurant Renaissance. They spawned a host of more casual dining spots that introduced us to a French-American hybrid labeled "Continental." Do you recall The Frog, The Commissary, The Garden, The Fountain, and In Season, where you may have had your first taste of quiche, steak-frites, salade niçoise, ceviche, or Coquilles Saint-Jacques?

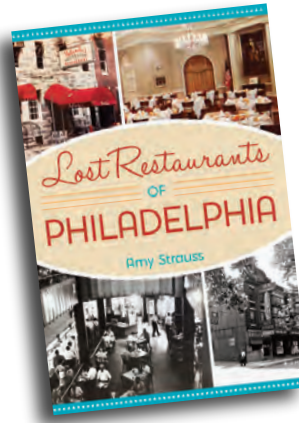
No survey of Philly dining choices would be complete without mention of Horn & Hardart Automats, a concept that originated here in 1902 and went on to become one of the world's largest "fast food" chains. In these self-service cafeterias

you made your selection from a wall of little windowed compartments with coin slots. You ate at your own pace, and a pocket full of nickels kept you well-fed. Turn a crank on the wall and their special blend of coffee poured out of a silver dolphin spout, followed by a dash of cream. (Note: A nostalgic video about H&H Automats is now making the rounds on various streaming platforms.)

Strauss gives generous space to the small, funky spots that sprang up around town, notable as much for their hippie-chic atmosphere, meaning reclaimed tables and chairs and mismatched silver and glassware, as well as for their creative menus. Remember Knave of Hearts and Astral Plane?

Traditional Italian red-sauce standbys, like Palumbo's and Jimmy's Milan, are given their due. Levis, on Sixth Street, was more than just a classic hot dog stand. It became a neighborhood landmark and social gathering spot that lasted nearly one hundred years. (And you don't pronounce it like the blue jeans, a friend admonished me.) You could get hot dogs with various additions and condiments, including fish cakes(!), and wash them down with Champ Cherry soda. Among bakeries, the name Rindelaub's makes my mouth water at the thought of their chocolate glacés.

Our family's infrequent but highly anticipated trips from Chester into Center City usually included a



*Lost Restaurants of Philadelphia* by Amy Strauss, American Palate, 2022.

movie at the Fox Theater and dinner at a restaurant chosen by my dad, a former Navy cook, who favored seafood emporiums like Shoyer's, Old Original Bookbinders, Kelly's Oyster House (tucked away on Mole Street), or Snockey's. If he wanted to treat us to a steak, it was not at Arthur's or The Palm, but Tad's (not a Philly original), where you could feast on a New York steak broiled over an open flame, a baked potato, small side salad and slice of garlic bread for \$1.17. When my mother and I came into town on shopping trips, lunch at Wanamaker's Crystal Tea Room (now available for catered affairs) was *de rigueur*.

Strauss provides historical background on restaurants and chefs (much of it based on contemporary newspaper and magazine coverage), bringing the timeline up to the Stephen Starr era.



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



Photo by Joseph Quinn

The original Horn and Hardart Automat opened in 1902. Now it's a ghostly presence haunting 818 Chestnut Street.

She includes vintage photos and some intriguing recipes, such as Bookbinder's snapper soup (start with one pound of turtle meat or lean stewing beef).

It was an era when the wealth of ethnic restaurants we have today, not to mention our selection of vegan and vegetarian options, was unimaginable. And Strauss's focus is limited mostly to Center City spots favored by a white, middle- and upper-class clientele.

This is a book for browsing and stopping along the way to recall the special events or casual meals you had at these fondly-remembered dining establishments. We can mourn those we have lost, even as we celebrate the many world-class restaurants we enjoy today. I recommend you put *Lost Restaurants of Philadelphia* on your autumn reading menu. ■



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# I Have Just Turned 80—and Baseball Continues to Be My Friend

Curt Johnson

Good friends are hard to find and even more difficult to keep—but I think my lifelong friendship with baseball still thrives. It has had its share of challenges. For one thing the game itself is extremely difficult. Hitting a baseball is, in my opinion, the single most challenging physical activity in all of athletics. Pitching is the most challenging mental activity in sports. It's hard to explain how it feels when you throw a baseball as hard as you can, and the hitter crushes it. Serious rejection!

