

# What's Inside

Lynn Miller

The election of new members to our Council is fast upon us, as our President, **Sarah Kelly**, reminds us in her regular column. She notes the time and place of the annual meeting, which will unfold in our no-longer-under-construction Solarium, as well as the hiring this past February of two important new members of staff, whose photos appear nearby.

Manager **Gary van Niekerk**, who recently marked the first six months of his time with us, tells us a bit more about the duties of the new employees, Krysta Decker and Michael Perez. He also mentions several capital projects soon to transpire at Hopkinson House, starting with the renovation of the building's façade.

In the winter issue of *on the House*, I said that we were beginning a regular Committee Corner feature in which committee chairs would report regularly on their committees' activities. Because the standing committees will all have new members and chairpersons following our own in-house election, there should be more to say in this Corner in the summer issue. But do note the graphic from the pool committee telling you about that marvelous rooftop amenity during summers at Hopkinson House.

Turning to this year's local, state, and national elections, resident **Larry Meehan** fills us in on the primary election on April 23. Voting will take place, as usual, in the south lobby, and is open

to registered voters. He also lists the names of candidates running in contested elections and reminds you what to do if you have questions about your registration.

Carole and Jerome Cloud are a very accomplished couple who love living at Hopkinson House, as **Concha Alborg** learned when she sat down with them recently. She tells you something of their achievements and of the new adventures they are planning now that they both are recently retired.

**Martha Cornog** explains what's taking place as construction proceeds behind the Richardson Dilworth House on the east side of Washington Square. She gives us a snapshot of the house's history when it was home to Philadelphia's mayor and his family, and what we can expect once the project is completed.

Whether or not you have ever crossed the Delaware River to visit Camden's Aquarium, which is not much more than a stone's throw away from us, you will be fascinated by **Jane Hickman's** account of her recent visit there. She will acquaint you with creatures of the sea you may never have known existed.

We celebrated the 90th birthday of Bill Reeves in January, celebrating, too, his thirty years as our forever amiable help-mate at the front desk. You can be reminded of Bill's bash in the text and photos that follow.

# on the HOUSE

The Newsletter of  
Hopkinson House • Spring 2024



On the first Sunday in March, Hopkinson House residents enjoyed their first-ever progressive party to mark the end (finally) of our long HVAC project. We give you photos from that event.

**Michael Neff** casts his artistic eye on the most famous Philadelphian of all time, Ben Franklin. Michael winks at us with some poetic lines of prose as well as a different kind of portrait of the great man himself.

Frequent traveler **Joseph Quinn**, who reported on his visit to France in the last issue, began the new year with yet another trip to India. This time he toured that nation's southern region and tells us all about it in this issue.

**Mary Tracy** is co-chair of *Curtains Up*, a group sponsored by our Washington Square Citizens' League for Hopkinson House theater-goers. She reports on their outing to the Annenberg Center to see *Zooman and the Sign* by Philadelphia playwright Charles Fuller.

**Martha Cornog** returns to tell you everything you ever wanted to know about a variety of construction cranes, as well as their ancestry.

Last but not least, **Johanne Lamarche**, in her Chef's Corner, suggests we celebrate Cinco de Mayo with Mexican cuisine. She gives us two recipes straight from our neighbor to the south. ■

Occasional Photo by Bari Shor



Watch the sunset from the comfort of your balcony.

# on the HOUSE

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

## Message from Council

Sarah A. Kelly

By the time our HHOA Owners and residents read this, it will be spring, and hopefully it will feel like it. For the first time since 2021, our homes, hallways and elevators will be back to normal, and signs of our HVAC construction should be gone. Some of you still have questions about the operation of your new fan coil units (or you may, when we change over to cooling mode), and if you do, we encourage you to put in a work order and have maintenance come to assist you.

A rite of spring at Hopkinson House is our annual meeting and election. There are four Council seats available this year—those currently held by Bruce Chamberlin, Rob Krebs, Bob Parsky and Joe Salerno. Election notice emailings have begun, and those of you who don't use email should be receiving hard copy distributions. The deadline for submission of candidate data sheets was March 25, and by now you should have received information on who has decided to run for the four available seats. Please remember to join us for a Candidates' Night in the Solarium on April 10.

There will be an in-person "meet and greet" from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m., followed by a hybrid "Ask the Candidates" session starting at 7:30 p.m. The "Ask the Candidates" session will be conducted in person in the Solarium with live Q&A, and will also be available via Zoom with the real-time Zoom Q&A function. For those not wishing to attend in person or not wishing to ask questions, the session will be broadcast on the Hopkinson House TV channel 97. Questions may also be submitted in advance to [admin@thehopkinsonhouse.com](mailto:admin@thehopkinsonhouse.com).

Voting will take place between April 11 and April 24, and our Annual Meeting will be held on April 25, in the Solarium, again for the first time since 2019! The Annual Meeting will include announcement of election results and presentation of 2023 year-end financial statements.

Hopefully many of you already have had the chance to meet two new Hopkinson House employees.

Council and our management are all very glad that the search is finally over to fill the positions of Chief Engineer (Michael Perez) and Executive Assistant/Resident Coordinator (Krysta Decker). You'll learn more about these two new additions to our staff from Manager Gary van Niekerk's article, but please take time to welcome them both to Hopkinson House.

Gary will also fill you in on the end of the HVAC project, and several new capital projects that will begin this year as we move forward to keep Hopkinson House in shape to last at least another 62 years!

People often ask me about our amenities at Hopkinson House, and my answer is invariably the same. We have many, but the best are our terrific staff and our amazing front yard—Washington Square. Please take time to say thank you to our staff when they help you, and to smell the flowers in the Square. ■



**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.

### 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 comments 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 Management

Gary van Niekerk

The first six months of my tenure at Hopkinson House passed in a blink of an eye! I am pleased to say that I have met many great residents, and I am sure that I will continue to meet more as time allows. It has been a busy time, filled with much learning as well as excitement as I tackle the varied projects that need to be completed.

