

Franklin Gazette

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Visit: www.benfranklin2006.org

"Patience in Market, is worth Pounds in a Year." *Poor Richard*, September, 1753.

President's Message

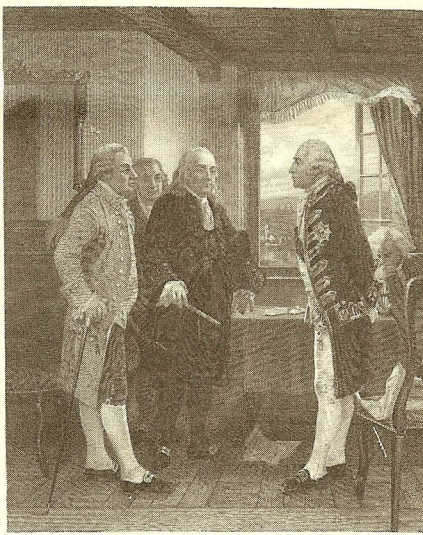
By Ralph Gregory Elliot

As these lines are written, the United Churches of Christ has lodged a complaint against NBC & CBS with the FCC for the networks' refusal to air an ad whose message was that no church should bar gay couples from its ministry on account of their status as such. The networks' rationale for refusing the ad was that it was too controversial. A radio network has been fined for remarks Howard Stern made on his program. CBS has been fined for showing an unexpected revelation of Janet Jackson's breast during a half time performance at the Super Bowl Game.

What would Franklin think of all this? I think Ben would have rolled his eyes in disbelief. It was the essence of Franklin — truly a Renaissance man — that there should be no barriers to freedom of inquiry and of expression. His whole life was devoted to the uninhibited expression of thoughts and ideas placed by him into the marketplace for his readers and auditors to accept or reject. We have no reason to believe that any form of expression was taboo to Franklin, or that he would countenance any form of punishment on account of the subject of speech. Franklin would undoubtedly have believed what Mao Tse-tung professed but probably did not believe: "Let a hundred flowers bloom, and a thousand schools of thought contend."

This is not to say, of course, that Franklin would have approved everything he saw and heard, or that he would have opposed laws promoting morality or the protection of the young from practices they were not yet sufficiently mature to evaluate. Nor, I suspect, would he disapprove of the concept of public ownership of the airwaves that forms the basis of the FCC's right to license broadcasting, while the print media are free from any licensing.

But the right of expression --- even expression of ideas whose implementation the State might have the right to regulate — would likely be viewed as beyond the pale of punishment and censorship. Franklin's love of life, combined with his insatiable curiosity and passion for inquiry, led him to write on any and all manner of phenomena. Sometimes he wrote anonymously. Sometimes, as in the Silence Dogood letters, he wrote pseudonymously. Often he couched serious thoughts in the form of satire. But he wrote and published without shackles on his speech. However tasteless others' expression might be to him, he would not deprive others of seeing and hearing it.



*"Interview between Lord Howe and Committee of Congress" (Adams, Rutledge, Franklin, and Howe).
Unidentified Artist*

Courtesy of The American Philosophical Society

We live in an age cowed into political correctness and bullied into intolerance of the right of others to give free expression to their thoughts and talents. The result all too often is a regime of timidity on the part of those controlling the channels of communication that disserves the very public whose protection is the professed aim of the censors. Franklin, the epitome of reason and tolerance, would, I believe, find the current restraints on expression intolerable.

On another matter, you have now received renewal notices for membership, and I hope each of you will enthusiastically re-up. We view this coming year before Ben's tercentenary as a splendid opportunity to increase our membership, and to invite existing members to participate in that venture. In the near future we shall be conducting a first-ever survey of our members. We know you by name and address, but precious little else. We want to know what you do (or did) for a living, what your particular interests are, to what other organizations and associations you belong, and kindred data. We hope that with this information in hand we can serve you better. We hope, too, that we can use those of you who

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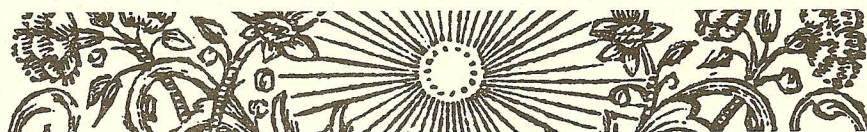
The President's Message

(continued)

choose to do so to spread the word of the Friends, and to help us to do so, among your fellow members of other groups to which you belong, and in this way to induce many more to become members of the Friends.

We close on a sad note. Charles W. Lard of West Hartford, Connecticut, a Life Member of the Friends and one of its most active and devoted members, succumbed to cancer the day before

Thanksgiving after a long and valiant battle. Charles and Jackie Lard were frequent travelers on the Friends' tours of England, France and this country. His warmth and generosity of spirit, coupled with his insatiable curiosity about all things Franklin, will form the memory of Charles which all of us who enjoyed the pleasure of his company will cherish. Our sincere condolences to Jackie and their children.



2005 Renewal Time!

Please take a few moments to renew your membership in the Friends of Franklin. If you received a membership renewal notice in the mail, your membership will expire on Friday, December 31, 2004. The good news is that on-line renewals (and new memberships) are now possible at www.benfranklin2006.org. So with a simple click, your renewal will be complete. Please log on to the website, click on join or renew, click the link to complete the required information on our secure website and your 2005 membership will be renewed. Of course, you may still renew by either fax (with credit card payment) or via mail. As always, the Friends appreciate your support and look forward to your continued membership.

