

What's Inside

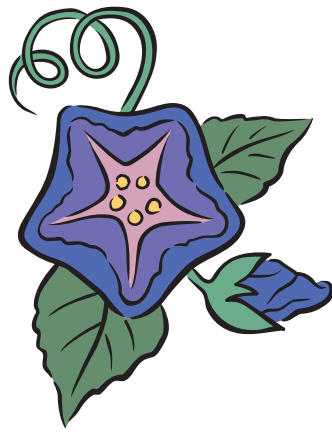
Lynn Miller

Sarah A. Kelly is completing her sixth year serving on Council and the fourth year as our Council President. As we approach the annual election of new Council members, she urges owners to consider becoming candidates to serve on Council. Drawing on her own highly dedicated years of service, she lays out what is, and what is not, required to help govern Hopkinson House.

Our General Manager, **Gary van Niekerk**, brings us up to the moment on several projects now, or soon to be, underway. These include the façade restoration, the hot water system replacement, and restoration of our garage and courtyard. He also announces the name of the new vendor and expected reopening of our ground-floor food market, which is now undergoing renovation.

Turn to our Committee Corner, prepared by **Jean Papaj**, to catch up on the activities of a number of our standing committees, all of which have important responsibilities in the life of Hopkinson House.

Concha Alborg continues interviews with residents and others associated with Hopkinson House, this time with a look at our hair salon on the ground floor, "M's on the Square." She has interviewed its long-time owner, whose mission is "to make us beautiful" — the "us" including women, of course, but also men and children.



Long-time resident **Dave Kurkowski** reminds us all to participate in our relatively new composting project. He explains exactly what can and cannot be placed in those cans in our garage that are collected on a regular basis to create compost for the wider community. It's an excellent way for all residents to act as good citizens of Planet Earth.

Our newest Council member, **LJ Steinig**, adds a list that includes recycling and other simple conservation measures we all can take to protect the environment.

Eagles are definitely on the mind of **Martha Cornog**, who has much to say both about the actual feathered avians and the men who play a sport in Philadelphia very much in the name — and honor — of those same birds.

Michael Neff shows us how he has broadened his artistic subject matter to move beyond the representation of nature's landscape in our neighborhood. He has recently taken a page from some of his favorite Impressionist painters to depict the built environment just to the north of Hopkinson House.

on the HOUSE

The Newsletter of
Hopkinson House • Spring 2025



My own essay considers the preparations Philadelphia is (and is not) making to celebrate the nation's 250th birthday next year. Yes, the official term for that celebration is Semiquincentennial. We must learn to say it.

Jane Hickman gets personal with her tale of how monkey business with her Social Security account might have cost her greatly. Fortunately, she got it stopped before any damage was done. Although she addresses those of us who are seniors, her warning contains excellent advice to youngsters who hope to reach an age when they, too, can collect this vital benefit.

Frequent traveler **Joseph Quinn** shares reflections on his recent trip to Mexico, where he focused on the antiquities and art in and around Mexico City. He paid particular attention to the work of several of that nation's most acclaimed 20th-century artists, known especially for their public frescoes and murals.

Last, but by no means least, turn to our Chef's Corner for two delicious, lemony recipes that **Johanne Lamarche** tempts us with as especially right for the season of spring. The first is a variation on a soup staple, and the second, a lip-smacking ending to your meal. ■

Occasional Photo by Bari Shor



Message from Council

Sarah A. Kelly

I'm writing this in the final few weeks of my current two-year term (out of six total years) as a Council member, and also in the last weeks of my second consecutive year (out of a total of four years) as Council president. By the time you read this article we will be in the

midst of our next Annual Election cycle, with our "Meet the Candidates" event scheduled for **April 9, at 6 p.m.** in the Solarium, and "Ask the Candidates" event scheduled for **April 17, at 7p.m.** in the Solarium. I hope you will make an effort to participate in both events. One up-front disclaimer: when I wrote and submitted this article, I didn't know who the candidates would be.

When people talk to me about why they might (and more often, frankly, about why they might not) run for Council, I often hear things like, "I don't have the background for it," or "I don't have any particular expertise." I'd like to share with you some thoughts—both mine and those I've collected from a number of current and past Council members—about what it takes to be an effective member of Council. Here are some qualities you should think about as you consider for whom to vote in this year's Association election.

- ♦ Good judgment, common sense and practical thinking, and the ability to use those skills to think independently, ask good questions, listen to the answers, and make rational decisions.
- ♦ The ability to help develop a consensus among Council members. This includes listening with an open mind to other members' thoughts, opinions, and concerns, as well as expressing your own, as issues are being discussed at Council meetings.

- ♦ The ability to consider, contribute to, and reach a compromise, if a consensus has not been reached.

- ♦ If consensus and compromise fail, as they sometimes do (not every Council decision is unanimous), the ability to accept the majority's decision and move forward.

- ♦ An understanding of the varied demographics and interests of the owner-members of our Association and a desire to represent and balance all of their interests fairly. This includes a recognition that some of us own large units, some own small units, some own multiple units, some have combined units, and some own units to rent. Owners represent a spectrum of economic backgrounds and life stages. We are of all ages, some are working (including some working from home), some are retired, some are healthy and active and others are in need of regular caregiving.

It's also important to consider what isn't required, and I offer these thoughts in light of one of my mantras: "Council governs; Council doesn't manage."

- ♦ Council membership isn't a full-time job! The candidates you vote for don't need to be retired!

- ♦ Council members don't need to make a full-time or even a regular part-time commitment. We often say that what is required is attendance at, preparation

for (by reviewing the agenda and supporting materials in advance) and participation in twelve Council meetings a year. Yes, between meetings there are a handful of emails. Council officers agree to take on additional duties, and every Council member has the option to become more involved in our budget process or other committees.

- ♦ Council members don't need a professional degree. There's no licensing process. As the new Council year begins, our management company, FirstService Residential, provides a Council training session covering legal, accounting, insurance and investment issues. For virtually every Council member I've worked with, myself included, this is a learn-as-you-go experience. I'm not saying not to take someone's education and experience into account, but it's not always the most important quality.

Remember to vote in the Annual Election. We need to reach a quorum for the election to be valid, so every vote matters! You will receive your balloting information shortly. Please direct any questions to the management office. Votes are due by **5 p.m. on April 23**. See you at the Annual Meeting, where results will be announced, on **April 24**. Hopkinson House is a great place to live. Let's keep making it better. ■



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.

