



**PRF ANNUAL MEETING 2021 AND
ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2021-
2023**

Webmaster: Lina Genovesi
Work in Progress/Presentation
Seminars: Ellen Gilbert

Following the bylaws of the Princeton Research Forum, we elect our officers at our June Annual Meeting, for two-year terms. At this year's Annual Meeting, held over Zoom on June 17, 2021, members unanimously elected the entire slate of candidates proposed by the Nominating Committee. The Committee was chaired by Linda Arntzenius and included Joan Goldstein, Winnie Hughes, Pam Sheehan, and Linda Holt *ex officio*.

Many of these committed members had previously served in their positions and were willing to sign up for another term despite the difficulties of pandemic times.

In addition, two volunteer positions have been established by the PRF Executive Board: Digital Resources Support and Newsletter Associate Editor. Jamileh Gerber will draw on her librarian skills to help members locate digital resources for their research--just ask Jamie! Grayson Barber joins Karen Reeds in producing the Newsletter.

Our new roster of officers, who will serve through the Annual Meeting of 2023:

President: Linda Holt
Vice-President: Donn Mitchell
Treasurer: Joyce Irwin
Secretary: Roger Moseley

Members-at-Large: Joan Goldstein
and Ludmilla Popova-Wightman
Calendar: Connie Goddard
Grants Officer & NCIS Liaison:
Karen Reeds
Library Access: Jamileh Gerber
Membership: Terri McNichol
Newsletter: Karen Reeds
Program: Pamela Sheehan
Publicity: Winifred Hughes

At the Meeting, Linda Holt congratulated PRF for continuing as a very active organization this past year even though we could not meet in person. Indeed, as Winnie Hughes remarked, in many ways, Zoom made participation in the Poetry Group easier for its members, and especially so for Hilly Geertz, who turned 94 in February.

Linda also noted that Zoom made possible her meetings with officers of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars (<http://www.ncis.org>) and her counterparts, the heads of the eight other NCIS partner groups around the world.

The discussion moved to questions about hybrid meetings and talks in the pandemic-free future, and Donn offered to explore the possibilities of in-person-plus-Zoom meetings – a discussion every organization in the world is surely having these days. If you have experience or ideas for arranging a successful hybrid gathering, get in touch with Donn, please.

CELEBRATING EVELYN M. WITKIN AT 100!

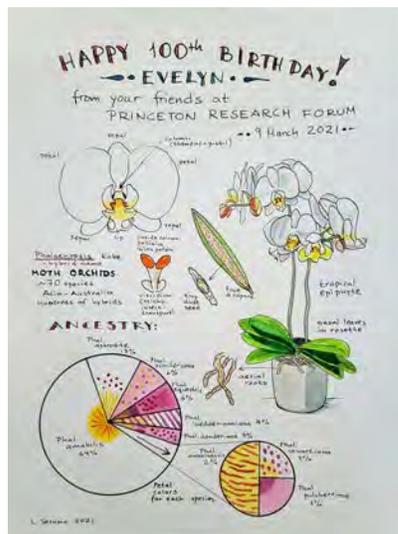


Photo by Nick Romanenko

March 9, 2021 was a red-letter day in Evelyn Witkin's life. Not only did it mark her 100th birthday, but it was also her first social occasion in the pandemic year. Her family, all safely vaccinated against SARS COVID-19, flew in from California to join her.

The PRF Science/Science History Group contributed to the fun even though the pandemic prevented an in-person gathering.

Boris Katz presented Evelyn with several gifts: a bottle of Veuve Clicquot, a *Phalaenopsis* orchid, a loaf of Lolly-Cake (from Evelyn's sister's recipe, which Evelyn has often made for our gatherings) and two hand-made birthday cards signed by nineteen members of the group.



Phalaenopsis Kobe, Moth Orchid – the birthday orchid presented to Evelyn Witkin. A birthday botanical infographic designed and drawn by Lena Struwe, PRF Science/Science History Group.

The PRF Science Group was started in 1998 as the result of a conversation between Evelyn and Karen Reeds. Evelyn ran the group for many years and suggested a high proportion of its readings. In recent years Boris has served as its chair and archivist. Over the past two decades, the group has discussed more than 150 books! Boris recently tallied the top 18 keywords in those titles and the number of times they showed up: *how* (21), *world* (14), *science* (14), *life* (14), *history* (12), *human* (9), *evolution* (9), *nature* (8), *mind* (8), *our* (7), *new* (7), *us* (6), *universe* (6), *man* (6), *brain* (6), *age* (6), *language* (5), and – Evelyn's special favorite – *Darwin* (5).