Franklin News Briefs

Another issue of the electronic *Franklin News Briefs* was sent on December 4th. If you did not receive an e-mailed copy, then we are either having difficulty reaching you on the e-mail address you have provided (some e-mail addresses with .edu have been problematic) or we do not have an e-mail address for you. Please send Kathy DeLuca your e-mail address (kathydeluca@benfranklin2006.org) so you can be added to the distribution list.

Friends to Visit Washington, D.C.

In the next few weeks, a mailing will be sent to all members regarding a planned visit by the Friends of Franklin to Washington, D.C. Mark the dates April 8-10, 2005 on your calendar. Friend Walter Isaacson, will be our host at the Aspen Institute on April 8th. Claude-Anne Lopez, James Srodes and Jim Leher, will be joining Walter Isaacson, in a seminar on Franklin. Ellen Cohn, Editor, of *The Franklin Papers*, will serve as moderator. The weekend promises to be filled with special Franklin visits and talks. This is one you won't want to miss!

Franklin Trail Secrets

The next two years brings a special series of excursions for the Friends and others interested in following the Franklin trail. Fall 2005 will see us on the "Franklin Trail: Boston to Philadelphia". We will begin our tour in Franklin's birthplace, Boston, then trace Franklin's route visiting New York, New Jersey, and finally arriving in Philadelphia, where we will spend the remainder of our time. Dates will be released in late January along with a preliminary program. The year 2006 takes us on the "Franklin Trail: London to Paris". Watch for more information as plans develop.

News from the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary Franklin Database Created for Tercentenary Celebration

By Connie Hershey

For a man whose face was "as well known as that of the moon" Benjamin Franklin remains obscure in many ways. As part of its effort to help our era know him better, the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary is creating a database of material that will be made available as part of the celebration of his 300th birthday.

Information and images in the database will include representations of Franklin that were made during his lifetime and objects that he owned, used or gave to others. Included in the first category will be portraits, of course, and prints. But Franklin was also the subject of popular art, with supporters and enthusiasts wanting his image on everything from ceramic medallions to snuff boxes. The database makes room for those souvenirs, too.

When we think of objects owned by national figures, we often regard them as icons. Before they had risen to that level, they were household articles, or personal accessories. A dish remains in use, sometimes for a long while, before it goes from the table to a cabinet; and longer before it enters a museum. Since Franklin's daughter and son-in-law had a large family, many of the articles that he owned or used were worn out or destroyed; others have scattered widely over the course of 3 centuries. The database aims to be a virtual home for things

that were Franklin's, where they can be seen together for the first time in centuries.

How does one write a program that can cover such a broad range of objects? With difficulty! The skills of the programmer and the curator have been tested in ways they didn't expect. As entries multiply, issues continue to arise and be resolved: how does one represent a partnership of makers, rather than a single person? To what degree should measurements be rounded out? How should the database handle the many examples of a single print? Questions like those make the building of the database endlessly complex and interesting.

We anticipate that the publicity surrounding the tercentenary will bring other objects to light, and provide information to help us update existing database entries. It will be added to the website as an ongoing project in time for Franklin's 300th birthday, and be accessible to website visitors. In fact, its lifespan will outlast that of the tercentenary, and its reach will exceed the other celebrations, since it will continue to be available online.

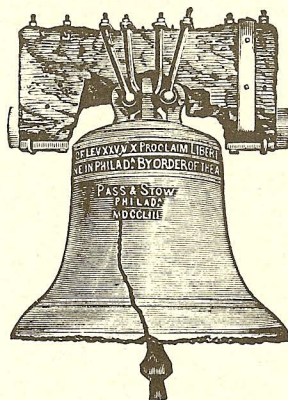
Members of the Friends of Franklin will be given occasional previews of some of the objects that are being entered into it, and we welcome your participation in our information-gathering process.

Celebrate! Franklin's Birthday in Philadelphia

This year's Celebration! of Benjamin Franklin, Founder focuses on *Franklin and Architecture: Building the City*. The annual event will be held on January 14, 2005, and consist of a morning seminar and procession to Franklin's grave followed by a luncheon at the Down Town Club. Philadelphia's well-known architects, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, will be honored at the luncheon with the presentation of the Franklin Founder award.

The morning seminar is devoted to "Franklin's Philadelphia: Understanding It and Preserving It." Speakers include Penelope Hartshorne Batcheler, Anna Coxé Toogood, Bruce Laverty and John Gallery. This panel will explore the architecture of Philadelphia in Franklin's time, the peoples who inhabited the city, new ways to research buildings in Philadelphia and how they are being preserved. The seminar will be held at Franklin Hall, and is free and open to the public.

Franklin's contributions to the built environment of his adopted hometown are not among his best known achievements, but they were both useful and practical, helping to provide an infrastructure for the growing metropolis, which, by the time of his death, was the largest city in the U.S.



Through his *Pennsylvania Gazette* he campaigned for a better water supply, urged the formation of fire companies, and suggested the paving and lighting of streets. His proposal for lotteries to build the Pennsylvania Hospital and a steeple for Christ Church was an example of his creative genius. He also made significant contributions to the efficient heating of buildings with his Franklin stove, and his invention of the lightning rod resulted in a safer city.

For more information on this event, contact Carol Smith at 856.429.8331 or by e-mail: cwsmith@verizon.net.