On the HOUSE

Newsletter Committee

Lynn Miller, Editor and Committee Chair

Concha Alborg

Martha Cornog

Jane Hickman

Johanne Lamarche

Michael Neff

Joseph Quinn

Council Liaison

Sarah A. Kelly

Graphic Design

Robin Siddall

Parallel-Design.com

Advertising

Jason Love

jasonhhoa@outlook.com

Photography

Concha Alborg

Martha Cornog

Michael Neff

Joseph Quinn

Bari Shor

Issue Contributors

Concha Alborg

Martha Cornog

Diane GaNun

Jane Hickman

Sarah A. Kelly

Victoria Kirkham

David Kurkowski

Johanne Lamarche

Lynn Miller

Michael Neff

Gary van Niekerk

Jean Papaj

Joseph Quinn

Ann Roantree

Lisa Schwab

LJ Steinig

Bari Shor

Hopkinson House Council

604hopkinson@gmail.com

Website

Find past issues of *on the House* at

www.thehopkinsonhouse.com

Message from Management

Gary van Niekerk

The year is in full swing, and with the upcoming Annual Election where the Association seeks volunteers to serve on the Council for the Hopkinson House Community, I start with this quote:

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

— **Margaret Mead** (1901–78)
American cultural anthropologist, author, and speaker, born in Philadelphia

Events

We had a successful “coffee and donuts” event recently, and the management team looks forward to hosting more such events for residents. It was fun seeing new faces and chatting with residents. Look out for pretzels, frozen drinks and more in the near future, and please stop by for a conversation and treat!

Staffing Updates

We will soon be hiring two new employees in the Housekeeping Department. One will work the day shift and another the overnight shift. The overnight cleaning is currently performed by a third-party contractor, and Council and management decided that HHOA will be better served by bringing this position back in-house where we can better manage the tasks needed.

Commercial Units

Honeybee Gourmet Deli is the new operator of the

market space, and they are currently completing a much-needed renovation of the space. It is anticipated that the market will open on or about June 1. As we all know, construction can bring about unanticipated hurdles, but residents can look forward to fresh foods and groceries in the near future.

Hopkinson House Projects

Updates to our capital projects are as follows:

Façade Restoration

It's hard to miss the orange barriers, scaffolding and swings on the front of our building; however, this work is much needed, evidenced by the stark difference from a completed section on the north-facing façade, versus that which has not yet been cleaned and coated.

The next phase or “line” of work will begin on approximately April 1. Notice will be sent to those unit owners. As always, if you have any questions about the façade project, please visit the management office. At present the rear courtyard is not open to residents for use.

Domestic Hot Water System

All the project bids have been submitted and reviewed, which means that by the time of publishing this newsletter the Association should have approved a contractor for this project. Residents will be advised of any water shutdowns which will be required as part of the project.



The new cooling towers have been craned up to the roof.

This project is anticipated to be completed by no later than mid-October.

Garage and Courtyard Restoration

The engineering firm of Joseph B. Callaghan, Inc. has provided the project documents, which both management and Council are reviewing. The project will need to be coordinated with the façade project. Of note is that, depending on the start date of the project, the rear courtyard may see limited landscaping services and/or flower installations. Use of the rear courtyard will also be affected.

Laundry Room

The Association still plans to continue with this project in conjunction with the domestic hot water system replacement project, as there are several plumbing connections that will need to be replaced at the same time. Timing will be communicated

once the specifics of the hot water project are finalized.

Cooling Tower Replacement

The new cooling towers were successfully craned up to the roof and the remainder of the installation is underway. Full completion of this project is anticipated to be May 15.

General Reminders

Pool

At present, management still plans to open the pool on Memorial Day weekend (May 24); however, this is subject to the façade project being completed on that section of the building. Should we experience significant weather delays or unanticipated problems, the pool opening may be delayed.

Unit Resales

Owners who plan to or may be considering the sale of their unit should note

continued on page 5



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Message from Management

continued from page 3

that, as part of the resale process, the Association conducts an inspection of the unit. The purpose of the inspection is to identify any maintenance defects or violations of the Association's governing documents or rules.

Any defects or issues found as part of the inspection will be noted on the resale certificate provided to the buyer. To avoid potential delays in the sale of the property, we suggest contacting the management team to schedule this

inspection prior to listing your home for sale. Please note that the inspection is not intended to be

a replacement for any other required inspections that may form part of a home sale or purchase. ■



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

Committee Corner

Jean Papaj

Finance Committee

Ann Roantree, Chair

The Finance Committee meets monthly with the General Manager and Council Treasurer for a detailed review of the prior month's Balance Sheet and Operating Income Statement and year-to-date performance against the 2025 budget. In the first quarter of 2025, the Committee is focusing on making sure that the year is getting off to a good start financially. In particular, we are identifying operating budget line items that might be at potential risk of falling below income projections or exceeding projected expenses. Our goal is to avoid an operating loss.

History Committee

Victoria Kirkham, Chair

The History Committee meets monthly. Our membership has settled into six plus one adjunct. Rebecca Yamin has become our note taker. Thanks to Council and Hopkinson House Manager, Gary Van Niekerk, we have been allocated space in the building for secure storage

of the archive we are creating on our architect Oskar Stonorov and the Hopkinson House. Members are vigorously sleuthing. Research has produced: 1) information from *on the House* as it relates to residents and milestones in our history, 2) newspaper articles on Stonorov's Hopkinson House from 1950–1969; 3) documents from the Presbyterian Historical Society on the church that once occupied our site, 4) a timeline on Stonorov's life, and 5) further insights on the lobby mural, Philadelphia Panorama, from an interview with the mural's restorer and renewed dialogue with Nick Crowell, son of the artist Lucius Crowell, best friends with Stonorov. We are working on a second article on our lobby mural.

Pool Committee

Diane GaNun

The first meeting of the Pool Committee for the 2025 season was held Wednesday, March 12, 2025. We are looking forward to several great months "up on the roof"

starting in late May (fingers crossed, hoping the façade project and necessary pre-season pool repairs progress as planned). The Committee arranged for water fitness sessions in the past, and we're excited about doing so again with management's approval. Let's put those new pool noodles and boards to good use! We will also review first aid equipment, plan to host a season opening social, work with management as needed on the phosphate issue if it recurs and serve as a conduit for input from pool members to Council. We are interested in discussing plans for revamping the pool deck area, with special interest in a shade option. Please plan on becoming a member and support/enjoy this truly wonderful amenity!

Landscape Committee

Lisa Schwab, Chair

The Landscape Committee meets monthly to proactively assess and plan for the

seasonal needs of our exterior garden areas. Our recommendations are coordinated with our vendor and HH management and Council (via our Council liaison) regarding maintaining our plants within the annual budget allocation.

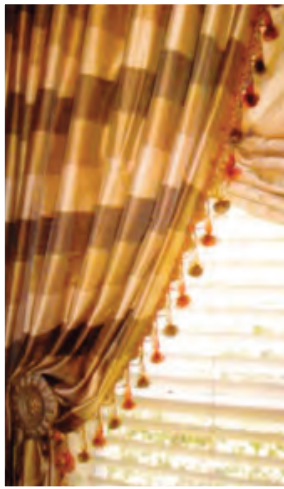
Occasionally, we have donated plants, holiday lighting, or have arranged a revenue fund raiser to underwrite improvements not currently in the HH budget. We also stepped in to support efforts to water our courtyard grounds this past summer when our irrigation system needed to be disabled to support a consulting engineering assessment and staff was being redirected from their usual responsibilities. And, with an eye for the future, we continually consider and discuss both short- and long-term improvements, sometimes in coordination with other committees, so that associated considerations and budgets can be anticipated. ■



Jean Papaj, MBA is a marketing, communications and business development executive with additional experience as an adult educator.

