



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear PRF Colleagues,

Because of the pandemic, our PRF Annual Meeting – normally held in June of each year – had to be postponed.

Instead, our 2020 Annual Meeting will be held on Zoom on **October 20, 2020, at 5pm**. See the link below. (Thank you, **Terri McNichol**, for volunteering all this year as our Zoom wrangler!)

If you have matters for the agenda, please let me know. Bring your own wine and cheese to make it a celebration!

The current PRF officers’ terms end in June 2021. Current events remind us how important it is for every community – whether nation-states or tiny scholarly non-profits – to have good candidates to vote for.

Please consider putting your name forward as a candidate or serving on our Nominating Committee, and let me know if you are interested. During the winter of 2021, the Nominating Committee will draw up a slate of candidates. The election will be held at the June 2021 Annual Meeting (how we hope to meet in person again!) when the membership at large will vote on the slate proposed by the Committee. The new PRF officers will serve a two-year term, 2021-2023.

See you on October 20!

Best wishes to all,
Linda Holt, President



Connie Goddard on “Suffrage Speaks”

*This issue comes out on the eve of our Oct 20, 2020 PRF Annual Meeting and choice of a Nominating Committee, and as our national election is already underway. Earlier this spring, PRF member **Connie Goddard** had the honor of portraying Alice Paul, the great leader for the right of women to vote, in “Suffrage Speaks: The Fierce and Flawed Battle for the Vote,” first in a staged performance and then in a vimeo for a much wider audience. Their voices remain more relevant and eloquent than ever.*

Back when 2020 began – remember then? – some of us thought a big event for the year would be observing the centennial of the 19th Amendment, the culmination of seven decades or more of efforts to extend the franchise to women. And a small group of us in Monmouth County came up with a program to not only celebrate the passage of the amendment, but bring attention to a neglected part of that story: the role of African-Americans in that struggle and the importance of resisting ongoing efforts to take the franchise away from some of us.



Those ideas led to “Suffrage Speaks: The Fierce and Flawed Battle for the Vote,” a program conceived and organized by five women representing local branches of the AAUW and the League of Women Voters in conjunction with the T. Thomas Fortune Cultural Center in Red Bank. We decided to tell the story through an imagined conversation between Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass and soliloquies by Alice Paul, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, and Carrie Chapman Catt, along with excerpts from a famed 1964 speech by Fannie Lou Hamer.

The five of us all prepared our scripts, using as many of our characters’ own words as possible. Continuity would be provided by a narrator who linked all the stories together.

The initial event was held on Sunday afternoon, March 1, at the Monmouth library’s branch in Shrewsbury – and it was so popular we were asked to do it again, which of course got interrupted by the year’s even bigger story. But in mid-August, the New Jersey League of Women Voters sponsored a webinar version, which was attended by around 200 people and even raised some money for the sponsoring organizations. A Vimeo of that event is available here <https://vimeo.com/447922127>. We have also agreed to make the script available to educational groups who would like to tell the story. Anyone interested can contact me – cg@conniegoddard.com.

Connie Goddard

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THE CONSOLATIONS OF SCHOLARSHIP – REFLECTIONS ON OUR LIVES IN THE PANDEMIC

The San Diego Independent Scholars – our colleagues in Southern California – invited reflections on the scholarly life during Covid-19 for a booklet they will publish later this year. We share here the contributions from PRF members sent along to SDIS, together with two that came in separately. Keep them coming, please, for future issues.

Linda Holt submitted her meditation on the root meanings of the words “pandemic” and “isolation” in her “Letter from the President,” published in the

last PRF Newsletter (Winter-Spring 2020):
<http://www.princetonresearchforum.org/newsletters.shtml>.

PRF’s past-president, Ashwini Mokashi, sent a piece that is at once a report on her own pursuits as a philosopher this past spring and summer and an exemplary case of scholarship serving the community in difficult times.

Covid-19 impelled Lara Freidenfelds to draw on her personal experience of grief at a future up-ended and to speak out in her hometown of Chatham, New Jersey. She notes: “I wrote this letter to the editor of my local newspaper after my community experienced a Covid outbreak from a teen party, resulting in a school closure and much acrimony.”