In His Own Words:

On Being a Citizen of the World

After the signing of the Definitive Peace Treaty in September, 1783, Franklin had time to contemplate what might, these days, be called his legacy. Around this time he received a magnificent present from one of his former London neighbors: a large and beautifully illustrated set of Francis Blackburne's *Memoirs of Thomas Hollis* (London, 1780). Thomas Hollis (1720-1774) was an eccentric, well-heeled Englishman with American sympathies and a quiet determination to spread republican ideas. He, like Franklin, was interested in the design and printing of books. Hollis used his influence and his fortune to republish his favorite books and he sent them as presents to libraries and individuals around the world. Harvard University Library was but one beneficiary of his generosity. Hollis' books were always given anonymously, inscribed to the recipient from "an Englishman, a Lover of Liberty, the Principles of the [Glorious] Revolution & the Protestant Succession in the House of Hanover, Citizen of the World." Franklin acknowledged the books in October, 1783. In his letter, a copy of which is now at the Library of Congress, we glimpse the potential for public service that Franklin saw in every educated person:

"In Encouraging People to undertake difficult Public Services...it is prodigious the quantity of Good that may be done

by one Man, if he will make a *Business of it*. It is equally surprising to think of the very little that is done by many; for such is the general Frivolity of the Employments and Amusements of the Rank we



Augustin Dupré

"Drawing for the *Libertas Americana* medal #2, 1783."

Courtesy of The American Philosophical Society

call Gentlemen, that every Century may have seen three successions of a Set of a thousand each in every Kingdom of Europe (Gentlemen too, of equal or superior Fortune,) no one of which Set in the Course of their Lives have done the good effected by this Man alone! Good, not only to his own nation, and to his [Contemporaries], but to distant Countries, and to late Posterity: for such must be the effect of his multiplying and distributing Copies of the Works of our best English Writers on Subjects the most important to the Welfare of Society.

"I knew him personally but little.

I sometimes met with him at the Royal Society and the Society of Arts, but he appeared shy of my acquaintance, tho' he often sent me valuable Presents, such as Hamilton's Works, Sydney's Works, etc. which are now among the most precious ornaments of my Library. We might possibly, if we had been more intimate, have concerted some useful operations together; but he loved to do his good alone and secretly, and I find besides, in perusing a these Memoirs, that I was a doubtful Character with him. I do not respect him less for his Error...

"I see Mr. Hollis had a Collection of curious Medals. If he had been still living, I should certainly have sent him one of the Medals that I have caused to be struck here [in Paris]. I think the countenance of my *Liberty* would have pleased him."

Thomas Hollis ornamented the books he gave away with emblems, and among his favorites were the goddess of the Roman Republic, *Libertas*, and the symbol of the Roman freeholder, the liberty cap. Franklin's medal was the "*Libertas Americana*" that he had had struck in March, 1783, one face of which had a beautiful female head depicting Liberty.



Benjamin Franklin and Erasmus Darwin

By Emeritus Professor Jonathan Powers, D.L., Hon.D.Univ.

"Dear Sir,

*Whilst I am writing to a Philosopher and a Friend, I can scarcely forget that I am also writing to the greatest Statesman of the present, or perhaps of any, century."*¹

Thus Dr. Erasmus Darwin, F.R.S. (Fellow of the Royal Society, 1731-1802), esteemed by many as the greatest polymath of the English Enlightenment, addresses a letter to Benjamin Franklin on 29th May 1787. The importance of Darwin's opinion rests on the fact that he was a significant figure in his own right: the leading physician in England, for a period hailed as its leading poet, a significant contributor to physical chemistry, meteorology and botany (hence his Fellowship of the Royal Society), an education innovator² and social reformer, and an influential (but secretive) inventor³, whose gift for friendship brought together those key figures of the Industrial Revolution, who formed the "Lunar Society".⁴ Until recently his name has been almost totally eclipsed by that of his famous grandson Charles.

Darwin was not apt to flatter those he did not genuinely admire. King George III, in what might be thought of as a remarkable example of good judgement, insistently attempted to recruit Darwin as his personal physician. One wonders whether history would have turned out differently had he accepted – with his scientific curiosity Darwin would surely have made connections between the King's "madness" and the striking symptoms of porphyria. But Darwin steadfastly refused. This was not just because he preferred the air of the English Midlands. His letter to Franklin, written while the latter was participating in the Constitutional Convention, goes on to declare that his older friend had "*spread the happy contagion of Liberty among his countrymen; and like the greatest Man of all antiquity, the Leader of the Jews, deliver'd them from the house of bondage, and the scourge of oppression.*"

Erasmus Darwin was introduced to Benjamin Franklin in 1758 at the house of Matthew Boulton, the great Birmingham industrialist. Darwin was a newly established physician of 26 and

Franklin already a legendary figure of twice his age. It seems that the meeting was a significant stimulus to Darwin's scientific interests (he had already published on atmospheric electricity). Darwin's foremost biographer, Desmond King-Hele⁵, also observes that their discussion of the founding of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia in 1743 was the direct stimulus for the creation of the "Lunar Society", which followed a similar model in gathering together a variety of expertise.

