

# Franklin Gazette

Volume 14, Number 2, Summer 2004

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"Promises may get thee Friends, but Nonperformance will turn them into Enemies." *Poor Richard*, July 1740.

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## President's Message

By Ralph Gregory Elliot

With the publication of Ron Chernow's biography of Alexander Hamilton and Gordon Wood's long-awaited *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin*, Americans this summer have a veritable banquet on the conception and birth of the American nation. Each played a role in the Revolution, but as Franklin's public life waned after 1787's contributions to the Constitutional Convention, Hamilton's public contributions, there and for the next decade and a half, reached their apogee, before his untimely death at 49.

As different as the two men were, coming generations apart from each other, there are interesting similarities in their careers, contributions and strengths, which set the groundwork for Hamilton's magnificent contributions.

The greatest similarity between the two, it seems, is that both Franklin and Hamilton were practical men. They were sensitive to the ways of the world. They knew how to move people's hearts and minds by argument and suasion. Each was well aware of the fallibility of humankind, aware that the average human being was not a product simply of the mind, but of urges and prejudices and passions that had to be managed in some way to avoid their interfering with the progress of whatever task was at hand without alienating those who were being so managed. Franklin was infinitely more tactful, Hamilton, alas, often brusque and arrogant; but both knew what had to be done to get a task accomplished and how to enlist the best in their fellow citizens to accomplish that task. Both were men of business — Franklin's many and varied, Hamilton's in law and banking. In this, they differed markedly from Jefferson who, while technically a lawyer, was more comfortable as a philosopher, writer and farmer of his own farm. The contributions Hamilton made in establishing the national economy in a hard-headed and pragmatic way are the

post-Constitution analogue to the hard-headed and pragmatic style of Franklin leading up to and including the Constitutional convention.

With the Franklin tercentenary celebrations gaining greater form, with the exhibition to open in Philadelphia in October of 2005, and the opening of the new Constitution Center in Philadelphia, perhaps now is the time to renew a call for American public secondary schools to devote more time and money to a solid program teaching American history, and especially the principles underlying the American Revolution and the Constitution and how they were put into place and how the forms devised to implement them were created. It is a remarkable story, filled with complexity and nuance; and in addition to the inherent good for Americans in America to know about how we were created, it helps us understand as well problems other nations are undergoing in struggling with nation-building.

As this column is written, in early June, much is being made in Iraq about "sovereignty" — what "full sovereignty" is, of what it consists, whether "full sovereignty" for Iraq is an accurate description



Carmontelle, L.C. Engraving by Née of Franklin  
seated after Carmontelle  
Courtesy of the American Philosophical Society.

of a regime in which certain aspects of life (such as military matters) will be decided by another power (the United States or the United Nations). One of the great contributions of the American Revolution was to devise a concept of "shared sovereignty", in which certain powers were granted directly to the federal government, and an amendment to the Constitution provided that any powers not expressly granted were to be retained by the states as sovereign states. Increasingly, the Rhenquist Supreme Court has held certain federal statutes unconstitutional as trenching on the powers reserved by the states for their own exercise. By like measure, the sovereign states ceded completely the authority to engage in foreign policy, make war and peace, raise standing armies, and the



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## The President's Message

*(continued)*

like, to the federal government. We can learn much about the issues being faced by Iraq in resolving its nation-making by studying how we resolved those same issues among thirteen sovereign states in 1787.

A deep and intense study of American history appropriate for secondary schools would also help inestimably to inculcate in the American young an understanding of not only what the various civil rights and liberties they enjoy are, but why it is important to protect them at all costs even when doing so causes difficulties and is faced with temptations to cut a few corners here and there when

deeply unpopular people or ideas are involved. Issues such as freedom of speech, due process of law, immunity from unwarranted searches and seizures, and the like protect the good and bad alike; and if they are allowed to atrophy, or to be officially or informally suspended, the public justification must be of a magnitude that no rational person could fail to agree was necessary. America's young need to understand not only the "what" of civil rights and civil liberties, but the "why" that underlies them.



## Annual Fund Drive in Progress

The Friends of Franklin has launched its third annual fundraising drive. This annual drive subsidizes both administrative costs and Gazette expenses and helps keep membership dues at affordable levels. We need your help at this time, as the Franklin tercentenary nears, to increase membership benefits, programs, and activities. Annual fundraising appeals are critical for all non-profit organizations and we ask you to be as generous as you can. Franklin will be receiving renewed national and international attention and we would like the Friends to play a visible role in the upcoming celebrations.

