

# Franklin Gazette

Volume 21, Number 4, Winter 2011/2012

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

Visit: [www.friendsoffranklin.org](http://www.friendsoffranklin.org)

*"None know the unfortunate, and the fortunate do not know themselves."*

Poor Richard, February 1747

## President's Message

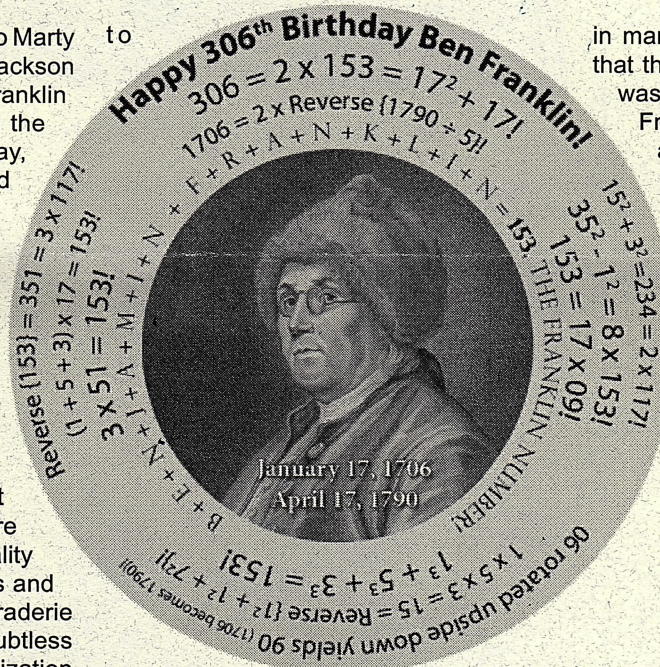
By Lee E. Knepp

We extend sincere appreciation to Marty and Jane Mangold, and also to Jackson and Ann Boswell, for offering a Franklin Weekend in Washington, D.C., to the membership and guests on Friday, April 20, Saturday, April 21, and Sunday, April 22.

The Friends of Franklin have gathered in Washington on several previous occasions, most recently in 2005 (at Cherry Blossom time) with Walter Isaacson and The Aspen Institute as our host. Previously, in 1994, we stayed at the Cosmos Club and eagerly anticipated our first international venture, to Paris, where we journeyed in 1995. The hospitality and special efforts of the Mangolds and the Boswells, as well as the camaraderie of the Friends of Franklin, will doubtless go down in the history of the organization along with these earlier visits.

The Friends of Franklin and we, individually, as friends mourn the passing of board member Frank H. Batchelor of Beaver, Pennsylvania, on Thursday, March 29, 2012 (the day of his 90th birthday). Many of us first met Frank and his wife Carin at the above mentioned 2005 gathering in Washington, and have travelled with them on many of our domestic and international fall gatherings since that time. Frank served our organization with real dedication as a board member and became the first to step forward with a generous loan which allowed us to defer the liquidation of an investment. Without exaggeration, many of us came

to



*"Franklin number 153" created by Aziz Inan to celebrate Franklin's 306th birthday.*

adore this special couple, and at this time we extend our sincere sympathy to Carin as well as to their two sons Batch and Stuart and their wives Margit and Nancy (who also have accompanied us on several trips). Carin has assured me that, had it not been for Frank's illness, they would have been the first to register for the 2012 Washington gathering.

The January, 2012, Philadelphia Celebration! Of Franklin, Founder, was the first Franklin birthday party I have missed

in many years, but I have been assured that this year's birthday, Franklin's 306th, was another superbly fitting tribute to Franklin. We commend Celebration!, and all constituent organizations, for carrying forth this noble tradition (for more on this tradition in the 20th century and beyond, see the article in this issue). I call your attention to the illustration by Aziz Inan, reproduced for you right here on the front page of this issue, and to the accompanying article elsewhere in this issue.

## Happy 306th Birthday, Ben Franklin!

Aziz S. Inan, Ph.D. Electrical Engineering, University of Portland

Benjamin Franklin (January 17, 1706-April 17, 1790) was an extraordinary person with multiple facets and interests and his contributions to the wellbeing of human society are myriad. In the words of his biographer Carl Van Doren, Franklin was a "harmonious human multitude."

In addition to his crucial role in the American Revolution, Franklin was also very active, influential and proficient

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# Celebration! 2012

On January 20, 2012 hundreds of people attended ceremonies in Philadelphia to mark the 306th birthday of Benjamin Franklin. Sponsored by Celebration! of Benjamin Franklin, Founder, this annual event focused on the theme of Franklin and Energy with a morning symposium,

with Franklin's contributions and moving through the decades to the present.

Energy issues from Franklin's time to the present were explored in the morning session with lectures by Derrick Pitts,

Chief Astronomer of the Franklin Institute, Denis O'Brien, CEO of PECO Energy Company and Dr. Henry Foley, executive director of the Greater Philadelphia Innovation Cluster, a DOE initiative. Members of the Friends of Franklin, students from area schools and the general public were in attendance.



Participants set off on procession to Franklin's grave.

procession to his grave and luncheon at the Down Town Club. United States Secretary of Energy, Dr. Steven Chu, received the annual Franklin Founder award and spoke about the global significance of energy sources and their conservation, beginning

Participants in the annual procession to Franklin's grave were grateful for one of the warmest Franklin birthday celebrations on record and as is the custom a prayer was offered by the Reverend Timothy Safford, rector of Christ Church and a wreath and Franklinia branches placed on Franklin's grave. Luncheon followed at the Down Town Club. For more photographs and video (eventually) of the day's events go to: [www.ushistory.org/celebration](http://www.ushistory.org/celebration)

## Reading Franklin

Carla Mulford, "Benjamin Franklin's Savage Eloquence: Hoaxes from the Press at Passy," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 2008. Read the pdf on line: <http://www.amphilsoc.org/sites/default/files/1520405.pdf>

Kevin T. Barksdale, *The Lost State of Franklin: America's First Secession* (University Press of Kentucky, 2009).

