
KAREN REEDS'S PRESENTATION ON VITAMIN B COMPLEXITIES

Report by Linda Arntzenius

Like many people these days, I take a selection of vitamins—daily and almost without thought. Among them is a mixture of B vitamins. Occasionally I'd wonder about the need for these. The thought was invariably dismissed, however. Given my diet I could hardly count as undernourished. So I figured: "Well, you can't have too much of a good thing and besides anything my body doesn't need will be flushed away, so what's the harm."

Karen Reeds's presentation to members of Princeton Research Forum on Sunday, May 11, has given me pause for thought. Karen spoke to more than a dozen PRF members assembled in the home of Ellen Gilbert. According to her recent paper, "Vitamin B Complexities," published online in March, the harm might well be considerable. At least in the case of vitamin B6 (pyridoxine) too much might be as harmful as too little.

The paper is Karen's first online, open access, peer-reviewed publication and it draws on personal experience as well as recent in-depth research. Her interest in vitamins dates back to her first publication, *Today's Medicine, Tomorrow's Science: Essays on Paths of Discovery in the Biomedical Sciences* [Swazey & Reeds, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Public Health Service National Institutes of Health, 1978]. In chapter three Karen writes on "Beriberi and the Coenzyme Function of Vitamin B1."

But what prompted her return to the subject was purely personal, the result of her experience with vitamin B6 for medical problems that have since been resolved. She had been taking the vitamin for some time and, although she had suffered tingling in her feet — peripheral neuropathy — she hadn't associated her symptom with her use of B6, which is,

after all, a suggested as a *treatment* for peripheral neuropathy.

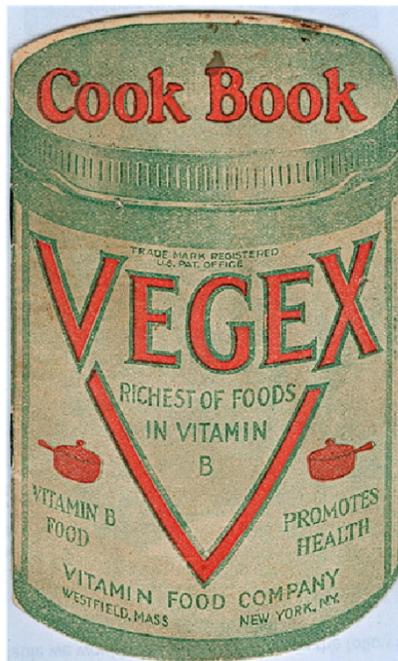
Then, some two and a half years ago, Karen read about the dangers of taking too much B6 on the People's Pharmacy blog. Although she'd been taking B6 for years, and considered herself a savvy consumer, this was the first time she had heard of this possibility. Unlike the fat-soluble vitamins A and D which are toxic at large doses, Karen regarded the water-soluble vitamins of the B-complex to be benign: any excess washed out of the body every day." But now, she looked at her supply and found that the dosage she was taking far exceeded the recommended minimum daily requirement. She decided to self-experiment. She stopped taking the B6 and the symptom went away. A second test yielded the same outcome.

Furthermore, she began examining suggested dosages on vitamin labels and looking carefully at the literature going back to the first discovery of B vitamins in the early years of the last century. Among other illnesses, a deficiency of B6, identified in the 1930s, is associated with neuropathy. However, in the early 1980s a handful of patients suffering from neuropathy and taking B6 supplements found their symptoms worsening. "That's when the paradox of too much being as problematic as too little was first discovered," says Karen.

The idea that pyridoxine could cause neuropathy seemed "at first improbable or paradoxical. Peripheral neuropathy had long been seen as a primary symptom of *too little* vitamin B6. How could both a deficiency and an excess of the same vitamin bring about the same unhappy problem?"

It took some time for this to be figured out. And it was not until very recently (2017) that the mechanism of how B6 is processed by and distributed throughout the body was understood.

Even now these findings are not generally known — not by the general public; not by those buying vitamin B-complex over the counter; not even by primary care physicians; and not by purveyors in health food stores. At one organic grocer, Karen found a supplement designed for healthy feet to include B6 in its active form with a recommended dosage (two pills three times a day) that is 45 times the Daily Value suggested by the FDA. The manager of the supplements section was surprised to learn that this water-soluble vitamin can build up in the body and pose a long-term hazard at high doses. It is likely that people are being harmed by this, especially if, like Karen, they are also consuming foods that are rich in B6 like avocado, nuts, fresh fruits and vegetables, whole-grains, and liver.



This vintage cookbook touts the benefits of Vegex because, like Marmite, it is rich in brewer's yeast, a source of B Vitamins. (Image courtesy of Karen Reeds)

“For vitamin B6 consumers, charting a course between ‘too little is not enough’ and ‘nothing in excess’ is further complicated by politics.” Karen believes that the FDA ought to be tracking cases of overdose of B6 and went on to explain that this is not happening because of changes in the law as to what is a food and what is a drug. As a result of intense lobbying by consumers, health food stores, manufacturers, marketers, and legislators, the 1994 Dietary Supplement Health Education Act (DSHEA) redefined what the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) could count as food. Under DSHEA, the FDA must regard “dietary supplements

[including vitamins]” as foods, rather than as medicines.

