

Franklin Gazette

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Friends of Franklin, c/o Dr. Larry E. Tise, Benjamin Franklin National Memorial, The Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, PA 19103

Time is an herb that cures all Diseases.

- Poor Richard's Improved, 1738

FROM THE DESK OF LARRY E. TISE

Once you get the habit of talking about Benjamin Franklin, there is no end to it. We just finished our annual Franklin Institute Awards Convocation where we had a symposium on "Benjamin Franklin and Women." You would not believe all of the tongue wagging that went on there--for days and weeks ahead and ever since. The very next week I went to a meeting of the Organization of American Historians where tongues were wagging that we had finally--and successfully--taken on that topic most mentioned when there is almost any reference to our patron not-quite-saint. And then the talk just went right on a few evenings ago when Lady Mary Bessborough arrived in town with the principal officers of the Friends of the Franklin House (Craven Street) in tow. Dining at Philadelphia's charming Acorn Club, we could not avoid continuing on this never-ending topic as we chatted in a quaint parlor adorned with the mythic but well-known illustration of Franklin and the women of Paris!

But on with our quarterly smorgasbord of Franklin news and notes:

1. The Brillon Armonica. The winter, 1994, issue of the the newsletter of The Bakken Library and Museum of Minneapolis, Minnesota, describes in some detail the Bakken's prized Brillon armonica. Acquired by the Bakken in 1975, the armonica had been in the hands of descendants of Madame Brillon de Jouy since its original acquisition when Benjamin Franklin socialized with this remarkable woman during his long sojourn in Paris. The Bakken armonica seems to have its original parts, complete with 28 glass cups and a fragile pedal for turning the glasses. The armonica described by Franklin in a 1762 letter to Italian scientist, Giambattista Beccaria, by contrast, was to have 37 glasses to cover three octaves. Different from both of these is the armonica owned and exhibited by The Franklin Institute which is pedal-less and has only sixteen glasses. Franklin had the Brillon armonica made

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Benjamin Franklin's Use of Scientific Analogues and Metaphors in a Political Context¹ Part One

by Professor I. Bernard Cohen

Franklin's political writings do not draw upon the concepts or principles of physics, not even electricity, that branch of which he was a master. Nor did he make use of the principles of the bio-medical sciences to buttress his political writings. His introduction of scientific ideas and theories in a political context is somewhat different from that of Jefferson, Adams, Madison, Hamilton, or any of the other Founding Fathers. One reason for this difference is that Franklin did not theorize about politics in the philosophical manner of others in America and Europe in the eighteenth century; accordingly his use of the images and concepts of science in a political context was not at all like that of his American contemporaries. But there were other

reasons as well. By drawing on the phenomena or concepts or principles of science, Jefferson, Adams, and Madison could give their political ideas a special legitimacy by linking them to the domain of human thought most highly esteemed in the Age of Reason. An appeal to physics, astronomy, chemistry, or the bio-medical sciences served not only to validate their ideas but to establish their credentials as citizens of the Enlightenment who understood scientific principles. We may readily understand why Jefferson, Adams, Madison, and their European contemporaries found the physical and bio-medical sciences to be a rich source of analogues and metaphors, adding an exotic flavor of theoretical importance to their political prose.

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"BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AND WOMEN" THE SYMPOSIUM THAT WAS

On Saturday, April 9, some sixty individuals--students, scholars, Franklin buffs, and curiosity seekers--gathered at The Franklin Institute to grapple once and for all with the knotty and frequently mentioned topic of Benjamin Franklin and women. Attendees quickly realized they would not only learn about the women in Franklin's life; they would also hear from eight historians--a couple of them literary historians--about the role of women in Franklin's world.

Sheila Skemp from the University of Mississippi set the stage with a rapid review of the lives of fifteen or so women encountered by Franklin or related to him--mother Abiah, sister Jane, wife Deborah, daughter Sarah, coquette Catharine Ray, jilted would-be daughter-in-law Elizabeth Graeme, landlady Margaret Stevenson, tutee Polly Stevenson, salonière Madame Helvetius, neighbor

Madame Brillon, and many more. The Skemp show whetted appetites for more to come.