We recently announced the hire of a new Chief Engineer, Michael Perez. Michael has extensive experience as a Regional Maintenance Manager of high-rise, multi-family apartment buildings. Having completed numerous capital (equipment) replacement and repair projects, Michael is well equipped to provide the Association with the guidance that it needs for our future projects. He will oversee management of both the maintenance department as well as the housekeeping department.



Michael Perez, Chief Engineer

We also welcomed Krysta Decker to the office team as the Executive Assistant and Resident Services Coordinator. Her background as a coordinator for an assisted living and rehab facility has provided her

with the tools she will need to assist residents. Aside from general administration assistance, Krysta will also be tasked with engaging with the community to help plan and coordinate social events, as well as renting the solarium or courtyard for private events.



Krysta Decker, Executive Assistant and Resident Services Coordinator

The HVAC Project has officially drawn to a close. Hallway carpets have been cleaned, paint has been touched up and wallpaper repaired. We may have some owners awaiting replacement parts, and those owners will be contacted as soon as the parts arrive. The association has ordered a sufficient supply of replacement parts (not all) so that any future service requests may be addressed promptly.

Our next big project is to tackle the façade renovation. This project entails the thorough inspection of the exterior building façade which includes the windows and balconies. Any required masonry repairs will be completed, and the building will then be cleaned and repainted. The perimeter of the windows will also be recaulked.

As mentioned, the project includes the inspection and as needed, repairs to the balcony. You will be required to remove all items from the balcony prior to the commencement of work. Notification will be provided prior to starting.

Other capital projects that are in the planning stage are those related to the domestic hot water storage tanks and hot water generation, the staff break room, pool roof deck and pool repairs, garage structural assessment and the elevator mechanicals and controls replacement.

The commercial space previously occupied by the HVAC project contractor is currently being marketed, and we hope to find a suitable tenant in the near future. We also have a small office next to the management office which can be leased at low cost.

I look forward to the next six months and being able to improve the service levels, engage the residents with new community events, and check off some of the smaller projects and tasks on my to-do list. ■



**Gary van Niekerk**, has been managing condominiums, including both the Ayer and Lippincott condos on Washington Square, for more than fifteen years.

## Welcome to Hopkinson House!



New Hopkinson House resident Makeda Constable received a Welcome Gift Bag from the Society Hill Civic Association.

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## Committee Corner

We hope you completed the pool survey the office emailed on March 15. We look forward to the input. By the summer issue of *on the House*, not only will the pool be open, a new Council liaison will be guiding the Pool Committee. We extend our deep appreciation to Joe Salerno for his outstanding patience, support, and leadership as our Council liaison during his term in office. Thank you, Joe.

### Rooftop Summer Fun Hopkinson House Pool

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# Prepare for the April 23 Pennsylvania Primary

Larry Meehan

Pennsylvanians will vote for candidates for the following offices on April 23: President of the United States; the United States Senate and House; the Pennsylvania State Senate and House; and three state-wide offices—Attorney General, Auditor General, and Treasurer.

While only registered Republicans and Democrats may vote for the candidates in their respective parties, all registered voters are free to weigh in on ballot questions. As of the date of this article, only one question is on the ballot:

*Should the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter be amended to require the City to provide for the indemnification and defense of registered community organizations (RCO) in connection with claims made against them arising directly out of their lawful participation in the City's zoning variance process?*

If the initiative is approved, the city government must devise a system to help RCOs pay for the costs of defending against such lawsuits, which may include the costs associated with losing or settling.

## Contested Races

The ballot lists opponents for President Joe Biden (Dean Phillips) and presumed Republican nominee Donald Trump (Nikki Haley), but both Phillips and Haley have suspended their campaigns. The results will merely reflect the extent of the protest vote against the nominees.

The most interesting race, and one that features an extraordinary number of worthy contestants, will produce the Democratic and Republican nominees for Pennsylvania Attorney General. Candidates for the Democrats are Jack Stollsteimer, Eugene DePasquale, Joe Khan, Keir Bradford-Grey, and Jared Solomon. The Republican candidates are Dave Sunday and Craig Williams. The website [www.why.org](http://www.why.org) has an excellent guide for voters who wish to gather more information about the candidates' qualifications and experience.

The final contested races for voters at Hopkinson House are for the Democratic Party nominees for Auditor General and Treasurer. In the first race, Philadelphia State Representative

Malcom Kenyatta will face off against Mark Pinsley, Lehigh Valley Controller. The winner will challenge the current Auditor General, Republican Tim DeFoor, in the November election. The website [www.spotlightpa.org](http://www.spotlightpa.org) has a worthwhile voters' guide for this contest.

The Democrats running for State Treasurer are State Rep. Ryan Bizarro (Erie County) and former addiction program director Erin McClelland (Allegheny County). The Republican incumbent is Stacy Garrity, who upset Joe Torsella in the 2020 election.

## Where To Vote

Residents of our division (the 3rd Division of the 5th Ward) may vote on election day in the South Lobby at Hopkinson House. Of course, many will take advantage of the option to vote by mail. Whichever option you choose, you must be registered to vote. Check your status here: [www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/SurePortalHome.aspx](http://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/SurePortalHome.aspx).



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

## Early Voting Sites

Voters who wish to submit a mail-in ballot in person may do so at the county election office, Room 140 at City Hall. The closest drop box for ballots is at the Independence Branch of the Free Library at 18 S. 7th Street. The next closest drop box is at the South Portal of City Hall.

