Franklin Gazette

Volume 11, Number 1 Spring, 2001

Friends of Franklin, Inc. P.O. Box 40048, Philadelphia, PA 19106

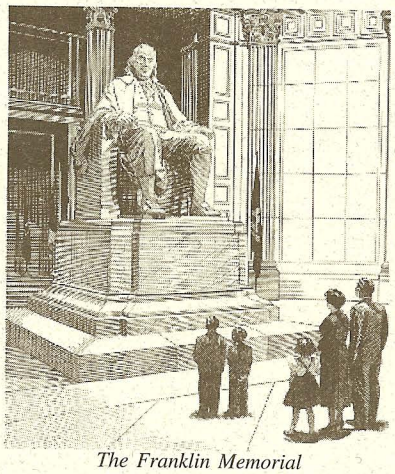
"Are you angry that others disappoint you? Remember you cannot depend upon yourself." ~ *Poor Richard, 1735*

President's Message

by Ralph Gregory Elliot

It cannot be that I am the first or only person to have been struck by the parallels in the lives of this country's two most beloved figures, Ben Franklin and Abe Lincoln. (Lincoln and Washington are probably our most *revered* figures; Ben inspires love and admiration, but he's too much one of us to inspire reverence.) The parallels were brought home to me last week as I watched PBS's superb three-part series "Abraham and Mary Lincoln".

Born slightly more than 100 years apart (1706 and 1809), both had only the barest of school-learning: two years for Ben, and but one for Lincoln. And yet through voracious reading — easier for Ben in urban Boston than for Lincoln in backwoods Kentucky and Indiana — they learned of a world beyond the cabined life each led; and learned, too, the power of words to move men, to transport the reader to worlds undreamed of and to delight with the beauty of the well-crafted thought committed to paper. Each in turn became a gifted writer whose chief works — the *Autobiography*, the First and Second Inaugurals, the Gettysburg Address, the Cooper Union speech — retain to this day the power to delight, to inspire, and to express truths about the American experience that help to define us as a people.



The Franklin Memorial

Each was essentially a self-made man of the people, who delighted in the company of ordinary persons. Each was known for his sense of humor, was fond of telling anecdote and joke, and used each both strategically to defuse a situation or to make a point and socially lighten the atmosphere and inspire the restorative effects of a good laugh. While each had a primary occupation — printer, lawyer — each in his early lifetime had undertaken a wide variety of endeavors, which served to broaden and deepen the understanding each had of the human condition.

Each in his own way was also, alas, a neglectful husband. Lincoln, whose wife's mental balance was increasingly tenuous over 23 years of marriage and the deaths of three of her four sons, three half-brothers fighting for the Confederacy, and, of course, her husband was never an easy and companionable mate. Nevertheless, and especially as the cares of the War began to press upon him, Lincoln became ever-more withdrawn, immersed in melancholic concentration on the official decisions that daily had to be made; and he came less and less to share his life and thoughts with Mary, more and more to shut her out.

Franklin, too, was far from the model husband. One gets the sense that having wed Deborah in his relative youth (he was 24 and the same year, 1730, had, by an unknown woman, fathered William, whom he presented to Deborah to raise) he quickly outgrew her intellectually and socially. Their common law marriage continued until her death in 1774, and his Papers are replete with correspondence to her when he was away; but those letters have about them the sound of a tolerant and bemused man of affairs talking to one of inferior learning and status.

And then, of course, comes what is at its kindest a separation and, at its unkindest, a virtual divorce: the

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Franklin Gazette

published quarterly by:

The Friends of Franklin, Inc.
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Philadelphia, PA 19106

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Publication schedule is as follows:
March, June, September, and December

Newsletter submissions are encouraged.
Deadlines are the 15th of the month preceeding publication.
Submissions by e-mail or computer disks (text-only format) are preferred.

Gift memberships and back issues are available.

President's Message

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years in England. In 1757 Franklin leaves for England as Pennsylvania's agent. Deborah declines to make the journey. Franklin and William arrive in the great city. He is lionized by the learned people, the chattering classes; he is feted and honored by the great, the good and the universities; and at last he is constantly in the company of his kind of people — people of the mind, scientists, writers, thinkers, people with whom he can converse and compare notes as equals. ("When a man is tired of London," said Dr. Johnson, "he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford.") He remains for 5 years, returning home in the Fall of 1762, only to depart in 1764 once again for England, there to remain — well beyond the point where his services were particularly useful to his client-colonies — until May 5, 1775, five months after Deborah, who had suffered a stroke in 1769 that handicapped her for the rest of her life, died of yet another stroke on December 19, 1774.

To be sure, transatlantic voyages were hard; Deborah herself had refused twice to join Ben on them. But 11 consecutive years away from his wife and family! 16 of the last 18 years of his wife's life! 6 years after she had suffered a disabling stroke! What kind of husband was Ben? Was it truly his work that kept him "at the office" all those years? Or was it that the contentment, the kudos, the intellectual stimuli he received in the great city so intoxicated him that the prospect of trading it for the humdrum tedium of life's quotidian tasks in provincial Philadelphia, and the domestic tabletalk of plain old Deborah, was more than Franklin could seriously contemplate? For whatever reason, Franklin, like Lincoln after him, effectively shut his wife out of his life — in Franklin's case, by allowing 3,000 miles of dreaded ocean to separate them.

