

# Franklin Gazette

Volume 22, Number 1, Fall 2012

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

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

*"Patience in Market, is worth Pounds in a Year."*

*Poor Richard, September 1752*

## President's Message

By Lee E. Knepp

Appreciation is extended to board members Marty Mangold and Jackson Boswell for their article in this issue of the *Gazette* on The Friends of Franklin gathering in Washington, D.C., in April of this year. The article and related photographs evoke pleasant memories of our time together there for those who attended, and share our activities with the whole organization.

Not included in Marty's article is reference to our visit to the impressive statue of Benjamin Franklin located at the southeastern corner of 11th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the Old Post Office Building. As noted at the base of the monument, the statue was erected in January 1889 (at another D.C. location not distant from the Old Post Office Building), and it was designed by Ernst Plassman, sculpted by Jacques Jouvonal, and was the gift of *Washington Post* founder Stilson Hutchins. We hope you enjoy the accompanying photograph of our group taken with Benjamin Franklin.

We note with alarm and genuine concern the news reports of an August 24th theft of an extremely valuable portrait bust of Benjamin Franklin from a Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania private

collection, and its subsequent retrieval in a damaged condition. Franklin connections abound between current events and our membership: after being informed by

our organization's Vice President Jackson Boswell that the accused suspect is from Alabama, board member Cutter Hughes (an attorney from Huntsville, Alabama) responded "Yikes! We don't know her!" and board member Marty Mangold expressed his embarrassment that the accused was apprehended in his own state of residence. It is comforting to know that any damage inflicted to this rare Franklin bust can be fully repaired by a restoration expert.

The officers and board members treasure your membership and involvement in The Friends of Franklin and beg your continued support of the organization. Notices for payment of annual dues will be issued this fall, and we ask you to respond promptly with your remittance. And, as the end of calendar year 2012 rapidly approaches, we remind you of your opportunity to make a financial contribution to The Friends of Franklin to ensure its continued success as it carries out its important mission to preserve the legacy of Benjamin Franklin. Contributions qualify as a deduction under 501(c)(3) of the I.R.S. Code, and should be remitted to The Friends of Franklin, Inc., PO Box 40048, Philadelphia, PA 19106.



*The Friends and their friends assembled before the Benjamin Franklin monument along Pennsylvania Avenue*





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# Musings: Catherine The Great and Benjamin Franklin

By Eleanor Gesensway

After reading Robert K. Massie's recent and thoroughly engaging biography of *Catherine the Great: Portrait of a Woman*, I was struck by some striking parallels in her life with the life of Benjamin Franklin. (Of course, there are also many profound differences.)

Franklin was born in 1706, Catherine in 1729. He died in 1790; she only 6 years later in 1796. As teenagers, they each started life anew, among strangers, away from family and familiar surroundings. Franklin left home at 17, by choice. Catherine (née Sophia Friederike Auguste of Anhalt-Zerbst) at age 14, involuntarily, when she was chosen by Empress Elizabeth of Russia to marry her nephew and heir, Peter.

In adulthood, they were both determinedly self-educated, self-directed, self-motivated and increasingly self-confident. Influenced by Enlightenment ideas, they both read voraciously and corresponded with the likes of Voltaire, Diderot and other leading thinkers.

Catherine became Empress of Russia in 1762, not long after Franklin retired from his printing trade to devote his energies to affairs, of state as well as to his scientific, civic, and cultural interests. They were both trailblazers interested in modernization and improvements benefitting all citizens.

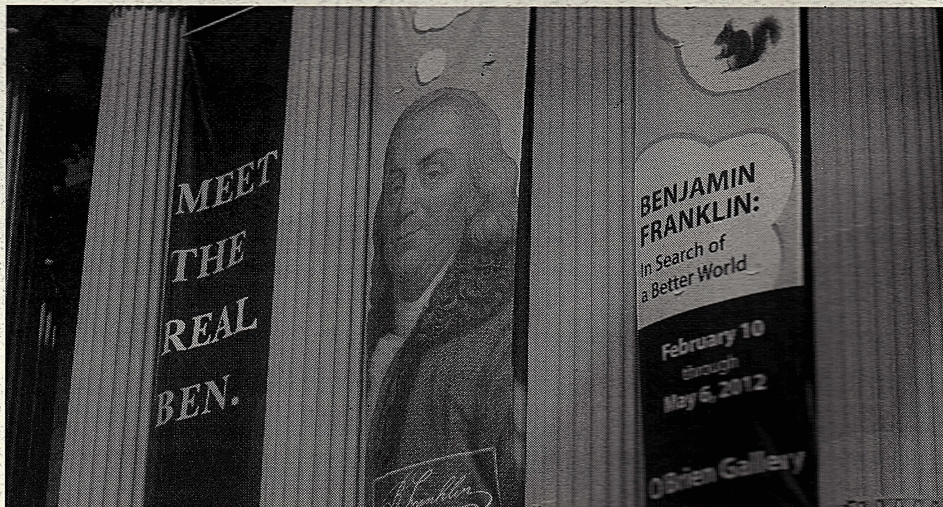
In later life, they each faced mounting political problems which forced them to change, moderate or reject some of their visionary goals.

Although they never met personally, I think we can reasonably deduce that Catherine knew of Franklin. Robert Massie describes Catherine's fifteen year correspondence with Voltaire. She likely was aware that Voltaire had met and embraced Franklin. (p.334)

Additionally, Catherine selected young Nicholas Sheremetev, son and heir of one of the richest and most prominent of Russian noble families, as playmate for her son and heir, Grand Duke Paul. The Sheremetevs lived in an Italianate palace five miles from Catherine's home when in Moscow, the Kremlin. Paintings by Rembrandt, Van Dyke and others lined the walls and twenty thousand volumes including works by Europe's literati filled the shelves. Also in the Sheremetev's library, there were busts of Voltaire and Benjamin Franklin. (p.311)

Catherine the Great and Benjamin Franklin each became the leading citizen of their adopted city and their country. Each transformed and informed policies at home and on the world stage.