Only the voter may turn in a ballot. The only exception is for voters with an illness or physical disability who correctly complete a designation of agent form, allowing another person to transport the ballot. Both the voter and agent must sign the form. Agents can only transport ballots for voters of one household per election.

**Important! Ballots may not be turned in at the polling place on election day.**

If you have questions about voting procedures, email Linda Ellsworth, our Judge of Elections, at [lvellsworth@yahoo.com](mailto:lvellsworth@yahoo.com). ■

## Important Dates

Keep these deadlines in mind as the election approaches:

### April 5-6

Voter registration in Hopkinson House lobby for new residents and those who wish to change party affiliation.

### April 8

Last day to register to vote in the primary.

### April 16

Last day to apply for a mail-in or civilian absentee ballot.

### April 23

Last day for the Board of Elections to receive voted mail-in and civilian absentee ballots (must be received by 8:00 p.m.).

## Carole and Jerome Cloud: A Design Couple

Concha Alborg

Carole and Jerome met on a blind date in Rittenhouse Square more than twenty years ago, and together they have created a home rich in design and comfort. They have lived in Hopkinson House since 2010, moving here from Society Hill Towers, because “we always wanted to live on Washington Square,” says Jerome. And Carole confirms: “I love it here. It feels like I’m finally at home.” Jerome’s son Julian lived with them and is now living a few blocks away, where they see each other often. His old room has become a family room of sorts, with a glass partition to the living room, creating an open space full of light.

Carole is originally from Switzerland. Her family moved to Central California when she was a little girl. She has a sister in Corsica and other relatives in Paris, France. Carole received her undergraduate degree from the University of California, Irvine, and an MFA in creative writing from the University of North

Carolina. She considers herself a poet, but her work experience has focused on web design, or what she calls “information architecture.” She worked for fifteen years at Drexel University, where she created a creative communications group and worked on the university’s very first integrated website, followed by ten years at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, redesigning their website and managing web communications.

Jerome received his BFA from the University of the Arts and his MPS from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. He taught in the design program at the University of the Arts before founding Cloud Gehshan Design in 1986 with Virginia Gehshan. He was the principal in charge of design there for 36 years, and he and his partner Virginia were made fellows of the Society for Experiential Graphic Design (SEGD) in 2010. Since his retirement this year, he has become a



Carole and Jerome Cloud

Senior Advisor to the firm. It’s interesting to note that the pandemic was helpful for Jerome in the transition to retirement. Working at home with Carole made them both realize that it was time to plan and enjoy the next stage of their lives.

Cloud Gehshan Design creates “memorable and accessible experiences for the natural and built environment.” It promotes a sense of place and identity, which helps visitors understand their surroundings. Some of its services include placebranding, signage and wayfinding systems, interpretative storytelling, and

environmental enhancements. Cloud Gehshan has worked with many hospitals and universities in the Philadelphia area and throughout the United States. For example, at Temple University, they designed a “master exterior signage and wayfinding plan.” In addition to working with hospitals and universities, other clients include gardens, zoos, parks and arboretums, including Longwood Gardens and Winterthur Museum and Gardens. They have developed wayfinding systems for heritage areas as well as cities and towns

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Interpretive panel for the Barnes Foundation by Cloud Gehshan



American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial, by Cloud Gehshan



## Getting to Know Our Neighbors: Carole and Jerome Cloud

continued from page 6

around the country. Cloud Gehshan received numerous awards and recognition for “promoting the highest values in environmental graphic design and significantly contributing to the direction and growth of the profession.”

In and around Philadelphia, we can see Cloud Gehshan’s interpretive panels along the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, the pylons and signage for the Pennsylvania Convention Center, Barnes Foundation, the recently opened Penn Medicine Patient Pavilion at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, Jefferson University Hospital and Lower Merion Township.

Our Phlash Bus Downtown Loop is another, very recognizable project.

When I asked Jerome which one of the projects he is most proud of, he answered without hesitation, “The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial in Washington D.C. adjacent to the National Mall, in full view of the U.S. Capitol.” It is the first national memorial devoted to the over three million veterans living with permanent disabilities in the United States, dedicated October 2014 by President Obama. The Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum is another project in Washington D.C.

Projects in Philadelphia include the Spring Garden Connector, full of animated lights that transformed the dark and bleak I-95 underpass, and the Corten steel wall of the Philadelphia Rail Park, the viaduct abandoned since 1984 when the last train traveled its rails. This abandoned overpass has been transformed into our own “High Line.”

Now in their first year of retirement, Carole and Jerome plan to enjoy more frequent travel; in fact, they are planning a trip

to Barcelona, Spain, soon. They love the pool; they like to swim in the evening when the heat of the sun has passed. I’m sure you have seen Jerome with his foldable bike, around the building, heading off to yoga. Carole has a horse, an Azteca, which she boards at Fox Den Farm in Chadds Ford, training in dressage. She is also completing a creative writing certificate program at Penn.

I have invited her to my writing group to tell us about her poetry. ■



**Concha Alborg, PhD**, is a retired academic and author originally from Spain. She writes fiction, creative non-fiction and a blog, “Epilogues/Epílogos.” [www.conchaalborg.com](http://www.conchaalborg.com)



Spring Garden Connector under I-95, by Cloud Gehshan



Steel wall map at the Philadelphia Rail Park by Cloud Gehshan

You are invited to join

## Washington Square Citizens League

Washington Square Citizens League is a nonprofit organization with more than 140 members, most of whom live in Hopkinson House.

If you are not a member and would like to join, contact Martha Cornog at [martha.cornog@gmail.com](mailto:martha.cornog@gmail.com), or find a link to the membership form at <https://thehopkinsonhouse.com/activities/>

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# The Dilworth House Condos: New Neighbors to the East

Martha Cornog

What's the story about these new Dilworth House condominiums going up beside the Athenaeum, soon to be housing more Philadelphians looking to live on our lovely square?