Sheila Skemp, *The Making of a Patriot: Benjamin Franklin at the Cockpit*. The second entry in Oxford University Press' Critical Historical Encounters series.

And, for those who puzzle over Benjamin Franklin's rejection of his son William over their political differences, there is a book with a wonderfully detailed chapter on the Associated Loyalists, a group of which William was a leader in America. Although this is just one chapter in a war that had so many horrors, it is quite probable that this particular thread, which outlines what the Associated Loyalist organization did to fellow Americans, is one that would have been repellent to the elder Franklin. Thomas B. Allen, *Tories: Fighting for the King in America's First Civil War* (Harper, 2010).



# Past Celebrations

This past January Celebration! of Benjamin Franklin Founder commemorated Benjamin Franklin's 306th birthday following in the footsteps of previous generations who commemorated that day in the past. A *Public Ledger* article from January 6, 1924, gave advance warning of the upcoming event, "Franklin Tribute to be Nation-Wide. Philadelphia Will Lead in Observance of His 218th Birthday." It was the Poor Richard's Club in Philadelphia that spearheaded the Philadelphia events. This club was comprised of members from the advertising and printing businesses who had for many generations observed the birthday of their most famous colleague beginning with a dinner in 1906. In 1924 the day began with lunch at their club house, then on Camac Street, followed by a procession to the Federal Building plaza for ceremonies there, then to the Christ Church Burial ground where wreaths would be placed on the grave. An evening banquet at the Bellevue-Stratford capped the day's festivities. In New York the festivities lasted for two days. The Sons of the American Revolution hosted an event with ceremonies held in the Aldermanic Chamber at City Hall on January 17th. On January 18th, the International Benjamin Franklin Society hosted a dinner at the Waldorf Astoria. More than 1,000 guests were expected to be present and both events were to be broadcast. The International Benjamin Franklin Society had been established in 1923 "to provide a meeting place for those who seek to honor and perpetuate the principles for which Franklin stood." Over the nearly 50 years of its existence the organization produced publications, sponsored junior high school chapters and presented an annual award for distinguished public

service. One of the more enduring publications was *Benjamin Franklin: A Play*. The organization disbanded in 1971.

But the intervening years brought more celebrations to Franklin's adopted hometown. In 1926 the Philadelphia festivities appear to have become even more elaborate with the Poor Richard Club arranging for a parade in celebration of the 220th birthday. The Philadelphia Contributionship took part, placing an automobile in the procession bearing a sign which read, "The Oldest Fire Insurance Company in America Founded by Benjamin Franklin 1752 Joins in Celebrating the Anniversary of his Birth. The Philadelphia

Contributionship' for the Insurance of Houses from Loss by Fire."

The Sesquicentennial Committee had hoped to devote a day in October celebrating Franklin in 1926 as part of the official ceremonies, but it seems that event never took place.

Christ Church took an even more active role in the Celebrations in 1928 when the Reverend Louis Washburn invited "Poor Richardites" and other guests to gather in the church at noon for prayers and tributes prior to the march to the grave. (Reverend Washburn's address to the assembly appears elsewhere in this issue.) This annual celebration of Franklin's birth continued even through the war years with an article in the *Philadelphia Bulletin* in 1943 noting that the Poor Richard Club's celebration included a wreath laying ceremony in the morning (including a wreath from President Roosevelt) when The Rev. Dr. E. Felix Kroman rector of Christ Church offered a prayer. The day's festivities ended with the organization's 38th annual dinner at the Bellevue-Stratford.

A second wreath laying took place at 4:00 when the Rev. J. Clemens Kolb, assistant minister of Christ Church and chaplain of the University of Pennsylvania presided at a service and members of Benjamin Franklin Post 405, American Legion, laid a wreath on his grave.

Christ Church remained a center of these daytime festivities and in 1952 had even more reason to celebrate Franklin's

## Where Franklin Worshipped! Poor Richard Will Hold a Memorial Service in Historic Old Christ Church At Noon, Tuesday, January 17th



**Christ Church** † †  
Second Street near Arch  
Founded 1693

At noon, on Tuesday, January 17th, Poor Richardites will foregather in the pews of old Christ Church in memory of Benjamin Franklin. Special exercises will be conducted by Doctor Washburn, the pastor of the church, after which the Club will proceed to the burial ground of Franklin, where a wreath will be laid on the grave of the great American.

Frederick G. Jones, chairman of Poor Richard's Franklin Memorial Exercises Committee, has arranged this unique departure, and thru his committee you will have received complete details of the services to be conducted, and the other important speakers who will be heard. No details are available as this ALMANACK goes to press.

THIS meeting at Christ Church, through the courtesy of Doctor Washburn, is indeed a rare privilege for Poor Richard to meet under such historic auspices. Christ Church dates back to 1695, and its pews have been occupied by many of the distinguished men and women who have made the nation, notable among whom were Washington, Adams, Robert Morris, Benjamin Rush, Betsy Ross and Benjamin Franklin. Franklin's pew is number 70; Washington's pew, number 58, was occupied by Lafayette on his second visit to this country.

IN the yard surrounding the church edifice are the bodies of Robert Morris and James Wilson, signers of the Declaration of Independence. In the burial ground at 5th and Arch Streets, bought by the church in 1710, were interred Benjamin Franklin and Benjamin Rush.

It is expected that a goodly number of Poor Richardites will devote the noon hour on January 17th to these services in memory of Franklin in this famous old

Announcement for the Franklin services at  
Christ Church. Courtesy of  
The Philadelphia Contributionship.

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birthday as they held in conjunction with the Poor Richard Club "A Rededication of Christ Church on the Occasion of the Completion of its restoration to the original colors." An organ recital preceded the service in addition to selections played before and after the sermon by the Reverend E. A. De Bordenave. Edward Riley, Historian of the National Park Service, concluded the program by describing the restoration of Christ Church. General MacArthur was the slated recipient of the award presented by the Poor Richard Club that evening, but an unexpected visit by Prime Minister Winston Churchill to address Congress in Washington, D.C., caused him to cancel his appearance. Nonetheless the event was star studded, with Don Ameche serving as Master of Ceremonies. These events were huge with at times, with as many as 1,000 guests attending and the honorees of national and international stature including Walt Disney (1934), Will Rogers (1935), Bob Hope (1945), and General Dwight D. Eisenhower (1948).