*Editor's Note: Often we must all be struck by comparisons between Franklin and other world figures or run across his various comments tucked into unexpected articles. Please share these with us – it's always fun to see how often Franklin crops up in the real world. I was particularly struck by my daughter's reference to Franklin in a graduation speech: Hide not your Talents, they for Use were made. What's a Sun-Dial in the Shade!*



Banners welcoming us to the National Archives exhibit "Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World"



# April 2012 Weekend in Washington, D.C.

By Martin Mangold

The gathering commenced Friday evening, April 20, with "A Franklinian Evening at the Mangold Home" in Rockville featuring an

alfresco dinner. Attendees were Friends Lee Knepp of McClure, Pa., Phil Krider of Tucson, Az., Cutter and Mary Shepard Hughes of Huntsville, Al., Watty Strouss of New York City, Jackson and Ann Boswell of Arlington, Va., and Marty and Jane Mangold of Rockville, Md. We were joined by friends of Friends Beverly Brandau of Timonium, Md., Daphna Shye (a close friend and the artist behind some of the Mangolds' favorite Franklin holdings) and husband Dr. Calman Prussin, the Mangold sons Ben and Barry, John Willett and Cathy Gebhart of nearby Garrett Park, and Nancy and Joe Huba of Cheverly, Md.

Marty reprised his cello performance from the earliest Friends of Franklin meetings, playing "So Merry as We Two Have Been," an unaccompanied Irish folk song mentioned by Benjamin Franklin in his correspondence, and later led the group in heartily singing appropriate Franklin-related ballads.

Our initial visit on Saturday was to the National Archives along Pennsylvania Avenue to see the final presentation of the touring exhibit from the Franklin Tricentennial of 2006, "Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World." The exhibit here was augmented by some special additions from the collections of the National Archives, including the Journal of the Constitutional Convention, a printed Constitution from 1787 on loan from the U.S. State

Department, and the French decree of June 11, 1790, announcing a mourning period in honor of the late Dr. Franklin.

We gathered for lunch at the Old Post Office building, a landmark on Pennsylvania Avenue, which will soon be undergoing renovations and transformation under the management of Donald Trump. We ate at the open food court in the lower level, and then went to the top of the bell tower for a view of the city from the highest point available (the Washington Monument was closed due to the August, 2011 earthquakes which had adversely affected a number of structures).

We then moved to the "American Stories" exhibition at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. The display included the "Elkanah Watson" suit, reportedly worn by Franklin at the signing of the Treaty of Alliance with France in 1778, and subsequently given by Dr. Franklin to Watson, a native of Massachusetts. This was the last appearance of the suit on loan from the Massachusetts Historical Society; it has since been announced that the Smithsonian has acquired this wonderful treasure and added it to the nation's permanent collection.

The exhibit also included the crab-tree walking stick "with a gold head wrought in the form of the cap of liberty" that Dr. Franklin bequeathed to George Washington -- perhaps the second most wonderful Franklin item in the Washington area, after the portrait of Franklin's son, Francis Folger Franklin, which was on display in the Mangold house during dinner Friday evening, on loan from Franklin descendants especially for our weekend gathering.

We ended Saturday afternoon at the Folger Shakespeare Library, located just east of the U.S. Capitol. Besides being one of the most exquisite libraries in the world, its founder Henry Clay Folger was from the same branch of the Folger family as Franklin's mother. Starting in the Founder's Room, we were given a private tour of the Reading Rooms by Betsy Walsh and other staff. We had up-close time with a Franklin autograph from the Folger collection, correspondence between Franklin and his relative on Nantucket, and a letter written by Madame Helvetius. We concluded our visit with the exhibit "Shakespeare's Sisters."



*The crabtree walking stick and the suit worn by Franklin on display at the Smithsonian.*

*Continued on p.4*



Dinner was at the Bistro D'Oc across the street from Ford's Theater, where we attended a marvelous performance of the musical 1776. The role of Benjamin Franklin was played by actor Chris Bloch, who met us afterwards to chat about his role and the Francis Folger Franklin portrait which he had seen earlier at the Mangold house.

Sunday morning several of the group attended the morning worship service at

the Washington National Cathedral, and then searched the dozens and dozens of embroidered seat cushions in the choir loft in for a cushion commemorating Dr. Franklin, but did not find one. Continuing this search would be a fine Franklinian project for another day.

Following lunch on Sunday we visited the Renwick Gallery exhibit "Something of Splendor: Decorative Arts from the White House." The Renwick is on the same block of

Pennsylvania Avenue as the White House, so these wonderful pieces were none the worse for travel or decades upon decades of use. We were all refreshed and quite taken with the Renwick's other galleries which we enjoyed before our respective departures for home.



Following dinner Friday evening, the gathering in the Mangold house: from left, Phil Krider, Mary Shepard Hughes, Ann Boswell, Beverly Brandau, John Willett, and (presiding at the piano) host Marty Mangold

## The "Phylosephy" of Crown Soap

By Julie Hegner

Benjamin Franklin's multitude of inventions have ensured him lasting fame as a scientist. While it is popular knowledge that his son, William, assisted with some of Ben's experiments, it might come as a surprise to learn that the women in his family were also scientifically inclined. Ben's daughter, Sally Franklin Bache, and his sister, Jane Mecom, have spent much of the past two centuries in the shadow

of their famous relative, a position they have had a difficult time escaping. Yet the rich correspondence that they left behind shows Jane and Sally to be intelligent and inquisitive women, something that is particularly evident in a series of letters between Ben and Jane from 1785-1786. In them, it becomes obvious that on at least one notable occasion the Franklin women shared Ben's desire to understand some of

the principles governing the world in which they lived.

In the autumn of 1785, Benjamin Franklin returned to a hero's welcome in Philadelphia after a lengthy mission to gain French aid for the American Revolution. He moved back into the family home, Franklin

*Continued on p.5*



Court, crowded with his daughter and son-in-law and their seven children, and was soon elected President of Pennsylvania. His sister, Jane, had hoped that he would visit her in Boston upon his return and was greatly disappointed by this turn of events. She had been one of his most faithful correspondents for decades, however, and took some solace in receiving regular letters from her brother after years of missing and delayed international mail.

Not long after his return, Ben wrote to Jane requesting the family recipe (or "receipt," in eighteenth century parlance) for crown soap and asked that she make a large batch of the product, volunteering their grandnephew Jonathan Williams, Jr.'s help with the making of it. Ben had a specific type of soap in mind, that which their late brother John (a chandler) had been expert at making: "the greenish Sort that is close and solid and hard...not that which is white and curdled and crumbly." To avoid confusion, he sent a sample of the kind he desired; he wished to give the finished product to friends of his in France, who "very much admir'd it."<sup>1</sup> It was not the first time he had shown an interest in crown soap: as early as 1772 he had asked for the receipt while he was staying in London, only to find out that the soap contained ingredients unique to the colonies such as bayberry and "Brasileto" (both apparently used for their coloring purposes) which made its production in Europe impractical.<sup>2</sup> In 1785, with both of them in America, Jane was delighted at the chance to preserve the craft for posterity and suggested that in lieu of the crown stamp that had been pressed into the soap when America was still in British hands, "I fancy if any should be made for America it would be cleaver to have thirteen Stars..." The inferior crown soap currently on the market, she asserted, "...is as contemptible as the British Head that Now wears won, dirty stinking stuff."<sup>3</sup> She would make something more worthy of giving to his friends.