Do these traits in Lincoln and Franklin diminish their stature or give us any reason to love them less? I think not, just as we love and admire members of our own families despite the fact that they are not paragons of virtue, that their faults are often writ large for all to see. They are human, partaking of the imperfection that is the common lot. That we can view them unblinking, that we can allow ourselves to see those imperfections and recognize their failures and still hold them in the esteem and affection Americans feel for Franklin and Lincoln is the greatest honor anyone can enjoy.

Franklin Overhead?

According to a story in the March/April 1998 issue of the *Old House Journal,* lightning rods were often called "Franklin rods." Franklin's pioneering work in the field of lightning protection is well known, but I had never heard of a "Franklin rod" before. The origin of the name lies in the manufacturers of a popular lightning rod. The Cole Brothers, a firm doing business around 1900, invented the name. They stamped their lightning rods on the shaft couplings with the trademark "CBFR" (Cole Brothers Franklin Rods). So if you have a Victorian house with an original lightning rod, next time you are up on the roof look to see if it is a "Franklin rod."

-- Kate Ohno

From Warm to Very Warm to Icy to So-So: The Story of a Friendship Benjamin Franklin and William Strahan

Part I: Introductions

by Claude-Anne Lopez

It was in July 1743 that Benjamin Franklin, then 37 years old, and William Strahan, nine years his junior, started a friendship that lasted forty years, albeit with a few bumps along the road. Born in Scotland, Strahan had already been admitted to the Stationers' Company of London and was on the threshold of a brilliant career as publisher and agent of David Hume, Adam Smith, Samuel Johnson, Edward Gibbon, William Robertson, and William Blackstone. Eventually, he published the *London Chronicle*, became the King's Printer and was a member of Parliament from 1774 to 1784.

The two men were put in touch with each other by a relative of Franklin's wife who had just returned from London with a note from Strahan wondering whether Franklin would be interested in hiring young David Hall (another Scot) who was trying to make his way in the printing business. Franklin answered quite amiably that he already had three printing houses in three colonies (Pennsylvania, Virginia, and New York) and that he would gladly set up a fourth "if I can meet with a proper person to manage it, having all materials ready for that purpose." As it turned out, Franklin appreciated his new journeyman so much that instead of sending him to establish a press in the West Indies, he kept him by his side in Philadelphia in a partnership that would last harmoniously for eighteen years.

Reading the eighteenth-century correspondence between printers, physicians, merchants, men of science, administrators, and others, is a heartwarming experience. They just love to write to one another as equals, to pollinate each other's mind with the latest they have heard from abroad, to tell about their own discoveries, joyously, openly, too enthusiastic about the explosion of knowledge to angle for a prize with all the secrecy it implies. They are not competing, they are collaborating.

The role of Quaker merchant Peter Collinson in ensuring the diffusion of Franklin's electrical experiments to the London scientific community is well known. Now enters Cadwallader Colden (1688-1776), a graduate of the University of Edinburgh who later studied medicine in London, migrated to Philadelphia, and then to New York where he eventually became lieutenant governor of the province.

Shortly after Strahan had entered Franklin's life in 1743, he received a letter from Colden describing, without naming him, a man whose acquaintance he had just made: "I accidentally last summer fell into company with a printer (the most ingenious in his way without question of any in America). Upon mentioning my thoughts which I wrote to Mr. Collinson, he told me of the method which had been used in Holland which you likewise mention, but he thought the method by types *en creuse* to be an improvement of that method, and as he is a man very lucky in improving every hint he has done something on this foundation which I have seen; it has puzzled all the printers in this country to conceive by what method it is done." Colden adds that he does not feel at liberty to communicate the method in question, since printing is this un-named man's livelihood. It did not take Strahan long to figure out who his correspondent was talking about: "From the Character you give of him, I am sure it must be Mr Franklin you mean, whose fame has long ago reached this part of the world, for a most ingenious man in his way. I have had the pleasure of corresponding with him lately..."

It was in that atmosphere of reciprocal good will that the Franklin-Strahan friendship took flight. They were soon discussing which books the colonies should import from the mother country, and vice-versa.

Next installment: Part II: Books Across the Sea

No Gains Without Pains

Although frequently quoted to emphasize the aches and pains of energetic exercise in connection with body-building workouts, few people are aware that the maxim "no gains without pains" originated with Benjamin Franklin.

It first appeared in the 1745 edition of Poor Richard's Almanac, but Franklin repeated the maxim thirteen years later as part of Father Abraham's parting soliloquy on perseverance and hard work. Bartlett erroneously credits Adlai Stevenson with the quote since it was incorporated in his speech to the Democratic National Convention, July 26, 1952.

While Stevenson certainly deserves credit for the selection, Franklin deserves credit for the original source.

-- Seymour M. Gluck, M.D.

Benjamin Franklin and David Hume: Compliments of "*Gold* and *Wisdom*"

by Mark G. Spenser
The University of Western Ontario
London, Canada

Readers of this quarterly may be interested to know that Benjamin Franklin was far and away David Hume's most famous American visitor. Their personal relationship is interesting in its own right but also important for the light it casts on Hume's wider colonial American reception — a reception which Franklin's efforts did much to shape.