Donations in any amount will be gratefully received and are fully tax-deductible. Please send all contributions to Kathy DeLuca, Friends of Franklin, Inc., P.O. Box 40048, Philadelphia, PA, 19106. To all those

members who have already donated, we express our deep appreciation. You will receive a tax form from the Friends for your tax-deductible contribution shortly.



***Thank you in advance for your continued support of the Friends of Franklin.***



## Plant a Tree in Honor of Franklin

The Royal Society of Arts (RSA) announced plans to establish a wood in Derbyshire, England, of approximately 23,000 trees, as part of its 250th anniversary celebration and is inviting members of the Friends of Franklin to help plant the Benjamin Franklin Copse. This special grove of 2,500 trees will be planted at Castle Gresley and be dedicated to Benjamin Franklin, one of the Society's earliest Fellows.

The Royal Society of Arts was formed in 1754 to promote the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. Franklin served as the Society's first Honorary Corresponding Member from the Colonies and was an active participant in several committees. During these early years and in the three decades following his death, the Society was responsible for planting more than 50 million trees across the United Kingdom.

Franklin's interest in his natural world extended to trees as well. He studied the beneficial effects of leaves "in producing wholesome air" and supported his friend Francis Hopkinson in the successful repeal of the proposed Pennsylvania Act directing that all trees in streets of Philadelphia be cut down. Franklin wrote to Hopkinson in 1783: "I thank you for your ingenious Paper in favour of the Trees. I own I wish we had two rows of them in every one of our Streets. The comfortable Shelter they

would afford us, when walking, from our burning Summer Suns, and the great coolness of our Walls & Pavements, would I conceive, in the improved Health of the Inhabitants, amply compensate for the loss of a house now and then, by Fire, if such should be the Consequence."

This proposed new copse of trees is the latest in the RSA's tributes to Franklin, which include an annual Benjamin Franklin medal award and support of the Franklin House in Craven Street. A donation of \$30 ensures that a tree will be planted and nurtured to maturity. Larger donations will support the planting of more trees and the erection of benches or plaques. All donations are tax-deductible in the U.S. and will be recorded in a book for posterity. For more information about the project visit the Society's website [www.theRSA.org](http://www.theRSA.org) (London office) or [www.rsa-us.org](http://www.rsa-us.org) (US headquarters). To make a donation contact Mrs. Lynn Broadbent, MBE, Fellows of the RSA in the United States, PO Box 189, Clifton, VA 20124. [Lbroadbent@rsa-us.org](mailto:Lbroadbent@rsa-us.org)



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*"I thank you for your ingenious  
Paper in favour of the Trees. I own  
I wish we had two rows of them in  
every one of our Streets."*



## Franklin News Briefs Launched

We are delighted to report that our Franklin News Briefs electronic news was launched on June 3, 2004, and sent to all those members for whom we have e-mail addresses. If you did not receive this publication it is because we did not have your e-mail or we have an incorrect e-mail address for you.

It is our hope that this electronic communication will serve as a vehicle to notify our members about upcoming Franklin events taking place throughout the world. In order for this to be a successful and informative tool, we need your help. Please e-mail Franklin news and activities to us so we can share them with our membership.

If you did not receive the inaugural June issue of "Franklin News Briefs" then don't miss the July issue.

Send us an e-mail at:  
[fof@befranklin2006.org](mailto:fof@befranklin2006.org)  
so we can add your name to our  
publication list.





# *Franklin and Filangieri:*

## *An Interesting Friendship* by: *Claude-Anne Lopez*



*A little while ago, a group of Italians living in New York decided to honor the memory of Gaetano Filangieri (1752-1788), a brilliant young lawyer at the highly conservative Court of Naples who dedicated his life to the reform and codification of the legislative and judicial system in harmony with the liberal principles of the Enlightenment.*

*The seven volumes of his *Science of Legislation* were translated into German, French and Spanish, and widely read throughout Europe for the following forty years.*

*Franklin was Filangieri's hero. When the Italian organizers of this conference came to see us at the Franklin Papers, they were delighted to read the letters exchanged between the two men (the first of these letters will appear in volume 38) and Claude-Anne was asked to give the keynote speech on June 15. Unfortunately, after having prepared it, she had medical problems that precluded a transatlantic flight and it was decided to make a video of her presentation. Here it is.*

It would be difficult to imagine two men more different in background, circumstances, and temperament than Benjamin Franklin and Gaetano Filangieri. At the time of their first exchange, the American was in his late seventies, the Italian in his thirties. Filangieri was born in the upper ranks of the aristocracy, from a family of princes; Franklin was the son of a poor Boston soap and candle-maker. Filangieri deplored being the third son, the one who had to fend for himself while his older brothers had a career waiting for them in the Church or the Army. Franklin was the tenth son in a family of seventeen and never seemed to mind, on the contrary. Filangieri was raised a Catholic while Franklin was raised a Protestant in the Puritan tradition, though he soon shed Puritanism and created for himself a faith more to his taste. Franklin was an early prototype of the American self-made man while Filangieri remained trapped in the antiquated European caste system. Franklin was down-to-earth, pragmatic almost to a fault, and resolutely optimistic; Filangieri was an idealist racked by self-doubt and moments of deep anguish.