Not surprisingly in 1956 on the 250th anniversary of Franklin's birth, Philadelphia celebrated in grand style. The Poor Richard's Club, the Franklin Institute, and the Delaware River Port Authority combined forces. The day began with a cavalcade of cars that headed to the Christ Church Burial Ground where 26 wreaths from various organizations, including The Philadelphia Contributionship, were placed on the grave. The group then proceeded to the Delaware River Bridge at Fifth and Race Streets where a plaque was placed on the Pennsylvania side and Governor Leader presided, then the cavalcade proceeded to the New Jersey side where Governor Meyner spoke and another plaque was installed, thus officially designating it the Benjamin Franklin Bridge. The procession of cars crossed the Delaware River again, stopping at Independence Hall where Senator Duff spoke about Franklin and then it proceeded to the Franklin Institute for lunch. 500 people were expected to attend this portion of the event. The Poor Richard

Club capped the day with their annual dinner, this time honoring Vice President Richard M. Nixon. A window display was mounted by Gimbels Department store.

Two years later in 1958 on the occasion of the 53rd anniversary dinner, the now traditional daytime events took place again

by the new bust by James Peniston which incorporated some of the old pennies.) A service at Christ Church was held at 10:45, then ceremonies at Independence Hall and finally a luncheon and a dinner at the Bellevue Stratford in the evening.

In the late 1970s as the center of the advertising industry seemed to move to New York, the membership of The Poor Richard Club decided to sell its clubhouse as of 1979, but its membership continued to organize the Franklin Birthday events for a few more years.

The last program in the Christ Church Archives for the Poor Richard festivities is for the 1984 event, when Lee Iacocca, chairman of The New Chrysler Corporation was honored. In a departure from tradition the day's events began with a luncheon at the Adam's Mark Hotel on City Avenue, followed by "a Pilgrimage Motorcade"

which started at Franklin's Grave for the traditional wreath ceremony, with stops at the "Penny Franklin Bust" and a short service at Christ Church, a visit to the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall, concluding at the Franklin Institute at 3:40. Remarks by various dignitaries were offered at each location. This year's dinner took place at the Adam's Mark Hotel.

Throughout many of these years other organizations celebrated Franklin's birthday; the Masons, the University of Pennsylvania and even the Franklin Square Club. Sometimes these overlapped on the same day, and sometimes they took place on consecutive days. When the Poor Richard Club ceased operations, it was the University of Pennsylvania which assumed the leading role in the celebration, but in the late 1990s even Penn had dropped its commemoration of this generally blustery January day. This decision inspired several members of Penn's Old Guard alumni led by Benjamin Franklin Reinauer, II, to form a new organization comprised of organizations founded by or in the image of Franklin entitled "Celebration of Benjamin Franklin, Founder". The first annual event took place in 1999 and has continued with ever more elaborate programs over the years. Mark your calendar for next year's event: January 18, 2013!



*Philadelphia Contributionship car in the January 17, 1926 procession. Courtesy of The Philadelphia Contributionship.*

starting with the cavalcade from the Poor Richard Club on its annual pilgrimage. 18 wreaths were laid at Franklin's grave where Mayor Richardson Dilworth spoke and 30 sixth graders from Southwark Elementary Public School each laid a penny on the grave. An additional ceremony took place at Mikveh Israel where tribute was paid to Haym Solomon. Fireworks were set off over Independence Hall and Governor Leader spoke.

These festivities organized by the Poor Richard Club continued throughout the 1960s and 1970s eliciting large crowds each year for what appears to have been a marathon of speeches and tributes. A 1972 program lists a starting time of 8:00 am at the Poor Richard Club for breakfast, "motorcade & Bus Departure from Poor Richard Club for Franklin Pilgrimage." The Franklin Institute was the next stop for the caravan, before it departed for Franklin's grave. A new stop was added at the Penny Franklin bust, a larger than life bust of Franklin composed of pennies donated by the school children and placed in the park next to the fire station at Fourth & Arch Street. (Sadly this bust deteriorated over the years and was replaced several years ago



# Benjamin Franklin's Religion

By Louis C. Washburn

Reprinted from THE CHURCH NEWS for March, 1928

*(Following is the address delivered by the Rector of Old Christ Church on the occasion of the commemoration of the two hundred and twenty-second anniversary of Franklin's birthday, January 17, by the Poor Richard Club, when a religious service was held in connection with the anniversary. Benjamin Franklin worshipped in Old Christ Church, and his body rests in the Old Christ Church burial ground, at Fifth and Arch Street. —Ed.)*



This Patriot's Sanctuary opens wide its doors on this natal anniversary of one of its virile sons, and extends a particularly cordial welcome to the Poor Richard Club and your guests who would in this clarifying atmosphere envisage more adequately the true Benjamin Franklin.

Fascinating as is the story of his struggle to make a living and of the surpassing accomplishments of his brilliant intellect, and of the development of his extraordinary influence in national and international affairs, these, after all, are but secondary to the more intimate records of the growth of his soul. More vital than talents or achievements is the fashioning of character. And of all the factors that shape personality, one's religion (adequately defined) is quite the most dynamic and formative.

Here and now restraining the homiletic impulse, you will find satisfaction in having me simply remind you of a few more or less familiar and illuminating quotations from Franklin himself.

But first his own unabashed confessions compel an unevasive assessment of the honesty of his religious declarations. One of our local papers as recently as Saturday last carries a book review, with the headline "Benjamin Franklin in his mellowest vein." Its opening sentence is "Once upon a time there was an old hypocrite named Benjamin Franklin, who wrote moral precepts into an autobiography and did everything which he told others not to do." Further on, the reviewer, who likely may be present with us, adds "it is needless to say anything of Franklin, the old reprobate of recent discovery—although the wisest could have told you so all the time."

