

# Franklin Gazette

Volume 10, Number 1 Spring, 2000

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

"Let our fathers and grandfathers be valued for their goodness, ourselves for our own." - *Poor Richard, 1739*

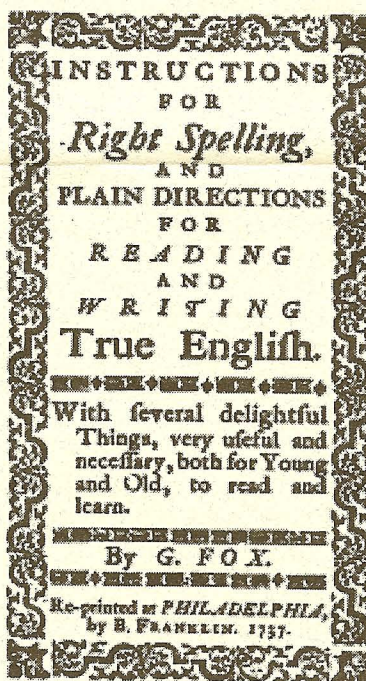
## President's Message

by Ralph Gregory Elliot

As these lines are written, three of the four viable candidates for President happen to be sons of famous fathers: Bush, McCain and Gore. The pressure that places upon the sons is considerable; and while they may benefit from the admiration and fond memories their sires' lives inspire, they are also burdened by the baggage their parent's history imposes on them.

One cannot help but be reminded of the fate of William Franklin, Ben's firstborn, in this regard. But William had it even rougher than today's trio. William was his father's companion and right arm both in Pennsylvania and in the first five years of Ben's service in England. None of today's trio had any association with their distinguished parent's public career; they were simply offspring.

William also took on significant public office, the royal governorship of New Jersey, at the same time as his father continued his lobbying activities for the various colonies. While William was thus, in an executive capacity, serving as the agent of the King, his father was involved in the ongoing issues that increasingly



put his clients at odds with that same king.

Finally, when push came to shove and the breach between Crown and colonies became real, William remained loyal to his King at the same time his father was helping to draft the Declaration of Independence and embarking on his embassy to

France, seeking French cash and French involvement to wage the fight for total separation from William's King. While Ben became the toast of the Parisian haute monde, William was immured in prison and, when ultimately released, became active in the Tory movement seeking to frustrate the very goals his father, in advancing age and suffering the ailments that attend it, was striving vigorously to promote.

And finally, with but one brief meeting in England in 1785 as Ben returned home for the last time, William was essentially disowned by his father, and ended his years a forlorn exile from his native land - unloved, unhonored and unsung. American history does not record, among its famous figures, so stark a tale of filial disaffection. Not even the Civil War, where brothers and cousins waged war on each other, produced a rift involving a paternal giant such as Benjamin Franklin was.

And so, as they contemplate the mixed blessing being the son of famous men represents, Al, John and "W" can take comfort in the relative warmth of their filial relationship, and be grateful that they took the public stage after, not during, their distinguished parent's public career.



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The Friends of Franklin, Inc.  
P.O. Box 40048  
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215-BEN-0300

(215-236-0300)

Fax: 215-440-3423

email:fof@benfranklin2006.org

Website:

www.benfranklin2006.org

Ralph Elliot, *President*

Alison M. Lewis, *Editor*  
alewis@amphilsoc.org  
215-440-3444

Claude-Anne Lopez,  
*Co-Editor*

Newsletter Coordination:  
Kathleen DeLuca  
Roy Goodman

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## **From the Editor: 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Franklin Gazette**

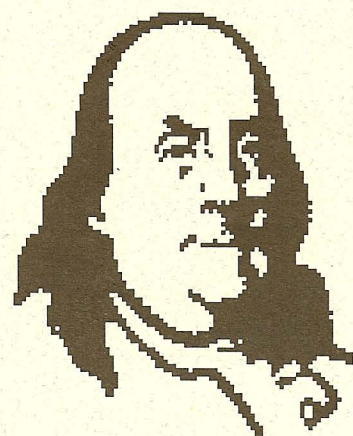
This issue is Vol.10, no.1 of the *Franklin Gazette*, making it the year of our 10th Anniversary. I have been editing and laying out the Gazette since the "double issue" of Vol.8, nos.1&2. I'm happy to be associated with this fine organization. Franklin's "Friends" tend to be a group of very interesting people! Their wide-ranging interests include lightning rods, sea currents, glass armonicas, drinking songs, early medical technology, food and wine, historic houses, historic furniture, politics, chess, and genealogy. And this is just the beginning of the list! I want to thank everyone who has shared their love of Franklin with me; I have learned much and been inspired by all of you. I want to especially thank those of you who have taken the time to write about your Franklin interests and submit your articles to the *Gazette*, as well as those who have written letters, submitted news articles and "tid-bits," and made constructive observations about the Gazette. Your participation in this newsletter is the meat and bones of its existence.