And yet, while never having met face to face, those two men admired each other intensely, both of them driven toward the same powerful goal: to make a better world for humanity.

From the point of view of our symposium, Franklin's most important contribution was a document he had brought with him to Paris at the end of 1776. This was the constitution of Pennsylvania, a document put together by a committee of which he was chairman during the weeks that followed the Declaration of Independence.

It consisted of two parts: a bill of rights and a frame of government. Even though it started with the assertion that all men are born equally free and independent, it did not abolish slavery in Pennsylvania. Franklin was certainly not its author, but he gave advice when the parties disagreed, made some stylistic revisions, and had it promptly printed. (I was glad to be able to send here a copy of the original printing.) The provision most often attributed to Franklin is that of a unicameral assembly, a system he considered more democratic than the British one, with its House of Lords and plain Commons.

Within a month of his arrival in Paris, Franklin had already talked the duc de la Rochefoucauld into translating that constitution into French, as well as those of Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware. They appeared together in a book that he distributed to friends. Congress directed him to give two copies to each ambassador in Paris, one to be kept at the embassy, the other to be transmitted to the country's sovereign.

This novelty from America was widely read throughout Europe and pretty soon the belief spread that Franklin's role had been far more than advisory, and that he had in fact written the constitution of Pennsylvania. Well... Let us admit that he did nothing to discourage the idea. When he joined Franklin in Paris, John Adams was far from happy when he discovered that "M. Turgot, M. Condorcet and many others were enamored with the constitution of Mr Franklin."

Filangieri's first letter was dated August 24, 1782.

"Most respectable Sir, Your precious gift has finally reached me after many months and I consider it as one of the greatest prizes I received for my work."

To understand what gift he is talking about, we must turn to



Signor Luigi Pio who, one year earlier had been named chargé d'affaires at the Paris embassy of the Court of Naples. For two years, he exercised in fact the functions of cultural attaché, opening channels between Italian and French intellectuals. He lent Franklin the first volume of Filangieri's *The Science of Legislation*. In response, Franklin asked Pio to congratulate the author on his talent for presenting his theories "with the utmost clarity and precision." Franklin added that he was eagerly awaiting the volumes dealing with criminal legislation, "because they will be of special interest to my nation, still needing to be enlightened on this subject." The gift from Franklin that Pio forwarded is almost certainly his *Political, Miscellaneous, and Philosophical Pieces*, a marvelous compendium of Franklin's writings on a variety of topics. (The book is currently advertised for sale for \$6,500 in the *New York Times Book Review*!)

Edited by Benjamin Vaughan (1751-1835), the son of one of Franklin's friends, who at one time served as the Earl of Shelburne's private secretary, the compilation of Franklin's political writings was published in late 1779. This excerpt from Vaughan's introduction gives an overview: "The writings of Dr. Franklin need no other preface than his character and life. A few words therefore will explain all that is necessary concerning this collection. ...The times appear not ripe enough for the editor to give expression to the affection, gratitude, and veneration, he bears to a writer he has so intimately studied: Nor is it wanting to the author; as history lies in wait for him, and the judgement of mankind balances already in his favor. The editor wishes only that other readers may reap that improvement from his

productions, which he conceives they have rendered to himself. Yet perhaps he may be excused for stating one opinion: He conceives that no man ever made larger or bolder guesses than Dr. Franklin from like materials in politics and philosophy, which, after the scrutiny of events and of fact, have been more completely verified. Can Englishmen read these things, and not sigh at recollecting that the country which could produce their author, was once without controversy their own! Yet he who praises Dr. Franklin for mere ability praises him for that quality of his mind, which stands lowest in his own esteem. Reader, whoever you are, and how much soever you think you hate him, know that this great man loves you enough to wish to do you good: His country's friend, but more of human kind."

For Ellen Cohn's account of the history of the compendium, and the table of contents see vol. 31 of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, pp. 210-18.

Back to Filangieri's first letter:

"I have almost completed the third book, the one dealing with criminal law. It will take up two volumes, one of which is concerned with the procedural system, and the other with the penal code."