What seems to have started out as a simple desire to ensure that old family traditions were not lost through the generations became a science project that united the Franklin family across the miles. The first batch, made according to the receipt Jane had, came out "good and solid" but the wrong color. It was not as green as the sample he had sent her, which she had made some years before while staying with their friend Catharine Greene. Jane, looking for a reason behind the different results as critically as any scientist, recalled that the earlier batch had not been made strictly according to the receipt; it had gone

a week between the first and second boiling and large amounts of it had stuck to the brass kettle leaving green patches in their wake. Believing the lye in the processing would even it out, Jane had finished that batch and sent it to him, little realizing that later soap would be judged by its unique standard. She also had "a Conjecture but not a certinty" that the diminished color in the new batch could have been the result of faulty weights that caused her to add the wrong amount of wax to the mix. Working from these two hypotheses, she added fatalistically that she would make another attempt "if I Live till Spring."<sup>4</sup>

When he examined this batch of soap, Ben noticed that it crumbled to the touch. Forever interested in the causes of natural phenomena, he speculated that exposure to frost during its shipping was the problem and tried to re-solidify the bars by wrapping them in "spongy Paper," which he hoped would seal the fine cracks that appeared in the bars. It did not, to his chagrin, and he regretted that he had sent some of it to his friends before realizing his error. Here Sally proved that scientific curiosity was a trait all the Franklins shared by "making an Experiment," as Ben informed his sister. Reasoning that repouring the soap would solve the problem, Sally placed some of the crumbled cakes in a kettle with water to melt them down and emptied the resulting liquid "into little Paper Pans of the Size of the Cakes." Her attempts were more successful than her father's as the finished soap was of the right consistency, but the bars twisted out of shape as they were drying. Out of ideas, father and daughter sought Jane's opinion before proceeding further, believing that she might have come across a similar problem before or at the very least could guide them through the soap-drying process to avoid more warping.<sup>5</sup>

Jane received this letter while working on the promised replacement batch of soap, one that she hoped would be "Green as well as good." To this end, she had increased the proportion of wax to tallow. As for the cracks in the original batch, Jane quickly wrote back that she had never experienced such a thing and was "much mortified" for having sent him such inferior soap. She further noted that the bars she had kept for herself out of the same batch showed no such flaws, which seemed to confirm Ben's suspicions about the frost. Sharing her brother and niece's scientific turns of mind, she brainstormed and suggested several possible solutions. Since temperature appeared to be key (her own soap had been fine after staying in a warm room), perhaps if the soap were kept in a warm, damp container, the cracks would

disappear. Another idea was to carry the faulty batch through a second processing with lye, but after giving it some thought, she believed Sally's approach of melting it down was the better one and offered tips for the drying process to avoid warping, including suggestions for soap molds: either "a Draw (with a cloath jn side) or...a Little Trough made on Purpose with a few holes in the Botom and the Sides to Let Down when it is cold" would do. Above all, she stressed that the soap "must not be Desolved in Iron but Brass or Copper."<sup>6</sup> Apparently someone, whether it was Jane or brother John, the originator of the family's receipt, was aware of a reaction between the soap and different types of metal.

Crown soap must have been on the minds of all the Franklins that month, for two days later, Ben sent Jane a sample of the crumbled soap as well as the bars Sally had re-melted so Jane could see what he was talking about firsthand and better understand the problem. He also observed that the crumbling cakes, when separated from each other and left to dry out slowly in a closet, re-solidified on their own, which might make the lengthy process of melting the soap down with water unnecessary.<sup>7</sup>

The quest to recreate soap of the desired color and consistency continued to occupy the family throughout the spring, with Jane dutifully reporting her trials and errors to the brother who loved "to know the meaning of all Apearances."<sup>8</sup> Adding more than the called-for amount of wax to the soap did indeed make it greener, but brittle enough that it cracked before it could be packaged for shipping. To salvage the batch, Jane tried Sally's method of reconstituting it by boiling it with water, but found that this discolored the soap. She nonetheless carried on through the second processing, which left her with good quality soap, but not the desired shade of green. She concluded with regards to the amount of wax needed that their brother John "Perfectly understood the Exact proportion that would be best." This seemed to mark the end of her experimentation with the family receipt. As she noted, "There is a good deal of Phylosephy in the working of crown soap that I cant comprehend..." The perfect shade of green had continued to elude her, as the bars lost color even through contact with each other. In this newest batch she observed "...the couler was taken out of wonside of this green cake by laying on a Damp won and by Drying will not Recover it."<sup>9</sup>

The amount of time and effort spent on the endeavor by all parties shows that Jane Mecom and Sally Franklin Bache were just



as curious about the world around them as Benjamin Franklin was. Although their experimentation with crown soap might have risen out of a desire to help him, their actions are proof that they, too, were adept problem-solvers with an interest in cause and effect. Jane's observations on the various batches of soap she made are as detailed as the notes made by any scientist, and her hypotheses about the cause of the desired green color and repeated tinkering with the original receipt to reproduce a specific set of results show she had as logical and orderly a turn of mind as her brother. And while William had been the one to assist Ben in his electrical research decades earlier, Sally's experiment with reconstituting the soap demonstrated that both of Ben's children inherited his interest in natural philosophy.

Although soap-making is a more domestic pursuit than the conduction of electricity, Jane and Sally went about it in a scientific manner, using deductive reasoning in their attempts to achieve the desired color and consistency in their soap. Moreover, Ben's active participation in the experimentation process shows that he viewed this as a legitimate scientific study. The Franklin family correspondence is thus an extraordinary gift; one that affords us a glimpse at the minds of inquisitive women who were encouraged in their scientific pursuits by a fellow lover of knowledge.

For the curious, below is Jane's receipt

for crown soap (incomplete). Note that in this version, she recommends the use of myrtle wax rather than bayberry wax.