PRF member Ellen Gilbert is also Board President and a facilitator at People & Stories/Gente y Cuentos (P&S/GyC, <https://peopleandstories.org>), a nonprofit organization founded by another PRF member, Sarah Hirschman (1921–2012), over 40 years ago. Ellen describes how, for People & Stories, the new necessity of using Zoom unexpectedly opened new opportunities for its participants to talk together..

Don McNeill, in the midst of the loneliness and despair surrounding him, found consolation through his re-reading of Albert Camus’s novel, The Plague – this time in Portuguese.

And, as Linda Holt reminded us by email in May, the video recording of Kairy Koshoeva’s beautiful performance of Bach’s Goldberg Variations will brighten your day and gladden your heart:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qmpUWVWSOUY&feature=youtu.be> [Westminster Choir College, Princeton, January 31, 2020; dedicated to the memory of Kairy’s teacher, Faina E. Kharmats (1945-2020)]

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Ancient Wisdom Leads to Happiness in the Time of Covid-19

Ashwini Mokashi
September 29, 2020

Of all people, only those are at leisure who make time for philosophy, only those are really alive.

Seneca (ca. 5 BCE–65 CE),
On the Shortness of Life

The pandemic got me wondering: Could I put my scholarly studies of ancient philosophy to practical use helping myself and others get through this difficult time? I wanted to take Seneca's words seriously. These months of imposed stay-at-home leisure have given me a chance to reflect on life, to be creative and resourceful about ways we could change our lives.

Our forced reliance on the internet gave me ways to engage in conversations about ancient Stoic and Hindu precepts about wisdom, virtue, and happiness with individuals and audiences in places I had never imagined I could reach (see links below). In the American Philosophical Practitioners' Association, I found both a new set of congenial colleagues and a new career direction – a philosophical counseling practice, certified by the APPA, aimed at serving people suffering during the Covid-19 crisis. Closer to home, my course, “Wisdom Leads to Happiness,” allowed me to explore these issues with wise elders in the Princeton Senior Resource Center’s Evergreen Forum.

The talk organized by ‘Garje Marathi’, a global non-profit in California works to unify people from the Indian state of Maharashtra settled outside India, gave me a chance to connect with people who speak my mother-tongue and who like me have spent much of their lives outside the motherland.

The connection of Indian Philosophy and the topic of Bhakti or devotion in connection to my work on the comparative studies in Stoicism and the Bhagavad-Gita became a focal point in my talk with the students of the Hindu Life Program in Princeton. I wish I had met them all in person, but it was still nice to be in touch with the local Hindu community.

The virtuous life is the happy life, the ancient sages insisted. And virtue cannot be passive. So I was spurred to take a more active part in fighting the pandemic. Volunteering with the Montgomery Emergency Medical Service to organize monthly blood drives, to help local hospitals replenish dwindling blood supplies has brought me new friends, a new sense of connection to everyone in my community – and, yes, greater happiness.



Links:

- “Pursuit of Happiness in Lockdown and Beyond.” Talk to an international audience, organized by the Garje Marathi platform, May 2020: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9nZUwxabi60&t=10s>
- “Using Leisure to Improve Lives - Epictetus, Seneca and Indian Philosophy.” Special double issue, How Philosophy Can Help During a Global Pandemic, *Philosophical Practice: Journal of the American Philosophical Practitioners' Association*, Vol. 15, # 2-3, July-November 2020: <https://ashwinimokashi.com/2020/07/30/using-leisure-to-improve-lives/>
- “Wisdom Leads to Happiness.” Presentation, American Philosophical Practitioners' Association, Annual Meeting, July 11, 2020: <https://ashwinimokashi.wordpress.com/2020/09/22/please-watch-my-talk-at-appa/>
- “Sapiens and Sthitaprajna.” Talk to students and members of the Princeton University Hindu Life Program (based on my 2019 book, *Sapiens and Sthitaprajna: A Comparative Study in Seneca's Stoicism and the Bhagavadgita*) <https://ashwinimokashi.com/2020/06/24/thank-you-for-joining-my-talk/> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sk60MM4KDvo>
- Philosophical counseling practice: <https://ashwinimokashi.com/services/>