To which we would rejoin: Franklin himself once sagely observed about another when under attack, "If he was so bad with religion, what would he have been without it." Or as a popular jingle runs, "There is so much good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the best of us that it ill-becomes any of us to throw stones at the rest of us."

To be sure, a reckless youth who sows his

wild oats and openly discusses the process with shocking frankness, clouding his better self with irrepressible vulgarity, inflicts raw and ugly scars on his manhood; but shall we let the ubiquitous cynics, be they biographers, or reviewers, or post-prandial merrymakers, get away with a snicker or a sneer at the candid self disclosures of a friend enmeshed in the tragic contest between the dual giants in our common human nature? There is a present and pressing need amongst us for sturdily upholding ethical standards and for insisting that genius is never exempt from the universal moral obligations. And there is equal need for a clearer understanding of the religion of the patient Father of prodigal sons. May it not be that he who as a lad fled from the vindictiveness of an intolerant Puritanism, found not only an economic second-chance in the City of Brotherly Love, but as well a congenial atmosphere in the historic Church whose characteristic note has ever been that we are miserable sinners; and whose intellectual roominess encouraged him to seek here the emancipation of his higher self.

With a juster estimate of the sincerity of his religious expressions, then, we recall one and another of his notable utterances.

From his callow pamphlet on "Liberty and Necessity," written in his teens, he moved forward to that riper document entitled "Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion," and to the composing of that extraordinary manual on self discipline, "The Art of Virtue."

While still a youth he composed also that epitaph so full of profound implications, printed on your programs. The frequently expressed desire to have this epitaph graven on an imposing monument at his grave has been restrained in obedience to the codicil of his will, dated so much later, in 1789, as follows: "I wish to be buried by the side of my wife, if it may be, and that a marble stone be made by Chambers six feet long and four feet wide. Plain, with only a small molding around the upper edge, and this inscription:

BENJAMIN  
And FRANKLIN  
DEBORAH  
1790"

Clearly, his last resting place must remain as it is, and where it is, for all time.

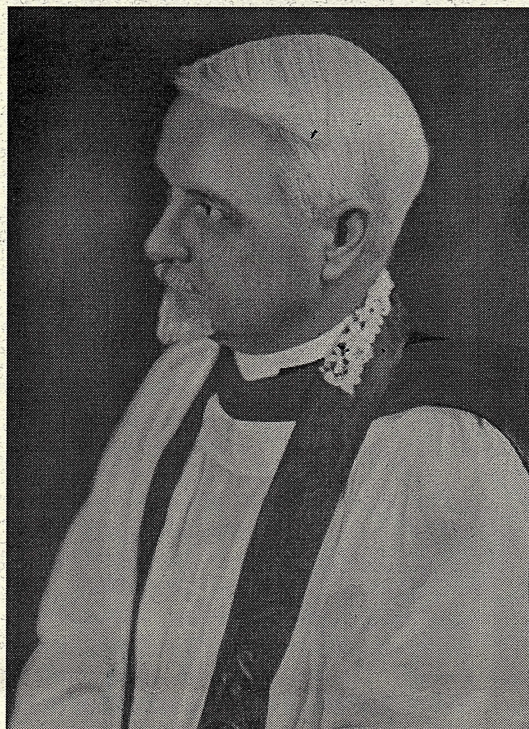
At another period in his maturing religious life, while in England, he joined with his friend, Sir Francis Dashwood (it was he who gave to Philadelphia the statue in front of the Pennsylvania Hospital), in revising the Book of Common Prayer. How he would laugh at the present House of Commons for their meddlesome obstruction of the proposed plan of revision. Franklin rewrote the Catechism and the Psalms and penned the Preface. This Preface starts off as follows; "The Editor of the following Abridgement of the Liturgy of the Church of England thinks it but decent and respectful to all, and (more particularly to the reverend body of Clergy who adorn the Protestant religion by their good works, preaching and example) that he should humbly offer some reasons for such an undertaking. He addresses himself to the serious and discerning. He professes himself to be a Protestant of the Church of England, and holds in the highest veneration the Doctrines of Jesus Christ. He is a sincere lover of social worship, deeply sensible of its usefulness to society; and he aims at doing some service to religion by proposing such abbreviations and omissions in the forms of our Liturgy (retaining everything he thinks essential) as might, if adopted, procure a more general attendance."

Again he composed and used a Litany for himself containing such exalted sentences as these: "That I may be preserved from Atheism and Infidelity, impiety and profaneness, and in my address to Thee, carefully avoid irreverence and ostentation, formality and odious hypocrisy — Help me Oh Father!" "That I may to those above me be dutiful, humble and submissive, avoiding pride, disrespect and contumacy. Help me Oh Father!" "That I may to those below me

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be gracious, condescending and forgiving, using clemency, protecting innocent distress, avoiding cruelty, harshness and oppression, insolence and unreasonable severity. Help me Oh Father!"



Portrait of the Rev. Louis Washburn.  
Courtesy of Christ Church, Philadelphia

His frequent letters from abroad to his daughter and his wife reiterate his desire that they should continue regular attendants at public worship. "You spent your Sunday very well, but I think you should go oftener to Church," so he writes to Sarah Bache.

His pew in Christ Church was No. 70. It was in this Patriots' Sanctuary that his daughter and his son Francis, were baptized, and here his wife and himself were buried. He was one of its mainstays materially, being one of the committee who raised funds with which to build the monumental tower and install therein the peal of eight bells in 1754.

Particularly memorable is the speech he made at the Federal Convention of 1787; urging that prayers, imploring the guidance of heaven on the deliberations of the Convention, should be offered every morning before the Convention proceeded to business. "After four or five weeks of continual reasonings with each other we are groping in the dark to find political truth, and are scarce able to distinguish it when presented to us. How has it happened, Sir,

that we have not hitherto, once, thought of humbly applying to the Father of Lights to illuminate our understandings? In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for the divine protection. Our prayers, Sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a Superintending Providence in our favor. To that kind Providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten powerful Friend? Or do we imagine we no longer need His assistance? I have lived, Sir, a long time; and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of men. And I also believe that without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel. And what is worse, mankind may hereafter from this unfortunate instance despair of establishing government by wisdom; and leave it to chance, war and conquest."