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Marialana at M's on the Square: Making Us Beautiful

Concha Alborg

Marialana Romagnoli-Gunning was proudly born and raised in South Philadelphia, where she still lives with her husband, George, and 12-year-old daughter Rosa, named after her grandmother. Although they are not big sport fans, they do enjoy the perks of their location, like being able to view the Eagles' recent Super Bowl parade, and often celebrating the Mummers with an open house on New Year's Day.

Her father, Biagio Romagnoli, who was also a hair stylist, was born in this country, but frequently traveled to Naples, where he met his wife Rosa before they settled in Philadelphia with their three daughters. He was an accomplished musician who played the accordion, the mandolin, the piano, and the guitar. No wonder that Marialana loved ballroom dancing as a young woman and practiced it into adulthood. She spent summers in Italy as a child and learned Italian at home. She also loved to play with her father's tools of the trade and practiced on her two older sisters.

After undergoing hair-dresser training, taking specialty classes in different locations, and stints working in Rittenhouse and Society Hill Towers, Marialana wanted to have her own business. In the '60s, Hopkinson House already had a barber shop run by Ralph Saldutti—some of you will know his son, Jim, our neighbor, who still lives here—and

when the shop came up for sale in 2004, Marialana was ready. Before opening, she renovated the entire place: changed the green walls to the soothing pink they are now, added the stylish chandelier, and the barber shop became a four-chair, full-service hairdressing salon for women, men and children. With her winning personality and professional skills, she already had clients and stylists to join her. Silvana Barile has been at the salon for fifteen years and Steven Tamaccio, her mentor from Estetica Salon, both followed her here.

M's on the Square offers a full array of services, including haircuts for men and women, color, highlights, perms, keratin treatments, waxing, or simple shampoo and blow-dry. They also work with their clients' special occasions like bridal parties, weddings, proms, Holy Communion, Bat Mitzvahs, and Bar Mitzvahs. The salon is open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and by appointments. A full line of their own hair care products is also available.

True to her heritage, Marialana loves to cook Italian food for her family and friends; her husband appreciates everything about her culture, which they blend with his Polish-Irish background. Seven years ago, George had a serious car accident and went through a very difficult time with several surgeries



Steven Tamaccio, Marialana Romagnoli-Gunning, Silvana Barile



Marialana and Steven with a client at M's on the Square.

and rehabilitations. He works from home now as a fundraiser for churches and non-profit organizations. Marialana and George have celebrated fifteen years of a happy marriage.

I met Marialana at our pool, with little Rosa, who was then learning to swim. She is in the sixth grade now at Saint Mary's School

in our neighborhood. In fact, mother and daughter feel part of our community.

When I asked Marialana what she liked best about her job, she quickly answered "the friendly people at Hopkinson House." She has been our friend and neighbor for twenty years now and counting. ■



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



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The Power of Many

David Kurkowski

Have you ever felt powerless in the face of a big problem like global warming? Do you think, “What difference can I make? I’m just one person.”

Let’s think about this for a minute. Consider Philadelphia’s plastic bag ban. While each person’s individual reduction probably numbers in the dozens, the cumulative reduction citywide is estimated at 100 million plastic bags per year. That’s the Power of Many.

I’ve got more good news for you. Thanks to our forward-looking Council, we now have composting at Hopkinson House. The very idea of composting in a high-rise seems like an oxymoron, but the program has worked well, and the number of composters is growing.

Admittedly, one person’s compost amounts to just a little hill of beans, pun intended. But, because we live in a building with over 500 units, if we act

as one, we can make a big difference.

If you haven’t tried composting yet, here’s how. First, you’ll have to obtain a suitable container. We found a handsome odorless container on Amazon. Some people use a pot.

Next, you’ll want to buy compostable bags. The banned plastic bags are a no-no because they break down into “forever chemicals.” Once again, you can find the proper bags on Amazon and at other sources.

Now you’re all set up to collect your compost. The list of compostable items is vast (see below). You can even compost meat and bones.

When your bag is full, simply take your compost to the parking garage and deposit in one of three containers. I do that about twice a week.

It’s so satisfying to know that my compostables are helping to fertilize a garden



A reusable bucket and biodegradable bags make at-home composting a breeze!

somewhere, rather than taking up valuable space in a landfill. Plus, the less we grind up stuff in our garbage disposals, the better it is for our aging pipes, which are almost as old as I am.

Now, think of the impact if we all composted. The Power of Many. Then think about all the other high-rises

in Philly that participate in this program. Now we’re talking about a serious pile of compost!

If you’re already composting, bravo! If you haven’t gotten on board yet, why not give it a try?

A garden somewhere will thank you. ■



David Kurkowski is the composer of the musical *Finding Madame Curie*.

What You CAN Compost at Hopkinson House		
Food	Organic Material	Paper Products
Coffee grounds and filters	Grass clippings	Newspaper, as single sheets only
Tea bags	Hay and straw	Fireplace ashes
Eggs and their shells	Houseplants (no soil)	Sawdust
Fruits and vegetables	Yard trimmings	Paper towels and napkins (used without cleaning products)
Nut shells	Leaves	Soiled cardboard*
Dairy	Pine needles	
Meat and bones	Wood chips	
Seafood shells	Hair and fur	
Rice, pasta, bread and other grains		
*We are unable to take large quantities of cardboard and newspaper unless they are shredded. Ripping up soiled cardboard is much appreciated!		

Do NOT Compost
Black walnut trees or twigs
Coals
Charcoal ash
“Compostable” K-cups
“Compostable” plastic items
Diseased or insect-ridden plants
Pet waste (e.g., dog or cat feces, soiled cat litter)
Yard trimmings treated with chemical pesticides
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In Addition to Composting

LJ Steinig

Dave makes a great point about the Power of Many. If we all made small environmental choices each day, think of the difference we could collectively make. Here are a few ideas about things we can do in addition to composting:

- ♦ Turn off the light when you leave the room.
- ♦ Replace your light bulbs with LEDs, if you haven't done so already.
- ♦ Invest in a low-flow toilet or shower head.

- ♦ Do laundry with cold water; air dry or tumble dry low.
- ♦ Try ordering groceries and staples with The Rounds. You can get pantry, personal care, and household items all in reusable, refillable, glass containers. Every week when they drop off new items, they take your empties, keeping plastic out of the landfills.
- ♦ Try recycling with Rabbit Recycling—they pick up monthly, and they take *everything*, as long as it's clean and dry. They take your soft plastics, batteries, clothes, cookware, household gadgets and much more. Then they make sure it gets reused or recycled.