This “uneasy” category of dietary supplements, says Karen, effectively “prevents the FDA from testing supplements for efficacy or regulating their dosage (as the agency does for medicines).” While the FDA website can point to the National Institute of Health’s tables of Tolerable Upper Limits, the only “buyer beware” warning the FDA can impose is a noncommittal footnote to any health claim on a supplement label: “This statement has not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.”

As one would imagine, Karen’s talk excited a great deal of discussion regarding ways in which her findings might be disseminated. Questions were raised about the possibility of filing an “adverse event” report with the FDA in an attempt to persuade that agency to track B6 overdoses. The interplay of vitamins and bacteria within the human biome was touched on with Karen noting that this is an area which has barely begun to be studied.

“At the very least,” she concluded, “my experience suggests that I, along with some 150 million other vitamin-taking Americans, have been the willing and unwitting participants in an extraordinarily large, uncontrolled experiment whose results no one seems to be tracking.”

Karen’s presentation was also a lesson in conducting research as an independent scholar. Although a respected scholar and exhibition curator who has published widely on the history of botany, public health, and medicine, from the Middle Ages to the present, Karen still ran up against difficulties in accessing research materials. She has a PhD in History of Science from Harvard University, served as an acquisitions editor at the University of California Press and Rutgers University Press, is a Fellow of the Linnean Society of London and past-president of the Medical History Society of New Jersey. And yet, even with such credentials, on at least one occasion, her research was blocked (she was, incidentally, helped out by the editors of the online forum which had first excited her interest in the topic).

Her talk was an engaging mix of history, science and anecdote. As Karen puts it: “part straightforward history of medicine/nutrition, part personal essay, part gentle rant.” I recommend PRF members to access it

online: <https://remedianetwork.net/2019/03/04/vitamin-b-complexities/>

“Vitamin B Complexities” was published online (March 4, 2019) as part of the series, ‘What Should I Eat? Why?’ commissioned by RemediaNetwork in collaboration with H-Net Nutrition (<https://networks.h-net.org/h-nutrition>) by series editors Kristen Ann Ehrenberger and Lisa Haushofer.

PRF WELCOMES NEW MEMBER: GIUSI RUSSO

The Membership Committee and the Executive Board are pleased to welcome new PRF member Giusi Russo. Dr. Russo is a historian of gender, empires, and internationalism. She holds an MA in International Studies from the University of Connecticut and a PhD in History from SUNY Binghamton. She is the author of the article titled “Contested Practices, Human Rights, and Colonial Bodies in Pain: The UN’s Gender Politics in Africa, 1940s–1960s” published in the journal *Gender & History*, March 2018.



Giusi Russo

Giusi is currently working on a monograph (under contract with the University of Nebraska Press) on the United Nations, empires, and politics of the body, 1946-1975. She is also the guest editor for a Spring 2019 volume on post-colonial nostalgia with *The Journal of Commonwealth and Post-Colonial Studies*. She teaches full-time courses in gender, world, and European history at Montgomery County Community College in the Philadelphia area. She likes Opera, especially by Verdi and Puccini and she enjoys trying new restaurants and visiting new art

exhibitions in the Philadelphia area. We look forward to getting to know Giusi at future PRF events and thank Membership Chair Terri McNichol for her continued work on behalf of PRF.

ASHWINI MOKASHI AWARDED HUTNER GRANT FOR NEW BOOK PRESENTATION

Past PRF President Ashwini Mokashi is delighted to report that her book *Sapiens and Sthitaprajna: A Comparative Study in Seneca’s Stoicism and the Bhagavadgita* has now been published by D. K. Printworld, a leading publisher in Indological studies. It will soon be available on Amazon.

Ashwini launched the book last month in India, in Pune and New Delhi, in two different talks. She was invited to deliver the 18th P. V. Bapat Memorial lecture at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in Pune (bori.ac.in), considered the fountainhead of Indological studies. The talk, which drew an audience of more than a hundred individuals including leading scholars, received wide publicity before and after the event. It was covered in The Indian Express: <http://epaper.indianexpress.com/c/38832445>

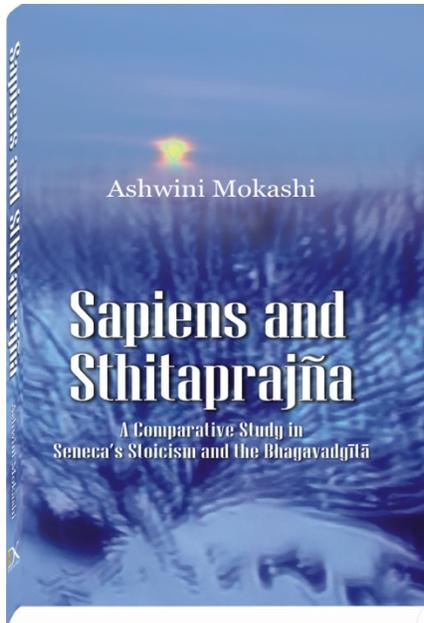
Ashwini’s Delhi talk was also generally appreciated and she received a lot of questions. The feedback and reviews were very positive, including a remark from a senior philosopher at Oxford University who described her research as “pathbreaking.”