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Lara Freidenfelds: During Covid, We Need to Grieve, Find Perspective, and Seek Safe Connection and Fulfillment

To the Editor:

This has been a difficult year. Even those of us who have not lost family and friends to Covid are grieving: this year we have lost beloved traditions, from prom to in-person religious services to the opening of the fall sports season. Our expectations for what is normal and right in our lives have been upended.

Grieving involves sadness, but also anger and denial. It is tempting to ignore Covid so long as it hadn't affected us personally. But right now, denial is dangerous for our community. We need to find ways to acknowledge our losses and grieve without putting our community at risk with unprotected social gatherings that will make us feel "normal" only until community members become gravely ill or die from Covid.

I really feel for the young people who are facing the shock and disappointment of high school and college experiences that are a pale imitation of what we have promised them. My life was upended when I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis at age 25, and I vividly recall the shock at having my expectations for my life shaken so dramatically and abruptly. I was newly engaged and in my first year of grad school. I had done everything "right" to have a happy life, and then this terrible disease dropped from the blue. My fiancé (now husband) and I cried and prayed a great deal.

Here is what saved me. First, I allowed myself to grieve. The loss was real, and pretending otherwise would not have been fair to myself.

Second, I reached outside myself for some perspective. For me, this meant reminding myself that my grandparents were war refugees. They had survived and built a new life. Compared with their suffering, even with this illness my life was manageable.

Third, I decided to focus on what I *could* do and *did* have rather than what I could not. I stopped comparing my life to my old expectations and

focused on what was in front of me. I used to say that my dream was to become President of Harvard. Now I focused on each day: was I doing something that I found fulfilling and that I believed would make the world a better place? Did I build relationships with family and friends? It didn't matter how much I was able to accomplish on a given day, so long as I spent some time on positive projects and relationships.

I hope we will all support our fellow Chatham community members to find safe ways to grieve what we have lost in this difficult year and to find some good in each day. This will unfortunately not be a good year for big parties (which I love, and I am sad with you). But can it be a good year for fortifying deep relationships with a few close friends? We can be creative about supporting the fulfilling things we can still do this year, for example, investing in fire pits and outdoor heat lamps for small outdoor gatherings into the fall and winter. This is also a good year to get a great winter coat, hat, and scarf and find some trails to hike with friends when the weather gets too chilly to sit outside. I hope that together we can seek the things we *can* do safely to build community and support each other through this strange and challenging time.

Lara Freidenfelds

[Reprinted from TAPinto:
<https://www.tapinto.net/categories/letters-to-the-editor/articles/during-covid-we-need-to-grieve-find-perspective-and-seek-safe-connection-and-fulfillment>
and <https://www.larafreidenfelds.com/> September 23, 2020 post. See below, Member News, for another example of Lara's helping others to find perspective in the midst of grief.]

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People & Stories/Gente y Cuentos in the Time of COVID

Ellen Gilbert
September 7, 2020

Guided by a belief in the power of literature to change lives, the facilitators for People & Stories/Gente y Cuentos (P&S/GyC <https://peopleandstories.org>) had, for years, been working with underserved populations (halfway house residents, immigrants working toward citizenship, veterans re-entering civilian society,

homeless parents, senior adults) in their respective facilities with groups of about 15 people. The closing-down of jails, senior centers, and libraries as a result of COVID-19 brought all this to an abrupt end. In an exciting transition, however, we have been offering online sessions through venues like the Princeton Public Library.

The Zoom format has lent itself well to the participatory style of the P&S method in which people are invited to listen to oral readings of literary short stories and then encouraged to participate in seminar-style discussions. The stories typically embody the best qualities of enduring literature: rich in artistry, they revel in life's complications, wonders, and ambiguities. Participants learn to connect knowledge gleaned from their own lives with stories under discussion in an atmosphere of trust established by trained facilitators. In the past, we achieved particularly remarkable results with prison populations, who reported that understanding and respect for one another was greatly nurtured by these sessions. Our work is informed by Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, a passionate call for learning as a shared experience.