Let those who will then disparage these indisputable facts and transitional records in the character and life of the versatile philosopher; yet those who would honor themselves by taking him as their patron and hero are surely well advised when they make pilgrimage to this shrine on his Anniversary Day, in certifying to themselves and to the world at large that the true estimate of the man must take into account his better self. Religion is not theology, nor the repetition of sectarian shibboleths. Ascertained truth is not a chair to fetter thinking, but an assured basis from which to adventure toward ever expanding horizons. Moreover, discipleship is not a Pharisaic profession of faultlessness. Some such conceptions are clearly interwoven in Franklin's thoughts and his spiritual struggle against fiery temptations found its culminating expression when he lay dying – he chose to have a picture of Christ on the Cross where he could gaze upon it.

One more quotation completes his *Apologia pro sua vitae*. A month before his death he wrote: "Here is my Creed: I believe in One God, Creator of the Universe. That he governs it by his providence. That he should be worshipped. That the most acceptable service we render to Him is doing good to His other children. That the Soul of man is immortal, and will be tried with justice in another life respecting its conduct in this. As to Jesus of Nazareth I think the system of morals and His religion, as He left them to

us the best the world ever saw or is likely to see. Having experienced the goodness of the Supreme Being in conducting me prosperously in a long life I have no doubt of its continuance" in the next, though without the smallest conceit of meriting such goodness."

Enough! The evidence is before you! What think ye? Did he mean what he said? Remember Washington's tribute to him: "Venerated for benevolence. Admired for talents. Esteemed for patriotism. Beloved for philanthropy."

What brought such men to this place? To parade their perfection; to patronize God; or because of desperate and conscious need; their tested conviction that here was (and is, and ever shall be) a spiritual power house whence issues recovery, vision, tonic, redirection, life.

And in these modern days when defaming critics and flippant jesters would not only debunk our heroes, but aggressively assail the citadels of righteousness and faith, it surely is timely and well that such a company as this – masters of the mighty press and moulders of public opinion – should stop, look and listen, and go forth to carry on the faith of our fathers and safeguard and uphold American traditions, ideals and institutions.

America stands in the courts of God  
Her feet are the feet of those who plod  
Up to high Calvaries; and her eyes-  
Blue as these Pennsylvania skies-  
Challenge our faith. Have we not sold  
Her for a talent or two of gold?

*Men of the high faith  
Who are of my faith,  
Back to the dream of Jefferson,  
Back to the pledge of Washington!*

Franklin has prayed with Lafayette  
Under this roof where Mercy met  
Judgment and Truth, they meet again  
Now in Christ Church, O sons of Penn-  
By that which sanctifies these walls,  
Be true to their memorials!

*Let us not falter  
Up to the altar-  
Faces of flame look down today:  
"Kneel, as we knelt!" they seem to say.*

*Editor's Note: The above text complete with unusual spellings included additional reference text at the end. The Reverend Washburn's sermon was reprinted in The Church News and then reissued as a pamphlet. Copies exist in the Christ Church archives.*



# In His Own Words

## *"There are honest Statesmen still among ye"*



In this election year, it seems that the political news is all we hear. Concern over the corrupting power of money, and the search for honest leaders were also considerations in Franklin's day. Among Franklin's papers at the American Philosophical Society is an intriguing undated fragment, which the editors of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* have tentatively assigned to the period in which Franklin was serving as Colonial Agent in London. It may or may not be of Franklin's composition, but it is in his hand. Although it is torn and incomplete, one page contains an election exhortation, perhaps drafted for some newspaper. Its signature shows that it was intended to be anonymous. Is the "Plainman" of the signature that far from the 99 % of our own day?

"Courage, Britons; there are honest Statesmen still among ye; employ 'em, and they will do their Duty. There are brave Officers still among ye; employ 'em, and they will fight your Foes and remove your Dangers. You Party Politicians, extend your Views beyond your own private Inte[rests] and study the Interest of your Country. You British Politicians; extend your partial Views beyond your own Island, and study the Welfare of Ireland and your Colonies. Are they not Parts of the same

Whole, Members of the same Body? Why would you swell the Head at the Expense of the Limbs, and give your Empire the Rickets? You Electors, reject the Candidate that offers you a Bribe; it may help to discourage the Practice. Britons; there still subsist among ye, Wisdom, Honesty and Bravery; exert them, and ye may still be victorious, glorious and happy.

Plainman"

Perhaps Franklin was writing about this very same election when he sent a letter to his son, William Franklin. Around the same time as this letter was written, London newspapers were publishing joke advertisements for seats in Parliament—wanted, or for sale, at prices running between £3,5000 and £4,000.

"Dear Son

...The parliament is up and the nation in a ferment with the new elections. Great complaints are made that the natural interests of country gentlemen in their neighbouring boroughs, is overborne by the monied interest of the new people who have got sudden fortunes in the Indies, or as contractors, &c. £4000 is now the market price for a borough. In short this whole venal nation is now at market, will be sold for about Two Millions;

and might be bought out of the hands of the present bidders (if he would offer half a million more) by the devil himself."

On the very same day, Benjamin Franklin also wrote to his friend Joseph Galloway, who was then in Pennsylvania. Tales of the election that was taking place also formed a large part of this letter. In it, Franklin enclosed a copy of a recent pamphlet which had been widely distributed, "Bribery and Corruption considered in a new light; in a dialogue between two Electors".

Friends wishing to read the complete texts of Franklin's letters to William Franklin and Galloway can consult them on line in the digital edition of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* under the date of March 13, 1768. <http://www.franklinpapers.org>

## Benjamin Franklin Returns to the United States

The story of Franklin's return to the land of his birth after his service as minister plenipotentiary to the Court of France during and after the Revolutionary War is a long and complicated one, but we thought that Friends of Franklin might enjoy a morsel of this tale, as seen through an exchange between Franklin's twenty-something grandson, William Temple Franklin, and Franklin's dear friend and neighbor during his years in France, Louis-Guillaume Le Veillard. Thanks to Assistant Editor Allegra Di Bonaventura of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* for suggesting this article.