On both occasions Ashwini proudly introduced herself as an independent research scholar and PRF Member. “I am very thankful for the support of the Princeton Research Forum and I mentioned the organization and what we do, in both of my talks.” Ashwini is very grateful to the PRF community for their wonderful support over the last two decades.



Ashwini presenting her new book in India

Sapiens and Sthitaprajna studies the concept of a wise person in the Stoic Seneca and in the Bhagavad Gita. Although the Gita and Seneca's writings are a continent apart, they have much in common in recommending a well-lived life. This book describes how, in both writings, a wise person is endowed with both virtue and wisdom, is moral, makes right judgments and takes responsibility for actions. A wise and virtuous person always enjoys happiness as happiness consists in knowing that one has done the right thing at the right time.



Both Seneca and the Gita demand intellectual rigor and wisdom for leading a virtuous and effective life. They provide guidelines for how to become and be wise. Both systems demand a sage to be emotionally sound and devoid of passions. This leads to mental peace and balance, and ultimately tranquility and happiness. While surveying these similarities, this study also finds differences in their ways of application of these ideas. The metaphysics of the Gita obliges the sage to practice meditation, while the Stoics require a sage to be a rational person committed to analyzing and intellectualizing any situation.

Ashwini's comparative study will be of interest to students of both Ancient Western and Ancient Indian Philosophy. Practitioners of Stoicism and followers of the Gita should find the presence of closely related ideas in a very different tradition of interest while perhaps finding somewhat different prescriptions a spur to action.

To offset her expenses for the trip, Ashwini was awarded a PRF Frances C. Hutner Presentation

Grant, the first to be awarded for 2019. The requirements for a Hutner Grant are given below.

IN MEMORIAM: HELEN SCHWARTZ (1935-2019)

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of PRF member Helen Dane Schwartz. Helen died Friday, April 26, after a short battle with lung cancer. She was 83. Helen was active in PRF and attended many of our events. She was known for her work in the community as an artist, a basket weaver, and board member at the Princeton Adult School.

An obituary in Town Topics newspaper reported that Helen is survived by her son Eric Schwartz (Patty), of Wilmington, daughter Lisa of New York City, and three grandchildren, Will, Maddie, and Drue.

Born and raised in New York City, Helen came to Princeton in the 1969. She was known for her basket making, which she elevated to an artform. An excerpt from an article about Helen that ran in Town Topics is included below and can be viewed entire at:

<http://www.towntopics.com/dec1306/other6.html>

A former painter and printmaker who taught at the Adult School, Helen Schwartz changed her artistic focus when she took a course there on basketmaking, a decade or so ago. . . . Ms. Schwartz works in traditional materials such as reed and ash, and also in unconventional materials such as handcast paper and speaker wire. While she still teaches, her classes are rarely in basketmaking because students often expect to be able to do in six weeks what it takes six years to master. Baskets cannot be hurried and that suits her fine. "When I am working, there is nothing else," she said. "Somehow or other there's a Zen for me to making a basket; it feels good to work. When I used to paint sometimes I'd have a phone in my ear. But this balances me. It's a wonderful experience.



Helen in her studio (Photo by Linda Arntzenius)

"The first basket I made, I knew I had hit a new space in my life. It was like going to graduate school.

I found another teacher in South Jersey and then I worked with Indian weavers in Maine and worked with Cherokee basket makers in Taos. For the first couple of years, I worked on traditional baskets. You can't do any art until you've mastered the craft. I like to work with antlers because if you start with an antler it determines in some way the form of the basket, which is not what you expect and I like that....

"When I went to art school, crafts were not taken seriously; there was a lot of condescension. Craft is very serious these days. There is much original thoughtful work being done in crafts whether it's wood or glass or textile. The idea of making something that I can hold appeals to me. I don't care about utility as much as the fact that I can hold it. I don't know why it's more satisfying to me than painting and printmaking, which I did for years and years.

"While I did art all my life, I felt that at any given moment I could walk away from it. But I don't feel that way with basketmaking. It nourishes me. . . . The one thing I really believe is that you have to have space in your life for things to happen to you, otherwise nothing happens, life just goes on and on."

Helen will be missed by all who knew her and appreciated her sparkling intelligence and good nature.