An eight-week Zoom session with fifteen participants who registered through the Princeton Senior Resource Center (PSRC), a nonprofit organization serving aging adults and their families in the greater Princeton area, was a compelling experience that helped prove the strength of the P&S method.

In spite of some initial anxiety about how this new platform would work (copies of each story were e-mailed to participants in time for the week's session), the feedback from the group — not to mention my own elation at the end of each session — indicated that it went very well, indeed. Each session was recorded by PSRC's very able tech staff, providing a record for those who missed the session as well as a fine teaching tool for future facilitators.

The stories, of course, won the day. We read Hernando Tellez's "Just Lather, That's All," Nadine Gordimer's "The Soft Voice of the Serpent" and James Joyce's "Eveline." In an eerie coincidence, in the days before George Floyd's murder, I had selected "A Worn Path," Eudora Welty's story about Old Phoenix, who walks from her home to the city of Natchez to get medicine for her sick grandson. "When Phoenix was so long in answering the attendant in the office, I wondered if her grandson

had passed away," one participant said. There was divided opinion about whether or not the grandson was still alive, and when exactly he had swallowed the lye that destroyed his esophagus. One participant pointed out the story's parallels with *The Odyssey*, and many agreed.

Tim O'Brien's Vietnam-era story, "The Things They Carried," resonated deeply with this over-55 group who shared vivid memories of that time. "A Moving Day," Susan Nunes's story about generational tensions, evoked descriptions of a beloved meat grinder in someone's kitchen, and being in our respective homes enabled us to do a bit of show-and-tell. One participant in the group held up a well-loved old glass bottle filled with rose petals, and I suddenly remembered and pointed out "The Ties that Bind," an artwork hanging right behind me each week, made by book artist Maria Pisano from a piece of her deceased mother's clothing.

Being able to communicate during the week enabled some discussions to continue: Louise Erdrich's poignant story "The Shawl," a painful tale of generational trauma in a Native American family, led to interest in another story called "The Shawl," by Cynthia Ozick, set during the Holocaust in Europe. Both versions of "The Shawl" are devastating; they teach us, as James Baldwin once said, "that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, who had ever been alive."

Though participants weren't in the same room, we still watched each other's faces and listened to each other's voices every week. When I think about what we can offer each other during this time, I often remember Simone Weil's suggestion that "Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity." Being a librarian and writer committed to shared knowledge and social justice was good preparation for this moment.

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Reading Camus's *The Plague* in Portuguese (Lendo *A Peste* de Albert Camus em português)

Donald H. McNeill
12 October 2020

I have read Albert Camus's *La Peste* in four languages at various times in my life. First, in

English as *The Plague*, in 1962-3, my first year of college. Not much of a fiction reader then (a physics major), I found this famous allegory of World War II (published in 1947) way over my head, but I loved the book for its attention to responsibility and truth. Camus's humaneness and humanity struck me then and still do, as unique. I read it again in French in 1969 when I was in graduate school at Columbia thinking of emigrating (to Canada) if necessary to avoid the draft by building up my knowledge of French.

The next time was in 2001. On the morning of 11 September, I was loafing in bed reading *A pestis* in Hungarian (a language I had studied for two years before at Rutgers University). I had bought the book in Hungary when I was there at a meeting a year before and was now living in Pittsburgh. That September morning, my wife, **Fannie Peczenik**, called from Pitt to say, "Turn on the radio and computer, and watch the sky – something is happening in New York."

A terrible disaster, followed by a tremendous national freak-out: the making of war all over the planet by the US and its lackeys ever since. Thus far, 65 million refugees, trillions of dollars spent, millions of dead. In 2020, no presidential possibility, except Barbara Lee (the only member of Congress who voted no to making war on Afghanistan in 2001) and one primary candidate, Tulsi Gabbard, who was stationed in Afghanistan, and was shut out by the DNC, consistently opposed our national militarist plague during the Democratic primary campaign of 2020.