Le Veillard lived near Franklin in the suburban village of Passy, where he was the proprietor of the local mineral springs. In 1790 he became Passy's first mayor, and he fell victim to Madame La Guillotine

during the French Revolution. In July, 1785, Le Veillard was among the party that accompanied Franklin, his two grandsons, and a domestic servant from Passy to the Channel port of Le Havre at the mouth of the Seine. When Le Veillard reached the French port he could still not bear to be parted from his good friends, and he sailed across the English Channel to Southampton with them. Le Veillard wrote the letter below to William Temple Franklin from the Isle of Wight, on the other side of the Solent from Southampton, soon after the Americans boarded the ship that was to sail the following day for Philadelphia, the *London Packet*. The letters below are translated from the French originals.

Cowes, July 27, 1785

I am attached to you for life, my dear W. T. Franklin. I am sorely disappointed to see you leave, but my feelings are ameliorated slightly by the hope of seeing you again. Although I wish for this heartily, my friend, for your sake I would rather know you to be happy than see you. I cannot conceal from you that I believe your best life is to be lived in America, and except for the crown of France which would give me the means to render multitudes happy, there is no state in America which I wouldn't take over the most brilliant country of Europe. And if I was younger, had a better command of your language, and was free to bring along those whom I love and who tether me to my own country, I would go with you to live out my life there.

Continued on p.9



# In Montreal: Franklin and the Revolutionary Wife

By Bruno Paul Stenson

Originally published as "The man who started **The Gazette**; Fleury Mesplet was sent here from France by Benjamin Franklin to print pro-revolutionary propaganda" in *The Gazette, Montréal, Canada*, July 16, 2011

*Editor's Note: We are indebted to Bruno Paul Stenson for helping us to secure permission to reproduce his article which includes exciting new information about Franklin and his connections with Montreal and for securing permission for us to reprint the illustrations that accompany his article.*

For a brief time during the seven months that Montreal was an American city, Benjamin Franklin was here to negotiate support of the locals for the American Revolution. He failed in this mission but might well have played an instrumental role in reuniting a woman with her runaway husband.

Of the 16 British North American colonies in 1775, three were in what would become Canada. Of those, the only one the revolutionary forces could realistically capture was Lower Canada, now called Quebec. Accordingly, troupes under Continental Army Brigadier-General Richard Montgomery landed on Montreal Island at Point St. Charles on Sunday morning, Nov. 12, 1775. After securing Montreal on Dec. 3, Montgomery joined General Benedict Arnold for an ill-conceived and ultimately disastrous attempt to seize Quebec City on Dec. 31.

Meanwhile, back in Montreal, Major David Wooster was left in charge of the effort to rally Montrealers to the American revolutionary cause. However, his army's imprisonment of the city's leading citizens, closing the Catholic churches and spreading smallpox made them and their cause unpopular.

Congress chose to send a team of three diplomats to set the situation right. Lawyer Samuel Chase and French-educated Roman Catholic Charles Carroll of Carrollton accompanied political philosopher, inventor and statesman Benjamin Franklin to Montreal.

The delegation arrived at Montreal on April 29, 1776, welcomed by General

Arnold. A reception was held for them at for them in a house at the corner of Notre

Dame and St. Charles streets, possibly the home of British born Boston businessman Thomas Walker.

On May 6, a French printer whom Franklin had met in London, England and had persuaded to move to Philadelphia arrived in Montreal. Fleury Mesplet was sent [here] by Franklin to print prorevolutionary propaganda meant to convince francophones to join the cause of the United Colonies. He found lodging in a tavern and set up his printing press in a building on rue Capitale (a lane running from St-Sulpice to St-François-Xavier).

After two weeks in Montreal, the delegation received news that the Continental Army siege of Quebec City had ended in failure. Franklin concluded that it would be "easier to buy Canada than to conquer it." The delegation and its supporters decided to end the occupation and leave for home, some more quickly than others.

One of the supporters who left Montreal the fastest was Thomas Walker. His active support of the Revolution secured him the wrath of British authorities. Furthermore, he and his wife were so disagreeable they became unpopular with the Americans as well. Walker escaped Montreal so quickly that he left a few important things behind, including his wife, Jane Hughes. Knowing how unsafe it would be for her to attempt a return south of the border alone, Hughes sought out Franklin and his fellow delegates for help. On May 11, 1776, the very day they left Montreal, the delegation wrote a note to the Continental Army asking them safely to conduct Hughes



*"Jane Hughes was the wife Thomas Walker, a Boston businessman and revolutionary zealot who ran a shop in Montréal. After the failed attempt to include Canada in the American Revolution, Walker left Montréal in such haste that he left some important things behind... including his wife." © Château Ramezay – Historic Site and Museum of Montréal*

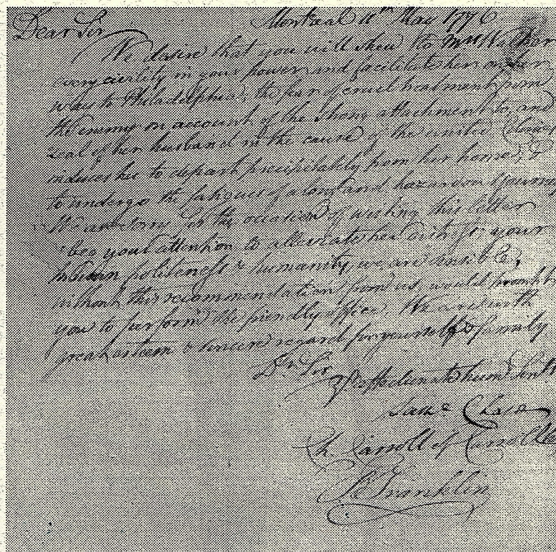
the Continental Army's headquarters in the city, the Château de Ramezay, former home of the French governor of Montreal. Living accommodations were arranged

*Continued on p.9*



back to her husband then believed to be in Philadelphia. The note, possibly written at the Château Ramezay, was thought necessary because "the zeal of her husband in the cause of the united colonies" would make her a target of the British. Thomas Walker reappears once or twice in history after this date - he died in Boston in 1788 - but it is not known whether he ever was reunited with Jane Hughes.