—Linda Arntzenius

NEW BOOKS BY MEMBERS TO LAUNCH AT AGM IN JUNE

The Annual General Meeting of Princeton Research Forum will take place Sunday, June 9, from 4 to 6 p.m., in the home of past PRF President Ashwini Mokashi, 33 Pin Oak Road, Skillman NJ 08558. Besides being PRF's annual pot-luck gathering, this year's event will mark the launch of new publications by Ashwini and by PRF President Linda Holt. Ellen Gilbert will introduce the authors who will talk briefly about their work. Among other members celebrating new publications this year are Winnie Hughes, Roger Moseley and Lara Freidenfelds (for more on recent publications by PRF members see Member News below). The attending membership will vote to elect officers to the PRF board for the academic years 2019/2020 and 2020/2021.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE NEWS

This year's Nominating Committee chaired by Diane Zizak (Chair), will present a slate of candidates to the membership at the annual general meeting on June 9. The Board thanks committee members Jeannette Brown, Matthew Erdelyi, Joan Goldstein, and Linda Holt *ex officio* for their efforts. The Nominating Committee will present a slate of candidates for each Executive Board position and Standing Committee Chairs. All terms are two years: 2019-2021.

The candidates are: The candidates are: President: Linda Holt; Vice-President: Linda Arntzenius; Treasurer: Joyce Irwin; Secretary: Roger Moseley; Members-at-Large: Joan Goldstein and Ludmilla Popova-Wightman; Calendar: Pat Hyatt; Grants Officer & NCIS Liaison: Karen Reeds; Library Access: Jamie Gerber; Membership: Terri McNichol; Newsletter: Karen Reeds; Program: Pamela Sheehan; Publicity: Winifred Hughes; Webmaster: Lina Genovesi; Work in Progress/Presentation Seminars: Ellen Gilbert.

MEMBER BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Retired chemist and PRF member, Jeannette Brown, celebrated her 85th birthday Saturday, May 18, in Hillsborough, with colleagues, friends, and a host of people she had mentored.



Jeannette celebrates her 85th birthday – and the publication of her second book (Photo by Karen Reeds)

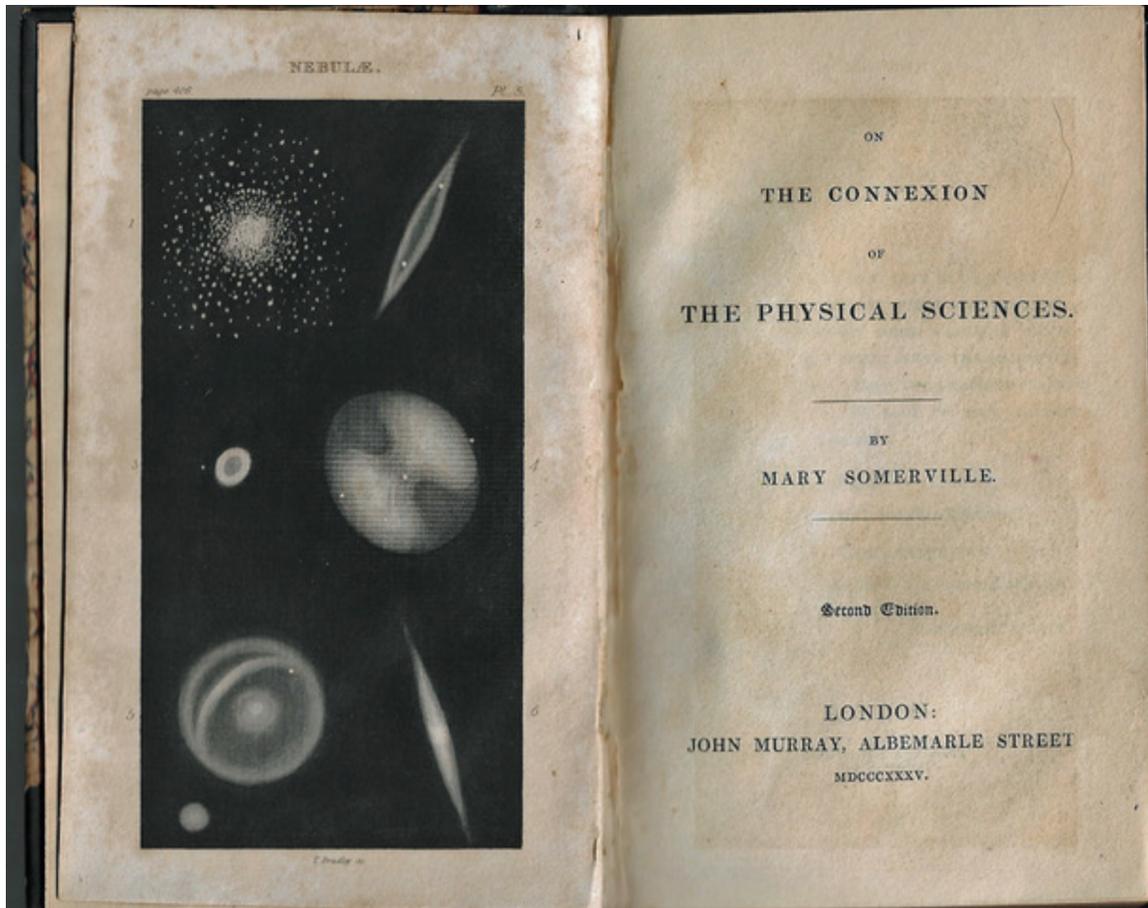
Jeannette's second book on African American women chemists appeared last year and is described in the Member News section below.