I grew up in Detroit, and after my long distance romance with Mickey Mantle and the Yankees, I ended up a devoted Detroit Tiger fan.

Al Kaline, Harvey Kuenn, Denny McClain, and Mickey Lolich were the players I followed the most. After moving to Philadelphia in 1974, I slowly but surely became a Phillies fan. I have had a 17-game ticket plan for more than 40 years. I watched Mike Schmidt and others, and in my opinion Schmidt is the best third baseman in baseball history. I also attended the only two World Series Phillies victories, in 1980 and 2008. The memories are great.

One of the many reasons baseball continues to be so popular is that when I grew up, only men played, but women playing softball changed all that, and now women's softball is so good and fun to watch. My other

theory as to why women like baseball as much as they do is this: many of us think women tend to be more sociable than men, and because going to a baseball game is the most sociable sport to attend compared to others, women continue to love baseball. I recently attended a Phillies and Diamondbacks game, and of the 37,000 fans at the game, at least half were women. Where else can you sit outside and visit with a friend for a couple of hours while watching a game? Maybe tennis.

Women have benefitted from many changes in our society, and baseball, at least, has benefitted with them.

I played baseball while in college at the University of Nebraska. I was a center-fielder, and I had a .220 lifetime batting average. Now you know why I am a fan rather than a major league player. Because it is such a challenging game, it is still fun to be a fan. I marvel at the enormous talent on display. Like all players and all 80-year-olds I hope I have a few years left. Play Ball!! ■



**Curt Johnson** is a long-time resident of Hopkinson House and former president of the Washington Square Citizens' League.

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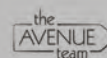


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# Girl-Sprites Who Paint the Trees for Autumn

Michael Neff

After the great spiritual and cultural disasters of World War II, a group of talented young Japanese comic and animation artists concluded that forsaking the ancient beliefs about the spirits that inhabit nature and man-made artifacts—in favor of the hyper-rational industrial values of the West—caused their country to fall into the traps of militarism and imperialism that led to the tragedy of the atomic bombs.

They thought their country had lost its soul. They wanted to “re-animate” life, to put the soul back into it.

They invented comic book characters descended from the tradition of *Yokai*—spirits who sometimes help and sometimes hinder the humans amongst whom they live. A modern intellectual might call them personifications of the vicissitudes and also the

benefits of life. But that would be falling into the same pattern of over-intellectualization these artists wanted to get away from. Blended with the pantheism of Shinto, the ancient nature religion, their work led to Pokémon.

The modern desire to personify emotional and natural forces isn't limited to Japan. After seeing hard battle in World War I, the young JRR Tolkien looked to the sagas of Scandinavia, the Celtic lands, and England to rediscover the realm he called “Faerie.” This is the realm of imaginative expression and inquiry beyond the dry and sometimes limited vision of science. Rather than the Victorian idea of cute and child-like miniatures, he saw elves and other spirits as bold fighters in the cataclysmic battle between good and evil and for

restoring the balance of nature. *The Lord of the Rings* grew out of this. A devout Catholic, Tolkien was quite serious in calling the Bible the highest example of what he meant by a Faerie story.

Personifying the forces of nature and even the various elements of our intellectual and emotional life goes back to ancient times. We use the term Mother Nature in ads for margarine, but *Gaia*, Mother Earth, was literally Mother Nature to the old Greeks. The hills are her breasts and Father Sky, *Ouranos*, lies upon her everywhere. They engendered the Titans, who are the oceans, forests, mountains, and the continents. The next generation of gods, the Olympians,

include such goddesses as Love, the Hunt, and Psyche.