The note signed by Franklin and his associates is on permanent display at the Château Ramezay Museum in Old Montreal. Its last signature: B Franklin. In the same gallery at the museum one can hear Franklin relate his days at the Château in one of the audio-visual stations peppered throughout the museum. Each of these stations features the



"When Jane Hughes found herself stranded in Montréal, the trio of delegates from the United Colonies wrote this letter to the Continental Army, requesting that they accompany her back to her husband who was believed to have returned to Philadelphia. The signatories are, from top to bottom, Samuel Chase, Charles Carroll of Carrollton and Benjamin Franklin." © Château Ramezay - Historic Site and Museum of Montréal

"ghost" of a former occupant of the building setting the Château in its historical context.

As for Fleury Mesplet, the time and special requirements needed to pack his printing, equipment for transport back to the United Colonies made it impossible for him to escape Montreal before the British retook the city.

After spending time in jail for his futile participation in the Revolution - his tracts failed to rally Montrealers to the cause - Mesplet remained in Montreal and eventually founded a newspaper that is still published today. It is called *The Gazette*.

**Bruno Paul Stenson**  
is a historian and  
musicologist who has  
been volunteering as a  
Château Ramezay guide  
since 1995.

#### Returns continued

Le Veillard

Addressed: To Monsieur W. T. Franklin  
on board the vessel London Packet"

Once the travelers landed in Philadelphia, Le Veillard was the first to receive an account of their voyage:

Philadelphia Sept. 16, 1785

Although I only have a moment to write since the *Courier de New-York* sails immediately, and since it is the last opportunity that we will have to send letters for this month's packet boat, I cannot leave you ignorant of our happy arrival in this country yesterday.

As you can see, our passage was not very long, and in general it was very agreeable. Although we experienced some rather bad weather, namely a violent blow on August 23 such as the captain had never seen in his life, my grandfather scarcely suffered, and he is now feeling infinitely better than before his departure. As for us, we were very well, except for some sea sickness that tormented us the first few days. It was impossible for us to have a better captain. We dispatched a half dozen sheep, and as many pigs and some hundreds of chickens and ducks not counting turkeys, geese, etc. You can see that we didn't make great inroads into the salted beef on board;

and I assure you that the water was as much spared through the drinking of punch, porter, claret, etc.

The reception of my grandfather here was all that you and I could have wished. No one knew when he would debark, although it was known that the vessel had arrived downriver. Upon entering the port, we found that all the ships there (of all nations, even English) were decorated with their flags, banners, etc. and as soon as we set foot on dry land we were surrounded by an immense crowd (which here was not composed of the rabble) who showed by their most animated cheers their satisfaction with once again seeing their Friend and Benefactor. This whole crowd, that is to say, the whole city, followed him to the entrance to our house, showing their happiness and wishing him long life. I cannot, my friend, express all the pleasure that I felt at that moment. Walking through the streets I cried with joy and my tears redoubled when I saw that I was not alone in being moved. I will not describe his meeting with his daughter, which was as you can well imagine very tender. A little while later he received a visit from several of his friends and the first people of the City: Richard Henry Lee, the current President of Congress, whose brother you knew, who is here for his health, was among the first to come and congratulate us on our arrival.

We await a quantity of other visits this morning, which makes it impossible for me to write to my other friends at the moment. However, I count on you to tell them of our arrival and the reason for my silence.

As for political news, you can well believe that in the last day, as busy as I have been, it has not been possible for me to get up to date, but nevertheless I will be. I am being hurried along to finish this letter, so there is no way I can explain now. I was touched by the affectionate letter that you wrote me from Cowes. I will keep it forever as an indisputable proof of your friendship—which I cherish more than anything. Farewell—I must leave you because the visitors are arriving.

Please give my affectionate wishes and regards to Madame and Mademoiselle Le Veillard, Mesdames Brillon and Paris, Madame Helvetius, Mademoiselle Monmarquet, Madame Filleuil, etc.

Your affectionate friend for life,

W. T. Franklin

Addressed: Monsieur Le Veillard at the Nouvelles Eaux in Passy, near Paris, France

*Le Veillard's letter to Temple Franklin is at the American Philosophical Society and Temple's response is at the Pierpont Morgan Library.*





## Calendar of Events

**June 14, 2012-** Evening seminar, The Worlds of Benjamin Franklin, Washington, D.C. For more information see:

[http://residentassociates.org/ticketing/tickets/reserve.aspx?performanceNumber=224586&utm\\_source=RAad&utm\\_medium=OAtsa&utm\\_content=mwX&utm\\_campaign=MayWe](http://residentassociates.org/ticketing/tickets/reserve.aspx?performanceNumber=224586&utm_source=RAad&utm_medium=OAtsa&utm_content=mwX&utm_campaign=MayWe)

**July 30, 2012-** Lady Joan Reid, "Franklin and Joseph Priestley" 12 noon at Benjamin Franklin House, Craven St., London. Admission.

**August 6, 2012-** "A Musical Evening: Franklin's Glass Armonica" 6:30 PM at Benjamin Franklin House, Craven St., London. Admission.

**September 10, 2012-** Tom Fitzgerald reads from his new novel, *Poor Richard's Lament*. 1-2 PM at Benjamin Franklin House, Craven St., London. Reservations required. Admission.

**October 22, 2012-** Lady Joan Reid, "Franklin and the Bankers" 6 PM at Benjamin Franklin House, Craven St., London. Admission.

**January 18, 2013-** Celebration! of Benjamin Franklin Founder, seminar, procession to his grave and luncheon. Philadelphia.

*Happy continued*

during the Enlightenment period both in America and Europe. His investigations and achievements spanned many fields of study including literature, printing, business, entrepreneurship, science, engineering, technology, politics, philosophy, environment, arts, and public service. His inventions include swim fins, the rocking chair, bifocal lenses, the Franklin stove, and the glass armonica. His legacy still lives today in every tall building around us protected day and night by his most famous invention, the lightning rod.