"The Leye must be clean & strong enouf to Boil an Egg won third mirtle wax two thirds clean talow the Greener the wax the beter add as much to they Ley as it will take in to be a strong clear soap Resembling Huney then as soon as it Boyls thro in a quantity of salt keeping it stiring constantly from the Botom till often it being all melted the soap is become thin & will Drop off of yr. stik clear Drops of Ley be carefull not to Put two much salt in it will make it Britle I cannot asertain the quantity because acording to the strength it will take more or Less. It will in this Proses Rise & fome & be Exeding Difecult to keep it from Boyling over in order to Prevent which it must be kept constantly Ladeing up to Let in the air & some won stand by to throw a Little water in to the fier underneath stiring the fier to Pull it out will but inRage it, in time it will settle & be Less difecult but must be kept constantly Boyling till the frowth is all Boyld. Down & the clear soap Lyes on the top of the Ley then Let all the fier be taken away & the Harth cooled the Are Let in upon it that it may be so cool in the [morne?] as to separte clean from the Ley then take it all off & throw the Ley away. Clean the Botom of yr coper & Put in the weaker Ley yu has been Runing of yr Leach sinc you began & Return in yr soap till Boath amount to much about the same quantity it was when it began to Boyl at first & keep it stiring till you make it Boyl as quick as you can when you are shure it Boyls then add salt

as before till the Lie will Drop clear of yr stick then keep it Boyling till the frowth is all Boyled in & the soap Lyes a Pure curd on the [Ley?] then [incomplete]"<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Benjamin Franklin (BF) to Jane Mecom (JM), October 27, 1785, The Papers of Benjamin Franklin Online, <http://www.franklinpapers.org> (accessed July 24, 2012). (Hereafter cited by correspondents and date of correspondence only, as the site is searchable by both fields).

<sup>2</sup>Carl Van Doren, *The Letters of Benjamin Franklin and Jane Mecom* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950), 133.

<sup>3</sup>JM to BF, November 30, 1785, PBFO.

<sup>4</sup>JM to BF, December 29, 1785, PBFO.

<sup>5</sup>BF to JM, April 8, 1786, PBFO.

<sup>6</sup>JM to BF, April 22, 1786, PBFO.

<sup>7</sup>BF to JM, April 25, 1786, PBFO.

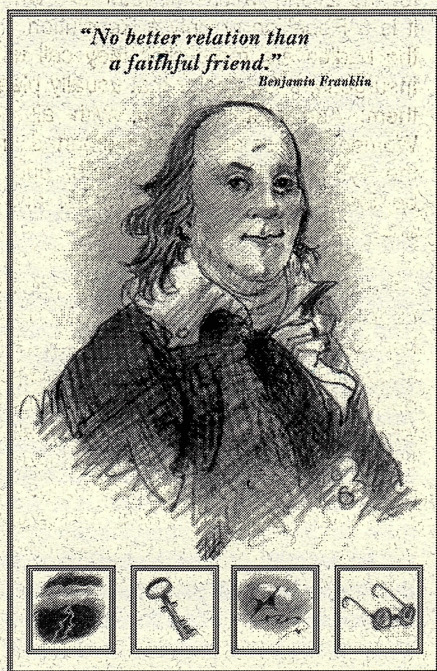
<sup>8</sup>JM to BF, December 29, 1785, PBFO.

<sup>9</sup>JM to BF, May 29, 1786, PBFO.

<sup>10</sup>Jane Mecom, *Recipe for Crown Soap* (unpublished), 1786, PBFO. Another version appears in Van Doren, *Jane Mecom*, 130-132.

## Drives Under Way

It's time to renew your dues and if at all possible contribute to the Friends of Franklin's annual appeal. Please be as generous as you can to support the Friends organization. As costs spiral membership fees alone are insufficient to meet operation costs. We depend on your generosity to allow us to continue to provide you with interesting and relevant information about one of our all-time favorite people - Benjamin Franklin. Each and every gift is tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowable by law. For additional information contact, Kathy DeLuca at 856-833-1771.



## "No better relation than a faithful friend."

—Benjamin Franklin

Customized card for a cause! Thinking of someone special, need to send out a thank-you note, want to acknowledge or touch base with a colleague? Why not send a note card that supports a good cause?

The Friends of Franklin, Inc. are selling a 5 x 7" custom graphic greeting card printed on all natural colored card stock with matching envelope. The inside is blank for personal notes. All profit from the sale of these cards supports the work and daily operations of The Friends of Franklin, Inc.

The Friends of Franklin would like to acknowledge and offer our sincere thanks to President Roy Goodman's wife, Sherry Bufano, who donated her design talent to provide the customized artwork for the card graphic.

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# In His Own Words

## *“Benjamin Franklin, Rebel”*



The two letters below were written soon after Franklin reached France in December, 1776, having been nominated by Congress to try to form an alliance with the French after war had broken out between Britain and its thirteen North American colonies. American independence had been declared, but it would take seven years of bloody conflict to achieve recognition that the United States was a nation. At the moment that Franklin received the letter printed first below, no agreement had yet been reached with the French government. The letter, which elicited Franklin's response, also printed below, was written by Emma Thompson, a woman who Franklin must have known during the years he spent in London as Colonial Agent. We know nothing of her but what is revealed here. The letters remind us that the Revolutionary War was our country's first civil war, with friends and neighbors finding themselves on the opposite side in politics. Mrs. Thompson half-jokingly calls Franklin a rebel, and he replies in kind, but uses his flirtatious and humorous response to highlight the differences between Americans and Britons. The American military, preparing a defense of New York City in 1776, treats Franklin and Mrs. Thompson's mutual friend Mrs. Barrow, a staunch Loyalist, who has been deserted by her Loyalist husband, with respect and fairness. British troops, occupying the city only a little while afterwards, as Franklin tells Mrs. Thompson, may not have been so ready to protect Mrs. Barrow. Franklin speaks proudly of offering good government to the Canadians during his stay there in 1776 (for which see Bruno Paul Stenson, "In Montréal: Franklin and the Revolutionary Wife," in the winter 2011/12 *Gazette* and "Benjamin Franklin in the Hudson Valley: Four Seasons in Albany," in the winter 2009/2010, spring 2010, summer 2010, and fall 2010 issues). The independently wealthy Mrs. Thompson, who has no need to work to support herself, is suffering from boredom and discontent wherever she goes. Franklin is far from sympathetic; his letter contrasts her bad attitude with his own habits; he lives modestly amidst Paris' splendors and his only pleasure in the midst of the upheaval of war is hearing of the good fortune of his friends. He even suggests a cure for the ennui of his winy acquaintance: a stint in prison on a diet of bread and water! That would surely result in an attitude adjustment! And lest she be too flattered by his long

letter, he tells her that she is only hearing from him at length because he is so ill that he cannot attend to his duties! Even though he suggests that the severity of his letter might make her wish that he had been too busy to write, we cannot doubt that the lady was as charmed by it as she had been in person by its author.