Every wave in the sea is a goddess. Every breeze or gust of wind is a minor divinity.

Once, I attended a lecture at Temple University by an environmental scientist who described the ecological challenges we face and the technologies we have for fighting them. A question popped into my mind that I have been thinking about ever since: Can we really ever change our ecological behavior without thinking of nature and the world as sacred and alive?

This has been a windy way of introducing some pictures on page 13 of the girl-sprites who'll paint our trees for autumn. ■



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

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# Girl Sprites Who Paint the Trees for Autumn

continued from page 12

Paintings by Michael Neff





# Taking Maelzel's Measure

Dan Rothermel

For years, one of the distinctive historical markers placed by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission commemorated the presence in Philadelphia of a colorful character in music history and one of the most important contributors to what would now be called music technology. That marker, honoring Johann Nepomuk Maelzel (1772–1838), was placed on South 5th Street between Walnut Street and Locust Walk in 2004. Maelzel was not the first inventor to conceive of an instrument that would enable a practicing musician to keep strictly in tempo, but he was the first to bring the metronome to a perfected state. Maelzel received a patent for it and set up shop in Paris as Mälzel et Cie to promote and market his invention.

Many a struggling young piano student has puzzled over the letters MM at the head of a piece of music, followed by a note of a certain value, an equal sign, and a number. The two M's stand, of course, for Maelzel's Metronome and the number tells the player at exactly what tempo the composer intended the piece or section thereof to be played in number of beats per minute. For instance, *MM eighth note* = 88, i.e., the value of eighty-eight eighth notes per minute.

The controversial inventor and showman's connection to Philadelphia was once visible in the presence of Maelzel's Hall at 5th Street



Metronome, Johann Nepomuk Maelzel, ca. 1820s. Image: The Met

below Adelphi, which he operated with one William Schlumberger (1800–1838). There he exhibited another of his inventions, the celebrated *Automatic Trumpeter*. By then, Maelzel had adopted the anglicized first name of "John". Robert A. Gerson's long-outdated but still engaging *Music in Philadelphia* (1940) notes that Maelzel also exhibited a diorama, *The Burning of Moscow* at Eighth and Chestnut Streets.

The ticking metronome is forever associated with the whimsical scherzo of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 8*, the shortest movement in all his nine symphonies. Generations of music teachers, intent on engaging the interest of their students in this most exuberant symphony, have taught the little

canon that Beethoven (1770–1827) apparently improvised at a party in Vienna held in honor of his then friend Maelzel. The canon was later discovered in one of Beethoven's sketch books, which he used in 1812 when he was composing the Eighth Symphony; however, it is believed that Beethoven's inspiration came from an earlier musical chronometer with which Maelzel had been tinkering at the time.

Though they began and ended as friends, Beethoven's relationship with Maelzel was, at best, a stormy one, due manifestly to Maelzel's propensity for appropriating the work of others and passing it off as his own. Around 1808, Maelzel presented the increasingly deaf Beethoven

with an improved ear-trumpet which Beethoven used for years. Five years later, Maelzel induced Beethoven to compose a battle piece for his latest invention, the *Panharmonicon*, an automated orchestra worked by weights and cylinders, first exhibited in 1804 and subsequently improved. Beethoven did compose a piece for Maelzel's invention in 1813 and had great success with an orchestral arrangement known variously as *Wellington's Victory*, *The Battle of Vittoria* and the *Battle Symphony*. But when Maelzel claimed the work as his personal property, Beethoven broke with Maelzel. After the metronome was perfected around 1816, it appears that Beethoven and Maelzel had reconciled and Beethoven began regularly using metronome markings in his subsequent compositions. Today *Wellington's Victory* is considered one of Beethoven's feeblest works, but it has maintained a precarious life in the orchestral repertoire as a *jeu d'esprit* and musical curiosity.