At this point, he turns more personal: "The novelty of my ideas on both subjects frightens me. In a century during which so much as been written and thought about everything that has to do with public prosperity, it is quite easy to see originality as akin to strangeness. This thought disturbs me and sometimes even oppresses me. In order to surmount that feeling, I keep repeating to myself: 'If you had merely repeated the ideas of other people, what benefit could humanity have expected from your writings? If my ideas are strange,

they will be rejected and in that case humanity will not suffer any damage; but if, while novel, they are also reasonable, applicable and opportune, if they manage to diminish the suffering of a single person, if they result in preventing just one injustice, shouldn't you applaud yourself for having spoken out, shouldn't you regret to have kept your ideas secret because of a cowardly feeling of doubt and of fear of seeing those ideas condemned and ridiculed?'

"Such is the reasoning that propelled me to pursue my enterprise with all possible vigor. As I have said, I have almost reached the end, and you, respectable man and remarkable being, will be the first to judge it, you who snatched the lightning Jupiter and the scepter from tyrants. Once I receive your opinion on this part of my work, I shall tell you about a personal project. You, who can ensure my happiness and make me an instrument of use to my fellow men, please allow me to hide a secret that I shall reveal to you when I have obtained your promise not to communicate it to anybody.

I kiss your hand II Cavalier Gaetano Filangieri"

After this intensely Italian, effusive beginning (one can almost hear the beautiful aria it might have inspired in Verdi!), the unfortunate Filangieri experienced the anguish we writers only know too well when the desired response to our manuscript does not arrive. Having waited four months for Franklin's answer, Filangieri writes again on December 2, 1782. I'll paraphrase this letter, too long to quote.

Believing that Franklin had not received his first appeal, Filangieri describes his difficult situation.

The third son in a family whose fame exceeds its finances, he is the victim of the unfair medieval





system of primogeniture, and quite poor. His honorary position at the royal court of Naples does not suit his nature. The presence of a King the behavior of courtiers are a real torment to him. Ever since he was a boy, he has been attracted to Philadelphia, the only place where he feels he could find happiness. And now he has one more powerful reason to want to emigrate: he is desperately in love with a lady who loves him too and wishes to marry him; but, given his poverty, they would be an object of ridicule if they stayed in Naples.

With his annual salary of two thousand livres, plus the 3,600 livres the King has granted him, he and his wife could live in modest comfort in Philadelphia. But how could he justify his departure without offering a believable reason for it? Only Franklin can help by inviting him to take part in the grand legislative work that will serve not only the United States but that whole new hemisphere.

Filangieri has an idea: he might ask his court for a temporary leave of absence, and once he is in America, who could force him back to Europe? Finally, he begs Franklin not to communicate his plan to anybody and informs him that two new volumes on legislation are ready, after a huge amount of work.

What struck me when reading this letter is that Filangieri never mentions whether he knows English or not--a crucial factor for a would-be emigrant.

This time, Franklin answers immediately, on January 11, 1783, acknowledging that he has received both letters but has been unable to answer because he has been ill for nearly three months. (As a former editor of his papers, I can vouch for those health problems: he suffered all winter from attacks

of gout and a painful kidney stone, while trying to play his part in the peace negotiations, now going on seriously.)

He compliments Filangieri on his published work and rejoices at the news that his friend is now dealing with criminal laws. He writes: "None have more need of reformation. They are everywhere in so great disorder, and so much injustice is committed in the execution of them, that I have been some times inclined to imagine that less injustice would exist in the world if there were no such laws and the punishment of injuries were left to private resentment." (I never thought I would see Franklin come out in favor of vendetta!)

But then he throws some cold water on the young Italian's dream. Filangieri would certainly be a valuable acquisition for America, he says, but "I cannot encourage you to take hastily such a voyage because, for a man to expatriate himself is a serious business, especially where the distance is so great and the expense of moving thither with a family, and of returning if the country should not suit you, will be so heavy. I wish therefore you could see that country by yourself before you carry thither the lady with whom you propose to be united in marriage."

I wonder if, at that moment, Franklin remembered another man he had encouraged, even helped, nine years earlier, to expatriate himself to America. But then, that other man was single and had a beautiful command of the English language: it was Tom Paine, and his pamphlet *Common Sense* provided the spark that catalyzed the American Revolution.

Still, Franklin does not close his letter without proposing a practical solution: now that the American government is recognized, several

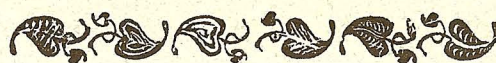
European states, with commercial exchanges on their mind, are preparing to send ministers to reside near the Congress. Could Filangieri suggest to his court to send him on a mission of information to several American states, in order to discover both their productions and their needs? In that case, Franklin could and would assist him with all his power.