- ♦ Turn the heat down (or the AC up) when you're not home—not all the way off, of course, but the system doesn't need to work as hard when you're not home, and that will save money and energy.
- ♦ Reduce your use of plastic. Instead of buying bottled water, refill your reusables with water from the tap or from the fountains in the lower lobby or the roof level.
- ♦ Our parties always generate a lot of trash with paper plates and cups, and plasticware. Bring your own plates, cups, and silverware and reduce waste.
- ♦ Glass is infinitely recyclable. Save yours for Bottle Underground. Those empty bottles will be taken and made into

beautiful cups, dishes, light fixtures, and more.

- ♦ Shop secondhand or get involved with a local buy nothing group—already a great use of BuildingLink!
- ♦ Shop locally—support neighborhood farmers markets and small businesses, benefitting our neighbors and the planet!

These are all simple, little changes that are easy to do. Maybe choose 2-3 ideas and give them a try. If we all try 2-3 ideas, think of the collective difference we could make! And if you'd like to try The Rounds or Rabbit Recycling, get in touch with me—I'll help you get set up! You can reach me through the manager's office: notify@buildinglink.com. ■



LJ Steinig is a high school English teacher online, a writer of creative non-fiction, and a longtime vegan with a passion for sustainability.

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The Eagles' Eagles

Martha Cornog

Nearly 50 years ago, in a fellow birder's car, I watched a long line of drivers ahead of us cruise through New Jersey's Blackwater Wildlife Refuge. Finally in an optimum position along the water, our caravan stopped. We piled out and unpacked binoculars, scopes, and chairs. A long way out in the water was a small island supporting a low tree housing a nest—and above the nest that familiar white head and yellow beak we all recognized but probably had never before glimpsed in person. At the time, bald eagles were endangered, and the only way to see them reliably was in wildlife sanctuaries.

The bald eagle had been designated a national emblem in 1782, gracing the Great Seal of the United States, although Benjamin Franklin dubbed it a “bird of bad moral character” for preying on other birds and carrion over and above its staple food: fish. The country had then perhaps as many as 100,000 nesting eagles. But industrialization, habitat destruction, and the mistaken assumption that the birds preyed on livestock decreased the population considerably.

Then pesticides after World War II, especially DDT, reduced the species to around 400 nesting pairs. Sadly, our national bird faced extinction. Fortunately, the 1970 founding of the Environmental Protection Agency plus the 1972 Endangered Species Act

set up the infrastructure to ban DDT and establish captive eagle breeding programs, reintroduction efforts, nest site protection, and laws against hunting the breed. These efforts all paid off. In 2007, an impressive ceremony in Washington celebrated the national recovery of our national emblem: the bald eagle's removal from the list of endangered species. Today, over 70,000 breeding pairs attest to a success story.

Philadelphia uniquely showcases the bald eagle as a symbol of our Eagles football team. And you can see these eagles—most spectacularly!—at Lincoln Financial Field, where before home games an actual feathered eagle flies for the Eagles during the National Anthem. Taking off on cue from its trainer's gauntlet, the bird rises from an upper level of the stadium to circle majestically over the rapt fans to another trainer, where a food treat is waiting as reward (dead rats are a favorite).

The eagle Challenger, which flew over the Lincoln Memorial during that 2007 Washington ceremony, was the first bald eagle trained to fly over crowds of humans. Challenger has flown over Eagles' home games as well as numerous other sports events, White House ceremonies, a Disney Park grand opening, and college commencements. The bird had been blown off his nest as an eaglet and then cared for by humans—and, imprinting on them, became unable to survive



Noah as ambassador at Eagles Training Camp, 2021.



Challenger takes off to soar over Eagles fans, 2014.

in the wild. Now retired from free-flight exhibitions since 2019, the 35-year-old Challenger lives full-time at the American Eagle Foundation (AEF) facility in Tennessee and only greets fans from his trainer's gauntlet as part of the foundation's educational programs.

The current flyer for Eagles' home games is Lincoln, another AEF rescue bird. Lincoln did the honors during the national anthem for this January 12th's Wild

Card Round of the Super Bowl playoffs: the Eagles vs. the Green Bay Packers. Lincoln was born at the AEF's Eagle Mountain Sanctuary to non-releasable parents. He too became imprinted on humans, and so now serves as another ambassador for his species. He works school visits, media appearances, and public events such as Eagles' pre-game flyovers, returning to live at the AEF sanctuary between gigs.

continued on page 13

The Eagles' Eagles

continued from page 12



Lincoln gets his snack after flying over the Linc, 2025.

Two other Eagles' eagles, Noah and Reggie, don't do pre-game flyovers, but act as educational ambassadors for the team. Before and during home games, they hang out with their trainers on the Linc's concourse and interact with delighted fans. "We're always out on the plaza for about three hours before kickoff to be with guests and let people come up nice and close, and get photos and talk to us," says Laura Soder, Manager of Ambassador Animal Engagement and lead eagle trainer from Norristown's Elmwood Park Zoo, where Noah and Reggie live. Pre-Super Bowl this year, the zoo held a pep rally for the team, starring the two feathered eagles and one human (former) Eagle: Pro Football Hall-of-Famer Brian Dawkins.

Noah damaged an eye when he fell from the nest as an eaglet and joined the zoo in 2008. Reggie came to the zoo in 2011 from Wisconsin's Raptor Education Group. He'd been injured by a truck when young, damaging

a wingtip that needed to be amputated. Thus the bird is unable to fly and became known for his "gentle demeanor." So the educational ambassador role fitted him perfectly.

Yet it seems four eagles haven't been enough for the Eagles. Rounding out the flock supporting our Super Bowl winners is Swoop, a costumed 6-foot mascot with a charming if supernatural backstory. Hatched in Eagles Forest of Neshaminy State Park, the young eagle had unfortunately poor eyesight and strength but was good at heart. But after donning an Eagles jersey, he instantly grew human-size. His eyesight improved, and he regained complete strength. Since 1996, he has lived in his nest atop Lincoln Financial Field, and before home games he too "flies" over the stadium—but via a zip-line to the ground. Throughout the game, he and the Eagles' cheerleaders entertain fans and pose for photos. Between games, he makes hundreds of appearances a year at,



Reggie as ambassador at the Linc Concourse, 2023.

e.g., schools and hospitals. This February 14, Swoop, together with the cheerleaders, led our Super Bowl victory parade up Broad Street and over to the Art Museum's Rocky Steps.

Actually, Swoop works harder—a human actor in a heavy outfit, capering and sweating for hours—than the live birds that may do just a few minutes of flying, or simply settle down on their trainer's gauntlet during ambassador events.