The "Lunar Society" was so-called because of its custom of meeting on the Monday closest to the full moon to make it easier for the widely dispersed group to get home in the dark. The earliest meetings took place in Darwin's house in Lichfield in the precincts of the great three-spired Mother Church of the English Midlands. This house still stands today and is the center for the Erasmus Darwin Foundation (see www.erasmus-darwin.org). Eventually the loosely defined network of "lunatics" (as Darwin dubbed them) included such significant figures as Matthew Boulton, F.R.S., James Watt, F.R.S. (inventor of the steam engine), Josiah Wedgwood, F.R.S. (the potter), John Whitehurst, F.R.S. (geologist and clock and instrument maker), John Keir, F.R.S. (founder of the chemical industry), and Joseph Priestley, F.R.S. (chemist and Unitarian minister). Though Darwin's "gift for friendship" was instrumental in the formation of the Lunar Society, the person who kept it functioning was a certain Dr. William Small, who arrived at Boulton's house in 1765 with a letter of introduction from Franklin. Small had been Professor of Natural Philosophy in Williamsburg, Virginia. Thomas Jefferson said he had had "the great good fortune" to be one of William Small's students and that this had "probably fixed the destination" of his life.⁶

In his 1787 letter to Franklin, Darwin goes on to elaborate some recent electrical experiments and wonders whether, contrary to Franklin's own view, a two-fluid theory of electricity might be true. He also reports a specious "discovery" by Herschel of active volcanoes on the moon, and goes on to say that he has recently moved from Lichfield to Derby, where he has completed an English

translation of the botany of Linnaeus' (thereby incidentally inventing a whole slew of new English words).

The move to Derby took Darwin further away from the center of the Lunar Society network, and though he established a Derby Philosophical Society, the gain was that he had more time to write. During the next decade he articulated a comprehensive theory of physical, biological, psychological and social evolution. Though his illustrious grandson Charles was acquainted with his massive *Zoonomia* (or Laws of Organic Life)⁸, he thought that Erasmus' theory "anticipated Lamarck".⁹ Careful reading, however, indicates that he anticipated a full-blown theory of evolution by natural selection, from exploding suns, to planetary formation, the emergence of "a single living filament", with organic life in shallow pools, "nursed by warm sunbeams in primeval caves", then engaged in a relentless struggle for survival, with sexual reproduction as the engine of development. What is extraordinary about Darwin's writings however is the fact that these theories are articulated in three massive books of poetry, with hundreds of scientific footnotes, and that his theory of biological evolution is entwined with declarations of progressive politics and visions of a bright technological future.

In 1789 Darwin published "The Loves of the Plants" – which achieved the extraordinary effect of making Linnaean taxonomy salacious, in a respectable manner. This was intended as the second part of a larger work, "The Botanic Garden", and was perhaps published first with an eye to its likely popularity and lack of controversial political content. The first part, "The Economy of Vegetation", published in 1791, clearly puts Darwin's cards on the table, with attacks on the iniquities of imperialism and the institution of slavery. The "Immortal Franklin" appears here in two guises: firstly as the new Prometheus, stealing fire from the gods:

*Led by the phosphor-light, with daring tread
Immortal FRANKLIN sought the fiery bed
Where, nursed in night, incumbent Tempest
shrouds*

*The seeds of Thunder in circumfluent clouds,
(Economy of Vegetation, Canto II, lines 355-8)*

The Muses,
*Bade his bold arm invade the lowering sky,
 And seize the tiptoe lightnings, ere they fly.*
 (Canto I, lines 385-6)

Then, by natural progression, he becomes the Moses of the New World:

*So, borne on sounding pinions to the West,
 When tyrant-power had built his eagles nest;
 ...
 Immortal FRANKLIN watch'd the callow crew,
 And stabb'd the struggling vampires ere they
 flew,
 The patriot-flame with quick contagion ran,
 Hill lighted hill, and man electrised man;
 Her heroes slain awhile Columbia mourn'd.
 And crown'd with laurels Liberty return'd*
 (Canto II, lines 361-2, 365-370)

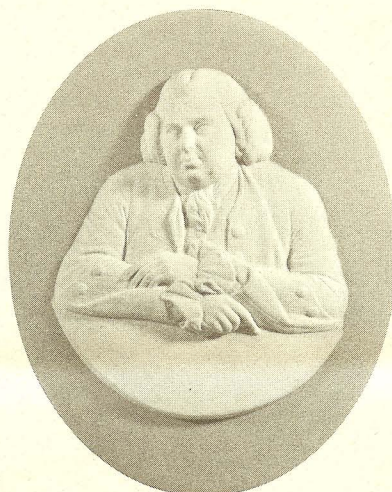
As if this were not radical enough for an Englishman of the time, he goes on to enthuse over the emerging French Revolution. Indeed he commented that he found himself becoming "all French" both in politics and in chemistry, as he espoused the theories of Lavoisier (and introduced "oxygen" into the English language) rather than the "dephlogisticated air" discovered by fellow Lunar Society member, Joseph Priestley.

Sadly the house on the bank of the river Derwent in Derby, which Darwin acquired in 1781 and equipped with characteristic inventions (such as the world's first "artesian" well), was demolished in 1933 in a fit of civic "modernization". Also demolished was Exeter House next door, where "Bonnie Prince Charlie" had set up the southernmost headquarters of his Scottish Army in 1745, before being bamboozled by false intelligence into calling off his march on London to seize the British throne. However, a few hundred yards upstream Derby's Industrial Museum now occupies the "Silk Mill" built by Joseph Lombe in 1718 as Britain's first factory.¹⁰ This stands at the southernmost end of the Derwent Valley World Heritage Zone and is a candidate for the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution.

It is a short walk to John Whitehurst's last house and workshop, which had previously been owned by John Flamsteed, Britain's first Astronomer Royal, who established the Greenwich Observatory. It is also the house where that great painter of "inner light", Joseph Wright of Derby, died in 1797, bequeathing an artistic legacy which evokes the

science, industry and personalities of the period. Prior to the recent relocation of the clock making business, founded by Whitehurst and continued by the descendants of John Smith, a later apprentice, there had been a continuous working connection of this place with the Lunar Society days. Whitehurst lived a little further along the street when Franklin stayed with him in August, 1759.¹¹

Benjamin Franklin had been an inspiration to Darwin and his circle, but political and religious radicalism had its dangers in England at that time. Following his overt support for French republicanism, Joseph Priestley's house and laboratory in Birmingham was besieged by a mob and burned to the ground in 1791.