Around that time, Filangieri must also have received, as usual through the ever-obliging Mr. Pio, a copy of the book on the constitutions of Pennsylvania and the three other states. (I would love to find out from one of you experts if that constitution had any influence on Filangieri's thought.)

His answer to Franklin's down-to-earth advice was written on July 14 of that same year, 1783. Filangieri announces that in a week (that's July 21) he will marry his beloved Carlotta Frendel about whom he had said previously that her virtues would lend her distinction even in Pennsylvania. He now enjoys a peaceful life in the country and only the post of envoy to America, suggested by Franklin, could prompt him to move. He is sending the part of his work in which he re-examines ancient and modern legislation.

Marriage to Charlotte Frendel, a Hungarian lady sent by Empress Maria-Theresa to act as governess to the children of Marie-Caroline, the wife of the King of Naples and sister of the unfortunate Marie-Antoinette, caused a considerable change in Filangieri's letters. No more brooding, soul searching, self-doubt. Living in Cava dei Tirreni, the couple had three children in five years and the letters now deal briskly with the exchange of publications.

(Continued on Page 8)





## Franklin in Risorgimento Italy by Kate Ohno



Antonio Pace's *Benjamin Franklin in Italy*, published by the American Philosophical Society in 1958 remains the standard work about Franklin's Italian correspondents, and the editors of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* often consult this work. There are some clues that Franklin considered a trip to Italy in the early 1780s. The weighty business of the peace negotiations to end the Revolutionary War and Franklin's health problems seem to be the most likely reasons for a change of plan, because Franklin never made the intended visit.

Although he never traveled to Italy, his influence was felt nevertheless; paging through the section of Pace's work that deals with Franklin's impact on Italy in the nineteenth century, the reader is struck by the aspect of Franklin most often depicted during the period. The sage and the diplomat are *not forgotten*, but it is Franklin's youth that is emphasized. Perhaps the newly-united Italy found the vibrancy and energy of the young Franklin most in harmony with its young nation, or perhaps Italians needed a role model, a man who had surmounted many obstacles, who had been present at the birth of his own nation. At the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia held in 1876 Italians contributed no fewer than three statues of Franklin; two of them illustrated an oft-repeated story from Franklin's childhood, "The Whistle," in which Franklin in his single digits is the main character. The third statue depicted Franklin as a young printer at his composing table.

In literature Franklin's early years were also accorded a primary role. The Rotondi translation of Franklin's

*Autobiography*, which only covers the first half of his life, was enormously popular and ran to ten editions between 1869 and 1903.

Franklin's diligence and efficiency made him the perfect model of the kind of worker that Italy desperately needed in the late nineteenth century. It was a country faced with the challenge of industrializing rapidly to secure national survival and prestige. Pace argues that the country could not achieve its economic potential without "an efficient and homogeneous laboring class to do the necessary building and to man the factories." The formation of such workers began with the educational system, and continued on the job. Pace tells us that books about Franklin were the most common prizes awarded to grade-school children, and a number of these books were written specifically for students, including those at technical and workers' schools. Perhaps youthful Italians identified with the young Franklin, or maybe the authors of these edifying tomes intended that they should. These works have titles which translate as *The Worker's Morality as Derived from the Life and Thoughts of Benjamin Franklin*, *Life of Benjamin Franklin, the Great American Worker for the Use of the People*, and *Franklin: a Booklet for the Children of Labor*. Franklin became a talisman in a time of upheaval and readjustment. Count Carlo Leoni, a novelist, produced a *Book for Workers* in which he included a life of Franklin. Pace translates part of the book's dedication: "I offer you this book in order that it may be of use and comfort to you. In it you will read the life of the greatest worker in the world. From such a beautiful

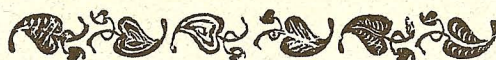
example there will come to you courage and constancy in your labors and griefs that accompany every status--although work, when it is well organized, maintains bodily health and mental peace..."

Pace also describes an allegorical interpretation of Franklin's intellectual vigor. It is Giulio Monteverde's sculpture entitled "The Genius of Franklin" (1871) and it is numbered among the artist's major works. Pace calls it "a symbolic interpretation of the youthful vigor and irreverence of Franklin's thought in subjugating the forces of nature. A pertly smiling winged sprite, gracefully entwined about a conductor on a housetop, seems to be making sport of guiding a bit of lightning into the chain that leads down from the rod." The artist was so fond of the work he placed a copy of the statue in a niche under the eaves of his combined residence/studio in Rome where it looks out over the appropriately-named Piazza dell'Indipendenza.