MULVIHILL COLLECTION ADDS MARY SOMERVILLE

Maureen E. Mulvihill has added an important book to her collection of rare and special books by early women writers: *On The Connexion of the Physical Sciences* (London, 1834) by Mary Somerville (Jedburgh, Scotland, 1780 – Naples, Italy, 1872). Celebrated as ‘The Queen of Sciences’, Somerville was a respected writer, polymath, and painter. She also enjoyed opera and was a capable pianist. J.M.W. Turner was one of her circle, and she educated him on Newtonian prisms and theories of color. As Dr Mulvihill wrote us, “At last, I found a second edition copy of this intriguing book (1835), with the additional notes and illustrations. Along with Margaret Cavendish, Maria Cunitz, and Caroline Herschel, Mary Somerville was a (scientific) daughter of the Enlightenment, and her legacy has been closely documented. But given the energetic delvings of feminist historians, there is certain to be an authoritative reassessment forthcoming of Somerville’s life, intersections, and extraordinary contribution. A sturdy Scotswoman (a Fairfax), ‘Mrs Somerville’ was a confident researcher and, at the outset, an independent scholar. Her long life (91 years) included two marriages, several children, published books, travel, suffragette advocacy, and honorary membership in the Royal Astronomical Society. Somerville College, Oxford, is named in her honor.” Online sources: [Recent paper](#) by Dr Alice Prochaska, FRHistS, principal (2010-2017), Somerville College, Oxford; *New York Times* obituary, December 2, 1872, page 1. We include three images sent by Maureen:



Image left. Spine, Mulvihill copy, Mary Somerville’s *On The Connexion Of The Physical Sciences* (London: John Murray, 1834; second edition, 1835). 12mo. 6 ½ x 4”. 493 pp. With detailed index and (lunar) frontispiece. The second edition includes additional illustrations, plates, diagrams, and author’s Preface. Rebound, dark blue morocco spine, elaborate gold tooling and red label; all edges gilt. Seller (2018), James Burmester Rare Books, Bristol UK.
Image right. Mary Somerville self-portrait, Somerville College, Oxford UK. Family bequest (1958), Lt. Col. J. Ramsay Fairfax. With permission of the Principal & Fellows of Somerville College, Oxford. Special thanks to Kate O’Donnell, Assistant Archivist.



Interior view. Title-page and frontispiece, Mary Somerville's *On The Connexion Of The Physical Sciences* (London, 1834; second edition, 1835). The frontis is an aquatint plate of lunar "Nebulae" (see p. 406ff.; also Index). Mulvihill Collection of Rare & Special Books by Early Women Writers. (Slight repair to this opening shall be managed by David H. Barry, Griffin Bookbinding, St Petersburg, Florida, conservator, 2011-, Mulvihill Collection.)

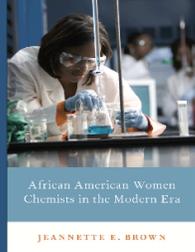
MEMBER NEWS

This year, **Linda Arntzenius** celebrates the tenth anniversary of her work as an oral historian with the Shelby White and Leon Levy Archives Center at the Institute for Advanced Study. She serves as consulting editor for the Center of Theological Inquiry's magazine *Fresh Thinking*.

Jeannette E. Brown's latest book, *African American Women in the Modern Era* published by Oxford University Press, is the second of two she has written on African American women chemists. Her first, *African American Women Chemists*, published in 2012, features outstanding chemists from the earliest pioneers to the late 1960s and the passage of the Civil Rights Acts. This second book focuses on contemporary women chemists and chemical engineers who have benefited from that Act. It tells the stories of 18 women leaders in their fields and how they succeeded: among them the inventor of a cancer drug; two who are the first African American women to become Dean of a non-historically black college; one in a leadership position with the American Chemical Society whose experience demonstrates that you do not have to work in the lab with a chemistry degree; another who worked to help scientist get patents for their research and also authored a book about African American inventors. "There are eighteen amazing women in this book and each of them has a claim to fame," says Jeannette. "However, they have been hiding in plain sight."

Jeannette, herself an accomplished chemist, historian, and science education advocate, wrote the book to tell the reader that everything in life is chemistry of some kind or another. *African American Women in the Modern Era* provides insight into the work of chemists and includes a guide to how to get the education to become a chemist, from elementary school to college and graduate school. It also tells the reader how to apply for a job. A pioneer in her own right, Jeannette was the first African American to receive a degree from the University of Minnesota's department of chemistry's graduate program, earning her master's degree in 1958. She received her bachelor's degree in chemistry from Hunter College. She is a former faculty associate in the department of Pre-College Programs at the New Jersey Institute of Technology. For 25 years, she worked as a research chemist at Merck. She started her industrial career as a junior chemist at CIBA Pharmaceutical, working there for 11 years. She is the 2004 Société de Chimie Industrielle (American Section) Fellow of the Chemical Heritage

Foundation, and a member of the first class of American Chemical Society Fellows (2009).



AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN CHEMISTS IN THE MODERN ERA

Jeannette E. Brown, former Research Chemist for Merck & Co. Inc. and a former Faculty Associate at the New Jersey Institute of Technology

- Details the successes and achievements of contemporary African American women chemists
- Focuses on chemists and chemical engineers working after the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Written in an interesting oral history style

African American Women Chemists in the Modern Era focuses on contemporary women who have benefited from the Civil Rights Act and are now working as chemists or chemical engineers. This book was produced by taking the oral history of women who are leaders in their field and who wanted to tell the world how they succeeded. It features eighteen amazing women in this book and each of them has a claim to fame, despite hiding in plain sight. These women reveal the history of their lives from youth to adult. Jeannette Brown aims to inspire women and minorities to pursue careers in the sciences, as evidenced by the successful career paths of the women that came before them.

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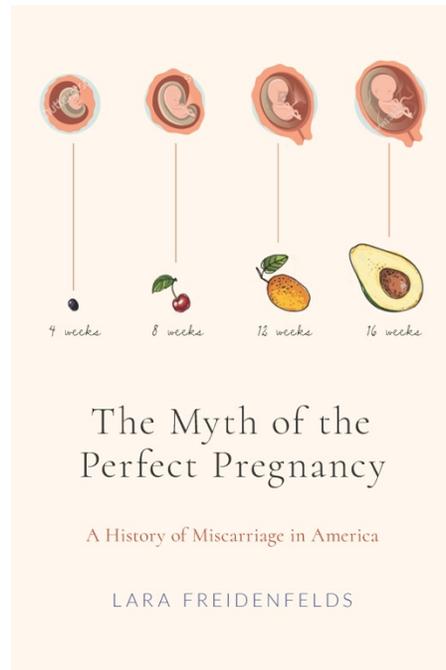
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In addition, she is passionate about serving as a mentor to and role model for underrepresented students and has participated in numerous scientific outreach programs and career days for students at all educational levels — elementary through college. For her work as a mentor to minority students and science education advocacy, she was elected to the Hunter College Hall of Fame in 1991; was honored by the University of Minnesota with an Outstanding Achievement Award in 2005; and received the American Chemical Society national award for Encouraging Disadvantaged Students into Careers in the Chemical Sciences in 2005. She was featured in the University of Minnesota's College of Science & Engineering's spring 2017 edition of *Inventing Tomorrow*, an edition focused on women scientists including alumnae like Brown who have inspired future generations of women in science, technology, engineering, and math.

This month, **Lara Freidenfelds** presided over the Women's Breakfast at the American Association for the History of Medicine meeting in Columbus, Ohio. She has been nominated to serve on the association's Council. In April, Lara gave the Linda and Charles Wilson Humanities in Medicine Lecture, on *Perfect Pregnancies and Mourned Miscarriages: A History of Modern Childbearing* at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. The talk can be viewed in

full [here](#). Her book, *The Myth of the Perfect Pregnancy: A History of Miscarriage in America*, will be coming out as a crossover trade book from Oxford University Press in January of 2020.



Lara is beginning to line up speaking dates and a book tour. If you know of friends and organizations that would be interested in hosting a presentation or book discussion, please contact Lara via her website, www.larafreidenfelds.com.

More details about the book can be found [here](#). And for more about Lara's activities, including her book *The Modern Period: Menstruation in Twentieth-Century America*, visit www.larafreidenfelds.com; @larafreidenfeld (twitter)

Shelley Frisch and Katja Petrowskaja, the author of Shelley's most recent translation, *Maybe Esther*, will appear at the University of London in London on May 30 at a conference on translanguaging: <https://modernlanguages.sas.ac.uk/events/event/17740>. *Maybe Esther* is shortlisted for the Pushkin House Russian Book Prize for which the award ceremony is slated to take place at the Charterhouse in London, June 12. For more information, visit: <http://www.pushkinhouse.org/2019-shortlist>.

Ellen Gilbert's article "The Prescient Librarian: Ilse Bry and Sociobibliography," has been accepted for publication in an upcoming issue of *Collections: A Journal for Museum and Archives Professionals*. In

addition, her paper "Opening Doors to Literature: People & Stories / Gente y Cuentos," has been published by *The International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion* (IJIDI) in a special issue on Diversity & Reading (vol. 3, iss. 2, April 2019). To view, visit: <https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index>, and scroll down to "Opening Doors."