Only a select few future neighbors will occupy 10 luxury units, designed by Cope Linder Architects as a contemporary-style, 11-story addition to the original Dilworth House. The addition will have a glass and grey façade, with slanted roof, and will offer 20 underground valet-served parking spots, accessed via South Randolph Street. Estimated project cost? \$32 million.

Most of the addition falls behind the original property, and only a small part of the faux-historic building has been torn down. The entire façade remains.

## Chronology

**1957** Richardson Dilworth, Philadelphia's mayor from 1956 to 1962, wanted his new home built in a Colonial Revival style, so restoration architect G. Edwin Brumbaugh's design mimicked historic



Here's what the Dilworth House condos will look like. Image: Cope Linder Architects/Philadelphia Inquirer. (Editor's note: Not quite. The condos in fact rise alongside the neighboring condo building, not as far back as pictured here.)

houses in the area. Previously occupying an elegantly appointed home west of Rittenhouse Square, Dilworth decided to move his family into Society Hill to show commitment to the area's revitalization. He lived there until his death in 1974.

Dilworth's family included six children and twelve miniature toy poodles, so not just any house would be right for him!

**2001** Developer John Turchi Jr. bought the property, now referred to as the Richardson Dilworth House. Turchi originally intended to keep it a single-family dwelling but later proposed destroying the building and constructing a 16-story condo tower on the lot. But the Society Hill Civic Association fought back. The compromise was to reduce the size, and preserve the façade of the original house. Years followed when the project failed to move forward.

**2021** Some two decades later, Astoban Investments bought the property and took over the project, using most of Turchi's design and working with Cope Linder Architects. Work began soon afterward. Astoban intends to preserve the house's contents. Anything historic or representative of Dilworth and his mayoralty will be placed back into the finished building. ■



Martha Cornog reviews graphic novels for Library Journal.

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# My Ocean Adventure in Camden

Jane Hickman

*If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water.*

—Loren Eisley, anthropologist, philosopher, and naturalist

I never expected to become mesmerized by jellyfish. But when I stopped by a large tank filled with Pacific Sea Nettles, I had a difficult time moving on. A pulsating head or “bell” that resembles a parachute allows these jellies to move slowly and gracefully in all directions. Twenty-four maroon tentacles surround four frilly white “oral arms” that begin under the bell at the jellyfish’s mouth. In the wild, Pacific Sea Nettles may have bells as wide as three feet in diameter and tentacles more than fifteen feet long. They feed on small fish, plankton, crustaceans, and other jellyfish as they drift on Pacific currents.

On a recent rainy Wednesday afternoon, I spent a few hours at the Adventure Aquarium in Camden. Although some exhibits are geared to younger visitors—tanks where one can touch a baby shark, sting ray, or horseshoe crab—there is much for the curious adult. I would prefer to see animals and marine life in their natural habitat, but that is often not possible. Zoos and aquariums provide a service in educating urban dwellers about living things that may be endangered or nearing extinction. For example, a sign on an eye-level tank containing corals in several stages of growth indicated that these invertebrates were destined for future reef restoration.



Pacific Sea Nettles are mesmerizing to watch as they drift about the tank.

The most popular exhibit at the Aquarium is the shark bridge and tunnel and adjoining areas for viewing different species of sharks, giant Queensland groupers, enormous stingrays, and Old Green, an endangered loggerhead sea turtle. It is disconcerting to watch a massive, adult shark swim above you, so close that you can see its broken, yet still very sharp teeth.

The spiny puffer, balloonfish, or spiny porcupinefish—a fascinating fish with many names—is native to tropical zones around the world. Its body is covered in short spines that lie flat on the body. But when the puffer is threatened, it takes in water or air, inflates its body, and the spines are raised and lengthened, making this fish look quite menacing. When I worked at the Penn Museum, I learned that the people of the Kiribati islands in the South Pacific used dried, inflated spiny puffers as helmets during the 19th century. Apparently, these helmets were prized additions to collectors’ cabinets of curiosities.



When the spiny puffer inflates, it looks quite menacing!

Two Nile hippos can be seen from several locations, both above and below the water. I was surprised at how quickly they move when they are partly submerged, especially when feeding time arrives. Many smaller tanks contain a diverse group of creatures, including varieties of colorful fish, seahorses, crustaceans such as lobsters and crabs, frogs and salamanders (amphibians), and such reptiles as turtles, snakes, and lizards. Tiny frogs include the yellow-banded poison dart frog, which is less than an inch long. As their name suggests, poison dart frogs are highly toxic. The Enberá Chocó, indigenous people of Columbia, apply poison from glands on the backs of these frogs to the tips of their blow darts to paralyze their prey.

There are lots of benches and places to sit in the

aquarium to look closely at marine life or to take a break from walking. Think about having your lunch outside near the penguins. If this sounds appealing to you or if you have grandchildren in town, the Adventure Aquarium is a great place to visit. ■

*More information, including hours, prices, parking, and group tours is available at [www.adventureaquarium.com](http://www.adventureaquarium.com). Call 844.474.FISH (3474) to speak to an aquarium employee. A wide selection of food is available at the Aquarium’s Marketplace Café.*



The yellow-banded poison dart frog is highly toxic and less than one inch long.



**Jane Hickman** is an archaeologist who studies ancient jewelry.

# Celebrating Bill Reeves

Lynn Miller

Last January, Hopkinson House residents gathered in the lobby to honor Bill Reeves on his 90th birthday. It's fair to say that no individual is more clearly identified with our wonderful building today than this remarkable man. From his perch at the visitors' desk, Bill has welcomed all who come through the front door since the day he started working here, which was August 4, 1994, as he is quick to remember. A little math tells me that, come next August, he will have completed thirty years with us. Bill makes it sound as if he hasn't really worked for us at all, since he considers everyone here, residents and staff alike, to be one giant family—and one he loves.