Pursuits of business and pleasure took Franklin to Scotland twice: first in 1759 and then again in 1771. We know that Franklin read Hume's works and spoke with Hume on a number of occasions in both Edinburgh and London. The record of their earliest meetings, however, is sketchy. The precise date of their first encounter is unknown — it was probably during the winter of 1758/59 in London where they may have been introduced by William Strahan, a mutual friend. It is also uncertain if Hume and Franklin met in Edinburgh in mid-September 1759 (as Alexander Carlyle said they did). During his second visit to Britain, we know that Franklin dined with Hume at Strahan's London home on 27 January 1769. Journeying north to Scotland in 1771, Franklin knew Hume well enough to stay at his household in Edinburgh for three weeks.

David Hume, 1711-1776

That Franklin was hospitably received by Hume is clear. Franklin wrote to Strahan on 27 October 1771: "Thro' Storms and Floods I arrived here on Saturday night late, and was lodg'd miserably at an Inn: But that excellent Christian David Hume, agreeable to the Precepts of the Gospel, *has received the Stranger*, and I now live with him at his House in the new Town most happily". On 30 January 1772, Franklin wrote home to his son, William, that he had spent a month "in and about Edinburgh, lodging at David Hume's, who entertain'd me with the greatest Kindness and Hospitality".

Franklin was one of Hume's few American correspondents. Surviving letters show the two began to write sometime prior to 27 September 1760, most likely after meeting in 1758/59. Though frustratingly incomplete, what survives of their correspondence shows Franklin and Hume hit it off well. This is abundantly evident in Hume's letter of 1762, written on the occasion of Franklin's approaching departure from the British Isles: "I am very sorry, that you intend soon to leave our hemisphere. America has sent us many good things, gold, silver, sugar, tobacco, indigo, etc.; but you are the first philosopher and indeed the first great man of letters, for whom we are beholden to her". Franklin thanked Hume for his "Compliment of *Gold* and *Wisdom*" and expressed regrets at "the leaving a Country in which I have receiv'd so much Friendship, and Friends whose Conversation has been so agreeable and so improving to me".

While we will never know what topics of discussion Franklin found to be so "agreeable," the surviving correspondence suggests a number of probable subjects and highlights the mutual interests which brought Franklin and Hume together in the first place. While Hume's religious scepticism was shunned by many, it was not a problem for Franklin. The two men were at ease with each other as they jovially bantered about religious topics. Their correspondence was so candid as to lead Jared Sparks, Franklin's nineteenth-century editor, to suppress some of Franklin's more colorful passages concerning George Keith, Earl Marischal's theological difficulties in Neuchâtel.

Franklin and Hume were also drawn together by a common interest in scientific matters. Franklin sent to Hume a paper on "the means of preserving Buildings from Damage by Lightening" which was read before the Edinburgh Philosophical Society, of which Hume (with Alexander Munro the Younger) was a joint secretary. Franklin's paper was commented upon by James Russell, and was printed in the Society's *Essays and Observations, Physical and Literary* (1771). These events evidence Franklin's rise to Old World prominence; they also suggest that Hume's New World audience knew him in part for his scientific interests.

Finally, Franklin and Hume shared an interest in political and economic matters and, more particularly, the increasingly difficult relationship between England and the colonies. In the first of Franklin's surviving letters to Hume we learn that he had earlier sent to the Scot a copy of Richard Jackson's *Historical Review of the Constitution and Government of Pennsylvania*, along with other pieces, most likely including Franklin's *The Interest of Great Britain Considered* and his "Observations concerning the Increase of Mankind". Franklin in this letter also illuminated the context in which he interpreted Hume's essay of 1758, "Of the Jealousy of Trade". "I am not a little pleas'd to hear of your Change of Sentiments in some particulars relating to America", wrote Franklin from London,

> because I think it of Importance to our general Welfare that the People of this Nation should have right Notions of us, and I know no one that has it more in his Power to rectify their Notions, than Mr. Hume. I have lately read with great Pleasure,

> as I do every thing of yours, the excellent Essay on the *Jealousy of Commerce*. I think it cannot but have a good Effect in promoting a certain Interest too little thought of by selfish Man, and scarce ever mention'd, so that we hardly have a Name for it; I mean the *Interest of Humanity*, or common Good of Mankind: But I hope particularly from that Essay, an Abatement of the Jealousy that reigns here of the Commerce of the Colonies, at least so far as such Abatement may be reasonable.

Franklin here foreshadowed the context in which Hume's writings had their most significant impact in eighteenth-century America.