When the Friends visit Italy this fall they can add a chapter to Pace's book and document the influence of Franklin on the Italy of the twenty-first century.

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*"Franklin's diligence  
and efficiency made  
him the perfect model  
of the kind of worker  
that Italy desperately  
needed..."*





(Franklin and Filangieri cont. from Page 6)

Filangieri expresses his pleasure at the gift of the American constitutions, "worthy of the country, the times, the circumstances, the authors." In return, he sends on October 27, 1783, the second part of his *Criminal Law*, covering every country through the ages. The best prize he could obtain, he writes, would be Franklin's approval.

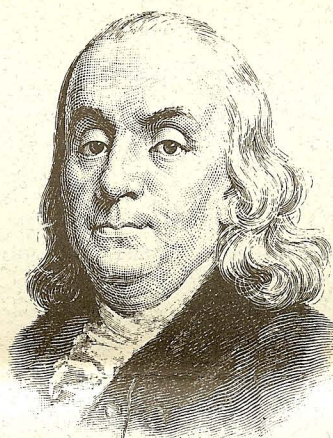
We have only one letter for 1784. Filangieri compiles a list of all he has sent to Franklin and Pio, without receiving any acknowledgment from them. If his writings have been lost, he will replace them. On Christmas eve 1785, Filangieri thinks of his old friend, now back in Pennsylvania, and asserts that the enormous distance between them makes no difference in his feelings. He is enclosing a copy of his last three volumes that deal with the laws concerning education and public schools. "My ideas about those topics are certainly new, but are they sensible? That is for you rather than anybody else to decide." Solitude, he says, allows him to work fast. This is Filangieri's last letter.

Franklin's last, written on October 14, 1787, when he was President of Pennsylvania, contains a copy of the new Federal Constitution. Enclosed is a list of the missing volumes of Filangieri's "invaluable work," and the address of the Parisian banker who will pay the bill for buying and shipping them.

What pleasure it would have given Filangieri to read the American Constitution and to hear his own work called "invaluable!" But he had died, probably from overwork, by the time Franklin's letter arrived. His widow answered Franklin in French. Her beloved husband died on July 21, 1788, she said (that would have been their 5th wedding anniversary), leaving her and their children no other fortune than the memory of

his virtues and his high reputation. She promises to send Franklin all the volumes he requests. She will also send him the story of her husband's life. But, as Antonio Pace tell us this was never done.

Franklin had less than 2 years to live when he wrote that very warm note. One month before dying, he composed a bitterly humorous piece advocating the abolition of slavery. To their last breath, those two were indeed trying to make our little planet a less cruel place.



***"Still, Franklin  
does not close his  
letter without  
proposing a  
practical  
solution..."***



## **Dr. Eric Kandel**

### **New Creativity Laureate**

The Creativity Foundation, in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution presented this year's Benjamin Franklin Creativity Laureate Prize to the world-renowned scientist and Nobel Laureate, Dr. Eric Kandel. Dr. Kandel's studies in the field of neurobiology have provided some answers as to how the human mind incorporates new experiences as learning and memory. The prize is a silver medallion replica of Nini's 1777 "Benjamin Franklin in Fur Cap."

The Creativity Foundation was founded in honor of Benjamin Franklin and his "relentless curiosity, his tenacity in maintaining an independent, yet flexible, point of view and his devotion to public service." This annual award honors the achievements of "creative thinkers, innovators and catalysts in the arts, humanities and sciences, in both traditional and emerging disciplines." Former Creativity Laureates include Yo-Yo Ma and Daniel Patrick Moynihan. For further information about the Creativity Foundation, visit the website: [www.creativity-found.org](http://www.creativity-found.org).





# FRANKLIN TIDBITS

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## The Science of Better Letters:

The March 21st issue of the *Hartford Courant* included the newspaper's annual round up of the best letters to the editor. By way of explaining how these letters were chosen Lew Bresee expounded on "the completely fictitious, yet still underfunded, Courant Institute for Better Letters," whose "origins are veiled in secrecy, yet it's believed to have been around since the days when Benjamin Franklin combined printing press and electrical experiments to send the very first e-mailed letter to the *Courant*." The *Courant*'s staff advises writers of letters to the editor to get right to the point, but they observe that "It's the writers' emotion, humor, insight, bravery and unique observations that make their letters something special." Friends of Franklin can agree that Benjamin Franklin met all of these qualifications in his correspondence, whether or not he sent the first e-mail!