Like many people, I think that my perception of Benjamin Franklin was obscured and limited by his status as an icon in the American culture. He had become a familiar image of popular culture to me, someone with vague association to colonial history and trite aphorisms, but whose image was more likely to be seen on a paper towel wrapper or an advertisement for "Electric Factory" rock concerts in Philadelphia. All that changed when I came to work for the American Philosophical Society Library in the summer of 1997. Being inside an organization founded by Franklin and becoming more aware of his contributions to our culture on so many levels was an eye-opening experience for me. It was here at the APS Library that I also met Roy Goodman, a dedicated Friend of

Franklin, who would later suggest that I become the editor of the *Gazette*. Since then, my appreciation for Franklin has grown at an even faster pace. I've heard Franklin called everything from an Elder Statesman to an Ur-Hippie. It continues to amaze me that this one man could have so many facets and have made so many contributions that so many people for generations afterwards can continue to study and promote his ideas. I suppose I should also thank Franklin for being Franklin!

Both the Friends of Franklin organization and the *Franklin Gazette* have changed and grown over the last (almost) decade. I look forward with the rest of you to the celebrations of 2006. I can't look ahead and know if I will still be editing Vol.16 of the *Gazette* at that time or not. But, I hope that for the time I am here, and for anyone who comes after me, that the *Gazette* will continue to grow and improve, and be worthy of the memory of the man to whom it is dedicated. I count on you, the Friends of Franklin, to continue to share your thoughts and ideas with me, to insure that this will indeed happen. Let me hear from you!

— Alison Lewis





## Franklin Tidbits

Friends of Franklin President **Ralph Gregory Elliot** wrote one of the lead articles for a recent issue of the *Connecticut Bar Journal*, Vol. 72, no.6. We can see that Ralph's interest in Franklin combines well with his professional interests: the title of the article is "Benjamin Franklin and the Seedtime of American Newspapers: Persistent Issues of a Free Press." Ralph's writing is as clear and precise as we have come to expect from his columns in the *Gazette*, free from legal jargon and accessible to the general reader. Ralph recounts Franklin's involvement with issues of freedom of the press, from his youthful apprenticeship in his brother James' printing shop when the *Courant* ran afoul of the local government, to his reflections in old age in a work like *On the Abuse of the Press* (1788). Particularly interesting is Ralph's observation that James Franklin was the first American newspaperman to refuse to reveal his source and to be punished for it.

Friend of Franklin **Bob Dewel** served as guest columnist in the *Baraboo News-Republic* (Baraboo, WI) in the Sept. 5, 1999 issue. Bob brought the *Baraboo News-Republic* editor to task for failing to even mention Benjamin Franklin in a report of a trip to Boston. Entitled "What About Big Ben?," Bob's column recounts many of Franklin's major accomplishments in a clear and good-humored fashion. He admits that evidence of Franklin in Boston might be slight due to the fact that "Boston is probably a little ashamed, for a cruel brother to whom Ben was apprenticed, plus an official atmosphere repressing free thought." Fleeing to Philadelphia, Franklin found a town where he could be honored appropriately and extensively, and Bob urges his editor to visit that city for ample evidence of Franklin's fame. Bob says he regards Franklin "as the real father of his country" and recounts in a note to us that "I promote Franklin every chance I get." Bravo for great Franklin publicity!

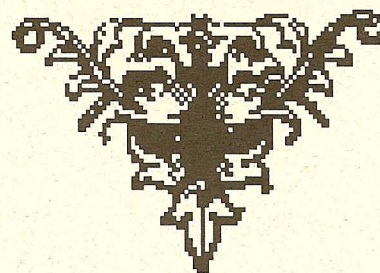
West Coast Benjamin Franklin impersonator **Gene Collins** writes that he had a delightful time at Ben Franklin Elementary School in Corona, CA on the occasion of their celebration of Franklin's birthday. He was engaged to appear for two assemblies, for a total of 450 school children, and also visited the Kindergarten classes. Gene says: "When I arrived at the school, there were banners, balloons, and confetti, all proclaiming 'Happy Birthday Ben.'" In the assemblies, the children "asked dozens of questions, pretty intelligent ones for they have studied Ben well. We had a big birthday cake and I was serenaded with 'Happy Birthday Cha Cha Cha'." He was given birthday cards and again serenaded by the kindergarteners, of whom he said "It was amazing what the K grade knew about Ben." Gene also forwarded a copy of the school's official PTA newsletter, called *The Ben Franklin Gazette*.