Elaine Crane of Fordham University then addressed the matter of motherhood in the eighteenth century, particularly through the brilliant witness of Elizabeth Drinker and her fabulous diary. Sheila Skemp returned to the podium to describe in great detail the difficult role it was for Deborah Read to serve as Benjamin Franklin's wife.

Mary Kelley of Dartmouth College broadened the subject considerably by focusing on the subject of female education and reading in the eighteenth century and noting the limitations of education available to such as Sarah Franklin. Susan Stabile of the University of Delaware next gave an energetic and entertaining rendition on the efforts to replicate French salons in America by a group of women in

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Ben Franklin and Women - continued

and around Philadelphia--especially after Elizabeth Graeme returned from her sojourn in London in 1765 where she befriended Lawrence Sterne, popular author of Tristram Shandy.

Jan Lewis of Rutgers University finally broke into a topic that had not yet emerged--Franklin's sexuality and his physical relationships with women all about him. Carla Mulford from Penn State looked at Franklin in literature and the origins and persistence of myths about him and women.

Claude Lopez of the Franklin Papers, a favorite at every Franklin conference or meeting, began to close down the day with the amazing and pathetic careers of three women--each in some way encountered by Franklin--who fought for the rights of women during the French Revolution and each of whom paid the supreme sacrifice for their testimony on the scaffold. Larry Tise concluded the symposium with a tough judgement on Franklin's failures in bringing

up daughter Sarah to the point that she rebelled in defiance against the terms of his will.

The symposium was appropriately concluded with a reception at the nearby Rosenbach Museum and Library which had just premiered a very relevant exhibit titled "In Her Own Words: Women of the Rush, Williams, Alexander, and Biddle Families, 1775-1918." The exhibit included items from Franklin's family and letters written by the three Alexander sisters describing their views of what the French Revolution was all about.



Benjamin Franklin and Women speakers
(from l to r) Larry Tise, Barbara Oberg, (top) Mary Kelly, Susan Stabile, Elaine F. Crane, Carla Mulford, (bottom) Jan Lewis, Claude-Anne Lopez and Sheila Skemp.

LET - continued

for his beloved neighbor in 1785. The one owned by The Franklin Institute, said to have been Franklin's own instrument and passed through his descendents, is regularly on exhibit in Franklin Hall. The Bakken's armonica is brought out of storage for special events. For those not familiar with the Bakken Library and Museum, it is an institution devoted to "the history, cultural context, and applications of electricity and magnetism in the life sciences and their benefits to contemporary society." Address: 3537 Zenith Avenue South, Minn., MN 55416, phone (612) 927-6508.

2. Ben's Amours. No sooner did we finish our symposium on Franklin and women when a new spate of stuff started coming in, proving the popularity of this topic. From Knox (Bud) Long, a Franklin role player in Bellingham, Washington, came a folder containing a long line of special presentations on Franklin, including "a one act play on Ben Franklin's love life" titled "Ben's Amours." From its description it appears that Long, who goes by the commercial name of "Bud as Ben" hits all of the high spots in his popular presentations. Anyone interested in knowing more can contact Bud at 1473 Sudden Valley, Bellingham, WA 98226; phone (206) 733-0742.

3. B. Franklin, Postmaster. Roving Franklin photographers find photo opportunities everywhere they go. Friend Chuck Hargis of Brecksville, Ohio, just sent us a batch of new Franklin images. One came from a Franklin "Kites and Keys" Christmas tree presented by B. F. Goodrich for the 12th annual Children's Hospital Holiday Tree Festival in Akron, Ohio. A second batch of Franklin images he found at the new National Postal Museum in Washington, DC--which will be visited by the Friends of Franklin on our fall, 1994, tour of Franklin's Historic Washington, DC, September 29-October

1 (see details elsewhere). The last, an image of Franklin on a window poster, indicating that the business where it appeared was "consumer preferred in the American tradition" of Franklin himself. Chuck's note with this one, interestingly, read: "Sign in window of abandoned store front, Tucumcari, NM, Oct. 1993"! Thanks, Chuck.

4. Franklin's Trust Fund in Massachusetts. A newspaper article sent to us at the end of 1993 by Max Hall and taken from the Boston Globe told of a decision of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ordering that funds from Franklin's will be divided between the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the City of Boston just as Benjamin Franklin ordered. The Franklin Institute of Boston, which received the largest sum from Franklin's will at the end of the first hundred years, had argued that a law passed by Massachusetts in 1958 awarded all monies from the trust fund to that school. This decision cleared the way for a disposition of funds perhaps similar to what has long since transpired in Pennsylvania where most of the funds were reserved for community foundations to assist students in the trades. About a third of the total Pennsylvania trust fund went to The Franklin Institute in Philadelphia.