## Bid Confirmed:

A recent ebay online auction listed in the categories Everything Else/Weird Stuff/Slightly Unusual explored a new way to meet Benjamin Franklin. It offered "An Evening with Benjamin Franklin—The Original American". Franklin impersonator G. Robin Smith's service for an evening performance was auctioned off. Mr. Smith's normal fee was waived for a single charity fundraising event, but the winning bidder was responsible for ticket sales and all other promotional and event requirements and Mr. Smith's travel and accommodation expenses outside of King County, Washington State. Sorry, Friends of Franklin, the auction ended May 27.

## Transit of Venus:

On June 8 scientists and enthusiasts gathered to watch an event that most people will never see in their lifetimes. In 1761 Franklin was eager to share information about the transit of Venus, and in 1769 he arranged to purchase a reflecting telescope from one of the finest scientific instrument makers in London so that Americans could make their own observations. The American observations were forwarded to Franklin, then in London, and he shared them with Neville Maskelyne, the Astronomer Royal, who, Franklin told his American colleagues, "will compare and digest the whole received from different Part of the world, and report thereon to the Royal Society."

## Websites of Interest:

The National Park Service has developed a new site: "Following in Franklin's Footsteps." This guide was designed for both teachers and parents to use in preparing for a trip to Independence National Historical Park and is a fun way to introduce children (and adults) to aspects of Franklin's everyday life.

See [www.nps.gov/inde/education/franklinpac.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/inde/education/franklinpac.pdf)

The Discovery Channel on their school page includes an entire lesson plan for grades K through five, based on the life and beliefs of Franklin. See <http://school.discovery.com/lessonplans/programs/benfranklintime-line>.

The University of Pennsylvania's archives has developed a new site "Penn in the Age of Franklin," which highlights Franklin related manuscripts from the University's collections. This collaborative effort of the University of Pennsylvania Library and the University's Archives and Records Center can be visited at: <http://sceti.library.upenn.edu/franklin/>

Another website, "God and Country" is devoted to the religious views of American founding fathers, presidents and vice presidents. Franklin has his own page, with biographical notes as well as extensive quotations by Franklin on religious issues. As interesting are the "misquotations" and the explanations for them.

See [www.geocities.com/peterroberts.geo/Relig-Politics/Bfranklin.html](http://www.geocities.com/peterroberts.geo/Relig-Politics/Bfranklin.html).



## Good Reads

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Jean-Paul de Lagrave, *La Vision cosmique de Benjamin Franklin* (Septentrion, 2003). This new work in French explores Franklin's belief system that the author finds expressed in his correspondence and his public and private life, particularly in his confidential friendships, his work as a printer, and his association with various Masonic organizations.

Edmund S. Morgan, *The Genuine Article: A Historian Looks at Early America* (New York and London, W.W. Norton, July 2004). From the dustjacket: "These twenty-four essays present an extraordinary thematic range from 'Those Sexy Puritans,' an eye-opening account of the often bawdy lives of the Puritans, to 'The Secrets of Benjamin Franklin,' a model piece that would provide the framework for Morgan's best-selling biography, to an insightful essay on the divergent philosophies of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison."

Alfred Owen Aldridge, the author of *Franklin and His French Contemporaries* (New York, 1957) and *Benjamin Franklin: Philosopher and Man* (Philadelphia and New York, 1965) has published a new article, "Feeling or Fooling in Benjamin Franklin's 'Elysian Fields'". Aldridge argues that Franklin's bagatelle, written for Mme Helvetius, was either a marriage proposal or an invitation for a liaison, and not a light-hearted bit of literary flirtation. You can read the article, published in volume 39 (2004), issue no. 1 of *Early American Literature* on line at:

[http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/early\\_american\\_literature/](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/early_american_literature/)

(Continued on Page 10)



(Good Reads from Page 9)



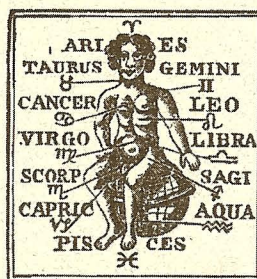
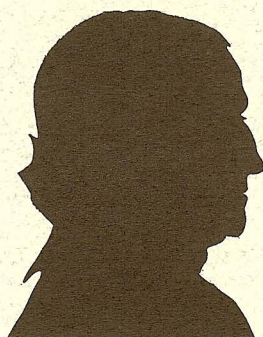
Stephen M. DiStefano, "Enlightened Loyalist to Proud Patriot: Benjamin Franklin and the Great Shift of Allegiance," *The College of New Jersey Journal of Student Scholarship*, vol. VI, April 2004. DiStefano, through Franklin's writings, examines the changes in his philosophy and his shift in allegiance from Great Britain as well as the ways in which Franklin's stance was reflective of broader views among American colonists.