Friend of Franklin and Franklin descendant **James Gassaway** was pictured in the November, 1999 issue of Chess Life. The article detailed the United States Chess Federation's Awards Luncheon last summer, at which Benjamin Franklin was inducted into the Chess Hall of Fame. Another good plug for Franklin!

A recent press release from the University of California at Berkeley announces that "Benjamin Franklin, one of our country's founding fathers, also was **the founding father of infotainment**, that ever-popular blend of information and entertainment" according to UC-Berkeley journalism professor Tom Leonard. According to the release, Leonard's article in the *New England Quarterly* "proves that 13-year-old Franklin wrote and helped his brother James publish a ballad, 'The Downfall of Piracy,' in 1719. The Franklin brothers later used their newspaper to advertise broadsides – sheets of paper on which was printed a song on a topical subject....Leonard also

linked specific details in the ballad with historic fact, showing that the song predates by three years the Silence Do-good letters of 1722, which scholars have long considered the earliest surviving writings of Franklin." I believe the article referred to is called "Recovering 'Wretched Stuff' and the Franklins' Synergy" and it appeared in the September, 1999 issue of the *New England Quarterly*. Also in the same issue is an article by Carla Mulford, entitled "Figuring Benjamin Franklin in American Cultural Memory."

The Pennsylvania Humanities Council has published its "2000-2001 Commonwealth Speakers" directory, which includes **six talks available specifically on Benjamin Franklin**. They are: William Pencak on "Poor Richard's and Other Almanacks;" George Boudreau on "Benjamin Franklin and William Penn's Legacy;" Larry E. Tise on "Benjamin Franklin: America's Original Talent Scout;" John B. Frantz on "Benjamin Franklin and the Pennsylvania Germans;" Wilson J. Moses on "Benjamin Franklin and American Democracy;" and George Boudreau on "The Changing Benjamin Franklin." The speakers are available free-of-charge for Pennsylvania non-profits; colleges and universities pay a cost share of \$250. For more information, contact the Pennsylvania Humanities Council at (800)462-0442 in PA or (215)925-3054. E-mail [phc@libertynet.org](mailto:phc@libertynet.org) or visit the website at <http://www.libertynet.org/~phc>.





In His Own Words:  
*Benjamin Franklin*

In His Own [Angry] Words  
or  
Still Another *Bête Noire*  
by Claude Anne Lopez and Kate Ohno

In his vivid and interesting book, *Benjamin Franklin and His Enemies* (Berkeley, 1996), Robert Middlekauff depicted a Franklin that many people had never heard of: a hard man doing battle against those he considered nefarious. Let us add one more "enemy" to his gallery of rogues.

Josiah Tucker, clergyman and economist, served successively as curator and rector of churches in Bristol and as a canon of the cathedral there, and in 1758 was appointed Dean of Gloucester. His numerous writings on trade began in 1749; they often expressed unpopular views. He was unfriendly to the American colonies; he believed they provided no essential advantages to the mother country, and as the American Revolution approached he recommended that Great Britain let them separate without a struggle. Yet he supported the principle of royal authority in the colonies and was hostile to the political and constitutional views of colonial spokesmen.

In 1766 he wrote a pamphlet entitled "A Letter from a Merchant in London to His Nephew in North America." In advising Britain that the colonies were no more than an encumbrance that the mother country could best do without, Tucker was basing his conclusion solely on British self-interest as he saw it; with the colonists' arguments about their rights he had no patience. The sovereignty of Parliament was for him unlimited: the Americans were virtually represented in it and hence might be taxed by it. He was singularly contemptuous of them, even by the standards of the day. His contempt showed in the form in which he cast this pamphlet, which was ostensibly the letter of a wise old man to his young and callow relative, an imaginary background that gave the "uncle" free rein to write with a condescension that seems almost designed to infuriate.