5. Franklin Papers, vols. 2, 3, 4. The Franklin Institute Library, due to recent acquisition of an additional set of the Yale edition of The Papers of Benjamin Franklin has extra copies of volumes 2, 3, and 4 (covering Jan. 1735-Dec. 1744; Jan. 1745-June 1750; July 1750-June 1753) available for sale. They are clean copies complete with dust jackets and are available for \$32.50 per volume. Interested individuals should contact Franklin Institute Librarian, Irene Coffey, directly at (215) 448-1239 or at this address.

Keep those cards and letters pouring in.

THE MEDALS OF FRANKLIN

by Phil W. Greenslet

Comment by Larry E. Tise

I have in my very hands a most handsome book lovingly conceived, compiled, composed, corrected, and commenced into the world by Friend of Franklin Phil W. Greenslet, that is, The Medals of Franklin: A Catalog of Medals, Tokens, Medallions, and Plaques Issued in Honor of Franklin (Lake Mary, Fla.: Token and Medal Society, Inc., 1993), 232 pages. I know that this masterwork is the authoritative work in the field of images of Benjamin Franklin because I have personally had the opportunity to see Phil Greenslet at work collecting, examining, and freely dispensing advice to anyone interested in medal, token, medallion, and any other form of image of Benjamin Franklin. While I have not visited his home or seen his considerable personal collections of images, I have seen his displays at numismatic shows and he has generously shared some of his rarest images for exhibition in the Benjamin Franklin National Memorial.

Medals of Franklin is clearly the work of a lifetime, although Phil generously thanks more than seventy individuals and institutions for assistance in collecting his information. But it was he who created the network and devoted endless hours and virtually every evening and weekend to the project for years.

Since I am a total non-specialist in this type of work, my description of it is purely amateurish. The book has 567 GM entries standing for medals and 53 GT entries for tokens, storecards, and "advertising exnumia" (numismatic items other than coins or currency). There is a photograph of every item showing both the obverse and the reverse. The earliest image derives from circa 1760 just after Franklin got an honorary doctorate from the University of St. Andrew's in Scotland. Numbered GM-1 with the inscription "Ben Franklin, L.L.D." and depicting a bewigged Franklin on the obverse and a blank reverse, the medal is attributed either to Irish medalist William Mossop or Isaac Gosset. To show the catalog's inclusiveness, Phil includes such disparate medals as the Bower Award, medals custom produced every year by the Benjamin Franklin National Memorial to be presented to scientists and business leaders "reflecting the scientific and humanitarian genius" of Benjamin Franklin. The diversity of images throughout is simply extraordinary.

According to Phil one can order copies either from the Token and Medal Society, Inc., P. O. Box 951988, Lake Mary, Florida 32795, but you will have to pay the postage if you do. A cheaper way to get the book is by sending orders directly to Phil with a check made out to him for \$39.95 (price without postage) and he will have a copy sent to you. Phil's address is P. O. Box 377, Reisterstown, Maryland 21136. Phone (410) 833-7753; fax (410) 486-8619.

Congratulations, Phil!

Ben Franklin On Religion: In His Own Words

by Aaron Goldman

"Serving God is doing good to man. But praying is thought an easier service and is therefore more generally chosen."--Benjamin Franklin.

In his writings and his pursuits over a long life, Benjamin Franklin left no doubts that organized religion stirred him very little, if at all. Although by nature genuinely spiritual, as a young tradesman who worked long hours six days a week, he found Sabbath church attendance an unwelcome and profitless intrusion; he preferred to catch up on his reading.

Franklin admitted that it took a lot of urging by his preacher to get him to attend church service on any regular basis. His specific complaints about this particular cleric was that "his discourses were chiefly concerning the peculiar doctrines of our sect, and were all to me very dry, uninteresting and unedifying, since not a single moral principle was ever inculcated, his aim seeming rather to make us good Presbyterians than good Christians." Undeterred, the preacher made one final attempt to encourage Franklin's conver-

sion, this time selecting for his Sunday text this promising verse from St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians: "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, honest, pure, lovely or of good report, think on these things."