By 1774 Hume questioned Franklin's commitment to the "common Good of Mankind" and the two had something of a falling out. Hume wrote to Adam Smith about Franklin's role in the "Hutchinson affair": "Pray, what strange Accounts are these we hear of Franklyn's Conduct? I am very slow in believing that he has been guilty in the extreme Degree that is pretended; tho' I always knew him to be a very factious man, and Faction, next to Fanaticism, is, of all passions, the most destructive of Morality". The way in which Hume thought Franklin "factious" is shown in Hume's March 1774 recital to Strahan of a discussion

> ***By 1776 Hume questioned Franklin's commitment to the "common Good of Mankind" and the two had something of a falling out.***

> at Lord Bathurst's, the Company, among whom was his [Franklin's] Son, the present Chancellor, were speaking of American Affairs; and some of them mention'd former Acts of Authority exercised over the Colonies. I observed to them that Nations, as well as Individuals, had their different Ages, which challeng'd a different Treatment. For Instance, My Lord, said I to the old Peer, you have sometimes, no doubt, given your Son a Whipping; and I doubt not, but it was well merited and did him much good: Yet you will not think proper at present to employ the Birch: The Colonies are no longer in their Infancy. But yet I say to you, they are still in their Nonage; and Dr Franklyn's wishes to emancipate them too soon from their mother Country.

In 1771 Franklin and Hume remained on much closer terms, however, and through Franklin other colonists would come into contact with le bon David.

Henry Marchant, the Attorney General for Rhode Island and soon to be celebrated patriot and delegate to the Continental Congress, set out for Britain in July 1771. Marchant joined up with Franklin in Scotland and was introduced to Hume, with whom he would visit and dine a number of times. The journal he kept shows Marchant was excited to meet "the celebrated Mr. David Hume" whom he described as "a Gentleman I should think of about sixty very large and heavy built. His Face is by no means an Index of the Ingenuity of his Mind, especially of his delicacy & vivacity". Marchant enjoyed his open discussions with Hume, writing that "[b]eing only with ourselves we set with much free Sociability till after Tea in the Evening".

Franklin also introduced Hume to Thomas Parke. Parke, a young Pennsylvanian Quaker, visited Franklin at Hume's Edinburgh home in St. Andrews Square in 1772. Like many others studying medicine in Edinburgh, Parke read Hume's extremely popular *History of England*. Writing home to his sister on 25 February 1772, he remarked that the Scottish historians had aroused in him "such a relish for History, that I fear I shall spend more time in the perusal of Historians, than I can spare for medicine".

Franklin's efforts also brought Benjamin Rush and Hume together. Soon to be the most famous colonist schooled in Edinburgh, Rush was a young man yet little known in the world. Like Marchant, Rush kept an account of his travels and his "Scottish Journal" offers an intriguing record of a young evangelical American's impressions of Hume. Rush met Hume for the first time when Franklin arranged for Rush to attend a dinner at the home of Alexander Dick:

> Novr 29th: I had the Honour of dining with Sir Alexander Dick, to whom I was recommended by Dr Franklin, & was treated with great politeness by him. David Hume Esqr dined with us — a Gentleman who is well known in the Literary World for his History of England, & ingenious Essays. Mr Hume's Appearance was no ways engaging. —his Person was rather ungenteel & clumsy. he spoke but little, but what he said was always pertinent & sensible. he acknowledged himself a Deist and has wrote much in Defence of his Principles. his political works are much esteemed.

When later he came to write of this meeting in his *Autobiography*, Rush embellished the story, adding an anecdote to paint Hume in an even more amicable light. Hume "was civil in his manner and had no affectation of singularity about him. Sir Alexander once referred to him for a fact in the history of England. Mr. Hume could not satisfy him. 'Why, said Sir Alexander, you have mentioned it in your history.' 'That may be (said Mr. Hume), there are many things there which I have forgotten as well as yourself'." In his "Scottish Journal", Rush discussed Hume's character in more detail:

cont. on p.6

Franklin and Hume

cont. from p.5

> David Hume an Author of the first Rank in the British Nation. I Observed formerly that He professed himself a Deist, & had wrote a good deal in Defence of his Principles -- Notwithstanding this he is a Gentleman of the most amiable private Character, & much beloved by every Body that knows him. he is remarkably charitable to the poor, & has provided handsomely for several poor Families that were related to him. he never swears, nor has any One ever accused him of any immoralities of any kind. He often meets wth very sever ...

At this point the journal ends. Even this unfortunately abbreviated account is sufficient to show that the young Rush was enamored of Hume and struck by the paradox that Hume the Deist had a morally upstanding and "amiable private Character".

Franklin, Marchant, and Rush all relished their "free Sociability" with the "celebrated Mr. Hume". None of the three (all of whom signed the Declaration of Independence and took active roles in the creation of the New Republic) thought Hume had expressed in his conversation or writings any views repugnant to the colonists. Rather the "beloved" Hume was portrayed as a congenial character whose *Essays* and *History* were "highly esteemed". None of this sits well with the standard interpretation which argues Hume's reception in colonial America was seriously marred by his infamous reputation as a "Tory historian". Franklin, in particular, thought Hume's writings designed to help the American colonial cause. When he returned Hume's "Compliment of *Gold* and *Wisdom*" by recommending Hume's writings and company to other colonists, he did so with effect.

A note on sources:

For the Franklin/Hume correspondence see:

Leonard W. Labaree, ed. *Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven, 1959-) and J.Y.T. Greig, ed. Letters of David Hume (2 Vols, Oxford, 1932).