Franklin was infuriated. He tore into the Dean's arguments with his usual vigor and at unusual length; he commented more fully than on any other pamphlet that has survived. The bulk of his notes permits extensive quotation, rather than paraphrase, of Tucker's accompanying text, from which its tone as well as style becomes all too clear. Franklin's responses are interesting for their range (and occasionally their rage) rather than

their originality: except for his views on property qualifications for voting, most of these marginalia repeat, at times almost verbatim, those in other pamphlets. Like them, these cannot be dated with confidence, although they were clearly written after the news of the Boston Massacre reached London—more than four years, in other words, after the pamphlet was written. Franklin bought it and kept it on his shelves intending to read it, we conjecture; when he finally did so he exploded into rebuttal.

Franklin's furious exclamations included "Infamous lie!", "A vile lie!", "Silly enough!", and finally, "Ignorance!" He attacked not only the text of the pamphlet, but the man himself, calling Tucker a lying villain and a madman. Due to space constraints we cannot reproduce the whole pamphlet with Franklin's remarks, but an example is given below. For a more complete understanding of both sides of the issue see volume XVII, pp. 348-80 of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*.

Tucker:

"The City of London has long enjoyed great liberties under its charter, but no Londoner would think of pleading them as ground for being exempted from Parliamentary authority or taxation. If any one did he would be sent, not to prison, but 'to another Place of Confinement,' much fitter for a Person in his unhappy Situation."

Franklin:

"This Instance would be something, if London was not within the Realm. Whereas the Colonies are without; and therefore 'tis nothing to the purpose, convinces no American of any thing but the pert positiveness and Ignorance of the Author.

The difference between a Fool and a Madman is said to be, that the Fool reasons wrong from right Premises, the Madman right but from wrong Premises. This seems the Case of our Author, and therefore that Place perhaps more suitable for him."

As far as we know, Tucker avoided the madhouse, but Franklin's arguments were no longer confined to marginalia when the Dean published another pamphlet in 1774, innocuously entitled "Four Tracts, Together with Two Sermons, on Political and Commercial Subjects".

To be continued...

[In His Own Words is a column designed to present the writings of Franklin by placing them within their historical context. Generally written by members of the Franklin Papers staff, it is hoped that these columns will help us remember Franklin's true genius and wit. -- Ed.]



## Franklin's London Home

by  
*Carol Fabbri*

A plaque near the door of 36 Craven Street is the only sign from the outside of the tremendous history and educational potential of Benjamin Franklin House. Benjamin Franklin lived at 36 Craven Street - a Grade I (the highest rating given by Britain's English Heritage) listed Georgian terrace House - for sixteen years, from 1757 to 1775. During this time, these "genteel lodgings," in Franklin's words, were the base for his many experiments, writings, and political negotiations including those with William Pitt, the Elder, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Chatham on the eve of the American Revolution.

Over the 200 years since Franklin lived at 36 Craven Street, the House fell into serious disrepair. Upon obtaining the freehold to the House, the Friends of Benjamin Franklin House dedicated themselves to transforming the 1730s building into a dynamic museum and educational facility in order to extend Franklin's influence, which has endured over two centuries, into the new millennium.

The plan for realising this vision was divided into three phases. Phase I, structurally securing the House, was completed on time and within budget in December 1998. Phase II, encompassing the historically accurate interior restoration of the House and the establishment of the educational facility and research centre, estimated to cost \$2.6 million (£1.6 million), will be completed by mid-2001 if all funding is in place by this autumn. Following, Phase III - a scholarship and endowment fund - will begin.

Phase II will transform 36 Craven Street into a living museum and educational centre, revealing Franklin's vibrant life in London for sixteen years - his work, his friends, and his passions. Upon completion, a historical-theatrical tour will teach and inspire further study of Franklin. The educational facility will serve young and established scholars and will include educational exchanges between London and American children as well as symposia and conferences for research and discussion on Franklin and related topics. The first symposium was held at the Royal Society of Arts in October 1999 on Franklin in London; the second, in October 2000, will focus on Franklin's relevance for the new millennium.

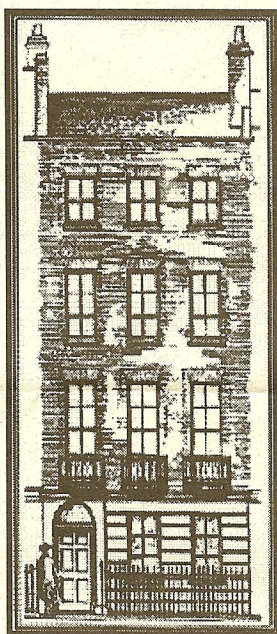
Upon entering the House, visitors will progress on a unique sensory journey of the sights, sounds, and smells

of 18<sup>th</sup> century London, Franklin's London. Polly Stevenson, the daughter of Franklin's landlady who became a lifelong friend of Franklin, will show visitors through the House - introducing this unique period in Anglo-American history and Franklin's life.