Emma Thompson to Benjamin Franklin  
St Omar Febry the 6th [1777]

Tho' your residence in Paris be proclaimed in the public papers, (you arch Rebel) yet having left England some months ago, I should have known nothing of you but for a Mrs. Playdell who happened to lodge in the House with you at Paris. Oh tell me I pray you how were Mr. and Mrs. Barrow<sup>1</sup> when you left America? Do answer me let me bribe you to it and pay you now before hand in intelligence of your friends and Sweethearts left in England. Yes, they are still so, naughty man, the good Man. [Israel] Wilkes and Wife in particular: I am sorry to tell you that nothing has yet been done for them and that wearied of their condition they have at length, he to the notory public business, She to take in Boarders. Her last letter directs my next address to her in Kingstreet Southhampton Row. But your friends Mr. and Mrs. [Andrew] Cheap are not only well but well off too, have got a Prebendary at York and a something better in daily expectation but Docr. [Richard] Huck disdaining all small matters except a Wife is now (upon my word tis true) just going to marry a little Miss Kensy quite a young Lady with a fortune of a Hundred Thousand Pds. No I do not forget your good friend [Margaret] Stevenson<sup>2</sup> who I think would have risqued all taring and feathering to have paid you a Visit in Philadelp, but now so near you what can prevent her seeing you? Nothing to be sure but the Weather, which stops me in my Rambles likewise. I left England early in November last hoping from air Exercise and dissipation to recover or mend at least my Health and Spirits most sadly depressed. Knowing little of the French tongue I purposed getting on to Brussels as there are so many English families settled in there. But the Winter Season was too far advanced when I first sett out upon this scheme, so here I was stoped and shall continue for a month at least. Do you know any thing of Brussels? The people here tell me all things are dear there, and that Lisle will better answer all my

purposes, tell me can one live comfortably there upon two Hundred pounds a year? I am very weary of this place tho the people are indeed more than civil to me. But I am out of temper I believe and associate but little with any of them. Mrs. Paine and Heathcott, (tho friends to your Cause) are yet my most welcome visiters. Three times a Week we do generally meet at Whist or Cribbage. I wish you would come and cutt in. I will give you your dinner tho you stay a month, and a Party Every Evening. Adieu I must invoke St. Patrick now before I get courage to sign my name, for tho native of a Country which he so bountifully blessed with proper assurance upon all occations, yet I feel we do degenerate when long absent from it. For tho I know you a Rebel and myself right Loyal, tho you deserve hanging, and I deserve pensioning Still I feel you my Superior, feel a return of the great Respect I ever held You in, and feel alas, unhappy, thinking I have been too bold, and that Emma Thompson may suffer in the mind of Dr. Franklin. She lodges at Madam Batiste Rue Commandant, St. Omar.

Franklin's response:  
To Mrs. Thompson at Lisle

Paris,  
Feb. 8. 1777

You are too early, Hussy, (as well as too saucy) in calling me Rebel; you should wait for the Event, which will determine whether it is a Rebellion or only a Revolution. Here the Ladies are more civil; they call us les Insurgens, a Character that usually pleases them: And methinks you, with all other Women who smart or have smarted under the Tyranny of a bad Husband, ought to be fix'd in Revolution Principles, and act accordingly.

In my way to Canada last Spring, I saw dear Mrs. Barrow at New York. Mr. Barrow had been from her two or three Months, to keep Gov. Tryon and other Tories Company,<sup>3</sup> on board the Asia one of the King's Ships which lay in the Harbour; and in all that time, naughty Man, had not ventur'd once on shore to see her. Our Troops were then pouring into the Town, and she was packing up to leave it; fearing as she had a large House they would incommode her by quartering Officers in it. As she appear'd in great Perplexity, scarce knowing where to go I persuaded her to stay, and I went to the



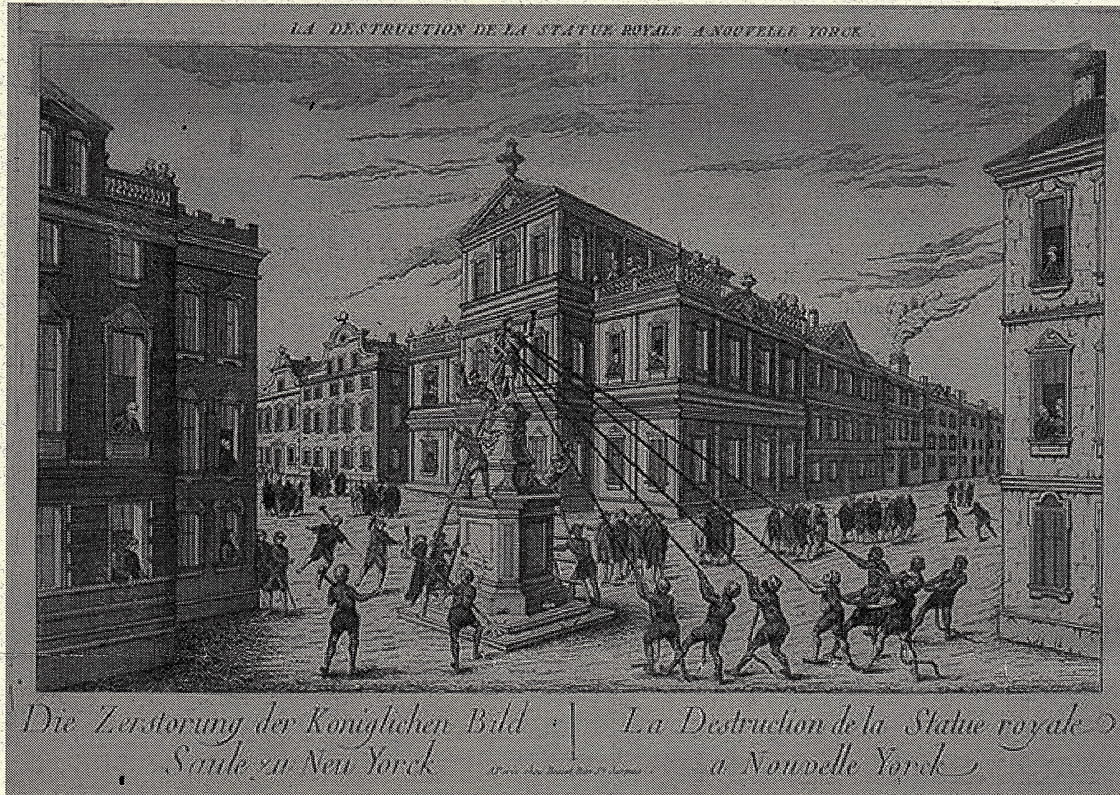
General Officers then commanding there, and recommended her to their Protection, which they promis'd, and perform'd. On my Return from Canada, (where I was a Piece of a Governor, and I think a very good one, for a Fortnight; and might have been so till this time if your wicked Army, Enemies to all good Government, had not come and driven me out<sup>4</sup>) I found her still in quiet Possession of her House. I enquired how our People had