Just as the metronome was the result of Maelzel perfecting the work of previous inventors, another celebrated but eventually notorious of his inventions was the *Automaton Chessplayer*, also known as "The Turk". It was an improvement of the work of a previous inventor who, in fact, sought financial restitution from Maelzel for his "borrowing." Benjamin Franklin and continued on page 15



## Taking Maelzel's Measure

continued from page 14

Napoleon Bonaparte are said to have engaged in chess matches with this clever but fraudulent novelty, which relied on a diminutive human chess-master being hidden within its mechanism. Edgar Allan Poe was among the first to deride its authenticity.

Maelzel was in the United States from 1830 until his death in 1838. Death came when he was returning to Philadelphia from a trip to the West Indies where he displayed and promoted his various musical and mechanical devices. Maelzel was found dead in his berth on the brig Otis on July 21, 1838, presumably as the result of alcohol poisoning.

Though a shrewd and clever businessman with

more than a touch of the charlatan about him, Maelzel will ever be remembered by grateful musicians for perfecting the metronome. In its modern electronic guise as well as its original mechanical form, Maelzel's ingenious invention continues to be an invaluable tool for the composer and performer alike.

Unfortunately, the marker on Fifth Street honoring Maelzel has disappeared. Could that removal have been the work of the ghost of one of the inventor's contemporaries who felt injured by his actions? ■



**Dan Rothermel**, a resident of Hopkinson House since 1990, is a retired opera conductor and music teacher. He is the music director emeritus of The Savoy Company and was its conductor from 1981 until 2011.



Pennsylvania Historical Marker, formerly on 5th Street between Walnut Street and Locust Walk



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# Hive-Minded in Philadelphia

Martha Cornog

You can check out books from the Free Library of Philadelphia, but you probably didn't know you can check out its honey, too—by buying jars of golden sweetness produced by Parkway Central's ten rooftop beehives. Inside the Richmond Branch, there's an observation hive letting patrons watch the busy little gals (worker bees are female), plus two outdoor hives. The bees support fun, educational culinary programs at both branches and thrive under the watchful management of the Philadelphia Bee Company, which also runs honeybee educational programs and sells locally-sourced bee products.

Sofitel Hotel on 17th Street keeps "half a million bees" that help pollinate its rooftop organic garden and supply honey for the kitchen. Macy's in the Wanamaker Office Building, and the towering Independence Blue Cross skyscraper, both support rooftop hives. On North Broad Street, Congregation Rodeph Shalom keeps bees and sells the "holy honey" to members. Buildings at 448 North 10th Street and 990 Spring Garden Street have beehives on the roof.

Across the Schuylkill, the University of Pennsylvania harbors a student-run beekeeping club, which keeps bees to educate about ecology and produce honey for sharing among student bee people.

Who knew that Philly had become a (metaphorical)

hive for busy beekeepers? And with a "staff" of some 60,000 insects per hive, beekeeping adds up to quite a responsibility! Indeed, our city has its own club for bee folks. Founded in 2009, the Philadelphia Beekeepers Guild boasts over 3,000 website fans, holds an annual and family-friendly Philadelphia Honey Festival, and supplies experts to help folks having bee issues—or looking for locally-sourced honey. One member not far from us is Mark Berman, who keeps his ten or so hives in one of South Philly's community gardens and sells the honey online at [www.annabeeshoney.com](http://www.annabeeshoney.com). Since bees typically range over two to three miles to collect the nectar used for honey, all these city hives likely supply some of the pollinators for our own Washington Square.

What's the big deal about bees, though? It's not just honey. Bees—many species—pollinate not only garden flowers but a third of our food plants, as a side-effect of gathering nectar. Some edibles like grains do rely on wind to scatter pollen, and some plants self-pollinate, but bees—going from flower to flower—do point-to-point UPS-style pollen-transfer fertilization for numerous fruits, vegetables, and other food plants that supply us necessary nutrients. The California almond orchards require over two million hives, trucked in by pollination contractors every year. If bees and other pollinators die out, we greatly suffer

nutritionally unless crops are artificially pollinated. Think humans with paint brushes, crop-duster airplanes, tiny drones, robo-bees, lasers, and vacuum machines as emergency alternatives. Not simple.