Erasmus Darwin, 1731-1802.
 Wedgwood medallion of 19th century.
 Courtesy of the American Philosophical Society.

Though his fellow "lunatics" rallied round, and indeed though the British Government paid some compensation for the damage, in 1794 Priestley sought the more welcoming environment of Philadelphia and the hospitality of the American Philosophical Society, before making his permanent home further inland in Northumberland County.

Erasmus Darwin, on the other hand, suffered attacks on his ideas from both Church and State. He was involved in 1791 in establishing the Derby Society for Political Information, whose manifesto caused its publishers to be tried for "seditious libel," fortunately being acquitted by the jury - despite the direction of the Lord Chief Justice to the contrary! However the "Botanic Garden" made

Darwin's political sympathies very clear, and in 1798 George Canning (under secretary of state for foreign affairs and subsequently prime minister) set out to destroy his reputation, publishing a parody of Darwinian poetry entitled "The Loves of the Triangles", replete with extensive notes. Almost simultaneously conservative religious writers attacked Darwin's ideas on evolution, trying to bury his gigantic *Zoonomia* under a welter of ill-informed criticism. His dethronement as England's leading poet was completed in the same year, when Wordsworth and Coleridge published their *Lyrical Ballads*, shifting the focus of poetry from Darwin's didactic, classically and scientifically informed rhyming couplets to the expression of personal feeling. Ironically, Coleridge had esteemed Darwin as "the first literary character in Europe", and as Desmond King-Hele has shown, Darwin's imagery continued to exercise a subterranean influence on the Romantic Poets (and indeed Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*).¹²

This first "Darwinian Revolution" has been successfully expunged from memory.¹³ Darwin himself found the atmosphere at times so repressive that he remarked: "the only place of safety is America", but he stayed put. Of course, the energy and inventiveness unleashed by the on-going Industrial Revolution continued to vindicate the vision of his "lunatics," as Britain began to establish herself as the pre-eminent world power. As we approach the Tercentenary of the birth of the inspirational "Philosopher" whom Darwin esteemed as possibly the greatest Statesman of all time, it is worth reflecting on the bonds of friendship and intellectual influence which linked two groups of people across the Atlantic. There were two Enlightenment projects in process. In the English Midlands one group was laying the foundations of the Industrial Revolution; across the water another was creating the United States of America. Two projects perhaps, but it was one network of friends, with shared values, who laid these joint foundations of the modern world.

Professor Powers, after finishing his career as Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor (= Academic Vice-President) of the new University in Derby, England, has become involved in numerous cultural and heritage organisations of the area, including serving as Chairman of the



Derby Playhouse, Project Champion the Derby Multi-Faith Centre, convener of the Darwin of Derby Bicentennial Committee and as a member of the board of the Erasmus Darwin Foundation and the Derby Cultural City Executive Committee.

¹ I am grateful to Roy Goodman at the American Philosophical Society for giving me access to the full text of this letter, which at the time of writing has yet to be published in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*.

² Darwin prescribed the curriculum for his daughters' school for "young ladies" which focussed on the sciences and modern languages, with industrial visits and plenty of fresh air and exercise. See Erasmus Darwin, *A Plan for the Conduct of Female Education in Boarding Schools* (Derby: Drewry, 1797).

³ These included the invention of what became known as "Ackermann steering" used in the modern motorcar, a "bi-grapher" for duplicating letters, an improved seed-drill, and a speaking machine to

demonstrate his analysis of phonetics.

⁴ See Jenny Uglow's magnificent book, *The Lunar Men – the Friends who made the Future*, (London: Faber, 2002).

⁵ See, most recently, Desmond King-Hele, F.R.S., *Erasmus Darwin – A Life of Unequalled Achievement*, (London: de la Mare, 1999). A distinguished space scientist and poet in his own right, Dr. King-Hele's historical labors over 40 years have recovered the story of this key figure of the English Enlightenment, whose reputation and achievements had been deliberately buried. Thanks to the inspiration of his work an international conference was held in 2002 to mark the bicentenary of Darwin's death – see C.U.M. Smith and R. Arnott (eds.), *The Genius of Erasmus Darwin* (London: Ashgate, 2005).

⁶ King-Hele (1999), p.60.

⁷ Erasmus Darwin, *The Families of Plants* (2 vols., Lichfield: J.Jackson, 1787).

⁸ Erasmus Darwin, *Zoonomia* (London: J.Johnson, 1794-96).

⁹ See the "Historical Sketch" added to the later editions of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (London: Murray, 1872), p. xiv n, and the discussion of Krause's essay in Desmond King-Hele, ed., *Charles Darwin's The Life of Erasmus Darwin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 148-157.

¹⁰ Lombe's Silk Mill was designed by George Sorocold, and built on the site of an unsuccessful earlier attempt to create a textile factory by Lombe's former employer Thomas Cotchett.

¹¹ Maxwell A.J.B. Craven, *John Whitehurst of Derby* (New Jersey: AutaMusique Ltd, 1996)

¹² Desmond King-Hele, *Erasmus Darwin and the Romantic Poets* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1986).

¹³ Dr. Desmond King-Hele remarked at the Erasmus Darwin Bicentenary Conference that he suspected that the English Language could not cope with the idea that the theory of evolution by natural selection had been discovered in two separate "Darwinian Revolutions".