God will bless them, and that they may see happier Days. Mr. Cheap's and Dr. Huck's good Fortunes please me. Pray learn, (if you have not already learnt) like me, to be pleas'd with other People's Pleasures, and happy with their Happinesses; when none occur of your own; then perhaps you will not so soon be weary of the Place you chance to be in, and so fond of Rambling to get rid of your Ennui. I fancy You have hit

I know you wish you could see me, but as you can't, I will describe my self to you. Figure me in your mind as jolly as formerly, and as strong and hearty, only a few Years older, very plainly dress'd, wearing my thin grey strait Hair, that peeps out under my only Coiffure, a fine Fur Cap, which comes down my Forehead almost to my Spectacles. Think how this must appear among the Powder'd Heads of Paris. I wish every Gentleman and Lady in France would only be so obliging as to follow my Fashion, comb their own Heads as I do mine, dismiss their Friseurs [hairdressers], and pay me half the Money they paid to them. You see the Gentry might well afford this; and I could then inlist those Friseurs, who are at least 100,000; and with the Money I would maintain them, make a Visit with them to England, and dress the Heads of your Ministers and Privy Counsellors, which I conceive to be at present un peu derangées [a little disordered]. Adieu, Madcap, and believe me ever Your affectionate Friend and humble Servant

BF

P.S. Don't be proud of this long Letter. A Fit of the Gout which has confin'd me 5 Days, and made me refuse to see any Company, has given me a little time to trifle. Otherwise it would have been very short. Visitors and Business would have interrupted. And perhaps, with Mrs. Barrow, you wish they had.



"La Destruction de la Statue royale a Nouvelle York" (etching, Paris, 1776?). By courtesy of the Library of Congress. The destruction of the statue of King George III in New York City after the reading of the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

behav'd to her; she spoke in high Terms of the respectful Attention they had paid her, and the Quiet and Security they had procur'd her. I said I was glad of it; and that if they had us'd her ill, I would have turn'd Tory. Then, says she, (with that pleasing Gaiety so natural to her) I wish they had. For you must know she is a Toryess as well as you and can as flippantly call Rebel. I drank Tea with her; we talk'd affectionately of you and our other Friends the Wilkes's, of whom she had receiv'd no late Intelligence. What became of her since, I have not heard. The Street she then liv'd in was some Months after chiefly burnt down; but as the Town was then, and ever since has been in Possession of the King's Troops, I have had no Opportunity of knowing whether she suffer'd any Loss in the Conflagration. I hope she did not, as if she did, I should wish I had not persuaded her to stay there. I am glad to learn from you that that unhappy tho' deserving Family the W's are getting into some Business that may afford them Subsistence. I pray that

upon the right Reason of your being weary of St. Omer, viz. that you are out of Temper [which is the effect of full living and idleness. A month in Bridewell, beating] Hemp upon Bread and Water, would give you Health and Spirits, and subsequent Cheerfulness, and Contentment with every other Situation. I prescribe that Regimen for you my Dear, in pure good Will, without a Fee. And, if you do not get into Temper, neither Brussels nor Lisle will suit you. I know nothing of the Price of Living in either of those Places; but I am sure that a single Woman, as you are, might with Oeconomy, upon two hundred Pounds a year, maintain herself comfortably any where, and me into the Bargain. Don't invite me in earnest, however, to come and live with you; for being posted here I ought not comply, and I am not sure I should be able to refuse. Present my Respects to Mrs. Payne and Mrs. Heathcoat, for tho' I have not the Honour of knowing them, yet as they are Friends to the American Cause, I am sure they must be Women of good Understanding.

<sup>1</sup> Probably Thomas Barrow and his wife. Barrow served as a paymaster for the British army under Gen. Gage.

<sup>2</sup> Franklin's landlady in his lodgings in Craven Street, London, beginning in the late 1750s. They remained friends until her death in the 1780s. However, she never visited him while he was living in Paris during the war.

<sup>3</sup> The royal governor of the province of New York, Thomas Tryon, had been on a visit to England when hostilities broke out. When he returned to New York City in June, 1775, he found he no longer had control over the province's government and that George Washington was expected any day in town. Fearing mob violence or arrest, he took refuge aboard a British ship in New York harbor.

<sup>4</sup> In May, 1776.

*Franklin*



# The 236th Birthday of America Possesses “Magical” Prime Powers

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

Wednesday, July 4th, 2012 marked the 236th anniversary of the US Independence Day. The United States of America officially declared its independence from the British Empire 236 years ago on July 4th, 1776.

As I was looking into date numbers related to Independence Day, I stumbled onto something unique that convinced me that this (236th) anniversary possesses some “magical” prime powers. How? I will explain.

Number 236 equals  $2^2 \times 59$ , that is, its prime factors are 2 and 59. 59 is the 17th prime number which equals  $59 = 17 + 19 + 23$ , i.e., the sum of three consecutive (7th, 8th and 9th) prime numbers. Also,  $2 + 59 = 61$ , another prime and the 61st prime number equal 283. Note that all of these primes are simply derived from this year's Independence Day anniversary number 236.

1. Just for curiosity, I went ahead and multiplied primes 17, 19, 23 and 283 and I couldn't believe what I found:  $17 \times 19 \times 23 \times 283 = 2102407$ ! Do you recognize this number? (Hint: Read it backwards and interpret it as a calendar date!) This result indicates that the full date number of this year's US Independence Day is cryptically coded in its anniversary number. Does this make sense?

2. Next, put numbers 7, 8 and 9 (corresponding to primes 17, 19 and 23) side-by-side to make-up the number 789. Then, add 789 with its reverse (987). What comes out? (1776!) Wow! (Note that interestingly enough, if primes 59, 2 and 2 (the product of which yields 236) are put side-by-side as 5922, one-sixth of this number equal 987.)