This year we are in the Coronavirus-19 (COVID-19) pandemic – the largest epidemic since the worldwide influenza epidemic of 1918 at the end of World War I. The incompetence of the US response has drawn wide criticism from science writers (e.g., the editors of the *New England Journal of Medicine* and *Science*). Having knocked out the Centers for Disease Control, whose job is to study and act on epidemics (which the CDC has done well many times), and diluted many other scientific agencies of the US government (EPA, FDA, NIH, OSHA...), the administration pulled the US out of the World Health Organization (WHO) in July 2020. Absurd, a great loss of our competence and international standing! Two hundred thousand dead Americans already, and more to come. This administration and its cronies

have a hard time counting anything – apparently except money rolling into their bank accounts.

In fact, counting, i.e., taking account of data, is the core of science and competent administration – as Camus notes throughout *The Plague*, and as this physicist has seen throughout his career. Trump's blather about waging nuclear war reminds of the concerns raised by many of us physicists during the Reagan administration in the 1980s about nuclear winter.

One wonders: if the public health system of the United States has been wrecked for dealing with an influenza-related epidemic, how will it handle a nuclear war, an event to which American policy makers have been addicted for 75 years?

Camus's *The Plague* is a most appropriate read for our time (the era of the atomic plague, as the Australian reporter Wilfred Burchett called it in 1945 after a visit to Hiroshima 30 days following the bombing). In this year of the COVID-19 pestilence, Camus's book has become a bestseller in much of the world (as in Italy and France, and recommended in Russia). It has been discussed in various magazines, such as *The New Yorker*, *NY Review of Books*, and *The Nation*, in articles about the problem of pestilence and contagion.

From May through July in this year of COVID-19, I read *A Peste*, Camus's book in Portuguese. There were two things that struck me about the book this time around, almost 60 years after my first time.

First, it's a new language to me, so meanings come across slightly differently. I have only studied Portuguese significantly in the last 5 years. Knowing a lot more Spanish makes it possible to get the idea behind the Portuguese "most" of time, with some amusing exceptions. I read 0-5 pages a day for three months. Sometimes I just forgot I was reading Portuguese (I could fluff it off as Spanish: the 5 pages/day rate). But there are some significant differences, and every once in a while they build up. I'd have to stop to review the grammar for a day (0 pages/day).

An example of a difference: the Secretary of Health and Human Services in the current administration is a lobbyist surnamed Azar. My small Spanish dictionary says *azar* means "chance" (as in "by chance"), but

the small Portuguese one says it means “bad luck.” Just follow the Tejo River to the Atlantic. (The Spanish Academy dictionary on the web gives both definitions, plus others, rather similar to the French *hasard*.)

In May 2019 I got to try out my Portuguese at the 3rd European Conference on Plasma Diagnostics to give a presentation on the statistics of measurements. In Lisbon they were coincidentally celebrating the 45th anniversary of the 1974 coup that ended the last of the original fascist regimes (set up by Salazar). My colleagues and I enjoyed Lisbon because the food was good, to be found everywhere, and cheap. That’s when I bought my copy of *A Peste*.

Second, while I think about some topics Camus raises in his book – responsibility, discipline, and integrity in work, for example – much as I did before, now the themes of grief and loneliness, which come up so often in *La Peste*, are much clearer to me.

Now a favorite episode in the book for me is when the journalist Rambert is trying to figure out how to get out of Oran where he is stuck in the plague (his wife is in Paris). He says roughly, “I was not born to write newspaper stories, but perhaps to live with a woman.” *D’accord*. He keeps trying to escape the lockdown, but does serious work throughout the epidemic in organizing services for the plague-stricken city.