Now here was a sentiment that appealed to Franklin, but not for long. Upon hearing the sermon his hopes were completely dashed. Read his critical lament:

"But from this lofty instruction trickled the following five points: 1. Keep the Sabbath day holy. 2. Be diligent in reading the holy scriptures. 3. Regularly attend public worship. 4. Partake of the Sacrament. 5. Pay due respect to God's ministers...Well, these might all be good things, but as they were not the good things that I had expected from the text, I was dismayed and attended his preaching no more."

In later years, Franklin would readily acknowledge that what he lacked was "any strong inclination toward Heaven, believing that our obligations should be discharged here on earth. I remember once

offering the scant accommodations of my home to an itinerant preacher newly come from England. He replied that if I made that kind of offer for Christ's sake, I would not miss of a reward. And I replied: 'Don't let me be mistaken, Reverend; it was not for Christ's sake, but for your sake!'

Now the last thing that anyone should infer from these instances of Franklin's indifference to conventional pieties is that he was not possessed of religious sensibilities, indeed on a much higher plane. Six weeks before his death (at the age of 84), in a letter to Rev. Ezra Stiles, President of Yale, he would state his creed:

"I believe in one God, Creator of the universe. That He governs it by His providence. That He ought to be worshipped. That the most acceptable service we render Him is doing good to His other children. That the soul of man is immortal, and will be treated with justice in another life respecting its conduct in this. These I take to be the fundamental principles of all sound religion, and I

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Metaphors - continued

But for Franklin, the case was quite different. His scientific credentials were well established by his discoveries and his recognition by peers. He had no need to display scientific learning out of its primary context. Additionally, as he tells us in his Autobiography, he formed his prose style by copying and imitating great masters, primarily essayists who reached their peak before or during Franklin's youth, that is, mostly before the death of Isaac Newton. Franklin's style, accordingly, required no admixture of exotic elements or of references to the new science. Furthermore, since Franklin was writing for mass consumption, usually to gain a political point or to influence public opinion, his arguments would have been weakened by the introduction of esoteric references. Accordingly, whereas the physical and bio-medical sciences provided a useful stock of metaphors to enhance the rhetoric of Jefferson, Adams, and Madison, there was no need for them in Franklin's writings. Of course, Franklin, like others writing in the 1750's and 1760's, could not help but introduce images from the latest news of science, especially the kind of science reported in almanacs, magazines, and newspapers and thus available to the general reader. This category would include reference to natural disasters, to the appearance of comets, and to new and exciting discoveries such as the peculiar properties of the polyp. Franklin also made use of fables about animals, constructing a kind of political bestiary in the great tradition of animal stories associated with Aesop. But his practice excluded such esoteric metaphors as the Newtonian laws of the universe, details of astronomical or physical law and phenomena, new aspects of animal or plant physiology, and even the details of electrical experiments and theories.

Of course, from time to time, Franklin did introduce examples of scientific knowledge, just as any other learned man or woman of his day might do. An example of Franklin's use of a bio-medical analogue may be found in his Cool Thoughts on the Present Situation (1764), an attack on the proprietary system. The "miserable" situation in Pennsylvania, he wrote, does not have its cause "in the Depravity and Selfishness of human minds." The "Cause is radical, interwoven in the Constitution, and so becomes of the very Nature, of Proprietary Governments." This conclusion led him to a biological analogue. Some "physicians," he wrote, say that "every Animal Body brings in to the World among its original Stamina the seeds of the Disease that shall finally produce its Dissolution." Similarly, he argued, the "Political Body of a Proprietary Government" contains "those convulsive Principles that will at length destroy it."

There was a vogue of interest in the polyp in mid-century; the properties of this curious entity were brought to the attention of Americans by Peter Collinson and also by an article appearing in the Gentleman's Magazine. Franklin referred to the polyp in a political context in one of his most important tracts, written in 1751, his Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, a major contribution to the nascent science of demography. In this politico-demographic study, Franklin aimed to demonstrate that there is "no Bound to the prolific Nature of Plants or Animals, but what is made by their crowding and interfering with each others Means of Subsistence."² He was using this finding to argue that Britain should acquire sufficient territory for the needs of "the increase of her People." "A Nation well regulated," he wrote, is like a Polypus." That is, if you "take away a

Limb, its Place is soon supply'd; cut it in two, and each deficient Part shall speedily grow out of the part remaining." This phenomenon of regeneration was so much on Franklin's mind that he referred to it in detail in Poor Richard's Almanack for that year.