3. Third, divide the full date number of the 236th anniversary July 4th, 2012 expressed as 7042012 by prime 17:  $7042012 \div 17 = 414236$ . What do you see? (Hint: Focus on the rightmost three digits.) It is like magic, isn't it?

4. Next, split number 414236 in the middle as 414 and 236 and multiply these two numbers:  $414 \times 236 = 97704$ . What do the rightmost three digits of the result represent? (July 4th!)

5. Let us now divide the full date number 7042012 by prime 17 and multiply the result by six (six being the difference of the digits of

prime 17):  $7042012 \div 17 \times 6 = 742026$ . Do you recognize this date? (Hint: The full date of the 250th anniversary of the US Independence Day.)

6. The product of the prime factors of 236 is  $2 \times 59 = 118$  and 118 can be expressed as the sum of four primes:  $118 = 7 + 23 + 41 + 47$ . Interestingly enough, the product of these four prime numbers yields  $7 \times 23 \times 41 \times 47 = 310247$ ! (Hint: Read it backwards!) So, the full date number of next year's US Independence Day is also cryptically coded in number 236! Fascinating!

7. Note that 7, 23, 41 and 47 are the 4th, 9th, 13th and 15th prime numbers. Numbers 15, 13, 9 and 4 (corresponding to primes 47, 41, 23 and 7) put side-by-side yield 151394 which equals  $151394 = 2 \times 59 \times 1283$ , where 283 (rightmost three digits of 1283) corresponds to the 61st prime (where again,  $61 = 2 + 59$ , the sum of the prime factors of 236). Another hidden connection, agreed?

8. Interestingly enough, the 236th prime number is 1487. Also, if number 59 is reversed yielding 95, the 95th prime number is 499. The product of primes 1487 and 499 yields:  $1487 \times 499 = 742013$ ! (Next year's Independence Day!) Unbelievable!

9. If number 236 is split as 2, 3 and 6 (where 2 and 3 are the prime factors of 6), note that  $6^{(2+3)}$  (that is, six to the power the sum of its prime factors) yields 7776, that is, the 6000th anniversary year of the US Independence Day!

10. Lastly, note that this year, 2012, is a leap year and so was 1776. 2012 marks the 57th leap-year anniversary of Independence Day where 57 equal the difference of 2 and 59, the prime factors of 236. In addition, July 4th is the 186th day of each leap year. Interestingly enough, 186 equals twice the sum of numbers 17 and 76, which together side-by-side constitutes 1776. The difference of the reverses of primes 2 and 59 also equal  $(17+76)$ . Also, prime 59 equals the difference of 17 and 76! Also, 1776 equals to three times 592, a number consisting of primes 59 and 2 put side-by-side.

Based on the above I hope I was able to convince you about why the 236th anniversary of US Independence Day possesses “magical” prime powers. Happy 236th Fourth of July Birthday America!

Note: Benjamin Franklin's birth date of January 17th is also cryptically coded in number 236. How? It turns out primes 2 and 59 (which are the prime factors of 236) happen to be the 1st and the 17th prime numbers. Interestingly enough numbers 1 and 17 put together side-by-side yields 117, representing January 17. Note also that in July 1776, Franklin was the oldest signer of the Declaration of Independence at age 70 where 70 equals the difference of the reverses of numbers 1 and 17.

## Reading Franklin

Simon Finger, *The Contagious City: the Politics of Public Health in Early Philadelphia* (Cornell University Press, June, 2012). The publisher's web site says that “Finger...shows that key figures in the city's history, including Benjamin Franklin and Benjamin Rush, brought their keen interest in science and medicine into the political sphere.”

Gregg L. Frazer, *The Religious Beliefs of America's Founders: Reason, Revelation, Revolution* (University Press of Kansas, May, 2012). Russell Muirhead says it “slices through...prevailing understandings of the founders' religious beliefs by showing that they are neither what contemporary secularists nor what contemporary Christians often wish they were.”

Michael I. Meyerson, *Endowed by Our Creator: the Birth of Religious Freedom in America* (Yale University Press, June, 2012). Legal scholar Meyerson investigates how the framers of the Constitution envisioned religious freedom and how they intended it to operate in the new republic.

Christopher Pearl, “Franklin's Turn: Imperial Politics and the Coming of the American Revolution,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, April, 2012.





## Calendar of Events

**October 22, 2012. Franklin and the Bankers, 6:00 pm. Benjamin Franklin House, London-** For more information see <http://www.benjaminfranklinhouse.org/site/sections/news/events.html>

**January 18, 2013-** Celebration of Franklin's 307th birthday hosted by Celebration of Benjamin Franklin, Founder, honoring Governor Jon M. Huntsman, Jr. This year's event focuses on Franklin and Diplomacy. A morning seminar will feature talks by Dr. Bruce Kuklick, professor of history and diplomacy at the University of PA and Edward A. Turzanski, Co-Chair of the Center for the Study of Terrorism at the Foreign Policy Research Council and a national security analyst at LaSalle University. This seminar is free and open to the public and followed by a fun filled although generally chilly march to Franklin's grave where prayers and tributes are offered. Luncheon follows where Governor Huntsman will be presented with the Franklin Founder bowl and address the audience. Tickets for this will be available through the website: [www.ushistory.org/Celebration](http://www.ushistory.org/Celebration) or by calling Carol Smith, 609-320-1417.

**Late summer 2013-** Reopening of Franklin Court, Philadelphia.

## Franklin Tidbits



**Franklin quilt:** Beginning June 18, 2012, the Erikhomemade website will start posting a patchwork quilt project designed around the life of Benjamin Franklin. The pattern for each quilt block will be based on an episode from his life and will be posted at intervals on line. For details, click on <http://erikhomemade.typepad.com/>

**Fashion Forward Franklin?** On April 18 Elizabeth Wellington wrote an article about Philadelphia's fashion icons in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. According to the author, Franklin is one of this elite group of 25 because of his glasses, the style of which was revived in the 1960s.