The idea of loss during our pandemic is reinforced powerfully to me because of my wife’s death three years ago and because there is so much isolation and loneliness in the streets of Bronx, where I live. Many people are badly stressed in our country, and intolerance is flaring. *The Plague* ends with a shooting in the street when the character Cottard has a breakdown. Here in NYC, there have been a lot of shootings during the pandemic shutdown (250% more in parts of the city than last summer). The shutdown would be of less import to me if Fannie were here, of course, but I live with the grief and the tension every day — and so I turn again to Camus’s *A Peste*.

For remembrances of Don’s wife and our PRF colleague, Fannie Peczenik, see the Fall/Winter 2018 PRF Newsletter at <http://www.princetonresearchforum.org/newsletters.shtml>. To read Stuart Gilbert’s open-access English translation (1948) of Camus’s novel:

[http://www.24grammata.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/The Plague Albert Camus-24grammata.com .pdf](http://www.24grammata.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/The_Plague_Albert_Camus-24grammata.com_.pdf)

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MEMBER NEWS

“Backstory with Joan Goldstein”

Joan Goldstein continues to highlight fellow PRF members and their projects in her interviews on the Princeton TV program, “BackStory with Joan Goldstein.” Most recently, Joan followed up **Connie Goddard**’s PRF Work-in-Progress Zoom presentation (see the Spring-Summer 2020 Newsletter) with an interview about Connie’s research on Bordentown’s Manual Training School for Colored Youth. The show gave both Connie and Joan a chance to talk about their own experiences teaching in schools intended to train students in trades. Watch the conversation at: <https://vimeo.com/channels/backstory/454039388>. (You’ll also find links there for Joan’s decade of interviews.)

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Lara Freidenfelds offers better ways to share pregnancy and miscarriage news on social media

For Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month in October 2020, **Lara Freidenfelds** has launched a new social media initiative based on her book, *The Myth of the Perfect Pregnancy: A History of Miscarriage* in America. As she explains in a blog post on Nursing Clio (nursingclio.org), women need a way to talk about early pregnancy and miscarriage that does not require them to commit to bonding with an expected baby in the early weeks when losses are common, but also does not rely on the awkward and cold clinical language of an “embryo.” Lara offers an agricultural metaphor and image of a “sprout,” based in historical understandings of reproduction and pregnancy. This metaphor supports conscientious nurturing of a tender shoot, while allowing some emotional insulation at a stage when a large number of pregnancies will miscarry.

These images are available for free download on Lara’s website (<http://www.larafreidenfelds.com/>),

under the "social media images" tab). She encourages you to share the post and images widely.



Lara will also be giving a public lecture online: "Making Babies, Making Miscarriages: Ultrasound, Home Pregnancy Testing, and Early Pregnancy Loss."

New Jersey Institute of Technology, Oct 21, 2020, 2:30 – 4:00 PM EDT, NJIT Webex Virtual Event.

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Terri McNichol on visualizing wisdom in Confucian China and the modern world

In "Visualizing Wisdom: The Mindful Brush of Confucian Moral Artistry," an article just published in the journal *Organizational Aesthetics*, **Terri McNichol** brings together her interests in management, leadership, Chinese art, and Confucian philosophy. She explains why, in troubled times, Chinese literati regarded their centuries-old practices of cultivating eye, mind, and heart through the arts of the brush (painting, calligraphy, and poetry) as indispensable to the training of wise leaders. And she argues that today's leaders could benefit from their example.

To read Terri's essay and see a brush painting by Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322), who came out of exile to become an advisor to the great Mongol emperor, Khubilai Khan:

<https://digitalcommons.wpi.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1215&context=oa>

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Toni Carey on "Thinking Morally, Thinking Economically"

In September, **Toni Carey** gave a talk to her neighbors at the Foulkways retirement community outside Philadelphia about the divide between ethics and economics that we witness so often in modern life. To Adam Smith and the other eighteenth-century Enlightenment philosophers that Toni studies, the two were not separate disciplines: part of moral philosophy. In her talk, Toni traced the reasons for the split and its consequences. Ultimately, she argues, in our hedonistic culture we need to respect and admire not only "Good-Samaritan acts, acts that go beyond the call of duty," but also "acts *within* the call of duty, garden-variety acts that we ought to do, like promise-keeping. If I promise to meet you for dinner, it's not OK to be a no-show because I decide I can do more good by spending the time making face masks for COVID-19, leaving you waiting, worrying, and hungry."