#### **Forthcoming:**

David Waldstreicher, *Runaway America: Benjamin Franklin, Slavery, and the American Revolution* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, August 2004). The first major book-length study of Franklin and slavery, and a radical reinterpretation. Waldstreicher argues that slavery was central to Franklin's life and to the American Revolution.

#### **Beach Reading:**

For lighter summer reading the fictional exploits of Franklin and Sir Isaac Newton are chronicled in a fantasy series by J. Gregory Keyes including *Newton's Cannon* (*Age of Unreason, Book 1*), *A Calculus of Angels* (*Age of Unreason, Book 2*), *Empire of Unreason* (*Age of Unreason, Book 3*), and as well as his latest and concluding volume, *The Shadows of God* (*Age of Unreason, Book 4*).



## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

### **Ongoing- February 2006.**

Exhibit at the College of Physicians of Philadelphia. "Only One Man Died: Medical Adventures on the Lewis and Clark Trail." Exhibit explores the medical aspects of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Meriwether Lewis carefully planned the trip consulting with doctors in Philadelphia to learn critical medical skills he would need for the expedition and purchasing medical supplies, scientific equipment and provisions.

### **Summer 2004.**

"Ben Franklin's Secret Garden: Sowing the Seeds of the American Paradise," Camden Children's Garden, Camden, New Jersey. For more information see their website: [www.camdenchildrensgarden.org](http://www.camdenchildrensgarden.org) or call 856.365.8733.

### **August 23-24, 2004.**

"Joseph Priestley, Universal Catalyst: A Bicentennial Celebration of His Life." This special overview of Priestley's life is being offered as part of the 228th meeting of the American Chemical Society which is being held in Philadelphia. The program, sponsored by the Division of the History of Chemistry, features some Franklin related sessions by FOF members. Dr. Dudley Herschbach will explore: "Ben Franklin and Joseph Priestley: Kindred Kites, Amiable Airs" and Dr. James Bohning will discuss "Priestley's Philadelphia." Contact Dr. Bohning at [jjba@lehigh.edu](mailto:jjba@lehigh.edu) for further information.

### **September 29-October 5, 2004.**

"Ben Franklin and Italy." Tour sponsored by the Friends of Franklin. For more information contact Kathy DeLuca at 856.979.1613 or via e-mail at [fof@benfranklin2006.org](mailto:fof@benfranklin2006.org).

### **January 14, 2005.**

"Franklin and Architecture: Building the City." Annual celebration of Benjamin Franklin's birthday in Philadelphia sponsored by Celebration! Benjamin Franklin, Founder. Contact Carol Smith at 856.429.8331 or via e-mail at [cwsmith@verizon.net](mailto:cwsmith@verizon.net) for more information.

### **February 2-6, 2005.**

Glass Music Festival will be held in Paris and surrounding areas. See website for more information: [www.glassmusicintl.org](http://www.glassmusicintl.org).

### **October 6, 2005.**

The special tercentenary exhibit, "Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World," will open at the Franklin Institute Science Museum in Philadelphia on October 6, 2005. After six months in Philadelphia the exhibit will travel to Boston, Paris, Denver and Atlanta before closing on September 30, 2007.



### **"Benjamin Franklin and Italy"**

There's still time to register for the "Benjamin Franklin & Italy" tour scheduled for September 27 - October 5, 2004. The early bird registration has been extended in order to accommodate some requests received by our members.

Our Italian Friends are eager to meet us and share their knowledge of Benjamin Franklin's Italian connections. We will have personalized, behind-the-scene tours in some of the most revered institutions in Northern Italy. For full details on the tour, please check the Friends of Franklin website or call Kathy De Luca at 856-979-1613.



## Special Thanks to Our Life Members!

William D. Anderson, Jr.  
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New York, NY

Newton Minow  
Chicago, IL

Clarence Wolf  
Bryn Mawr, PA

### Franklin Friends

Carin Batchelor  
Beaver, PA

Frank Batchelor  
Beaver, PA

Susan Curtis  
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Nicholas Varallo  
North Wales, PA



The Friends of Franklin  
Organization is seeking speakers  
on Franklin and various aspects of  
his life. If you are interested in  
sharing your research with other  
members of the Friends please  
contact Kathy DeLuca at  
856.979.1613

Visit the Friends of Franklin website:  
[www.benfranklin2006.org](http://www.benfranklin2006.org)



## 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	\$1,500	Franklin Diplomat	\$100
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Franklin Patriot	\$ 250		

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Website: [www.benfranklin2006.org](http://www.benfranklin2006.org)

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