The Student Centre will teach students of all ages the joy of problem solving and learning that was exemplified by Franklin. Children and school groups will learn using hands-on exhibits that demonstrate key concepts that Franklin studied and revolutionised while in London. These exhibits are being developed with input from education and science professionals as well as students to make sure that they are fun and interesting. In addition, emerging Internet and CD-ROM technology will make it possible for the images of the House and its contents to be readily accessible to a global audience. Such new technology will also allow London and US school children to study their shared history together.

An extensive network of trustees, friends, public bodies, corporations, institutions, and volunteers, are working co-operatively to bring Phase II to fruition. These qualified and dedicated individuals bring a wide range of skills to the House, ensuring professional expertise in crucial areas including: finance, project management, education, historical scholarship, fundraising, volunteer group management, production and development of interpretative programmes, and script writing.

Phase II fundraising efforts began in earnest during 1999. The Director of the House, Dr Márcia Balisciano, the trustees, a Phase II Fundraising Committee, and friends, are working to raise the funds necessary for Phase II. Since the Phase II campaign began, a \$100,000 gift was forthcoming from the US Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. The House has also recently been recognized as the first official project of Save America's Treasures, an awareness program of sites worthy of US support, created by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Clinton administration. Márcia has begun also reinvigorated the Friends of Benjamin Franklin House allowing a broad cross-section of individuals to support the project. For a donation of \$50, (£35 ) Friends will receive: the Craven Street Gazette (an informative newsletter), and the ability to visit the House free of charge with a guest. Information on becoming a Friend of Benjamin Franklin House is found near the end of this article. The goal is to raise \$900,000 (£564,400) for Phase II.



*cont. on p.7*



## What do I mean by "My Life with Benjamin Franklin"?

by *Claude-Anne Lopez*

I don't mean his biography or mine. In this collection of eighteen essays, to appear in April 2000 (Yale University Press), I tell stories about little known aspects of Franklin's life and personality, that I discovered in the course of a long career as one of the editors of his papers at Yale. My stories are closely tied to the documents assembled at the Sterling Library (almost 30,000 of them!). They don't offer revisionist theories about Franklin's behavior or ulterior motives, they are simply stories that appealed to my curiosity.

After an introduction about the role Franklin played in my life, bringing me, an immigrant, from the fringes of society to the American heartland, I divided my essays into four sections.

The first section deals with some facets of Franklin's personality. It opens with a discussion of a forgery committed in the 1930's depicting him as a rabid anti-Semite, followed by the importance of swimming in his life, the different styles he adopted when writing to three different young women, and ends with his role as grandfather—not only to Benny Bache but to several American boys studying in Geneva during the Revolution.

The second section is entitled Enigmas and Tricks and includes five stories: one about a man who attempted to poison Franklin, while in Paris, with a bottle of madeira, the next about the sad case of the Reverend William Dodd, hanged for committing a forgery, and his hitherto undiscovered relationship with the Doctor. After that we meet the enigmatic Chevalier d'Eon (man or woman?) who also knew Franklin, and we follow the destiny of a chess-playing mystery Turk. Finally, we retrace the

confrontation that pitched Franklin against the intriguing Dr. Mesmer, from Vienna.

The third section deals with Franklin's work as his country's envoy to France: his difficulties in procuring the armament requested by Congress, his choice of a dinner set—the first to be used by the American Foreign service—the part he took in French Free-Masonry, his friendship with a duchess who had been a dancer, an episode when he was hoodwinked by a clever French girl and, in a more serious vein, the prizes and pitfalls of his adaptation to France.



In the fourth section, we see him back in Philadelphia, an octogenarian horrified by the miscarriage of a utopian scheme dreamed up by some of his Parisian friends. Also, he appears as an elderly philosopher who has come a long way in his attitude toward slavery.

The Epilogue is in the shape of an imaginary dinner party given by Madame Helvetius on the first anniversary of his death. Six of his close friends evoke their memories of Franklin and of his influence on their country, now in the throes of the first stage of its Revolution.

The book is dedicated to the Friends of Franklin and I hope some of you will enjoy it.