If you want to see bald eagles in the wild—as majestic as those trained birds that fly for football games—head down to

the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum, near the airport. (SEPTA provides bus and rail access.) A mated pair has been nesting there for 15 years and in February was incubating a new batch of eggs. Since incubation lasts about a month, new visitors to the refuge should be able to spot the squirmy, always-starving chicks pestering their harried parents for food. Or follow eagles elsewhere from a comfortable chair through the courtesy of the American Eagle Foundation, which provides links to web cams of nesting pairs around the country. Go, birds! ■



Martha Cornog reviews graphic novels for Library Journal.

Further Reading

John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge:
<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/john-heinz-tinicum>

AEF eagle cams: <https://eagles.org/what-we-do/educate/live-hd-nest-cams>

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The View North from Hopkinson House

Michael Neff

When I first moved into Hopkinson House, I was glued to the window. I'd never lived above a third-floor student apartment, and now I was in an eagle's nest on the sixteenth floor. I was finally above it all. I could see forever: the vast and constantly changing sky, the twinkling buildings at night. I was transfixed.

Yet I was never tempted to paint the buildings. I paint natural forms. Even when I paint in the park, I squint to ignore the built environment and paint the trees as if I'm in our friendly neighborhood forest.

Quite a bit of time passed, and I began to feel guilty for ignoring the buildings. But I didn't want to be a slave to right angles. Then, one day at a museum, I realized that some of the greatest Impressionist

pictures are city paintings: avenues, apartment buildings, monuments and train stations, factories and parks. Pissarro, Monet, Renoir, even Van Gogh. They are usually thought of as nature painters, but the first three, especially, often painted city views from the upper floors of buildings. I thought: perhaps even this old painter can learn some new tricks?

It took me a lot of intuitive staring and gazing. The quality of the sun and clouds casts wonderful colors and shadows on those solid structures.

At one time of day, they might be pink, or gold, or cold gray, or lilac.

Then I thought: *This is my mountain range!* One day, working on my third straight painting of the old Strawbridge's store,

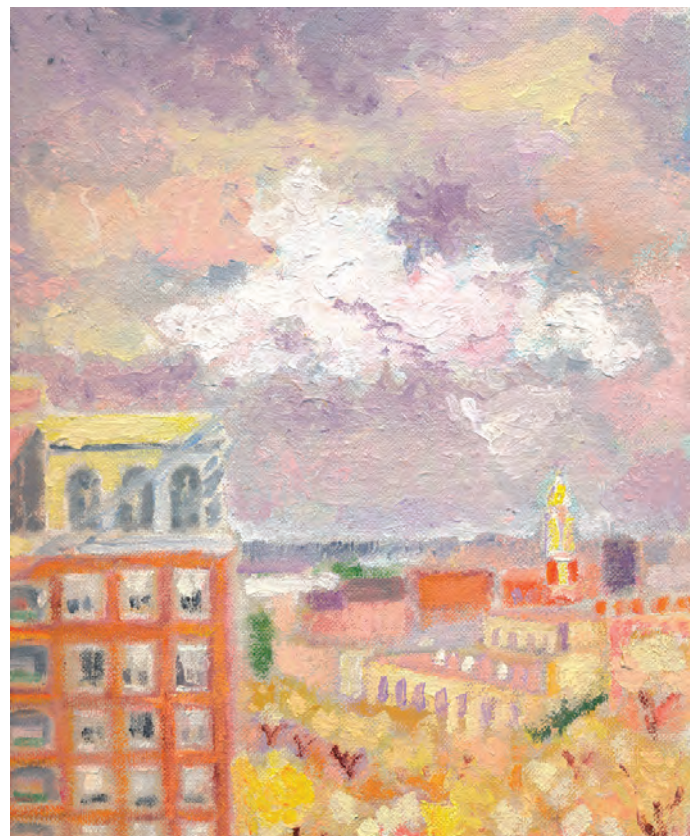


I realized: *That's my Mont Sainte Victoire*—the vast granite mountain in Provence that had Cézanne hooked—that he painted innumerable times.

Sometimes it's the buildings, sometimes the sky: its colors or the clouds, the time of day, my mood. And then there's east, west, and south to look at with time. ■



Michael Neff paints in Washington Square in summer, fall, and spring. You can see some of those, and other, pictures on his Instagram account, @paintinginthepark.



Preparing for the Semiquin

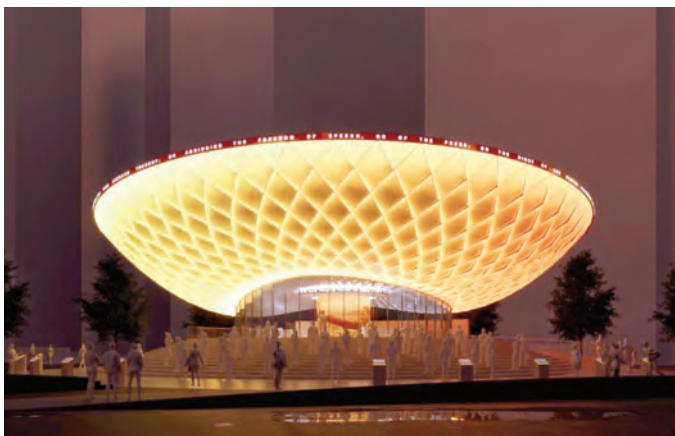
Lynn Miller

You must have heard, this city of ours is expected to play an important role in the nation’s celebration next year (assuming that our republic will still be standing) of our Semiquincentennial. That strange word means, in awkward English, “half of the five-hundredth anniversary” of the founding of the United States. If you’re good at arithmetic, you understand immediately that’s the 250th anniversary of our birth!

You’ve long known, of course, that this republic of ours was actually born in Philadelphia with the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 (never mind that Bostonians like to say it was actually *their* city that gave birth to the revolution, that Philly was just the place where the rebels notified the Brits of their intentions.) Next year, 2026, will actually be the fourth of these milestone commemorations when Philadelphia has been at their very heart: there was the Centennial, the Sesquicentennial, and the Bicentennial (read on to see how I’ve worked out the dates of each in Arabic numbers for you).



1876: Memorial Hall built for the Centennial. Still standing.



What’s up for 2026? A monument called the National Light has been designed for the Semiquin. Site has not been found yet.

The previous landmark celebrations have all been accompanied by a major infrastructure project. For the Centennial in 1876, a small city was built in Fairmount Park to house the fair, of which Memorial Hall, now home to the Please Touch Museum,

is the principal remaining structure. In 1926, the Benjamin Franklin Bridge was opened along with what is now J.F.K. Stadium. And in 1976, both the Mann Center in Fairmount Park and the African American Museum were created to enhance our

Bicentennial celebration. What’s up for 2026? Well, former mayor and governor Ed Rendell has been raising money to build an interactive, domed monument to democracy to be called the National Light. But after the city provisionally approved constructing it in LOVE Park, that approval was recently rescinded. So, as of this writing, the light is without a home. Yet fund-raising continues with the hope that a proper site will be secured, so that construction can begin.