Fortunately, the flowers that supply nectar with bee appeal are so darn pretty—the gardens in Washington Square and around Hopkinson House and its balconies welcome constant stopovers from bees. Currently, the square's plantings are being chosen specially to attract pollinators, thanks to the Society Hill Civic Association's Washington Square Committee. Also, check out Hopkinson House's own Pollinator Garden of nectar and pollen-rich native flowers in the northeast corner of our back courtyard.

Pollination aside, honey has a long history with humanity. Whereas multiple species of bees pollinate, it's European honey bees (*Apis mellifera*)—imported here in the 1600s—which make that sweet stuff. Honey-gathering dates to at least 8,000 years ago (think Stone Age), is enjoyed world-wide, and was the first appealing sweetener gobbled up by *Homo sapiens*. (Sugar, from sugar cane, is native to tropical areas and became widely available largely only after slave-driven plantation cultivation much later.) And honey has other properties exploited since prehistoric times. It can help heal burns and wounds or relieve coughs; it



Image: PlanetBee.org

Gathering wild honey on a ladder of vines, 8,000 years ago. Ouch!

can be fermented to produce the alcoholic beverage known as mead, and has been used as a preservative.

Early on, honey-gatherers scaled cliffs, climbed trees, and destroyed hives to get at the sticky substance. Naturally, the bees fought back! It was painful, dangerous work. But over centuries, people developed ways of managing honey bees by setting up little bee cities in containers. Eventually, boxy hive-city designs emerged that could be partially dismantled for collecting honey and then reassembled with no loss of bee life and less hazard to humans. The modular "Langstroth hive" was invented by a Philadelphian in the 1850s, so our city has been dubbed the "cradle of American beekeeping." Yet unlike with cattle, we can't breed docile bees or fully domesticate them, like dogs. Bees retain their wildness, and beekeepers walk a fine line in overseeing their mini-metropolises of little winged aliens.

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## Hive-Minded in Philadelphia

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Actually, modern urban beekeepers aren't in it just for the honey or even to support pollination. Mark Berman never thought he'd be a beekeeper until he dropped into a Philadelphia Honey Festival with his family: "I was instantly captivated by the otherworldly scents of the hives... mesmerized by this sudden show of nature, just a few blocks from City Hall." Bees have a kind of charming weirdness, and how they work can be exciting to watch. "Raising bees isn't like taking on a new form of livestock. They are brilliant little creatures that work constantly and do it all themselves," wrote one beekeeper online. Another suggested that beekeeping is a fun sort of real-life video game—"you get honey when you do well, and get stung when you make a mistake." Said another,

"[I] started [beekeeping] to get honey. Continued because I love my girls!"

Bee society is weird, even alien: it's taken centuries to understand how alien. Up to the 1600s, nearly all bee-watchers proclaimed workers to be warlike tough-guy soldiers and the queen a heroic, manly monarch, but the insects gathering nectar are all sterile females. The large queen dominates hive-life and occupies herself with laying eggs. Most hatch into workers. But at the appropriate time of year, some eggs produce more queens and some produce male drones. These queens fight mano-a-mano to become the new queen, who then mates with multiple drones to birth eggs for her own "staff," while the old queen and most of her workers leave in a swarm

to establish a new hive. The honey, made from nectar by workers, nourishes them all throughout. So the cycle includes matriarchy, murder, and polyandry. No wonder pre-feminist male hive-keepers had trouble!