Although Bill's time at Hopkinson House could count as pretty much a full career for most mortals, a bit more arithmetic indicates that when he



Bill greets Emily Farrell while other residents look on.

came to us Bill was of an age at which many people retire. He was invited to join our staff, in fact, by our then-new manager, Mana Tancredi, who had been the manager at our city's Presidential apartments,

where Bill served as the building's security advisor for the previous six years. But that was already the start of a second career for him; he had served in the Philadelphia Police Department some 17 years

before that. His police work eventually led to a back injury that in turn bought disability, thus ending his years as a gumshoe.

Bill takes pride in the fact that he knows 98 percent of our residents by name, even recalling their apartment numbers. He even remembers the names of many of those who visit us repeatedly. Some residents may have wondered if Bill's 90th birthday party would be the occasion when he would announce his retirement. But, happily, that was not the case. Bill says he has no intention of retiring because there are still more residents he "wants to torture." All who know Bill know that he said it with a grin and a twinkle in his eye, since his idea of torture is a smile and a warm greeting. That is exactly what makes those who know this Hopkinson House institution feel good whenever they see Bill Reeves. ■



Charlene and Vic Compher, Sidney and Sheila Siegel, and Carole Cherkas were among those attending Bill's birthday party.



Among the guests, Joyce Portnoy and Joe Salerno.



# Party Time!

Lynn Miller

We threw ourselves a party! On the first Sunday in March, residents came together for conviviality and refreshments to celebrate the completion (at long last) of the building's HVAC project. At 5:30 p.m., volunteers

throughout the building opened their doors to neighbors from their own and adjacent floors. Those hosts and other volunteers provided food and drink. Then at 7:00 p.m., the party progressed to the solarium, where we enjoyed

desserts and more libations. It was, we think, the first such progressive party ever at Hopkinson House.

Thanks to our Council and social committee for arranging this one. A good time was had by all! ■



**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)



The party started in various apartments and ended in the solarium.



Residents enjoying the party.



Sarah Kelly and LJ Steinig at the progressive party.



Savoring the final hour in the solarium.

# What's Happening East of Broad Street With Jody & Johanna

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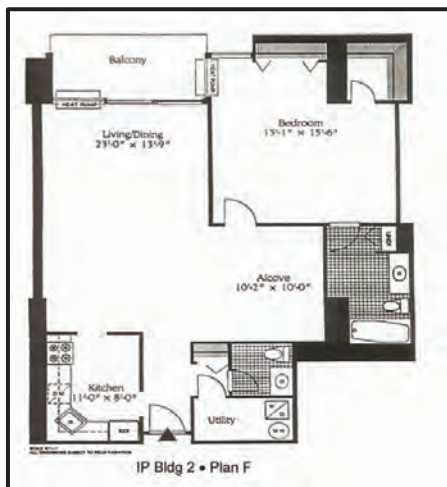
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# Winking Ben

**Michael Neff**

If one lives in Philadelphia  
it is impossible to escape Ben Franklin.  
He becomes a caricature.

It's hard to think of the city  
when it had to start from scratch.

They needed a school, a hospital,  
a library, paved and lit streets,  
an insurance company, a fire department,  
a Declaration of Independence,  
a newspaper to publish it,  
allies to support us in the war.  
A post office.

One by one, needs were identified and  
Franklin worked to provide for them.

In the Art Museum there's a marble bust  
of Franklin from his days in Paris. By Houdon.  
It's an Enlightenment work,  
showing an enlightened character:  
wise, practical, serious, witty, and compassionate.

I've gazed at this statue for years.  
It is so alive, and Franklin is so sympathetic.  
I imagine he understands our dilemmas.  
He encourages us to do what needs to be done,  
and acts as our example,  
and all with a wink and a smile.



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

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# My Trip to Southern India

Joseph Quinn

On my fifth trip to India, in January 2024, I went to Tamil Nadu and Kerala, the two southernmost states of that country. What a contrast to a previous trip, when I spent two weeks in Leh, the capital of Ladakh, India's northernmost state!<sup>1</sup>

India is a country of many contradictions and contrasts, none more vivid than those between the extremes of north and south—starting with weather and terrain. In winter, Ladakh is ice-bound and off limits to tourists. January temperatures in Kerala hover around 90°F with jungle-like humidity. The plateau on which Ladakh sits, (alt. 11,500 ft.) within view of the majestic Himalayas, is barren and rocky, the air dry and thin. With its luxuriant foliage and steamy backwaters, Kerala (alt. 22 ft.) resembles an earthly paradise.

Our two-week group tour began in Chennai, Tamil

Nadu, on India's southeastern coast. Stops along the way included Pondicherry, Tanjore, Madurai, Munar, and finally Fort Kochi, Kerala, on the southwestern Malabar Coast.

In southern India you won't find the jarring urban density of Delhi or Mumbai, or tourist magnets like the Red Fort and Taj Mahal. But you will be enlightened and amazed by the diversity of religious traditions, architecture, educational opportunities, socioeconomic status, and ancient customs surviving amid modern progress.

Of India's 1.4 billion people, 80 percent practice the Hindu faith, yet there are small surviving pockets of Christianity to be found as legacies of colonial occupations. Chennai is home to the Neo-Gothic St. Thomas Cathedral and Basilica dating back to 1523, one of only three Catholic churches in the world housing the remains of a saint.<sup>2</sup>

At our last stop, in Fort Kochin, we found more examples of religious diversity: the Paradesi Jewish Synagogue (1568) and the Church of St. Francis (1503). Originally the province of Portuguese Catholics and later Dutch Protestants, it is now a museum boasting the former resting place of Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama (removed to Lisbon in 1880).