For a copy of the talk, email Toni.

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NEW BOOK BY PRF MEMBER

Beverly Jerold explores disinformation in mass media and the musical world of Paris!

*Beverly Jerold announces her new book-length study, **Disinformation in Mass Media: Gluck, Piccinni and the Journal de Paris** (Royal Musical Association Monographs. Abingdon, Oxon & New York: Routledge, 2021).*

<https://www.routledge.com/Disinformation-in-Mass-Media-Gluck-Piccinni-and-the-Journal-de-Paris/Jerold/p/book/9780367350178>

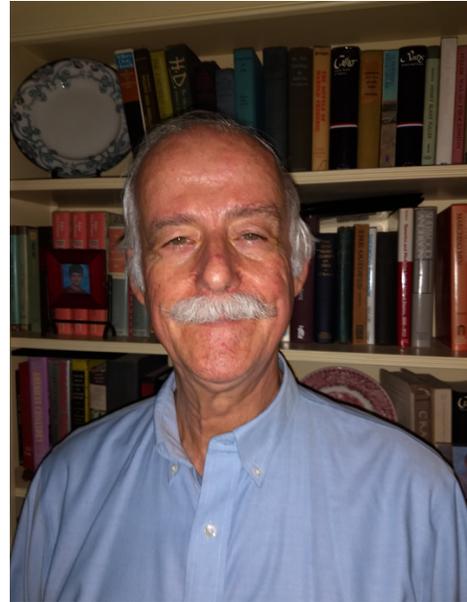
Beverly writes:

The founding in 1777 of the *Journal de Paris*, France's first daily and distinctly commercial paper, represents an early use of disinformation as a tool for political gain and profit. To attract a large readership and bar competition for C. W. Gluck's works at the Paris Opéra, it launched a prolonged campaign of anonymous lies, mockery and defamation against two prominent members of the Académie Française who wished the Opéra to be open to all deserving composers, but lacked a comparable daily forum with which to defend themselves. In a unique episode, music served as a smokescreen for nefarious activity. No musical knowledge is necessary to follow this purely political drama, which produced societal divisions similar to those today.

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PRF'S NEWEST MEMBER, ALAN R. RUSHTON

Alan R. Rushton practiced Pediatrics and Medical Genetics at Hunterdon Medical Center in Flemington, New Jersey from 1980 until 2017. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Earlham College in 1971 and completed his professional education at the University of Chicago (PhD in Genetics 1975 and MD with Honors 1977) and residency training at Yale University (1980). He has served on the faculty of Princeton University and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. He was elected Fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine and the Royal Society of Medicine in London.



Welcome, Alan Rushton, to PRF! Alan heard about PRF when he and Karen Reeds both volunteered for a Princeton University Library "user study" and gave feedback about independent scholars and library services. He sends us this bio:

Dr. Rushton has conducted research on the history of medicine and genetics for more than thirty years and has participated in conferences located in the United States, Canada, England, Scotland, Sweden, Germany and the Czech Republic.

Dr. Rushton has written five books in this area of research:

— *Genetics and Medicine in the United States, 1800 to 1922* (1994)

— *Royal Maladies: Hereditary Diseases in the Ruling Houses of Europe* (2008)

— *Genetics and Medicine in Great Britain 1600 to 1939* (2009)

— *Charles Edward of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha: The Nobility, the German Red Cross and the Nazi Program to Eliminate Disabled Citizens from Germany 1933-1945* (2018)

— *Talking Back: Protests against the Nazi Program to Murder the Handicapped Citizens of Germany 1933-1945* (2018).

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PRF STUDY GROUPS

The pandemic has put both the Poetry Group (led by Winnie Hughes) and the Humanities Group on hiatus. Before stopping, however, the Humanities Group (led by Ashwini Mokashi) had lively discussions of:

— Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*

— Salman Rushdie, *Quichotte* (inspired by *Don Quixote*).