Our country consumes some 500,000 million tons of honey yearly—beyond urban beekeepers selling the work of their "girls," honey is big business. Of states, North Dakota produces the most; of imports, it's India, Argentina and China collectively. At our Hopkinson House Marketplace, we can buy Sandt's unfiltered raw honey packed in Easton, Pennsylvania, but gathered originally in numerous states, as well as Argentina,

Canada, and Mexico. Flavors of raw honey vary, depending upon the flower of origin. (But pasteurization and blending can standardize flavors.)

A new honey product illustrates not just bee ingenuity but human attraction to gourmet oddities. Those invasive spotted lanternflies, as it happens, feed on fruit and plant sap, and excrete a sweet, sugary substance. Guess what? In late summer when nectar becomes scarce, bees have been collecting this lanternfly "honeydew" poop and turning it into a dark, smoky honey with an earthy, bittersweet taste. The Philadelphia Bee Company sells it under the name of Doom Boom, available online. ■



**Martha Cornog** reviews graphic novels for Library Journal.



Pollinators at work in the Hopkinson House courtyard. Photos by Dennis McGlade, first published in *on the House*, Summer 2022.



# Our Very Own Oasis, Washington Square

Lynn Miller

All of us who call Hopkinson House home are no doubt thankful to have Washington Square as our front yard. We join generations of Philadelphia residents in our gratitude for William Penn's wisdom in designating permanent open spaces in each quadrant of his planned city for the enjoyment of its citizens. Well, maybe the earliest generations didn't exactly applaud, because these squares weren't much to look at for more than a century after Philadelphia's birth. Our own Southeast Square, as it was first known, was a grazing ground for sheep and cattle as well as a burial ground for those, often paupers, without connections to the churches whose graveyards were reserved for their own faithful. Those inmates who died in the Walnut Street Prison were sometimes buried here, too.

During the American Revolution, both patriot and British soldiers who fell in battle were laid to rest in trenches dug, first, along 7th and Walnut Streets, then alongside the south side of the square facing us between 6th and 7th Streets. Some two thousand British and American soldiers may have been interred in these pits, more than in any other resting place for those fallen in the revolutionary struggle. During the early decades of the 19th century, the square became a gathering place for the city's African American residents, who left votive offerings for friends and relatives buried there and



Photos by Lynn Miller and Bari Shor

turned the ground into a place of festivities, for which it became known as "Congo Square."

But finally, in 1825, years after it ceased to be a burial ground, the city sought to make this site, along with its counterparts, into true public parks. Each was named for a prominent figure from the time of the nation's founding, with our square honoring the most prominent of them all, and the only non-Philadelphian. In 1833, Washington Square was laid out in a plan similar to what we see today, with symmetrical paths and trees. A French botanist, François-André Michaux, selected the trees that were planted at the time. By mid-century, a beautiful park was maturing, making the neighborhood a desirable residential district.

When city council named our front yard after Washington, they also planned to build a memorial to our first president and to the continental soldiers buried there. But in



Philadelphia, some plans take time. The memorial didn't actually come to pass for well over a century. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the American Revolution was conceived by a planning committee in 1954 and completed in 1957, its eternal flame burning before it ever since. It holds the remains of a soldier disinterred here, although, nearly two centuries after his burial, it was impossible to determine whether he had been American or British.

Washington's likeness in bronze towering over the tomb is a casting of the original sculpture in marble created by the great French sculptor, Jean Antoine Houdon, in 1790. The original stands in the rotunda of Virginia's state capitol in Richmond. Houdon came from Paris and visited Mount Vernon at Benjamin Franklin's invitation to make this life-size depiction of our first president, the only such representation of him done from life. continued on page 19



## Our Very Own Oasis

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Facing the square on Sixth Street, the handsome brownstone home of the Philadelphia Athenaeum, which was founded in 1815, was constructed in 1847. Designed by John Notman, it is one of the seminal buildings in the Italianate Revival style in America, and still serves as a vital library, gallery, and gathering place for its members.