But undoubtedly, the chief religious and architectural monuments in southern India are the remarkable Hindu temples in the Dravidian style. These are large rectangular compounds surrounded by walls, each with an elaborate entry gate. Inside are miniature bustling cities, with spaces for eating, socializing, and worshipping at open altars and in tiny chapels reserved for Hindus. The defining architectural elements are dizzyingly tall towers, one at each entrance of the compound, with the largest

(holy of holies) usually in the center. From a broad base they rise, narrowing at the top, and are ornately decorated with colorful, intricate carvings of deities, mythical creatures, and scenes from Hindu mythology.<sup>3</sup>

A highlight in Madurai was the Sri Meenakshi Sundareswarar temple (ca. 1200 CE; renovated and rebuilt as recently as the 17th century), encompassing almost 700,000 square feet. The approach is dramatic, with its central tower slowly becoming visible, and growing ever taller, as you make your way through labyrinthian neighborhood streets. For several hours, in bare feet, we admired ancient frescos and statuary while wandering slack-jawed through the 1000-pillared hall and other parts of the vast temple open to non-Hindus.

Thousands of ardent worshippers greeted us continued on page 17



Catholic nuns visiting Neo-Gothic St. Thomas Cathedral in Chennai, a national shrine honoring relics of the Biblical Doubting Thomas.



The central Sri Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple. At 500 ft., a premier example of Dravidian style architecture commonly found in southern Indian Hindu temples.



School children creating dazzling designs in colored chalk celebrating the Pongal rice festival.



## My Trip to Southern India

continued from page 16



In Fort Kochi, two performers in the all-male Kathakali Dance Troupe. Arrayed in fantastic costumes and make-up, they enact folk tales using only precisely choreographed bodily and facial gestures.

with friendly, curious smiles as they waited patiently in endless lines to enter the most sacred precincts.

In Chennai, an unplanned detour resulted in a memorable experience. Our guide noticed a group of kids in a schoolyard making colorful chalk drawings on the ground. We invited ourselves in and were rewarded with the delightful spectacle of young artists creating incredibly intricate and colorful designs for the Pongal festival held every year to celebrate a bountiful rice harvest. As everywhere I've been in India, these school kids were thrilled to meet Western visitors.

They gathered around excitedly, but politely, asking questions, shaking hands, high-fiving, and asking for selfies with us. They are the happy, healthy beneficiaries of a government program that pays for grammar school education, including uniforms, school supplies, and two meals a day. The universal education scheme does not, however, reach some children who live in remote villages, as we saw firsthand.

Next day, we spent an unforgettable afternoon visiting one of those villages near Tanjore, where Pongal celebrations were also underway. We saw colorful

chalk drawings in front of each dwelling on the single paved street. We were invited into a home with a large open kitchen, where we cooked Pongal rice and had a simple meal served by our gracious hosts and attended by many neighbors. Then we toured the small village with its dusty unpaved paths, open fields, goat pens, and tiny Hindu shrine. There was no sign of the government education scheme. The economy was based on raising goats and chickens for food and income. The peaceful rural setting no doubt softened the rough edges of poverty, and left us with the mixed feelings one encounters so often in India: sympathy, humility, gratitude. I sensed

an unspoken connection of admiration and respect passing between visitors and villagers, however disparate our social and financial circumstances.

Our tour ended on the coast of Kerala, in Kochi, or rather Fort Kochi, the city's historic district, with its leafy parks, quaint shopping streets, British-style bungalows, and seafront promenade. A highlight of our stay was a performance by the renowned all-male Kathakali Dance troupe. With stunningly elaborate costumes and makeup, they enact folk tales using precisely choreographed bodily and facial gestures corresponding to the action of the story, and spanning a gamut of emotions—delight, sadness, anger, tranquility.

Reeling from constant sensory stimulation, sometimes pleasant, sometimes not, I processed a similar range of emotions. Going from Tamil Nadu, with its urban-centered vitality, pervasive Hindu spirituality, and monolithic Dravidian architecture, to Kerala's Edenic vegetation, colonial heritage, religious diversity, and relaxed social mores, I sensed a noticeable shift—an exhalation from tension to release. An example of the inexhaustible variety of experiences that challenge and change how I see, think, and feel when I visit India. ■

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> See *on the House*, Fall 2022, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> The others are the Vatican (St. Peter) and Compostela, Spain (St. James).

<sup>3</sup> All Hindu temples are dedicated to a major divinity, such as Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesh, or Krishna.



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



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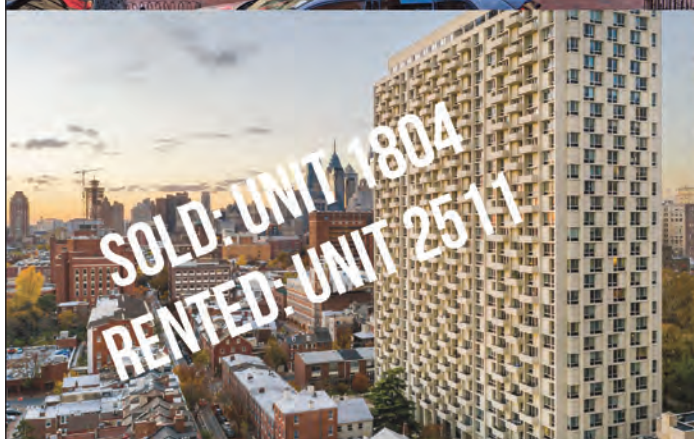
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## Curtains Up Hits the Road

Mary Tracy

“Can we fit?” theatre-goers asked as they hopped into Patricia Kapur’s mini-van while a few others slid into Dave and Myra Kurkowski’s SUV. Our entourage was headed off to see Charles Fuller’s Obie Award-winning play, *Zooman and the Sign* at the Annenberg Center. The Harold Prince Theatre offered a discount for groups of ten or more, and Myra, whose organizational abilities are unmatched, managed to wrangle enough people for the opening performance.