## Franklin on the Internet: Web Reviews

Benjamin Franklin: An Enlightened American at <http://library.thinkquest.org/22254/home.htm> is a wonderful example of the way Franklin can inspire young people. This excellent site was created by three high school students, Ravi Kavasury, Serge Aime, and Alexander Mittendorf, for the 1998 Thinkquest competition, an international contest in which students from around the world create educational websites. Their site was selected as a semi-finalist in the competition, and has won numerous other awards. The highlight of the site is a fine original biography of Franklin, which includes numerous illustrations and links. The site also features sections devoted to Complete Works, Inventions, Quotations, Wit & Humor, Interesting Facts, Genealogy, and References. Check out this great Franklin website!

The Access Indiana Teaching & Learning Center has a Benjamin Franklin site at <http://tlc.ai.org/franklin.htm>. Geared to help teachers plan lessons, the site has numerous links to "general resources" including the Electric Franklin site, encyclopedia articles, and text of the autobiography. There are also more specific links to sites reflecting Franklin's scientific ideas, including Franklin Institute's site on electricity, and an MIT page on the Franklin Stove. Sadly, there is only one lesson plan posted, a drawing exercise for grades K-2.

The Benjamin Franklin Discussion Port at <http://classicals.com/federalist/BenjaminFranklinhall/wwwboard.html> is devoted to a light hearted discussion centered about Benjamin Franklin." A part of the Western Canon "virtual" University, this page is a public bulletin board where anyone can post a question, answer, or comment. Unfortunately,

*cont. p.9*



## Franklin's London Home

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Benjamin Franklin House hopes to receive the remaining funding from the National Heritage Lottery Fund. Approximately 28% of the funds raised by the National Lottery in the UK are allocated to five independent bodies set up by Parliament. One of these groups, the Heritage Lottery Fund, aims to preserve and enhance the heritage of the United Kingdom. Because the House is the only surviving home of Benjamin Franklin House AND a Grade 1 listed building, the House was found to be an ideal candidate and received \$864,000 (£529,000) in 1996 from the National Heritage Lottery Fund for Phase I, the structural preservation of the House.

Because of the previous grant from the National Lottery and the match with the key priorities of the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Friends of Benjamin Franklin House are optimistic about the possibility of future funding. In the summer of 1999, an enormous effort was channelled into an application for a second grant for Phase II.

The application was sent to the National Heritage Lottery Fund in early September and additional details were given in mid-February. A decision will soon be forthcoming on whether it is possible to move onto the next phase of the application process.

If you would like to join the Friends of Benjamin Franklin House, please send your name, address, e-mail address, and a check for \$50 (£35) to Benjamin Franklin House, 36 Craven St. London WC2N 5NG, United Kingdom.

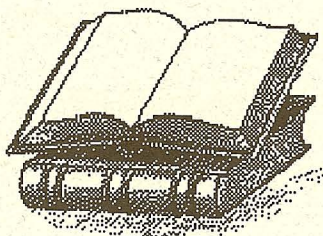
For more information on Benjamin Franklin House, please view our website: <http://www.rsa.org.uk/franklin/>.

## Good Reads

Here are two new suggestions especially for younger readers:

*The Amazing Life of Benjamin Franklin.* James Cross Giblin; illustrated by Michael Dooling. 48 p. Hardback, \$17.95. Scholastic Press, 2000. Meticulously researched and beautifully illustrated, this is an excellent short biography that will appeal to a wide age range. Smaller children would enjoy hearing it read aloud while they peruse the attractive and appropriate illustrations. Older young readers should find it appealing enough to hold their interest in independent reading, and the interest level is high enough to capture the imagination of adults. In addition to the biography, the book also contains a chronology, a list of inventions, a list of sayings from Poor Richard's, short descriptions of historic sites associated with Franklin, a bibliography and source notes, as well as a note from the artist about the process of illustrating the book, and an index. A must for the collector of all things Franklin, or anyone interested in introducing Franklin to a young friend.

*The Mysterious Ocean Highway: Benjamin Franklin and the Gulf Stream.* Deborah Heiligman. 48 p. Hardcover, \$25.69; paperback, \$7.95. Turnstone Ocean Pilot, 1999. Another finely produced and attractive book. It will appeal to pre-teen to adult readers for its clear explanation of the properties of the Gulf Stream and Franklin's role in describing and publicizing it. The illustrations are engaging and appropriate, and the entire book is educational as well as fun. The paperback edition is an incredible value!