The group will reconvene on Saturday, December 5, to talk about *Golden Gate* by Vikram Seth.

Books discussed recently by the Science/Science History Group, hosted by Boris Katz via Zoom, include:

— *Life's Engines: How Microbes Made Earth Habitable*, by Paul Falkowski (with the author joining in)

— *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*, by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

At upcoming meetings, the group will discuss via Zoom:

— *Entangled Life: How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Minds and Shape Our Futures*, by Merlin Sheldrake (November 13, 2020 at 12:30 pm)

— the prescient book, *Spillover: Animal Infections and the Next Human Pandemic*, by David Quammen (December 11, 2020 at 12:30 pm).

PRF members (and guests) are welcome to join in any study group.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

NCIS, SDIS, and PRF

PRF is an affiliate group member of NCIS, the National Coalition of Independent Scholars. As such, all PRF members are eligible to submit manuscripts and book reviews to NCIS's open-access, peer-reviewed journal, *The Independent Scholar*.

PRF Authors, take note! *The Independent Scholar* also publishes reviews of books, which may be authored or reviewed by independent scholars. The reviews are published on-line once the review has been approved by the editors. They are then published in the next edition of *The Independent Scholar*. Suggestions for suitable books should be sent to the Book Review Editor, reviews@ncis.org. Guidelines and PDFs of past volumes of TIS (going back to 2007) can be found at www.ncis.org/the-independent-scholar/tis. Queries should be addressed to tis@ncis.org.

PRF members are not automatically NCIS members, however. Consider joining NCIS as an individual member, as several PRF members have done. NCIS benefits you as an individual, as a member of PRF, and as a part of the larger community of independent scholars: <https://www.ncis.org/join-ncis>. For more information, visit: <http://www.ncis.org/>

Explore other NCIS affiliates, too. The *Scholars Notes* from **San Diego Independent Scholars**, for example, are online at <https://sdscholars.org/archives/> and we look forward to their online booklet of independent scholars' reflections on Covid-19.

MAILING ADDRESS & WEBSITE

PRF's mailing address is:
Princeton Research Forum, P.O. Box 264,
Kingston, NJ 08528-0264. Our website is:
www.princetonresearchforum.org.

WORK-IN-PROGRESS

To arrange for a work-in-progress or presentation, please contact WIP Chair Ellen Gilbert, edg5@columbia.edu.

DUES REMINDER

PRF observes the academic year from September 1 through August 31. Annual dues for an individual are \$40; the bargain price for a couple is \$60. A lifetime membership is \$400. The official deadline for receipt of dues for 2020-2021 will be December 31, 2020. Please mail checks to: **Princeton Research Forum, P.O. Box 264, Kingston, NJ 08528-0264.**

PRF PRESENTATION GRANTS

Giving a talk at a meeting? Save your receipts and apply for a PRF Presentation Grant when you get home. The grants help our members cover some of the costs of registration, travel, and accommodation. The first five grants awarded in a given year are named in honor of our late colleague, Frankie Hutner (1918–2014), a founding member of PRF whose generosity continues to fund these grants. Grants are awarded on a rolling basis, with no annual deadline. To be eligible, applicants must be PRF members in good standing for at least one year, must be an independent scholar, must incur presentation-related expenses in excess of \$300 that are not fully reimbursed by any other grant or institution, and must not have received more than one Presentation Grant within the previous five years.

If you meet the criteria, please send your documentation as soon as you have given a presentation to: Karen Reeds, PRF Grants Committee, karenmreeds@gmail.com. Grant recipients are asked to write a short item about the presentation and conference for the PRF Newsletter.

NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

Summer/Fall Issue: *deadline* mid-late September for publication October 15.
Winter Issue: *deadline* mid-late January for publication February 15.
Spring Issue: *deadline* mid-late April for publication May 15.

PRINCETON RESEARCH FORUM OFFICERS 2019-2021

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Poetry: Winifred Hughes
Science/Science History: Boris Katz