Myra and I are the co-chairs of *Curtains Up*, one of several educational and cultural committees sponsored by the Washington Square Civic Association. We focus on local theatre and meet on the third Tuesday of the month in the upper solarium. Susan Tomita and Patricia Kapur keep track of current and upcoming productions and distribute a detailed list to the group each month which we review and discuss before choosing which plays we plan to attend. There are a surprising number of theatre productions in Philadelphia, and reviews shared by those who have seen a particular play provide interesting discussions. Our recent agendas have included a meeting with



the director of a local theatre production, character roles for a group reading of a play we planned to see, sharing comments on the script of a musical in its final draft with the writer and composer, and listening to a presentation on the structure of a musical.

Most of the time our members attend plays on their own and report back to the group. Occasionally, we’ll decide on a play and go together. *Zooman and the Sign*, performed by the Negro Ensemble Company during Black History Month, was our most recent choice. The play, written 45 years ago by a native Philadelphian, takes place in the living room of a Black family living in 1979 Philadelphia.

The play begins in a darkened theatre where

*Zooman*, rocking menacingly back and forth, appears before us on the stage. He is partially hidden in shadow, waving a large knife. His glassy eyes slowly scan the audience, and I was sure he was staring directly at me when he spat out his hate-filled, terrifying, and unhinged soliloquy before running off the stage.

The silence in the audience was deafening. As the stage lights came on, the scene turned to the living room where unspeakable and overwhelming grief washes over the mother, father, and brother of a 12-year-old girl who was murdered on her front porch just hours before. The family’s grief is

exacerbated when neighbors, who witnessed the event, refuse to reveal the killer. Eventually, the father, who is disgusted and tormented by his neighbors’ silence, nails a large sign over the front door of his house, blaming the neighbors for letting the murderer of their daughter go free.

The sign receives a hostile reaction from the neighbors who are grappling with their own fear and guilt. In the end, *Zooman*, who was the murderer of the young girl, is killed. ■

*If you love theatre, please join us! Contact Myra by phone at 215.740.2563 or by email at myrakurkowski5@gmail.com*



**Mary Tracy** is a Hopkinson House owner. She has attended the Women’s Writing Workshop with Concha Alborg for three years. Email [concha@gmail.com](mailto:concha@gmail.com) for more information.

### Philadelphia Chamber Ensemble at Old Pine Church

Looking for more cultural events in the coming months? The Philadelphia Chamber Ensemble presents its spring concert at Old Pine Church on Friday, May 3 at 8 p.m., and Sunday, May 5 at 2 p.m.

All Ensemble members are current or retired Philadelphia Orchestra musicians. For tickets and information about their 46<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner following the May 5 concert, go to [www.pceconcerts.org](http://www.pceconcerts.org).

# Heavy Lifting

Martha Cornog

On an October Sunday in 2021, a huge orange alien insect hovered over Washington Square—or that’s what it looked like. Actually, it was a Sikorsky Skycrane, a specialty helicopter hired for an especially impossible job: replacing an HVAC unit atop the 45-story St. James. Cables from the helicopter’s chassis supported its burden, while double engines driving a six-blade rotor enabled its seemingly effortless rise up to the St. James roof.

Right now on the other side of Washington Square, equally capable if less bizarre equipment keeps the 11-story Dilworth House project perking along (see page 9). The site relied last fall on a giant tower crane, a magnificent structure probably installed by an even larger crane. Such cranes can self-build through a remarkable hydraulic “climbing” process. Tower cranes comprise a tall mast of steel lattice modules topped with a “cathead” spire, plus a “jib” crosspiece. The jib holds weights on the shorter end, counterbalancing loads hoisted via cables strung from the longer end. How does it know what and where to lift? An operator enthroned in a cabin near the top runs the show, an operator with strong legs who must manage the daily climb up a series of ladders. And because cranes sway a bit, they’d better not get seasick easily. Bathroom facilities? Primitive.

Some tower cranes have a horizontal jib while others,



Sikorsky Skycrane lifting an HVAC unit

dubbed luffing jib tower cranes, have jibs angling upwards. Such a crane sat next to Dilworth House for a while. If you look, you can see tower cranes all over Philadelphia—no fewer than four luffing jib cranes were recently spotted northwards from Market Street in West Philly. Not long ago off Rittenhouse Square, one monster tower crane toiled away to construct the 48-story Laurel condominiums. You could stack four Dilworth House buildings inside that—imagine how tall the crane had to be!

Its own crane’s work done, currently Dilworth construction entails smaller equipment, including an aerial forklift or “telehandler.” Like a boom lift or cherry picker, a telehandler wields a mobile, telescoping boom, but the boom is mounted on a truck and can be fitted with different attachments. Recently, workers were using one to move new glass windows, protected by large wooden frames, from a supply truck over to the building’s loading platform.



A buck hoist at work at the Dilworth House

The end of its boom held a pallet handler,” a large two-tined fork that slipped into open conduits in the frames. Another kind of boom-wielding truck showed up carrying a cargo of drywall—and unloaded itself.

Also noticeable now: a capacious yellow north-west-side “buck hoist” (an enclosed construction elevator on its own steel mast) capable of moving workers, new windows, drywall, and et ceteras up the building’s eleven stories.

How did heavy lifting get done before these complicated, fascinating, and sometimes flying machines? By other fascinating if less complex apparatus, made mostly of wood and powered by flesh and blood.