For further reading see:

George W. Corner, ed. *The Autobiography of Benjamin Rush: His 'Travels Through Life' Together with His Commonplace Book for 1789-1813* (Princeton, 1948)
David S. Lovejoy, "Henry Marchant and the Mistress of the World," *William and Mary Quarterly,* Ser. 3, Vol. 12 (1955), 375-398
J. Bennett Nolan, *Benjamin Franklin in Scotland and Ireland 1759-1771* (Philadelphia, 1938).

The Franklin Essay Contest
The Results are In!

The first Franklin Essay contest has been judged a success! Thanks to everyone who participated!

We had great participation from Fifth Grade students in several regions of the country, writing on the topic of "What I Like About Ben Franklin and Why."

The regional judges were Jim Gassaway, Roy Goodman, Phil Greenslet, Pamela Hartsock, Alison Lewis, and Peter Price. The Grand Prize judges were Ellen Cohn and her staff at the Franklin Papers, Yale University.

Our five regional finalists were:

Allen Miller
Franklin Elementary School
Santa Monica, CA

Kristen Murtagh
Franklin Elementary
Mesa, AZ

Sarah Peck
Benjamin Franklin Elementary School
Menomonee Falls, WI

Omi Singh
Benjamin Franklin School
Bergenfield, NJ

Madeline Suggs
Ben Franklin Elementary
Wichita Falls, TX

The judges had a hard time deciding on an overall grand-prize winner, so they ended up selecting two winners! Following, in alphabetical order, are the winning essays by Sarah Peck and Madeline Suggs.

Benjamin Franklin: A Writer for the Ages

by Sarah Peck

Benjamin Franklin Elementary School
Menomonee Falls, WI

Have you ever known a man who invented, founded, printed, and wrote throughout his entire life? One man was Benjamin Franklin. Did you know that his face is on the one hundred dollar bill? Did you know that he was great at writing lessons and proverbs which taught people? "The doors of wisdom are never shut" was one of his sayings. I like Benjamin Franklin because of his writing.

Writing is very important to me, so this is why I chose writing.

Ben Franklin was the author of a book called Poor Richard's Almanac. The almanac included his proverbs, farming information, and other issues of the day. One almanac was printed each year. This was the best-selling reading matter in the colonies after the Bible. We still use almanacs today for general information. He wrote the almanac after he revised the colonial Book of Prayer.

Ben Franklin established the first circulating library in early America. The library allowed the borrowing and returning of books. Some books were written by Ben Franklin himself. Many of the colonists enjoyed this idea. Libraries help us to enjoy life and learn. You can thank Benjamin Franklin for our libraries of today.

Ben Franklin helped Thomas Jefferson write the Declaration of Independence. He also signed the document. The document told England that the American colonies should be free. Imagine how hard it must have been to find the right words.

Ben Franklin also published a newspaper called The Pennsylvania Gazette. This was the most successful newspaper in the colonies. The newspaper had questions and answers in it. He also drew the first newspaper cartoon. The newspaper was important to the colonists because they needed to know about their town, and it is still important today because we also need to know about the world in which we live. Ben Franklin also printed the first newspaper in a foreign language.

These are just a few things that Ben Franklin did. However, he did much, much more. Ben Franklin was an inventor, writer, printer, founder, and a great man. "Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise," was a favorite saying of his. Today many schools are named after Ben Franklin, one of our important Founding Fathers.

What I Like About Benjamin Franklin

by Madeline Suggs
Ben Franklin Elementary
Wichita Falls, TX

When Benjamin Franklin returned home to America from abroad, he thought he had been forgotten. Today, nearly three hundred years later, we still know the name Benjamin Franklin. How could we forget a man who had wisdom, great inventions, good humor, and great ideas?

Benjamin Franklin's wisdom was an important quality to me. He was so intelligent that in order for him to swim faster he invented paddles for his hands, which he called palettes, and paddles for his feet that were sandal-like flippers. He was very smart at a young age, and had thought of something neat to do. He tied the end of a kite string to a branch from a tree, held on to the string, laid down in the lake, and the kite drug him across the lake.

Another thing Benjamin Franklin was known for was his inventions. One of my favorites that he invented was the bifocals. The bifocals were one of the best inventions I think. I mean I would have gone crazy putting one pair of glasses on a second later somebody walks in to talk to you and you have to switch glasses. I would get tired of it. With bifocals you can look far out of the top and see near by out of the bottom.

> ***Another thing I like about Benjamin Franklin is his humor.***

Another one of my favorites was the ladder chair. It would be good for a library when you're reading on the chair and a customer walks in and asks for a book on the high shelf. All you have to do is just turn around, step up the ladder and get the book. You're able to reach books on the high shelves and sit down in just a few seconds!

Another thing I like about Benjamin Franklin is his humor. When Benjamin Franklin worked for his brother, James, he did all the printing, but he also wanted to write. But since his brother James would not let him, he found a way. Benjamin began writing letters in the name of Mrs. Silence Dogood and slipped them under James's printing shop door at night. James then read them and thought they were good, so he printed them into the newspaper. The people loved them so Benjamin then started writing. Something else that I like about Benjamin Franklin was that he put his humor in his writings in Poor Richard's Almanac. One of his writing was, "Fish and visitors stink in three days."