Whether or not that major project gets built, there will be *lots* of festivities here next year. Start with soccer (what the rest of the world knows as football). From June 19 to July 4, the city will host six FIFA World Cup matches at Lincoln Financial Field. An accompanying Fan Fest will be headquartered at Fairmount Park’s Lemon Hill mansion, which is currently undergoing a \$3.5 million revitalization. The festival is expected to draw from fifteen to twenty thousand fans each game day. Also in July, for the first time in 30 years, the 96th annual Major League continued on page 17

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Preparing for the Semiquin

continued from page 16

Baseball All-Star Game will roll out at Citizens Bank Park. Basketball and golf will also have their moments in the national spotlight in our neighborhood next year.

Yet these athletic events, regardless of the huge crowds they'll attract, are not at the heart of the celebration. The centerpiece of Independence Day festivities will be the annual, multi-week-long Welcome America festival. Twelve of the city's neighborhoods will be in the spotlight, with colonial roots and the revolution's legacy featured in some (ours, among them), while in Chinatown and elsewhere the focus will be on immigration and our cultural melting-pot. In parts of West Philadelphia, the theme will be African-American entrepreneurship and its legacy.

A new event next year will be the Red, White, and Blue To-Do on July 2. That will bring crowds to Old City to enjoy a

festooned parade, concerts, games, extended hours at historic sites, and restaurant specials. You may also want to take in the National Semiquincentennial Convention, which will unfold over two days as citizens and celebrities from across America gather in state-by-state delegations to discuss social and political issues in an Olympic Village-like jamboree.

Then comes the main event on Independence Day itself. We are assured that it will be bigger than ever, including a free night-time party on the Parkway with live music from big-name pop stars and a massive fireworks display above the Art Museum. Planners hope to produce the largest 4th of July parade in the nation.

Museums across the city will offer special exhibits and programming. That includes reopening the country's oldest surviving federal building, the First Bank of the United States, which dates from the last

decade of the 18th century when Philadelphia was the nation's capital. The Bank has been closed to the public since the Bicentennial. Next year it will take on new life as a permanent museum dedicated to telling the history of the American economy. Also nearby, our Museum of the American Revolution, which first opened its doors in 2017, will feature "The Declaration's Journey: 250 Years of Discovering Democracy," which children will be encouraged to explore.

Also on July 4, 2026, a time capsule will be buried in Independence Mall. It is not to be opened until July 4, 2276, which, of course, is the Quincentennial: double the years of the party being planned for 2026. Assuming you won't be around for that celebration, you'll want to

participate as fully as possible in the Semiquin. Its organizers are looking for volunteers to help during next year's festivities. To learn more, visit their website: www.philadelphia250.us.

Meanwhile, in October of this year, the U.S. Navy will celebrate its 250th birthday. That will be followed in November by the same anniversary for our Marine Corps. Both will be accompanied by historic—and colorful—gatherings of ships on the Delaware. You can also expect to see a rechristening of Tun Tavern, near Penn's Landing, where the Marine Corps was founded in 1785. Assuming we make it through 2025 with our Constitutional republic still alive and well, all these festivities should allow us to celebrate in grand style come next year! ■



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

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A Word of Warning in These Turbulent Times

Jane Hickman

If you are like me, you paid into Social Security your entire working life and now rely on these monthly payments to cover some or all of your expenses. The system has always worked well for me: I can count on checks that are deposited into my checking account on or about the same day every month. President Trump's ongoing slashing of federal budgets and personnel alarms me, but he has said many times that his cuts will not affect Social Security. I write this in late March, and, so far, I have heard nothing about a reduction in our benefits.

But that is not the full story. A headline in the February 28, 2025, *New York Times* caught my eye: "Social Security Administration to Cut Roughly 7,000 Workers." That is about 12 percent of all federal employees who implement and support this essential program. From the *Times* article, I learned that about 73 million retired and disabled Americans are Social Security beneficiaries. Senator Patty Murray (Washington state), vice chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, expressed concern that staffing cuts would make the current 30-minute wait times even longer for consumers who call the toll-free number. This will result in making it more difficult for us to receive the benefits we have worked for, especially when we are experiencing a problem that must be resolved quickly. It is an ominous sign that

the Acting Social Security Commissioner Michelle King resigned rather than turn over data to DOGE, the Department of Government Efficiency, run by Elon Musk. Also, two dozen senior staff members have recently announced their departures from the agency.

My story begins on February 27, when I received an email from Social Security saying I had recently updated my direct deposit information. [Fig. 1] I was alarmed because I had not made any changes! I thought that it must be a mistake, but it was a scheme to defraud me, to redirect my payments to a stranger's bank account. Apparently, someone had hacked my account and

changed the bank information for my monthly payment. The pending new direct deposit was to Sofi Bank, which I have learned is a legitimate but strictly online bank with no physical locations. [Fig. 2] I called Social Security right away at the number I was given: 800-772-1213 (open 8 a.m.–7 p.m.) After the recorded announcements, I was told that the wait time was 120 minutes, not 30 minutes—that's two hours! Senator Murray's concerns had materialized already! I finally spoke with someone who said it would be best to handle this in person at my local Social Security office.

So, the next day, I went to the Philadelphia office just

as it opened. It's at 1500 John F. Kennedy Blvd, #2000A. (Take the elevator to the 20th floor—open 9 a.m.–4 p.m.) When the guards asked if I had an appointment, I told them the telephone wait time to make an appointment was over two hours. They let me in. After taking a number and waiting for about an hour, I spoke to a representative who fixed the problem. She said it was very helpful that I brought the website page with the false information, as it allowed her to report the specifics and show her co-workers evidence of the scam. She also gave me a direct number for the Philadelphia office