Member-at-Large **Joan Goldstein**, host/producer of "Back Story with Joan Goldstein" on Princeton TV30, invited PRF President **Linda Holt** to discuss her latest book *Invictus*, a fictional account of the life, trials and times of the composer Beethoven. View the show at: <https://vimeo.com/329114277>. "Back Story with Joan Goldstein" appears on Princeton TV30 and Fios 45, Wednesdays at 8:30 p.m. and Sundays at 5:30 p.m. Joan has been hosting/producing this show for more than 12 years, covering social, economic, and science issues of our time. Joan has once again taught for the Evergreen Forum of the Princeton Senior Resource Center. Her course titled: "Building Acceptance of Diversity" focused this year on gender. Amongst her guests was Robert Seda Schreiber, Director of the new Bayard Rustin Center, which offers help and support for the LGBTQ community.

PRF President **Linda Holt's** latest research leads the way to the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth next year with the Harvard Square Editions April release of her novel, *Invictus*. The book offers a fictional view of Beethoven's childhood from birth until age 16. Linda discusses the book on "Back Story with **Joan Goldstein**" (as mentioned above) and again during a book launch at A Novel Idea on Passyunk, a bookstore in Philadelphia, Sunday, June 2, from 3 to 4:30 p.m. at A Novel Idea on Passyunk, 1726 E. Passyunk Ave., Philadelphia. All PRF members and their friends are welcome to attend. *The Black Spaniard*, Linda's novel about Beethoven's early years in Vienna was published by Unsolicited Press in 2016. She writes about classical music for the *Broad Street Review* www.broadstreetreview.com and is a member of the Music Critics Association of North America and the Philadelphia Classical Guitar Society. In addition Linda's review about pianist Daniel Mnukowski's Carnegie Hall debut, was published earlier this month (May 4) in the New York Classical Review (<https://tinyurl.com/y4ozw5r3>).

Winifred Hughes's chapbook, *Frost Flowers*, which won honorable mention in the Finishing Line Press competition, is due to be published in June but can be ordered now at www.finishinglinepress.com. Winnie

will be a featured reader in the Poets at the Library series at the Princeton Public Library on October 14. Her poem “In the Pine Barrens” is currently appearing on the Parks and Points website, parksandpoints.com.

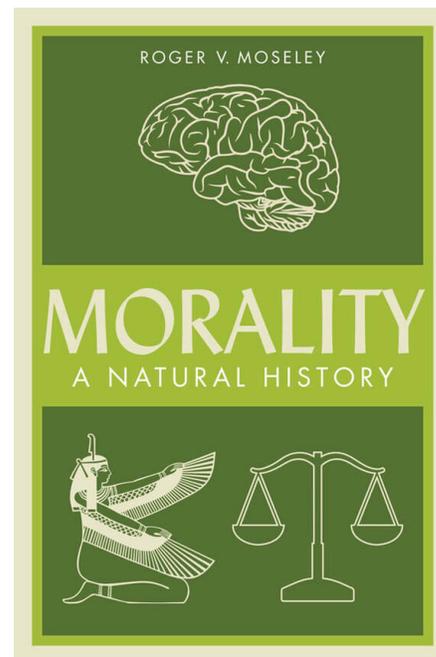
Joyce Irwin presented a paper entitled “Poetry, Music, and Religion in the Works of August Hermann Niemeyer” at the annual meeting of the Society for Christian Scholarship in Music in Toronto in February 2019. Her presentation focused on Niemeyer's oratorio *Mehala* based on the biblical story of Jephthah's daughter. Other presentations in the session focused on composer Carissimi's treatment of the same story, leading to a lively discussion of various possible interpretations of the biblical account.

Don McNeill's article, “US nuclear proliferation policy during the Clinton administration,” was published in April in the book *Foreign Policy in the Clinton Administration* (p. 55-72), edited by Rosanna Perotti, Nova Science Publishers, New York, 325 pp. The book is part of the series “Presidency in the United States” from this publisher and is the third on the Clinton administration originating from a conference (part of an ongoing series on American presidents) held at Hofstra University in November 2005. “The long and sometimes amusing delay in the publication of this volume has given the authors time for further reflection and the result is a fine review of US foreign policy during the first post-cold war presidency,” writes Don. “In my article I summarize the history of nuclear weapons proliferation and discuss the reasons for the poor prognosis in treating this addiction on the part of American presidents from Truman to today's incumbent.”

Donn Mitchell was selected to be a lead presenter at the May 10 Labor History Conference in New York, examining the labor movement and climate change. Donn's paper focuses on UAW leader Walter Reuther as an environmentalist before his time. Donn is the author of *Tread the City's Streets Again: Frances Perkins Shares Her Theology*. Donn is Editor & Publisher, *The Anglican Examiner*: www.AnglicanExaminer.com.