Benjamin Franklin had many ideas. One of his experiments proved to everybody that electricity was around us. He put a wire at the tip of a kite and tied a string to it. At the end of the string he put a metal key. Then he flew the kite during a storm. It worked. The lightning struck the wire and Benjamin felt the shock through the key. Lightning was around us.

Benjamin Franklin was a great man. Everything he did he did for the people, not for the money, and for the betterment of the nation. Money was not the goal. I sure think we could use a lot more people like Benjamin Franklin.

Franklin Tidbits

Franklin – Our "First Senior Citizen"

As a form of outreach, Friend of Franklin **Seymour S. Block** writes an article about Franklin every year for his local newspaper around the time of Franklin's birthday. This year, his essay "Ben Franklin – better with age" appeared in the *Gainesville Sun* on January 22nd. The article was accompanied by a copy of Franklin's portrait from the National Portrait Gallery in London. The opening paragraphs set the tone:

"Florida has become the gray-hair capital of the United States, and Gainesville has its share of senior citizens. Our oldsters are an active and productive lot, and they have an excellent model to guide them – our first famous American senior citizen, Benjamin Franklin, whose birthday we celebrated Jan. 17.

"Ben was 26 years older than George Washington, 37 years older than Thomas Jefferson and 51 years senior to Alexander Hamilton. He was famous well before the American Revolution – because of his work in electricity, his lightning rod, his writings and his politics – when people abroad had never heard of any other American.

"Just short of 70, after a brilliant career as a printer, publisher, writer, inventor and scientist, he signed the Declaration of Independence and joined the American Revolution. Congress immediately made him unofficial secretary of war; he used his scientific skills in preparing for the defense, as well as unofficial secretary of state, and he used his diplomatic skills to contact friends in foreign countries on America's behalf."

Block quotes Franklin saying "Had I died at 70, it would have cut off 12 of the most active years of my life, employed in matters of the greatest importance" and notes that Franklin was 81 when he joined the younger men in writing the U.S. Constitution.

Letting Franklin have the last word, Block ends his article with numerous observations about age which are attributed to our favorite oldster, including "Since I have begun to age, since my passions have diminished, I feel a well-being of mind and heart that I never knew before." Once again, we find another way in which Franklin can inspire us! Much thanks to Friend of Franklin Seymour Block for his creative and persistent outreach efforts!

Joint meeting of theFriends of Franklin Board with the Friends of the Franklin Papers at Yale University

Insuring the Uninsurable

An article from the October, 1953 issue of *Fieldman* concerning insurance coverage on Benjamin Franklin's will has been recently noted. The article was written by one H.B. Montgomery, whose title was apparently "Burglary Secretary" (!) for the Indemnity Insurance Company of North America.

The article tells how a policy was taken out of "Valuable Records insurance on the original will of Benjamin Franklin, which has been in the custody of the Orphans Court of Philadelphia. The will is to go on display in the library of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. A specific enabling act of the Pennsylvania Legislature was required to permit its release from the Register of Wills Office in Philadelphia's City Hall and transfer to the Philosophical Society." The $25,000 policy, which had a prepaid premium and covered a five-year term, insured against "loss, destruction or damage while in the premises of the American Philosophical Society and its library," and while being transported between the two institutions.

Even more interesting is the list of exclusions to the policy. Not covered were losses due to "inherent vice" in the article itself; "hostile or warlike action;" or, as is often a concern in Philadelphia, "insurrection, rebellion, revolution, civil war or usurped power."

Mr. Montgomery observes that this document, "if damaged or destroyed, would be costly to restore and impossible to replace. Because of its age and historic significance, the will has acquired high intrinsic value to the community."

He further notes that "It is an interesting coincidence, too, that this unique form of Valuable Records insurance should be issued on the will of Benjamin Franklin, himself credited with being the father of property insurance in America."

Franklin's will is no longer on public display, but the text of this interesting document can easily be found on-line at http://sln.fi.edu/franklin/family/lastwill.html.

Good Reads: Reviews of Franklin Related Books

Ben Franklin and the Magic Squares. By Frank Murphy; illustrated by Richard Walz. New York: Random House, 2001. 48 p. $3.99 paperback; $11.99 hardback. This book is a part of the "Step into Reading and Math" series aimed at young readers aged 4 to 8. Historically accurate, the book gives an overview of Franklin's life and achievements in the first half of the book, and then focuses in on Franklin's magic square math puzzles in the second half. Murphy tells his story in plain, sometimes colloquial, English, with a generous helping of humor -- "The guys in the Assemblly chose Ben to be a clerk because they knew he was super smart and a great writer!" Walz's whimsical drawings of Franklin through all stages of his life, accompanied by his pet squirrel Skugg in a tri-corner hat, are delightful. The image of Franklin and Skugg falling asleep during the arguments in the Pennsylvania Assembly will appeal to any child who has ever been bored in class. This colorful and engaging book is a great value, and highly recommended!