Following the Civil War, the surroundings of our patch of green gradually turned more commercial

than residential, as wealthy Philadelphians increasingly built their mansions near Rittenhouse Square. Washington Square was the center of the city's publishing industry through the first half of the twentieth century while much of the old housing stock around it turned shabby. That began to change nearly two decades after World War II, when Hopkinson House, soon followed by nearby Independence Place, was built as a part of the effort to revitalize Society Hill.

That project soon succeeded brilliantly in turning this quarter into one of the most desirable residential neighborhoods of any American city. For the rest of the last century, our park more or less thrived, although, as the city's tax base declined, Philadelphia's parks budget was never robust enough to keep it in prime shape through many of those years. Still, buildings facing the square that once had served publishers also took on new lives as luxury apartments.

Then, in 2005, Washington Square was transferred to the National Park Service so that it would become a piece of Independence National Historical Park (INHP). Although the city retains ownership, it is INHP that is now responsible for its upkeep.

Bluestone walkways have been repaired, trees have

been replanted, the brick wall around the perimeter rebuilt, and the long-derelict pool and fountain in the central plaza restored and made to function. The result is that our park today is no doubt as beautiful and appealing as at any time in its 340-year lifespan.

Much of what makes that so is thanks to the work of volunteers from the neighborhood who take responsibility for maintaining, especially, the plant beds. One of our Hopkinson House neighbors, Dennis McGlade, is in charge of the two beds that straddle the south entry into the park near 6th Street across from the Hopkinson House deli. He stakes plants, prunes shrubs and perennials, digs and thins overgrown plantings, and designs new and revised bedding. He also removes the trash that collects in his piece of the park, monitors the irrigation system and waters his plants as needed. Another resident, Barbara Gold, assists with the pruning, weeding, and planting throughout the square. We are indebted to Barbara and Dennis and their co-volunteers who give so much of their time and energy to maintain and enhance the beauty of our front yard.

Wouldn't William Penn be thrilled to see his park today! ■



**Lynn Miller** is a professor emeritus of Political Science at Temple University, now a sometime writer and painter. [www.lynn-miller.net](http://www.lynn-miller.net)

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# Fall is in the Air and in the Kitchen

Johanne Lamarche

Fall is in the air! With it comes the introduction of fabulous fall flavors in the kitchen. To start, I am featuring a delicious sweet potato hummus that is nutritious, easy to make

and looks ready for company served in a hollowed out squash. If you love anything pumpkin, I highly recommend the irresistible meatballs in a pumpkin sauce, simmered for an

afternoon in the crockpot while you enjoy an autumnal walk. For a not-too-sweet and very easy dessert, the pumpkin mousse made with Greek yogurt is sure to please. ■

## 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.*

### Crockpot Spicy Turkey Meatballs in Pumpkin-Tomato Sauce

These low-fat turkey meatballs, simmering a whole fall afternoon in their spicy sauce, filled the house with their enticing aroma while I enjoyed a walk to see the turning leaves. I love pumpkin and after reading in Runner's World magazine that canned pumpkin packs three times as much beta-carotene as fresh pumpkin, I have been sneaking it in all kinds of dishes. Added to the tomato base of this spicy sauce, it was indiscernible yet added a rich silkiness to the sauce's texture as well as a ton of fiber. The sauce is nice and thick and coats the meatballs densely. The meatballs can be served as an appetizer, in a roll or with pasta. The sauce is nippy so if you want to lower the heat, reduce the chipotle peppers by half. I freeze any leftover chipotle peppers with sauce in mini portion bags in the freezer for future use.