Ben & His Cooked Turkey

By John Walburn

Although the Thanksgiving holiday is associated with the Pilgrims, it was Abraham Lincoln who, in 1863, officially proclaimed Thanksgiving a national holiday, resulting in thousands of turkeys becoming the holiday's main dinner course. However, it was Benjamin Franklin who showed America (and the world) how electricity could be employed in the process of getting the turkey to the dinner plate.

In 1750, forty-four year-old Franklin, along with his scientifically-minded friends, held an "electric feast" to celebrate their many electrical accomplishments. Franklin, who had previously discovered that a large jolt of electricity could quickly and easily kill turkeys (and chickens) in a more humane way than was the usual practice, offered to demonstrate his method to his dinner-party friends.

Unfortunately, the merriment and lively chatter among the party-goers distracted Franklin, causing him to carelessly touch two wires from his electric generator at the same time, resulting in him coming close to being electrocuted. Momentarily

knocked senseless, Franklin reported that bystanders heard a crack as loud as a pistol, while he felt a severe blow through his body from head to feet, along with a violent shaking of his body, and pain in his breast bone. Part of his hand and fingers turned white and felt like dead flesh. Although these effects subsided after eight or ten minutes, a numbness in his arms and the back of his neck continued till the next morning. Embarrassed by having committed such a blunder, he tells a friend that, "Instead of a cooked turkey, I was almost a cooked goose."

Franklin also came up with the idea of using electricity, supplied by a battery-powered electric motor which he designed, to rotate the turkey over a heat source by means of an "electrical jack" or spit—what we now know as a rotisserie. The idea caught on, and attempts were made, especially by the French, to turn Franklin's prototype into a practical appliance, but the endeavor was thwarted by the limited technology of the era.

Another practical application of electricity occurred when Franklin observed

that the electric shock that killed the turkey also seemed, based on his admittedly limited experience, to result in meat that was "rendered more tender". Franklin was not sure what caused meat to be tenderized when stimulated with electricity, but he was evidently on the right track, for electrical stimulation is one of the methods for tenderizing meat used by many meat processors today.

During this holiday season, thousands of turkeys will be cooked with the aid of electricity, some 244 years after Benjamin Franklin had already "been there, done that."

Friend John Walburn is from Ottawa (Franklin County), Kansas and is a regular contributor to Benjamin Franklin's Integrity Project (www.bfip.org). The essay printed above is the first in a series of factual articles that will be offered free of charge to newspapers serving communities named in honor of Franklin in order to inform the citizens in preparation for the national celebration of his 300th birthday.



Meet You in Aichi?

Franklin as U.S. Ambassador to the World

Book your tickets now to meet Benjamin Franklin! He will be the host of the United States Pavilion at the 2005 World Exposition, to be held in Japan from March 25 to September 25, 2005. Douglas West, CEO of Aichi USA 2005, the organization in charge of developing and building the pavilion, said Franklin was chosen because of his role in unlocking the secrets of nature, particularly as it related to electricity. The expo's theme is "Nature's Wisdom and the Wisdom of Nature." The pavilion's developers understood Franklin's fascination with the natural world, and recognized his work in understanding it. Furthermore, said Lisa Gable, the U.S. commissioner general to the exposition, "Franklin is a perfect example of the core values of hope, optimism, enterprise and freedom we as Americans embrace today."

The central pavilion's theme will be "The Franklin Spirit." Franklin will not only serve as the host of the pavilion and ambassador to the world, but he will also provide visitors with a travelogue through history and will share with his audience his visions of the future, a future in harmony with nature. An expected 1.5 million visitors will

meet this iconic American figure in the course of the fair. Public exhibition designers George P. Johnson Co. of Detroit, which began as a small sewing shop in the early 1900s, will work on the pavilion's interactive displays. Today the firm is best known for producing auto shows and Thanksgiving Day parades. The Franklin Spirit presentation is described on the State Department web site link as beginning "through a tunnel of projected clouds. Through the deconstructed kite structure, brewing and swirling storm clouds are seen. The storm grows until it powers the introductory presentation, reminding us of Benjamin Franklin and his achievements. From unlocking the nature of electricity to inventing bifocal glasses and mapping the Gulf Stream, Franklin's inquisitiveness combined curiosity about the laws of nature with their impact on improving the human condition. In the stunning main show, Franklin will be played by a filmed performer projected onto scrims suspended in front of dimensional sets. The layered projected effects allow wonderful things to happen. Apparitions, electrical fields, floating objects, and Franklin himself will appear and disappear. The theater will also use other high-impact

effects such as fiber optic star fields, projection onto fine curtains of fog, and strobe lighting....We look through [Franklin's] eyes at technological developments through the 20th century."

Not fluent in Japanese? Never fear—through the miracle of modern technology Franklin will speak in either English or Japanese at the flip of a switch. How do you think he'd feel about acquiring another language so late in his career? He would, undoubtedly, be quietly pleased to have been chosen for the job of Ambassador to the World. As he wrote in his Silence Dogood letter number 3, "I have from my Youth been indefatigably studious to gain and treasure up in my Mind all useful and desirable Knowledge, especially such as tends to improve the Mind, and enlarge the Understanding: And as I have found it very beneficial to me, I am not without Hopes, that communicating my small Stock in this Manner, by Peace-meal to the Publick, may be at least in some Measure useful."

Read more about the plans for the United States Pavilion in Aichi at: <http://fpc.state.gov/fpc/35837.htm>

Franklin and Friend on Stage

By Claude-Anne Lopez

"Ben Franklin Unplugged". Such is the title of the comic monologue written and performed by Joshua Kornbluth, who happens to look remarkably like Ben. His home is in San Francisco but he travels all over the country, delivering these days another very funny monologue called "Love and Taxes." When Josh did some research at the Franklin Papers, I encouraged him to read as many documents as possible and use their raw power rather than the academic works they inspired.