Roger Moseley's book *Morality: A Natural History*, which was the subject of a PRF Work-in Progress last year, will shortly be available on Amazon. The book explores the nature of morality and the source of moral ideas and looks at the ways in which philosophers have explored these questions for centuries, suggesting that both emotion and reason play roles but failing to explain how and why *Homo*

sapiens developed these ideas. Roger argues that evolutionary forces that optimize human welfare provide the explanation; it presents a multi-disciplinary analysis of the topic and reveals a common thread among the seemingly diverse fields of religion, neuroscience, experimental psychology and game theory, child development, evolution and animal behavior, and anthropology and sociology. When humans first appeared, a simple self-interested survival morality sufficed. As societies became more complex, however, rules of behavior became necessary to limit conflict and promote cooperation. The brain evolved, producing language that allowed the articulation of moral ideas which were codified and enforced by religion and social forces. No species lasts forever, and it is at our peril today that we neglect those evolved moral values of cooperation, altruism, truthfulness, and empathy.



As was evident from his PRF Work-in-Progress, Roger's work is rooted in scientific evidence and interspersed with personal anecdotes and humorous observations. *Morality: A Natural History* provides a unique perspective. For more information, visit: www.rogermoseley.weebly.com

Karen Reeds, PhD, FLS gave a talk at Columbia University in March titled “Seeking Snakeroot in Eden: John Parkinson's *Theatrum Botanicum* (1640) in colonial Virginia,” to the Columbia University Seminar on the Renaissance. The talk presented a case study of the problems that early modern European naturalists faced in collecting, describing, and transmitting New World plants. It focused on the

Rev. John Banister, an Anglican missionary in the backwoods of colonial Virginia, and his copy of John Parkinson's huge herbal, *Theatrum Botanicum* (London: Thomas Cotes, 1640), sent to him by a London colleague in 1688. That volume—with Banister's signature, annotations, and fragments of pressed American plants—survives in a small New Jersey public library, the Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences (formerly the Mount Holly Public Library). Using accounts of Virginian snakeroot (*Aristolochia serpentaria* L.), which colonists regarded as a cure for snakebite, Reeds analyzed Parkinson's entries for North American plants, Banister's use of the herbal in his own botanical explorations, his English contemporaries' responses to his work, and the afterlife of both Banister's personal library and the Virginian snakeroot as a medicinal herb.



Engraving of John Parkinson (1657-1650) from his monumental work *Theatrum Botanicum* (1640) (Source: Wikipedia)

Reeds closed with a surprising contemporary twist to the story: aristolochic acid, an active component of a European *Aristolochia* species, showed up in a diet pill in Belgium and proved to be highly toxic.

Beverly Jerold Scheibert, who recently joined PRF's membership ranks, list among her more recent books and articles: "Tartini and the Two Forms of *Appoggiature*," *Eighteenth Century Music* 16/1 (2019): 83-86; "Pascal Boyer: A Pioneer in Journalistic Music Criticism," *Fontes Artis Musicae*, 65/3 (2018): 146-56; "A Vindication of Ferdinand Hiller," *Journal of Musicological Research* 37/2 (2018): 141-65; "Performance conditions, standards

and Bach's chorus," *The Musical Times* 158/1941 (Winter 2017): 55-70; "Zukunftsmusik/Music of the Future: A Moral Question," *Journal of Musicological Research* 36/4 (2017): 1-25; "Quantz and Agricola: A Literary Collaboration," *Acta Musicologica* 88 (2016/2): 127-42; *Music Performance Issues: 1600-1900* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon, 2016); "The *appoggiatura* breve in Domenico Scarlatti's *Sonate*," in *The Early Keyboard Sonata in Italy and Beyond*, ed. Rohan Stewart-MacDonald (Turnout: Brepols, 2016); and *The Complexities of Early Instrumentation: Winds and Brass* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015). While most of Beverly's titles concern music, both "Vindication of Ferdinand Hiller" and "Zukunftsmusik/Music of the Future: A Moral Question," treat anti-Semitism in the 19th century.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NCIS TO CELEBRATE 30 YEARS AT JUNE CONFERENCE

The 30th Anniversary conference of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars (NCIS) is set for June 21-23, 2019, at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. PRF is an affiliate group member of NCIS. As such, all PRF members are eligible to submit manuscripts and book reviews to NCIS's open-access, peer-reviewed journal, *The Independent Scholar* (TIS). *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.

To enjoy all the benefits of belonging to NCIS, individuals need to join NCIS as individual members. Several PRF members belong to both organizations. PRF members are not automatically NCIS members and should consider joining. 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/>

MAILING ADDRESS & WEBSITE

PRF's mailing address is: Princeton Research Forum, P.O. Box 264, Kingston, N.J. 08528-0264. Website is: www.princetonresearchforum.org.

WORK-IN-PROGRESS

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

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 2019-2020 will be December 31, 2019. Please mail checks to: **Princeton Research Forum, P.O. Box 264, Kingston, N.J. 08528-0264.**

PRF PRESENTATION GRANTS

by Karen Reeds

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. Grant recipients are asked to write a short item about the presentation and conference for the PRF Newsletter.

NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

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

PRINCETON RESEARCH FORUM OFFICERS 2018-2019

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