#### Ingredients

3 lbs of ground turkey	½ t cinnamon
1 c panko bread crumbs	½ c low sodium, fat free chicken broth
¼ c milk	3 garlic cloves, minced
2 large eggs, lightly beaten	7 oz can of chipotle peppers in adobo sauce, chopped finely
1 T chili powder	chopped flat leaf parsley to garnish
1 t garlic powder	
1 t kosher salt	
2 t ground cumin, divided	
1 28 oz can of marinara sauce	
1 15 oz can of pumpkin purée	Optional lime crema: ¼ c of sour cream ½ a lime, juiced
2 T molasses	

#### Directions

- 1 Preheat oven to 400°F. In a large bowl, combine turkey, bread crumbs, milk, eggs, chili powder, garlic powder, salt and 1 teaspoon of the cumin. Roll into tablespoon-sized balls.
- 2 Rest a cooling rack on top of a cookie sheet and spray with cooking spray on both sides. Line your meatballs on the rack, keeping a bit of space between each one, and bake for 10-12 minutes to brown.
- 3 In the bowl of your crockpot, combine marinara, pumpkin, chipotle peppers in adobo sauce, garlic, broth, cinnamon and one teaspoon of the cumin. Add meatballs and coat with sauce. Cook on low for three hours.
- 4 Garnish with chopped parsley and serve with crusty rolls or on pasta. If using the lime crema, drizzle over the meatballs. The coolness of the sour cream tones down some of the heat of the sauce.





## Fall is in the Air and in the Kitchen

continued from page 22

### Sweet Potato Hummus with Feta and Pistachios

This creamy sweet potato hummus offers a seasonal twist on the traditional hummus. It is easy to make and such a pretty addition to the menu when presented in a hollowed out squash. Serve with warm pita points.

#### Ingredients

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1 lb sweet potatoes     | 3 t brown sugar                         |
| 1 t cumin seeds         | zest of an orange                       |
| 1½ lemons, juiced       | 2 T crumbled feta for topping           |
| 1 t salt                | 2 T toasted pistachios for topping      |
| ¼ t cayenne             | paprika for presentation                |
| ½ t black pepper        | squash or sweet pepper to use as a bowl |
| 1 clove garlic, crushed | 1 T olive oil for drizzling             |
| 2 T tahini              |   |
| 1 T olive oil           |   |

#### Directions

- 1 Bake the sweet potatoes whole at 350°F for about an hour. Cool, peel and place in a food processor equipped with a blade.
- 2 Toast the cumin seeds over low heat until their fragrance is released, about two minutes. Remove and crush them with a spice mill or with a mortar and pestle.
- 3 In the same pan, without any added oil, toast the pistachios over low heat until golden.
- 3 Place all ingredients, except the toppings in the food processor and purée until smooth. Refrigerate overnight to get the flavors to meld.
- 4 Serve the hummus in a hollowed out squash or sweet pepper. Top with toasted pistachios, feta, and a drizzle of olive oil. Scatter some extra pistachios and feta on your platter and sprinkle the top of your dip and the platter with extra paprika for color.



### Easy Pumpkin Mousse with Peanut Brittle Topping

This creamy mousse gets its silky smooth texture and thickening from Greek yogurt. It comes together quickly in a food processor. Crumbled peanut brittle on top gives it a satisfying crunch. It can be made up to two days in advance so it is perfect for stress-free entertaining. It is elegant enough for company or simple enough for a weekday family meal.

#### Ingredients

- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1 c pumpkin purée              | ⅛ t ground cloves                         |
| 1 c plain low fat Greek yogurt | 1 t vanilla                               |
| ½ c sugar                      | 1 c heavy cream                           |
| 1 t cinnamon                   | ½ c whipping cream                        |
| ½ t ground ginger              | 2 T sugar                                 |
| ⅛ t ground nutmeg              | ¼ c chopped peanut brittle (store bought) |

#### Directions

- 1 In a food processor or with a mixer, combine the pumpkin purée, the spices, vanilla and the yogurt until smooth.
- 2 Whip one cup of the heavy cream with the sugar until soft peaks form.
- 3 Gently fold the cream into the pumpkin-yogurt mixture until fully combined and the mousse is a pale gold.
- 4 Divide into eight servings in either ramekins, small tumblers, or stemmed glassware. Chill for a minimum of two hours or as much as two days before serving.



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Thinking about buying or selling a Hopkinson House condominium?

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