The Ben Franklin Book of Easy and Incredible Experiments: A Franklin Institute Science Museum Book. Edited by Lisa Jo Rudy, and illustrated by Cheryl Kirk Noll. New York: Wiley, 1995. 144 p. $12.95 paperback, $29.95 hardcover. Still in print and worth mentioning again, this popular, hands-on science book is aimed at readers aged 9 to 12. It starts with an introduction to Benjamin Franklin and then presents the concept of scientifc observation, innovation, and invention in a chapter called "Using Your Head." Then follow five more chapters on activities and experiments related to some of Franklin's major interests: weather, electricity, music, paper and printing, light, and sound. Clear, simple directions guide readers through each experiment. Can serve as a useful curriculum resource for teachers, too!

Benjamin Franklin of Craven Street. London: Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, n.d. 49 p., spiral bound. £10. This informal compilation contains four papers focusing on Franklin during his London period. They are: "'Dear and serviceable to each other': Franklin and the Society of Arts" by David Allan; "Benjamin Franklin and John Hawkesworth: a transatlantic friendship" by John Abbott; "Franklin's Botanic interests' by Eleanor Robbins; and "Franklin's Craven Street Circle" by Jo Reid. The essays all provide interesting insights on their respective subjects, and the volume includes an Appendix titled "Checklist of members and officers of the Society of Arts associated with Franklin," as well as references and a fine index.

THE FRIENDS OF FRANKLIN are going to do BRUSSELS, BRUGES, GHENT, ANTWERP, THE HAGUE, LEIDEN, ROTTERDAM, and, of course, AMSTERDAM

30 September-10 October, 2001

And now we travel to the lands of Claude-Anne Lopez and certain Franklin cavortings

Who would have thunk it, i.e., that Benjamin Franklin luxuriated himself in the jewel cities of Belgium and The Netherlands. But he did. In 1761, he traveled across the English Channel and marveled at the architectural wonders of Bruges, the factories of Ghent, and the art and splendor of Brussels. In each of these places he paused to meet the grand leaders of the cities, to see and understand the vibrant economies of each city, and, of course, to enjoy the social proclivities of each locale. In Brussels he demonstrated his electrical expertise to the reigning Prince of Lorraine—the Austrian ruler of the now-forgotten province of Batavia.

He forged ahead toward The Netherlands: Antwerp, Rotterdam, Leiden, and then Amsterdam. In each place he visited scientists, engineers, and the persona of the Enlightenment. This was the age during which Belgium and The Netherlands had an "excess of abundance" and, from tiny realms, controlled huge segments of the known and explored world. In Antwerp Franklin saw industrial progress; in Rotterdam he was honored as the scientist of the age; in Leiden he visited and commiserated with the inventor of the Leiden jar—now known as a battery—without which Franklin could not have conducted his electrical experiments.

The Friends of Franklin are going to explore all of these places in early September 30-October 10, 2001. You will have a chance to see places and meet folk that will never again be available to those of us who study Franklin. And to party in places where he also partied and played and cavorted during this, his 55th year on earth. It is noteworthy that we will make this trek on the 240th anniversary of his own trip.

For more information contact Kathleen DeLuca, tour organizer and director of 12 successive Franklin annual tours at: 856.854.7257; fax 856.854.0773;

or Larry E. Tise, tour historian and director, at: 215.765.2418, fax. 215.765.2721; ltise@attglobal.net.

Special Thanks to Our Life Members!

William D. Anderson, Jr.; Wichita, KS

Jackson C. Boswell; Arlington, VA

Elly Fitzig; Wichita, KS

James M. Gassaway; Swarthmore, PA

Michael L. George; Dallas, TX

Doug Hall; Cincinnati, OH

James Hayase; Tokyo, Japan

E Cutter Hughes, Jr; Huntsville, AL

Mr. & Mrs. David A. Jones; Louisville, KY

Frank B. Jones; Bloomington, IN

Benjamin Franklin Kahn; Chevy Chase, MD

Stuart E. Karu; Cape Elizabeth, ME

John T. Kelly; Penn Valley, PA

E. Philip Krider; Tucson, AZ

Charles Lard; West Hartford, CT

J.A. Leo Lemay; Newark, DE

Claude-Anne Lopez; New Haven, CT

Martin Mangold; Rockville, MD

Albert Merck; Lexington, MA

Robert Middlekauff; Oakland,CA

Michael Newcomb; Cave Creek, AZ

Barbara Oberg; Princeton, NJ

Michel Roubinet; Ozoir La Ferriere, France

Deane M. Sherman; Rockville, MD

Malcolm Smith; Highland Park, IL

Noriyuki Uenami; Tokyo, Japan

George Franklin Waters; Rochester, MN

Douglas L. Whitley; Batavia, IL

Ehsan Zayan; London, UK

Welcome and Thank You to Our New Members!