This led him to create the offbeat character of "Claude," an opinionated historical editor who pushes him around, drives erratically, speaks in a falsetto voice with a French accent—this last touch, at least, is real—and

wins the heart and laughter of his various audiences. People have been asking him lately if this "Claude" really exists, and to prove it he invited me to join him on stage in San Francisco on November 6.

First we heard his Franklin monologue, amusing and brisk on the surface but with a core of sadness, somewhat a la Woody Allen. It has to do with the father-son relationship, one that in the case of Franklin and his son William turned sour in the days of the American Revolution after years of loving companionship and the other, just as poignant, between Josh and his father, a Communist who wanted the boy to become a leader of another American Revolution.

At the end of the program, we answered many questions from the crowd at the Magic Theater and I briefly evoked my first stay in San Francisco when back in the spring of 1945 I worked as a secretary/interpreter for a Communist delegate at the Conference for the Organization of the United Nations, an experience that opened my eyes to the realities of politics.

Read an excerpt from Josh Kornbluth's monologue on line from the Nov. 29 issue of Salon.com: at <http://www.salon.com>. For those who are not subscribers a free day pass is available.

FRANKLIN TIDBITS

A Facelift for Franklin?

The headlines on an Associated Press story late this summer said that the Franklin National Memorial at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia needs updating and cleaning, a job estimated at \$10 million. The Franklin Institute hopes to get Congress to allocate money for the rehabilitation project in time for the 300th anniversary of Franklin's birth in 2006. Pennsylvania will only underwrite projects that lead to job creation, so the project probably doesn't qualify for the Commonwealth's support. The statue was last cleaned in 1998.

And a Makeover?

The November 2nd issue of the *New York Times* reported on an intriguing new project to discover what George Washington really looked like at three different periods in his life. Using the newest computer imaging techniques combined with information from sculptures, paintings and artifacts like clothing and dentures, as well as documentary evidence, the project team plans to make life-like statues for display at Mount Vernon's soon-to-be-finished visitors' center. Can such depictions of Franklin be far behind? Tap into the *New York Times* on-line archive and look for Warren E. Leary's story, "Makeover to Depict Washington as Young, Old and In Between" at www.nytimes.com.

Franklin Celebration in Albany

Two hundred and fifty years ago Franklin and other delegates visited Albany, N.Y., and it was during this meeting that Franklin presented his Albany Plan of Union. The commemoration held last June in Albany featured Lee Stanton, the church archivist of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in the Franklin role. The 2004 celebration featured period music, a re-enactment, a candlelight reception, and a procession.

Benjamin Franklin, Printer, Sighted in Houston

At the Houston Museum of Printing History the role of Benjamin Franklin is filled by Harry Benson, who has been a student of the art of printing for nearly his whole life. A graduate in graphic arts management in 1952, he later managed print shops for Tenneco Oil, the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District, and the Texas A&M Agricultural Extension Service. He has since taught printing on both the high school and college levels. When playing the Franklin role at the

museum he wears a custom-made costume provided by a benefactor of the museum. Benson fears that Franklin has been downsized in history textbooks, so he is eager to accept any opportunity to portray the Founding Father and teach more people about his hero.

Tercentenary Music: A New Creation

On October 11 the Philadelphia Orchestra Association and the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Composers Forum announced the winner of a competition to create a new work to commemorate the anniversary of Franklin's birth. Daniel Kellogg, a graduate of Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music, and currently a doctoral candidate at Yale University's School of Music, was chosen from among 110 applicants. His work will receive its premiere in November, 2005 as a part of the Orchestra's subscription series. The composer expressed his hope that the piece will "capture [Franklin's] curiosity in all things, his flirtatious fun, his wit, and the spirit of the amazing time in which America was born."

Founding Fathers' Music

Among the web sites popularized by the latest presidential election is www.jibjab.com. But did you know that the site's humorous political commentary isn't just limited to the political scene today? Go to the feature on the web site called "The Vault" and tap into "Founding Fathers". There you will encounter not only Franklin, but Jefferson, Washington, Madison, and Adams. An interactive feature allows you to listen to each historical figure's "rap" when you click your mouse on their bodies.

Franklin Namesake

Film star Nicholas Cage plays "Benjamin Franklin Gates" in the recently released "National Treasure," an action-fantasy creation in which contemporary characters find clues in historical documents and symbols that lead them to a chest supposedly hidden by the Founding Fathers. In the film, Cage's character examines two items associated with Franklin--the manuscript of the Declaration of Independence and the Great Seal of the United States.

Websites to Check

The United States Government Printing Office offers a site for children: "Ben's Guide to Government for Kids." The site is

geared to children in grades K-12, with different levels of complexity, for each age group as well as a parents and teachers' resource guide. Check it out at: <http://bens-guide.gpo.gov/>

Gazette Guide

The Guide to the *Franklin Gazette* is now on-line at the Friends of Franklin newly expanded website: <http://www.ben-franklin2006.org>.

Franklin's Recipe for Milk Punch

The Massachusetts Historical Society's object of the month page features Franklin's recipe for milk punch, a commentary on food history, and a version of the recipe adopted for present day consumption. <http://www.masshist.org/objects/>. Franklin's original recipe calls for the rinds of 44 lemons, pared very thin, 6 quarts of brandy, 4 quarts of water, 2 pounds of refined sugar, 2 quarts of lemon juice, 3 quarts of milk and 4 grated nutmegs.