Tuesday, January 17th, 2012 marked Franklin's 306th birthday, numerically a very special birthday number for Franklin indeed! Why? I will explain.

First, if one assigns  $A = 1$ ,  $B = 2, \dots$ , and  $Z = 26$  to the letters of the English alphabet, the letters of "Benjamin Franklin" add up to 153, which I recently coined as the Franklin number, and twice the Franklin number equals 306 [1]! Isn't this something?

Second,  $306 = 17 \times 17 + 17$ , where 17 is a number that pops up repeatedly in Franklin's biography. For example, he was born on the 17th of January, died on 17th of April, his birth day was Sunday which is day 1 of each week and death day was Saturday (day 7) and Sunday-Saturday numbers put side-by-side yield 17. Since he lived during the eighteenth century, all the years in his lifetime started with the number 17. He was the 15th of his parents' 17 children and reverse of 15 which is 51 equals three times 17. He moved from Boston to Philadelphia at age 17. The digits of his death year add up to 17 and many more [2]. Also, note that if Franklin's death year 1790 is split as 17 and 90, amazingly 17 times reverse of 90 yields 153, the Franklin number!

If Franklin's birthday number 306 is split as 30 and 6, the difference of the squares of these two numbers yields 864, half of which is 432, where reverse of 432 is 234 which is twice 117, Franklin's birth date (January 17th)!

In addition, all the divisors of the Franklin number 153 (which are 1, 3, 9, 17, 51 and 153) add up to 234, that is, twice 117! Fascinating!

Also note that the reverse of the Franklin number is 351, which equals three times 117! Wow! In addition, if 153 is split as 15 and 3, sum of the squares of these two numbers yields  $234 = 2 \times 117$ ! It's like magic, isn't it?

If 351 (which is 153 reverse) is split as 3 and 51,  $3 \times 51 = 153$ ! In addition, if 351 is split as 35 and 1, the difference of the squares of these two numbers results in eight times 153 which is four times 306! Amazing!

Also, the reverse of the sum of the squares of the digits of 117 yields 15 which is  $1 \times 5 \times 3$ , that is, the product of the digits of the Franklin number! Unbelievable!

I hope these fun numerical coincidences related to Franklin's birthday help serve as a vehicle to attract more attention to his life and achievements. Happy 306th Birthday, Ben Franklin, and thanks for continuing to serve as a role model for generations to come!

### References:

[1] A. S. Inan, "The Franklin Number and Other Numerical Oddities in Ben Franklin's Life," Franklin Gazette, Volume 21, Number 3, Fall 2011, p. 9.

[2] A. S. Inan, "More 17's in Ben Franklin's Life," Franklin Gazette, Volume 21, Number 2, Summer 2011, pp. 7-8.

## Math Puzzlers

By Aziz S. Inan, Ph.D., Electrical Engineering, University of Portland

*Editor's Note: Here are some new math puzzlers to try; answers will appear in the next issue.*

**Problem # 28. Ben finds an organization.** Benjamin Franklin founded an organization in year  $x$ . If the difference between  $x$  and its reverse yields a year in Franklin's life, which organization was founded by Franklin in year  $x$ ?

**Problem # 29. Ben's age.** Benjamin Franklin is  $x$  years old in the year  $y$  where  $x$  equals the two-digit number in the middle of  $y$ . What are  $x$  and  $y$ ?

**Problem # 30. Benjamin Franklin's birthday in 2057.** Why will Benjamin Franklin's birthday number in 2057 be special? (Hint: The Franklin number.)



# Franklin Tidbits



**Friends Rejoice:** Friend of Franklin Christopher Lowell, who impersonates Franklin for a living has introduced a new feature to his website, a Franklin blog. The March 16 entry, for example, highlights some of Franklin's ideas on fitness and health. For weekly updates on his new blog check out <http://www.benfranklinlive.org>

Chris also tells us that he has begun offering a web seminar on Continuing Legal Education featuring our favorite Founder. Lawyers who sign up watch a video and then enter a chat room with the moderator (a lawyer from Philadelphia) and Benjamin Franklin. There are details on Chris's web site.

Congratulations to Friend Carla Mulford, who just received the

William L. Mitchell Prize from the Bibliographical Society of America for her December, 2008, essay published in the *Proceedings* of the American Philosophical Society, "Benjamin Franklin's Savage Eloquence: Hoaxes from the Press at Passy, 1782".

**Franklin and Thomas Paine:** Listen to Lady Joan Reid's talk recorded on February 27 at Franklin's former lodgings in Craven Street, London: <http://benjaminfranklinhouse.org/site/sections/news/default.htm>

**Franklin flow?** Scientists have worked for years on figuring out how people can achieve the elusive mental state known as "flow"—a feeling of effortless concentration that results in outstanding performance of skills accompanied by a feeling of joy in the moment. A new technology to allow everyone to achieve this state and master new skills is a dream that is being tested in the lab. A current study uses transcranial stimulation to invoke this state, wherein a mild electrical shock is

given to subjects. Scientists think that this therapy accelerates the formation of new neural pathways, resulting in long term changes. The calm focus that followed the shock was remarkably like the flow state, with the passage of time fading out of consciousness while the new skill was mastered. The amazing thing is that these studies report a phenomenon that would not have been unfamiliar to Franklin, one that Franklin's friend Ingenhousz described after an accidental self-administered electrical shock. We know that Franklin on more than one occasion also had similar accidents. Could Franklin's ability to intensely concentrate and master difficult skills have had anything to do with the accidental shocks he endured? See Sally Adee's Feb. 6, 2012, "Zap your brain into the zone: Fast track to pure focus" in *New Scientist* for details of the transcranial stimulation experiment. But don't try it at home.

**Welcome to Our New Member!**

Henry Foley, State College, PA

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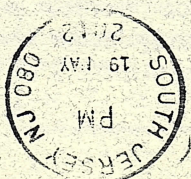
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