The *shaduf*, a beam supported like a seesaw by a pole in the center, a counterweight on one end and a bucket hanging from the other, was used in ancient Egypt to scoop water from the Nile. Later, Greeks used simple winch and pulley hoists for raising building stones. Then Romans developed treadwheel cranes, powered like giant hamster wheels by humans and animals, that could lift much heavier loads.

By the Middle Ages, cathedral construction involved still more powerful treadwheel cranes, often using two people walking abreast for extra *oomph*. And as the structure grew, the equipment was taken apart, moved up a floor,

continued on page 21



A telehandler lifting window glass at the Dilworth House



### Heavy Lifting

continued from page 20

then reassembled. So in these buildings today, remains of such cranes may be found—in seeming paradox—in the church towers. Around the same period, harbor cranes powered by animals helped load and unload ships.

Even today, some jobs get done with millennia-old methods. Twenty-first century roofers hauling up roofing paper and buckets of tar might still use a simple winch and pulley hoist system, with a ladder, ropes, and a wheel—now, however, with the option of a gas or electric motor as power.

The millennia-old international game of spying may also be underway today through the type of tower crane currently used in ports to load and unload ships. CNN and *The Wall Street Journal* have reported findings by the House Committee on Homeland Security that some imported cranes of this type may contain undocumented cellular modems that could be used remotely—a potential security risk. The Biden administration has announced that funds will be invested in replacing these cranes with U.S.-made equivalents. ■



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



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# Cinco de Mayo on My Mind

Johanne Lamarche

This spring we are celebrating Mexican cuisine with two recipes. The first is for spicy meatballs in a chipotle sauce with an optional lime crèma. The moist meatballs get their heat with the addition of some canned chipotle peppers in the sauce. It is in regular

rotation in our home and the recipe my sons most often request. The second recipe is for a velvety smooth caramel-orange flan that is absolutely irresistible. It is easy to make and looks very impressive served to guests. Be sure to scoop up every ounce of the delicious caramel sauce.

Happy Cinco de Mayo! These recipes may not be traditional fare for the holiday, but are so good, you will want to make them all year long. ■



**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.

## Chefs' Corner

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 at frenchgardener@comcast.net.

### Crockpot Mexican Meatballs in Chipotle Sauce with Lime Crema

Yields 4½ dozen meatballs. Adapted from *Hostess at Heart*.

#### Ingredients

For the meatballs:	½ c low sodium, fat free chicken broth
2 lbs ground meat (beef or turkey)	3 garlic cloves, minced
1 c plain bread crumbs	1 t dried Mexican oregano (or substitute plain)
2 eggs, lightly beaten	3 chipotle peppers in adobe sauce, chopped finely
2 t chili powder	cilantro leaves, to garnish
2 t chili powder	
1 t garlic powder	
1 t kosher salt, divided	
1 t ground cumin, divided	
28 oz. can fire roasted tomatoes, diced or crushed	For the lime crema:
	¼ c sour cream
	½ lime, juiced

#### Directions

- Preheat oven to 400°F. Prepare a baking sheet by lining with foil, then resting a cooling rack on top. Spray the rack with cooking spray.
- In a large bowl, combine meat, bread crumbs, milk, eggs, chili powder, garlic powder, ½ teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon cumin. Roll into ½ ounce meatballs and place on prepared baking sheet, evenly spaced.
- Bake meatballs in the oven for 10–12 minutes to brown. Alternatively, brown the meatballs in batches in an oiled skillet.
- In the bowl of a crockpot, combine the tomatoes, chipotle peppers, oregano, garlic, broth, and remaining ½ teaspoons of both salt and cumin. Add the browned meatballs, coating with sauce. Cook on high for three hours.
- For the lime crema, mix the sour cream and lime juice in a small bowl. Refrigerate until ready to serve.
- Dish out your servings of meatballs, drizzling lime crema over top. Garnish with cilantro leaves and serve with crusty rolls or warm tortillas.

### Flan Mexicano

Yields 8 servings. Adapted from *Amy Shurts on AllRecipes*, via her mother-in-law who is from Durango, Mexico.

#### Ingredients

1 c white sugar	¼ c freshly squeezed orange juice
1 c whole milk	1 T grated orange peel
1 can sweetened condensed milk (14 oz.)	1 T vanilla extract
3 eggs	1 T cornstarch
3 egg yolks	1 c heavy cream

#### Directions

- Place sugar in a heavy saucepan over medium-high heat, and cook, stirring constantly, until the sugar melts and turns a golden amber color, about 10 minutes. Watch carefully once syrup begins to change color, because it burns easily. Carefully pour the melted sugar syrup into a flan mold or deep dish glass pie plate and let cool.
- Preheat oven to 350°F. Pour remaining ingredients, except heavy cream, into a blender. Blend until the mixture is smooth. Add the cream, and pulse a few times to incorporate. Pour the mixture over the cooled caramel syrup.
- Line a roasting pan with a damp kitchen towel. Place the baking dish in the towel lined pan, and place on the middle oven rack. Pour enough boiling water in roasting pan to come halfway up the sides of your baking dish.
- Bake until the center of the flan is set but still slightly jiggly when moved, 45 minutes to one hour. Let the flan cool to room temperature, then chill for at least four hours.
- To serve, run a sharp paring knife around the edge of the mold to release the flan. Invert a plate (with raised sides) on the mold, flip it over, and gently remove the mold. The syrupy caramel topping will cover the top and overflow on the sides. Use a spoon to scoop up some caramel with each serving.



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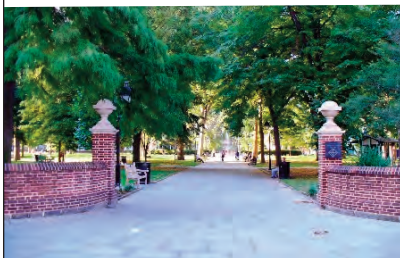


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