continued on page 19

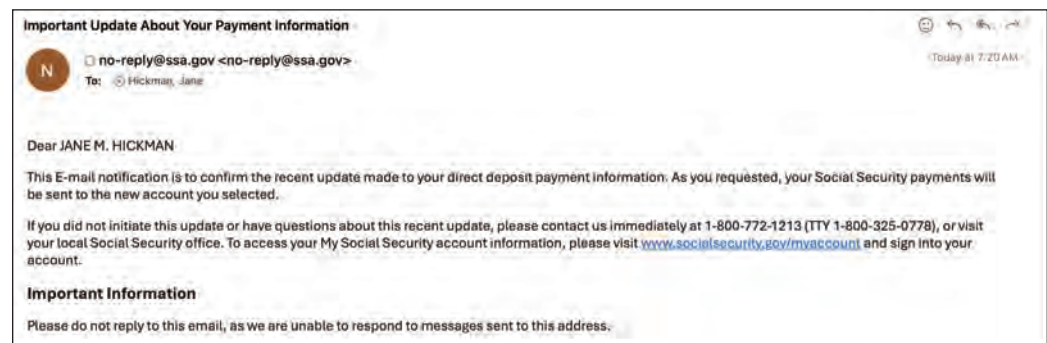


Fig. 1

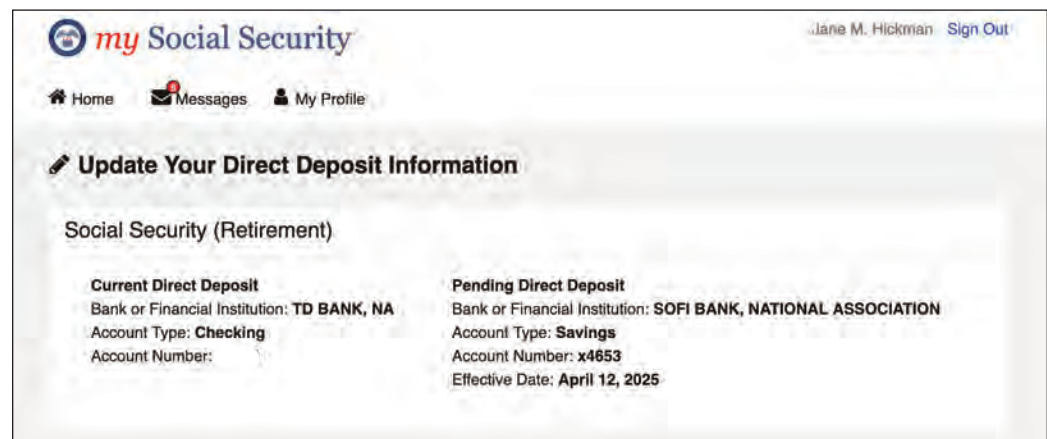


Fig. 2

A Word of Warning in These Turbulent Times
 continued from page 18

to use later to make sure the correction was made. They don't generally give this out, but the local number is 866-613-3969. I reported what happened to me to the U.S. government agency that handles fraud. They said they would most likely not follow up, as my record looked correct now, and they only investigate selected claims.

In these times of cuts to essential government programs and services, I urge everyone to be extra vigilant. Don't ignore emails and letters from the federal government. Make sure you have correct name/password information on hand for social security or other government services and change your password periodically.

Keep your login information in a safe place. Even if you have to wait on the phone, follow up as soon as you spot a problem. And be patient. These government workers are even more overwhelmed than they used to be.

P.S. The same thing just happened to two of my Cape May neighbors! One was notified the same day I was that his direct deposit had been changed to Sofi Bank. He is getting Senator Andy Kim involved, as well as *The Washington Post*. ■



Jane Hickman is an archaeologist who studies ancient jewelry.

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My Trip to Mexico City

Joseph Quinn

Having only enjoyed the coastal playgrounds of Mexico, I wasn't sure what to expect during my recent group tour to Mexico City, which turned out to be full of simulating historical and cultural discoveries.

With a geographic area so expansive and diverse, *Ciudad de México* can seem like a country of its own, with 9 million citizens (22 million in the entire metropolitan area).

The city's footprint covers 577 square miles radiating along and outward from the 15-mile spine of the tree-lined Paseo de la Reforma.

Like many of the places we visited, the city's vast main square, or Zócalo, is a civic site combining history, religion, politics, and commerce. It's bordered by the National Palace, a federal building, a cathedral, and an arcade of jewelry stores. Behind the cathedral is another religious monument, the excavated ruins of the Aztec-era *Templo Mayor*,

the main worship site of Tenochtitlán, which eventually became Mexico City. Built in nested stages between 1325 and 1487, it was a complex of 78 buildings with the main pyramid rising 200 feet. It was founded on the spot where, as the gods predicted, an eagle stood on a cactus devouring a snake, an image which is now the central symbol of the Mexican flag.

The city's famed Museum of Anthropology, with over 500,000 pieces, provides an immersive introduction to the artistic heritage of Mexico's native populations. It's great preparation for a field trip to Teotihuacán, the remains of a pre-Columbian, Mesoamerican city dating back to the first millennium. The eight square mile compound includes the Pyramids of the Sun and Moon, connected by the Avenue of the Dead. Walking through remnants of houses and public works, some still adorned with original frescos, and climbing

the pyramids (if your knees are capable!), you feel eerily close to what life was like in an ancient culture that practiced ritual human sacrifice.

Our main artistic focus was on three celebrated Mexican muralists: Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros. During the first decades of the 20th century, mural painting was the predominant form of artistic expression in Mexico. Its defining themes were social and political, hence its classification as "social realism."

Rather than being sheltered in museums or private homes, Mexican murals were given pride of place in public buildings. They were meant to educate the population with depictions of historical events. Major themes included the hybridization of Spanish and Indian bloodlines and cultures, the loss of rural and native traditions overwhelmed by industrialization, and oppression of the poor by the monolithic powers of

church and state. Especially during the '20s and '30s, the muralists, most of whom were members of or aligned with the international Communist Party, delighted in confronting viewers (including their civic sponsors) with anti-capitalist imagery that glorified the working class and ridiculed the idle rich.

Diego Rivera (1886-1957) is by far the best known Mexican muralist, and his work has come to exemplify the genre of "social realism." We saw three Rivera murals that combine the main characteristics of his style: bold, primary colors, figurative imagery of recognizable people, places and events, and barbed political and social commentary, captured in expansive panoramas bursting with activity.

It's impossible to capture a Diego mural at a glance. *Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in Alameda Park* (1947) is a 50-foot fresco, originally created for a continued on page 21



An Aztec god, with faded remnants of original coloring, found in the *Templo Mayor*.



Detail of Rivera's fresco *Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in Alameda Park*. A policeman roughly forces an indigenous family out of the park, while bourgeois visitors look on.

My Trip to Mexico City

continued from page 20

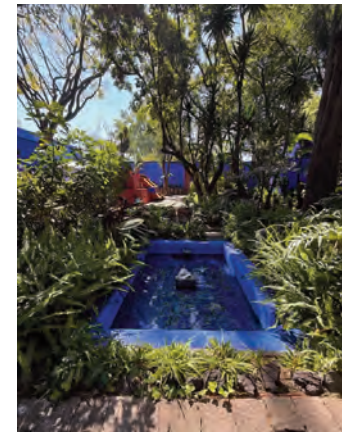
restaurant, now housed in its own museum adjacent to the park. A stylized, imaginative tableau of the park and its denizens, it can also be “read” from left to right as a chronological compression of Mexican history. Rivera stuffed it with sly caricatures of his “heroes” (workers and revolutionary soldiers) and “villains” (dictators and snobbish members of the bourgeoisie). He plants himself amid it all, a young dandy in knickers and straw hat, smiling (or sneering?) at the pandemonium swirling around him. His muse and life partner, Frida Kahlo, stands protectively behind, relegated, despite her own artistic status, to a subservient role.

Another singular, stand-alone Rivera work can be found in the basin of a pump house inaugurated in 1951 as part of a hydraulic system providing Mexico with potable water. In *Water: Origin of Life*, a four-sided fresco that was once partially submerged, Rivera

depicts human evolution, in both scientific and mythological terms, from protozoa to people. He celebrates the many beneficial and recreational uses of water, minus his usual critical social commentary.