## The Ben Franklin Song: More about Music

### Ben Franklin

*Words and Arrangement by Elva S. Daniels. Sung to the tune of W.A. Mozart's "The Magic Flute" Sung on Franklin's birthday by the students at Ben Franklin Elementary School in Wichita Falls, TX.*

Ben Franklin, a great man, an inventor was he,  
He discover'd that lightning was electricity.  
He attracted the lightning with kite, string, and key.  
Then invented the lightning rod for our safety.

Ben Franklin, a wise man, we agree and admit,  
Made his "Poor Richard's Almanac" much liked for its wit.  
Fine slogans like this made his Almanac sell:  
"If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing well."

Ben Franklin, a statesman, went to France with this plea,  
"Help the colonies break away so they can be free."  
He succeeded. Our freedom came just as he planned.  
Then he helped draft the Constitution of our great land.

Ben Franklin, forethinker, a founder was he  
Of the Fire Department and the Free Library.  
As Postmaster, Ben added improvements galore,  
Such as postmen deliv'ring letters right to the door.

We honor Ben Franklin, many talents had he,  
And his name cannot be surpassed in all history.  
We remember Ben Franklin, and here is the key:  
With his wisdom he aided all of humanity.



## Friends of Franklin Member Profile: Brandon Brame Fortune

Brandon has been a Friend of Franklin since 1996. While researching an exhibition of portraits of eighteenth-century American men of science, she visited the American Philosophical Society. Roy Goodman, a faithful Friend of Franklin, introduced her to our organization.

Brandon is the assistant curator of painting and sculpture at the Smithsonian Institution's National Portrait Gallery. The exhibition which led her to the Friends featured portraits of Benjamin Franklin that emphasized his scientific achievements, as well as likenesses of many of his contemporaries and friends. Co-organized with Deborah Warner of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, the exhibition, *Franklin & His Friends: Portraying the Man of Science in Eighteenth-Century America*, was held at the National Portrait Gallery during the spring and summer of 1999. The show garnered rave reviews and produced a beautiful keepsake catalog.

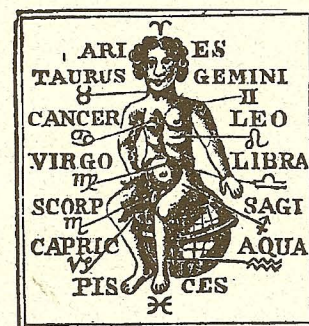
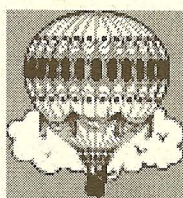
The exhibition's title, as well as its content, made it of natural interest to the Friends. "I was thrilled that the Friends were interested in helping us promote our exhibition to a ready-made audience, and delighted when a group of Friends, including the Board, gathered in Washington in June to see the show." The Friends had a tour of the exhibition and a reception in their honor. Brandon has just renewed her membership, and plans to continue her association with the Friends. "I'm looking forward to Franklin's 300<sup>th</sup> in 2006. The National Portrait Gallery closed in January for a three-year renovation of its home, the Old Patent Office Building. We will be open again well before Franklin's birthday year, and I hope that we can mark the occasion in some way at the Gallery."

## BALLOON Flies Into New York! The Play's the Thing

Karen Sunde's award-winning play, *Balloon*, will be staged in New York at the Connelly Theatre from March 18 to April 9, 2000. *Balloon* is set in France between the American and French Revolutions in the Salon of Anne-Catherine Helvetius, on Franklin's last night in Paris. This "charmed circle" sings Franklin's drinking song and prevails upon him to reenact scenes from his past life. A play-within-a-play develops, and the deep-seated conflict between Franklin and his son William is revealed. Their years of close association before the Revolution and a lifetime of international diplomacy could not bring Franklin to reconciliation with his Loyalist son. Claude-Anne Lopez's *Mon Cher Papa* was a major source in the writing of the play.

In a 1983 off-Broadway production, *Balloon* won four Villager awards, and was nominated for Best Play by the Outer Critics Circle. The *Villager* reported that "[Sunde] converts our textbook history into flesh and blood passions" and actor Richard Dysart commented that the play "bubbles with crisp language, depth, and humor."

*Balloon* performance dates and times are: March 18<sup>th</sup> at 3pm; March 19<sup>th</sup> at 8pm; March 22nd-April 9<sup>th</sup>, Wednesdays-Fridays at 8pm, Saturdays at 3pm & 8pm, and Sundays at 3 pm. The Connelly Theatre is located at 220! East 4<sup>th</sup> St. (between Avenues A & B) in New York City. For reservations call Claire Higgins at (212) 219-2085.