The discussion of the polyp in Poor Richard was part of an essay on the wonders of the microscope. Here the polyp was called the "most unaccountable of all Creatures." The polyp had many extraordinary properties. Here we may take note only of Franklin's description of what is so "wonderful, and almost beyond Belief," that "it will live and feed after it is turned inside out," and that "even when cut into a great many Pieces, each several Piece becomes a compleat Polype."³

Franklin's analogy of the polyp with its power of regeneration led him to the following conclusion about Britain. "Thus if you have Room and Substance enough," you "may, by dividing, make ten Polypes out of one." So, he wrote, "you may of one make ten Nations, equally populous and powerful; or rather, increase a Nation ten fold in Numbers and Strength." But for such expansion à la polyp you must have adequate "Room and Substance," which in relation to the issue at hand meant to annex Canada as the spoils of war rather than Guadeloupe.

TO BE CONTINUED

1. This is an extract from Professor Cohen's forthcoming book Science and the Founding Fathers: Science and the Political Thought of Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, and Madison; to be published in 1995 by W.W. Norton (New York City).

2. Yale edition of The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, iv, 233.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

Religion - continued

regard them as you do in whatever sect I meet with them."
 Nor should anyone infer that it was the approach of death that impelled him to affirm that man's soul was immortal. For in 1728, sixty-two years earlier, he had proposed for himself, humorously in the language of his trade, this best known of American epitaphs:

The Body of
 B. Franklin Printer
 (Like the Cover of an old Book)
 Its Contents torn out
 And stript of its Lettering and Gilding
 Lies here, Food for Worms.
 But the Work shall not be lost;
 For it will (as he believ'd) appear once
 more,
 In a new and more elegant Edition
 Revised and corrected
 By the Author.

Notes and Info

Note on Charitable Contribution of Membership Dues

The Board of Directors of the Friends of Franklin, Inc., have set the basic cost of membership in the Friends of Franklin at \$30 per year per individual member. Membership dues in excess of that amount may be listed as a charitable contribution to our 501(c)3 not-for-profit Maryland corporation.

Nothing New Under the Sun

Benjamin Franklin published his first catalog in 1744. It offered nearly 600 books. Franklin, a champion of customer satisfaction, guaranteed "those persons who live remote, by sending their orders and money to said B. Franklin may depend on the same justice as if present.

Obituary

Dr. Raymond Kjellberg - The Friends of Franklin have lost an enthusiastic member in the person of Dr. Raymond Kjellberg who died of cancer on December 20 in Boston at the age of 68. He was a neurosurgeon and director of Bragg Peak proton beam therapy form of radiation treatment, at Massachusetts General Hospital. A fairly recent member of our group, he brightened up the Boston and Mystic-New Haven Meetings with his enthusiasm and cordiality.

Ezra Stone - The Friends of Franklin have lost another friend in Ezra Stone, who died in a tragic car accident in New Jersey on March 3 at the age of 76. Mr. Stone was best known for his careers in acting and directing in both radio and television. He directed many early television sitcoms and dramas, including *I Love Lucy* and *Lassie*.

We shall miss them.

NEW MEMBERS

Individual

R. W. Brannick, North Canton, OH
 David F. Harris, Salisbury, CT
 Arthur Bachrack, Taos, NM

Franklin Friend

Ronny J. Coleman, Sacramento, CA

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 29 - October 1, 1994
*"Do They Remember Me in DC":
 Ben Franklin in the Nation's Capital*

September 29
*Friends of Franklin Meeting,
 Washington, DC*

Membership Categories

All individuals, institutions, scholars, students, collectors and others are invited to become members of the Friends of Franklin at the annual membership rates indicated below.

Life Member	\$1,000
Institutional Member	\$1,000
Sustaining Friend	\$100
Franklin Friend	\$50
Individual Member	\$30
Educators/Libraries	\$20

Send check made payable to:

THE FRIENDS OF FRANKLIN, Inc.

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