After attending a performance of the Ballet Folklórico in the art-deco *Palacio de Bellas Artes*, we visited the museum upstairs. It contains masterworks by Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros—allowing us to compare their unique pictorial styles: Rivera’s blunt Realism, Orozco’s impassioned Expressionism, and Siqueiros’ heroic Idealism.

Of special interest is Rivera’s *Man, Controller of the Universe*, (or *Man at the Crossroads*), a recreation of the infamous fresco that was rejected by Rockefeller Center in 1933 for its inclusion of “communist propaganda.” The central imagery extolls modern science—telescope, microscope, magnifying glasses, x-ray machine—along with



Casa Azul, the home where Frida Kahlo was born and died, with its cobalt blue walls, and sun-splashed tropical garden.

galactic and atomic imagery. On the right, Rivera includes a group of triumphant workers and Communist luminaries—Stalin, Trotsky, Marx, and Engels—some of whom were added defiantly after the Rockefeller mural was rejected but before being destroyed.

Amid so much painterly testosterone, it was refreshing to visit Casa Azul, the home where Frida Kahlo was born and died (1907-1954). Unlike Rivera’s, Kahlo’s art was personal and intimate, modest in scale, full of imagery focused on her struggle with deformity and pain, the result of a catastrophic streetcar accident in her youth. She painted many self-portraits, fiercely glaring at the viewer (under her prominent “unibrow”) that mix colorful Mexican Day of the Dead folk art with images of bodily torture, sometimes crossing over into the surreal

or grotesque. With its cobalt blue walls, peaceful domestic interiors, and sun-splashed tropical garden, Casa Azul belies Kahlo’s life of suffering. Then there is the annex, which was unlocked on the 100th anniversary of her birth, containing a macabre collection of prosthetic legs, and the steel, leather, and plaster casts and corsets that constricted her physical movement throughout her life.

In *The Labyrinth of Solitude: Life and Thought in Mexico* (1950), Octavio Paz claims that “one of the most notable traits of the Mexican’s character is his willingness to contemplate horror,” a trait clearly apparent in the work of Rivera, Kahlo and their compatriots. Whether it be with political or personal horror, that confrontation is a haunting presence that keeps their art ever fascinating and instructive. ■



El hombre en el cruce de caminos, (Man at the Crossroads) Diego Rivera, 1934.



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

Brightening Your Spring Palate

Johanne Lamarche

Come spring, I am all about fresh and bright flavors and I crave lemon. This month I am tempting your taste buds with a twist on a chicken soup with penne pasta, crunchy snap peas in a creamy lemony base. Soooo good and very spring-y!

Continuing the lemon theme, how about satisfying your sweet tooth with lemon shortbread bars? Baked in a round pan, dusted with powdered sugar, and sliced in wedges, they are as pretty as they are delectable. Pucker-up! ■

If you have a favorite recipe, we would love to test it and put it in this column.



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

Send your recipes or requests to Johanne Lamarche at frenchgardener@comcast.net.

Not Your Mother's Chicken Soup: Creamy Lemon Pasta Chicken Soup

Serves 6 as a main course, or 12 as a starter

Every culture has its own tradition of soup. Archaeologists have traced soup-making back to 20,000 years BC. It is the perfect communal meal, ideal for sharing. There is a meditative quality to the chopping of the ingredients, while the anticipation of enjoying the dish builds as the seductive aroma fills the home during the long simmering. It is a dish that evokes home like no other.

This soup has bright citrus notes, crunchy sugar snap peas, big chunks of chicken breast, and sliced mushrooms in a creamy base. It is satisfying as a meal on its own, and it is a lovely transitional dish with its spring-like ingredients: sugar snap peas, lemony highlights and fresh parsley. Whatever your tradition of soup is, try a new variation of "chicken soup" and experience a burst of springtime flavor and color. Who knows? It could become a new family favorite.



Ingredients

3 T butter	1½ c uncooked chicken breast meat, cut into ½-inch pieces
1 c celery, sliced crosswise	1 c penne pasta, cooked al dente
1 c carrots, shredded	1 c sugar snap peas, cut in half diagonally
1 c mushrooms, sliced	juice of 2 lemons
1 yellow onion, diced	salt and pepper, to taste
3 T flour	
6 c chicken stock	
1½ c light cream	
¼ c packed, chopped Italian parsley	

Directions

- 1 Melt butter in a soup pot. Add celery, carrots, mushrooms, and onions. Cook over low heat until onion is translucent. and simmer for 5 minutes. Add chicken and simmer another 5 minutes. *Soup can be made ahead to this point and refrigerated until ready to continue.*
- 2 Add flour and stir thoroughly for about 2 minutes. Gradually add chicken stock, stirring constantly, and heat through, about 5 minutes. Add cream and parsley
- 3 Add cooked pasta and sugar snap peas and simmer another 2 minutes. Finish with lemon juice and salt and pepper, to taste.

Residents' Corner

Residents wishing to make comments or observations on the current issue may e-mail them to: "The Editor," 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 *on the House*.

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.

Brightening Your Spring Palate

continued from page 22

Lemon Shortbread Bars

Adapted from Love and Olive Oil; Serves 12–16

Lemon Lovers rejoice! This tart and sweet lemon custard baked on top of a layer of buttery shortbread is a perfect, easy springtime treat. One bite and you'll be rewarded with a pucker-worthy burst of perfect tart-meets-sweet flavor. The bars can be made with Meyer lemons or regular lemons. Either way, they are delicious and a lovely pick-me-up.

Ingredients

For the shortbread:

- ¼ c (30g) powdered sugar
- ½ c (113g) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 c (125g) all-purpose flour
- pinch of kosher salt

For the lemon filling:

- 2 large eggs, plus 1 yolk, at room temperature
- 1 c granulated sugar
- ⅓ c freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 2 t lemon zest
- ½ t vanilla extract or paste
- ¼ t baking powder
- 2 T all purpose flour
- powdered sugar, for dusting

Directions

- 1 Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly butter an 8-by-8-inch square baking pan or an 8 inch round dish and line with parchment paper.
- 2 Cream together the butter and powdered sugar until fluffy. Add flour and salt and mix until blended.
- 3 Press into the bottom of the prepared baking pan. Bake for 20 minutes, until the edges are just starting to brown.
- 4 While shortbread is baking, wipe out mixing



- bowl. Combine eggs, egg yolk, and sugar and beat on medium speed until fluffy. Mix in the lemon juice, lemon zest, and vanilla. Add the flour and baking powder, mixing until just incorporated.
- 5 Pour the lemon custard mixture over the hot shortbread, then return

- to the oven and bake for an additional 20 minutes. Remove from oven and set pan on a wire rack to cool completely.
- 6 Refrigerate at least 2 hours or overnight. Dust with powdered sugar before serving. Cut into 12–16 pieces.

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