Life:

E. Cutter Hughes, Jr.; *Huntsville, AL*

Friend:

Bruce Beebe; *Wilton, CT*

Ronald Blumer; *New York, NY*

Mr. A. Lovell Elliott; *Barnstable, MA*

John Grasberger; *La Mesa, CA*

John Valpey; *Lincoln, MA*

Subscriber:

E. Renee Flager; *Yardley, PA*

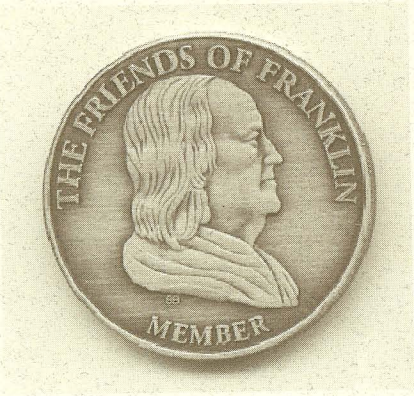
Friends of Franklin Membership Medallion

Several years ago, when Malcolm Smith was President of the Friends, the possibility of a membership medal for the organization was discussed. Through the efforts of former Friends' Board member, Phil W. Greenslet, the medal became reality this year. The bronze medals have been distributed to all renewing 2001 members. Special gold, silver/gold and silver medals were presented to the Founder, Stuart Karu, Past Presidents, and Life Members.

The obverse of the medal was designed by artist Sherry Bufano. Sherry is the wife of Friends' Board member, Roy Goodman. The reverse is blank so members can show their pride in the organization by having them engraved.

If you have not yet renewed your 2001 membership, please do so and you will receive this special medallion customized and produced for the Friends of Franklin.

The Friends of Franklin would like to take this opportunity to thank Phil for making this dream a reality.



The Friends of Franklin Membership Medallion

Featured Friend - Phil W. Greenslet

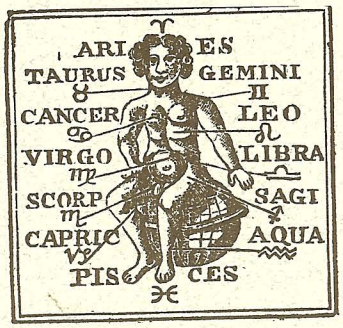
Phil W. Greenslet has been a member of the Friends of Franklin for several years and has served as a member of the Board of Directors. Phil was born in Chochranton, PA, on the corner of Franklin and Wood, Wood Street being named for his maternal grandparents. His father was a printer.

He is a graduate of West Virginia Wesleyan (BA) and Emory University (MA), Political Science. He met his wife, Myra, while serving in the US Army in Germany in the 1950s. He has four children who reside in California, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. He recently retired after 40 years in retail management.

Phil has been collecting numismatic items (coins, tokens, medals, paper money) for 50 years. He became interested in Frankliniana about 25 years ago, primarily in numismatic items picturing Dr. Franklin. He started with medals and the collection somehow expanded into busts, pictures, books, postal covers, ephemera, stock certificates, etc. Phil is Past President of a number of numismatic organizations, including Maryland State Numismatic Association.

Phil has been exhibiting Franklin material at coin shows and conventions for the past 27 years and has won over 300 awards. In 1990, he had the only all-medal exhibition in the Philadelphia area celebrating Benjamin Franklin's 200th Anniversary.

He is the author of "The Medals of Franklin", a numismatic reference on medals, tokens, etc., depicting the different facets of Franklin's life. The book was published by the Token and Medal Society in 1994. He is currently working to update the book and hopes to have a revised version published before 2006.



Calendar of Events

May 17, 2001. Friends of the Franklin Papers' annual meeting. At the Graduate Club, New Haven, at noon.

September 30-October 10, 2001. Friends of Franklin tour to Belgium and the Netherlands. See the article on page nine for more information, and call Kathy DeLuca at 215-BEN-0300 with any questions or to register.

Franklin on C-SPAN!

The C-SPAN cable television news channel has a new series they are producing, entitled *"American Writers: A Journey through History."* Benjamin Franklin and his *Autobiography* were the focus of the episode that was aired live from the American Philosophical Society on Monday, March 26th, and rebroadcast on Friday, March 30th. Unfortunately, we were unable to alert Friends to this fact ahead of time! The series runs through December, featuring writers who have had a particular influence on American culture and political thought. The April episodes feature Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, and Lewis and Clark. Check out the website at www.americanwriters.org for more information on the series, streaming video, and additional information on each featured writer. It is expected that video-tapes of each episode will also be available for purchase. Look in future issues the *Gazette* for updates!

Join Friends of Franklin!

Would you like to become an official member of the Friends of Franklin organization? Do you have a friend or relative who might wish to join, or who would appreciate a gift membership? All individuals, scholars, students, collectors, and Franklinophiles, as well as institutions, are invited to become members of the Friends of Franklin at the following membership rates:

Life Members	$1,000	Sustaining Friend	$100
Institutional Members	$1,000	Franklin Friend	$50
Supporting Friend	$ 250	Student Members (full time only; photocopy id)	$20

YES, I'd like to join the Friends of Franklin!

NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

_____

PHONE:_____ **FAX:** _____ **E-MAIL:** _____

Method of payment: Personal check ____ or Money order _____ (Made payable to Friends of Franklin, Inc.)
Credit Card: American Express ____ MasterCard ____ VISA ____
Card # _____ Expiration date: _____
Signature _____ Amount enclosed: _____

Please send to: Friends of Franklin, Inc., PO Box 40048, Philadelphia, PA 19106

215-BEN-0300(215-236-0300) 215-440-3423 (FAX) fof@benfranklin2006.org

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Volume 11, Number 1, Spring, 2001