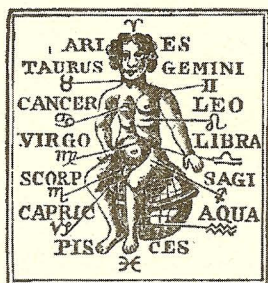


Good Reads

Alan Houston, ed., *Franklin: The Autobiography and Other Writings on Politics, Economics, and Virtue* (Cambridge University Press, October 2004).

Andrea Sutcliffe, *Steam: The Untold Story of America's First Great Invention* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2004). Andrea Sutcliffe's article, "Franklin and the Early Steamboat Inventors," which was published in the Fall 2004 *Gazette* detailed Franklin's role. Her carefully researched, highly descriptive, and entertaining book now gives us a more complete story of this American invention and the role other famous and less well-known figures played in its creation.

Nancy Hoffman and John Van Horne, ed. *America's Curious Botanist: A Tercentennial Reappraisal of John Bartram 1699-1777* (American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 2004). In 1999 a symposium held to examine the life of John Bartram, Franklin's long-time friend and America's first botanist, elicited new interest in Bartram's life and writings. The essays in this book, largely written for that event, explore the different facets of Bartram's life: his correspondence, his writings, his explorations and his garden.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

On-going – July 29, 2005.

"Joseph Priestley, Radical Thinker." Exhibit at the Chemical Heritage Foundation, Philadelphia, PA. The exhibit mounted to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Priestley's death, brings together artifacts and images including some items originally owned by Priestley which interpret his life and work. Best known for his scientific work, including the identification and isolation of oxygen, Priestley was also a well-known minister who helped to found the First Unitarian Society of Philadelphia.

January 14, 2005.

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

January 14-16, 2005.

Philomel, an original instruments strings ensemble, presents a concert in honor of Franklin's birthday, "The Amazing Dr. Franklin." Performances vary by time and location although are held in Philadelphia or Doylestown, PA. Contact www.philomel.org for additional information.

February 2-6, 2005.

Glass Music Festival will be held in Paris and surrounding areas. See website for more information: www.glassmusicintl.org.

February 9, 2005.

Author David Waldstreicher will kick-off the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's new History Book Club at 6:00 p.m. Waldstreicher, a professor of history at Temple University, is the author of *Runaway America: Benjamin Franklin, Slavery, and the American Revolution*. The History Book Club will meet the sec-

ond Wednesday of every month at 6:00 p.m. at the Historical Society, 1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA. For more information check the Society's website www.hsp.org or call 215.732.6200.

March 25-September 25, 2005.

"The Franklin Spirit" exhibit, United States Pavilion at Japan's World Exposition. See *Meet You in Aichi? Franklin as U.S. Ambassador to the World* for details.

April 8-10, 2005.

Friends of Franklin tour to Washington, D.C. Contact Kathy DeLuca, 856.979.1613 for more information.

April 10, 2005.

Franklin Fanfare: An Afternoon with Dr. Franklin, 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. at the Philadelphia Antiques Show, including a lecture by Jay Robert Stiefel "Benjamin Franklin & the Philadelphia Artisan," comments by Jay Snider on his collection, and an overview of the Tercentenary celebration by Dr. Rosalind Remer. The show will be held at the Armory, 33rd Street and Lancaster Avenue. Check www.philaantiques.com for more information.

April 14, 2005.

"Artisans of Franklin's Philadelphia," lecture by Jay Robert Stiefel, for the Washington Decorative Arts Forum, at the Metropolitan Club, Washington, D.C. Contact Forbes Maner fmaner@bmms-dc.com for more details.

August 6, 2005.

Special West Coast Franklin event for Friends, Long Beach, California. Details will follow.

September 2005.

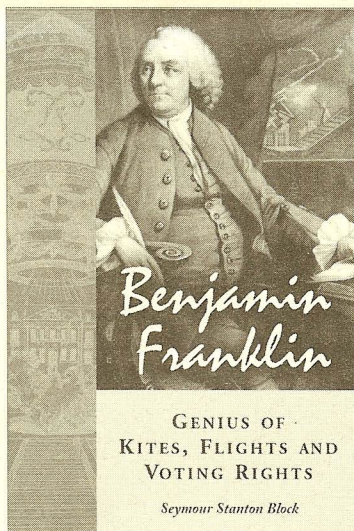
"Franklin Trail: Boston to Philadelphia." Details will follow.

December 15, 2005.

The special Tercentenary exhibit, "Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World," will open in Philadelphia on December 15, 2005. The exhibit will travel to Paris, Denver and Atlanta before closing on January 20, 2008.

2006.

The Franklin trail continues! "Franklin Trail: London to Paris". Check future issues of the *Gazette* for details.



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Charles W. Lard (1946-2004)

As this issue goes to press we have just learned of the death of friend Charles Lard of West Hartford, Connecticut. Charles, like Franklin, was a believer in entrepreneurship, and it was this spirit of enterprise that led him to leave his job as Assistant Treasurer for United Technologies in order to found several companies, among them, Alta Energy Corporation and Wasp Tie Company, as well the interactive media company, Bigbad, Inc. A Franklin enthusiast and collector of Frankliniana, Charles seldom missed a meeting of Friends of the Franklin Papers. He often brought kindred spirits with him, and he was a lively participant in discussions. Our heartfelt condolences go to his wife Jackie, who usually accompanied him to Franklin gatherings, and his daughter Holly, and son Benjamin.

*Visit the Friends of Franklin website:
www.benfranklin2006.org*

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