**Franklin Bust Recovered:** A valuable plaster cast of Franklin's portrait bust produced in the studio of leading eighteenth-century French sculptor Houdon which had been stolen from a home in Bryn Mawr, Pa. was recovered and the thief arrested. The sculptor gave Franklin four plaster casts at the time of the completion of the terra cotta bust now in the collection of the Louvre. The stolen bust, thought to be one of the ones originally owned by Franklin himself, was damaged during the time that it was in the hands of the thief, but the damage was not to the head. For more details click on: <http://usnews.nbcnews.com/news/2012/09/24/14072398-busted-housekeeper-nabbed-with-3-million-sculpture-of-ben-franklin?lite>

**Franklin Musical Celebration:** BBC Radio 3 broadcast "If Chimes Could Whisper—The Strange Tale of the Glass Armonica" on April 28. The show, celebrating the 250th anniversary of Franklin's invention of the glass armonica was hosted by Dame Evelyn Glennie, who tried out the instrument at Benjamin Franklin House on Craven Street, London. Also featured is a visit to an early armonica in the collection of the Horniman Museum and a meeting with Thomas Bloch, one of the leading musicians responsible for a revival in interest in the instrument.

**P.S.** There is a glass armonica version of "Stairway to Heaven" played by street musician Peter Bennett on youtube.com.

**House Where Franklin Began His Autobiography is For Sale:** Twyford

House was the country home of the Shipley family. In 1771 Franklin visited them in Hampshire and set to composing the first section of his famous *Autobiography* in a summerhouse on the grounds of the grounds. The property was advertised for sale in March. For photos of the house, grounds, and summerhouse, click on [http://www.country-house-company.co.uk/particulars\\_sales/Property\\_0024/files/property\\_0024\\_sales.pdf](http://www.country-house-company.co.uk/particulars_sales/Property_0024/files/property_0024_sales.pdf)

**New Franklin Document Discovered:** Tom Ligenfelter recently discovered what he believes to be a roster of the Union Fire Company for 1736 originally belonging to Joseph Paschall, the company's clerk. Of course, Benjamin Franklin's name is on the list. Franklin's leading role in the establishment of the Fire Company was told in the fall 2011 issue of the Gazette. To read more about the discovery of the manuscript, click on <http://www.history.com/news/2012/05/23/roster-from-ben-franklins-fire-department-found/>

**Franklin's hometown prepares for the transit of Venus:** This astronomical phenomenon was the subject of much interest to our favorite Founder. For the preparations being made for the June, 2012 transit, click on Tom Avril's June 1 story in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*: [http://www.philly.com/philly/health/20120601\\_Centuries\\_later\\_Philadelphia\\_will\\_be\\_tracking\\_Venus\\_again.html?page=2&c=y](http://www.philly.com/philly/health/20120601_Centuries_later_Philadelphia_will_be_tracking_Venus_again.html?page=2&c=y)

**Looking into Franklin's Wardrobe:** A suit of clothes which Franklin gave to Elkanah Watson in the 1780s is now part of the nation's collection at the Smithsonian. The Smithsonian recently purchased it from the Massachusetts Historical Society, to which it was donated by Watson: <http://newsdesk.si.edu/releases/benjamin-franklin-s-suit-joins-smithsonian-collections>

**Franklin lecture on youtube:** Listen to Bill Bryson speak on Franklin: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FIE76lmuiQ>



# Math Puzzlers

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

*Editor's Note: Here are the answers to the puzzlers posed in the last issue as well as some new ones posted below.*

**Problem # 28.** Ben founds 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  $x$ ?

(Source: Inan, Answer: 1743.) (Solution: Since Ben Franklin lived between 1706 and 1790, let year  $x$  be represented by the four-digit number  $17AB$ . Then,  $BA71 - 17AB = 17CD$  or  $1000B + 100A + 71 - 1700 - 10A - B = 1700 + 10C + D$ . (Note that the two-digit number  $CD$  (that is,  $10C + D$ ) lies between 06 and 90.) Simplifying,  $999B + 90A = 3329 + 10C + D$ . Note also that since the left-hand-side of this equation is divisible by 9, the right-hand-side should also be divisible by 9. Also because  $6 \leq 10C + D \leq 90$ , this means  $3329 \leq (3329 + 10C + D) \leq 3428$ . This means digit  $B$  has to be greater than 2 and less than 4. Therefore,  $B = 3$ . This yields  $A = 4$ . Therefore, year  $x = 1743$ . Franklin founded the American Philosophical Society in 1743.)

**Problem # 29.** Ben's age. Ben Franklin (1706-1790) is  $x$  years old in the year  $y$  where  $x$  equals the two-digit number in the middle of  $y$ . What year is this?

(Source: Inan, Answer: 1784.) (Solution: Since Ben Franklin lived between 1706 and 1790, let the year  $y$  be represented by the digits  $ABCD$  where digits  $A = 1$  and  $B = 7$ . Since Ben's age is  $7C$  in the year  $17CD$ , we can write the equation  $17CD - 1706 = 7C$  or  $10C + D - 6 = 70 + C$ , which can be simplified to  $9C + D = 76$ . This equation has only one solution given by  $C = 8$  and  $D = 4$ . Therefore,  $y = 1784$  and  $x = 78$ , that is, Ben Franklin is 78 years old in the year 1784.)

**Problem # 30.** Benjamin Franklin's birthday in 2057. Why will Benjamin Franklin's birthday in 2057 be so special?

(Source: Inan, Answer: It will be Franklin's 351st birthday where  $351$  equals  $3 \times 117$  where 117 represent his birth day January 17. Also, reverse of 351 is 153, the Franklin number.)

And some new puzzles to test your skill:

**Puzzle # 31.** Who is this person? The letters of the full name of someone related to Benjamin Franklin are scrambled yielding the phrase "BORED HARE AD." Can you figure out who this person is?

**Problem # 32.** Birth year. The sum of the digits of the birth year  $x$  of a person related to Ben Franklin equals the reverse of a prime number. Also, the sum of the prime factors of  $x$  equals the two-digit number in the middle of  $x$ . What is  $x$ ?

**Puzzle # 33.** Who are these people? The letters of the full names of four people close to the person found in Puzzle # 31 are each scrambled yielding the following four phrases:

"FINANCING FRASER FOLK"  
"LIN FILM RAIN WALK"  
"JEAN BLINK FARM'INN"  
"ALAN FRAN SILLY SHARK BEACH"

Can you find the full name hidden in each phrase?

## Welcome to Our New Members!

Ron J. Coleman, Elk Grove, CA  
Julie Hegner, Brooklyn, NY

## Special Thanks to Our Life Members!

William Anderson, Jr.  
Wichita, KS  
Ralph Archbold  
Philadelphia, PA  
Genya Asama  
Chino, Nagano-ken, Japan  
Eric Auerbach  
New Rochelle, NY  
David Bishop  
Rochester, MN  
Jackson Boswell  
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