## Calendar of Events

March 18-April 9, 2000. *Balloon* plays in New York City, Wednesdays through Sundays only. See article to the left for more information.

March 29, 2000. Ellen R. Cohen, Franklin Papers editor, will give a talk entitled "Franklin's Passy Press," as part of the Friends of the Franklin Papers luncheon program. Noon at Mory's Association on York St., New Haven, across the street from the Sterling Memorial Library on the Yale Campus. James Mosley's lecture on the development of French typography in the 17th and 18th centuries will take place on the same day, in the Sterling Memorial Library lecture hall at 4:30 PM.

April 26, 2000. Brian Owen-Smith will lecture on "Benjamin Franklin & the Hewson Anatomy School." 6:15 pm at the College of Physicians of Philadelphia. Call (215)563-3737 x214 or x282 for more information.

April 27-30, 2000. World Glass Music Festival 2000, in Philadelphia. For more information, or to register, contact Elizabeth Glancy Brunelli, Harbor Point, 40 Westwind Road Apt. 505, Boston, MA 02125. Tel/ Fax: 617-288-6111.

September 14-18, 2000. Benjamin Franklin's Historic Boston and Nantucket. Friends of Franklin tour to the Boston area. Call 215-BEN-0300 for more information.



## Special Thanks to Our Life Members!

William D. Anderson, Jr.;  
Wichita, KS

Jackson C. Boswell; Arlington, VA

Elly Fitzig; Wichita, KS

Michael L. George; Dallas, TX

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James Hayase; Tokyo, Japan

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

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Barbara Oberg; Princeton, NJ

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Deane M. Sherman; Rockville, MD

Malcolm Smith; Highland Park, IL

Noriyuki Uenami; Tokyo, Japan

George Franklin Waters;  
Rochester, MN

Ehsan Zayan;  
London, UK

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## What Do YOU Think?

Over the past couple of years, we've enjoyed hearing Friends' responses to the question: "How do you think Ben Franklin would celebrate his 300th birthday?" Now that it is the year 2000, however, it seems time for a *new* question. Put on your thinking caps and give us your best answer to the following:

*What problem or issue do you think Franklin would be most interested in if he were alive today? Why?*

Send your replies to the *Franklin Gazette* via fax, mail, or e-mail (see page 2 for all the right numbers). We eagerly await your well-thought out and witty responses. Look for answers starting in the next *Gazette*!

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## Web Reviews

*cont. from p.6*

since the board is not monitored, there is a lot of garbage to wade through ("I heard Ben Franklin was a nudist and a swinger" "Turn six dollars into six grand, FAST!" and the last minute pleas for pictures and information from report-writing students). The site also hosts a live chat if you're willing to take your chances. Perhaps if more serious-minded folks got involved, this could be a useful resource.

Speaking of websites, be sure to visit the Friends of Franklin website at <http://www.benfranklin2006.org>. We'd also be interested in your ideas about the website. What would you find useful there? More Franklin texts? Links to other Franklin resources? Would you like to see issues of the *Franklin Gazette*, or selected articles, available online? Your input is requested!

## Welcome to Our New Members!

### Sustaining Friends:

Dean A. Bennett;  
Newtown Square, PA

James Biddle, Andalusia, PA

Philip D. Fowler, Riverdale, NY

### Friends:

Roberta Boyd; Long Beach, CA

Marion A. Brown; Cincinnati, OH

Susan Curtis; Wilmington, DE

Drew Fisher; APO, AE

Jon Peter Gassaway; Beaverton, OR

David R. Gassaway,  
Portland, OR

Mrs. Eliot Porter Goss;  
Teton, WY

Irwin Harris; Los Angeles, CA

Kay L. Knoblauch; Hamilton, NJ

Norma Milner; Palmyra, NJ

Carla Mulford; State College, PA

Earl H.B. Nemser; New York, NY

Charles E. Peterson;  
Philadelphia, PA

Peter Price; San Diego, CA

William E. Thomford;  
Millbrae, CA

Esmond Wright;  
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### Subscribers:

Carolyn Gale Miles;  
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Life Members	\$1,000	Franklin Friend	\$50
Institutional Members	\$1,000	Student Members (full time only; photocopy id)	\$20
Sustaining Friend	\$ 100	Subscription (Educators and libraries only)	\$20

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