On April 13, Rutgers University paid homage to its emerita scientist by devoting a day-long virtual symposium to Evelyn's world-renowned work in genetics and the discoveries that stemmed from it. The symposium culminated with the dedication of the newest building at the Waksman Institute of Microbiology as the "Evelyn M. Witkin Laboratory."

Her work underpins our understanding of DNA damage and DNA repair in all living organisms, from bacteria to humans, and for understanding how DNA damage and DNA repair affect cancer and aging.

Richard Ebright, Rutgers Board of Governors Professor of Chemistry and Chemical Biology and laboratory director at Waksman Institute of Microbiology

Speakers at the symposium offered moving personal tributes to Evelyn's teaching and mentorship, especially for women in science, and to her lifelong commitment to social activism.

Stay tuned: we'll post a link to videos from the symposium once they are mounted on the Waksman website. Meanwhile, for more about Evelyn's life and work:

•Rutgers Today article:

<https://www.rutgers.edu/news/rutgers-celebrates-world-renowned-geneticist-evelyn-witkin-she-turns-100>

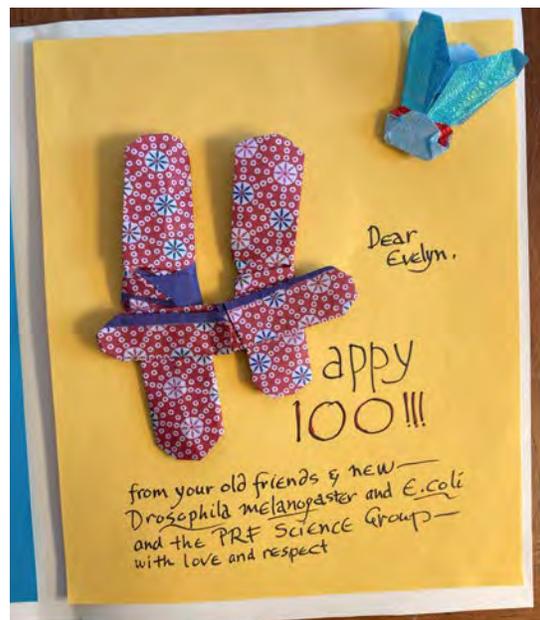
•PLOS Genetics, 2012: "It Was Heaven: An Interview with Evelyn Witkin" :

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgen.1003009> [open access]

•Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Digital Archives, Oral History, recorded June 1,

2000, "Evelyn Witkin on Becoming a Scientist"

<http://library.cshl.edu/oralhistory/interview/scientific-experience/becoming-scientist/witkin-interest-in-genetics/>



Origami birthday card, featuring two organisms Evelyn studied in the lab. Designed and folded by Karen Reeds, PRF Science/Science History Group.

MEMBER NEWS

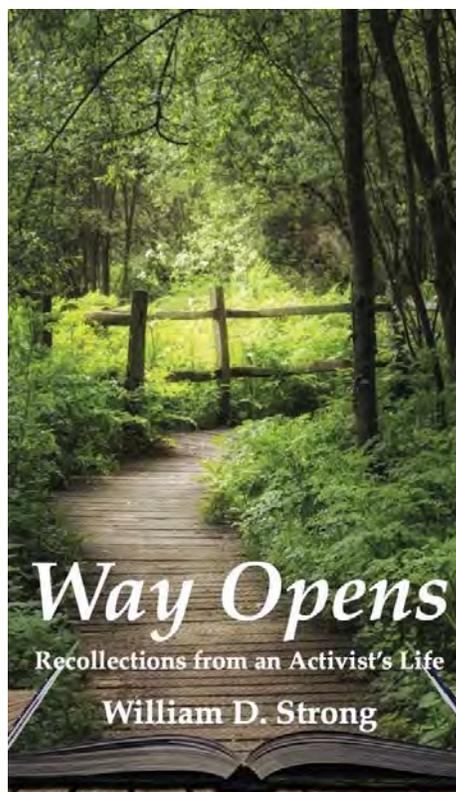
Linda Arntzenius announces the first book from Province Line Press. She inaugurated Princeton's newest publishing house with *Way Opens: Recollections from an Activist's Life*, by William D. Strong. Linda met Bill Strong in 2007 when she interviewed him for the *Town Topics* series, All in A Day's Work: <http://www.towntopics.com/sep1907/profiles.html>.

At that point, Bill was spending much of his time as a volunteer restorer of children's books for the Princeton Public Library, a quiet task that reflected his love of books

and his frugal habits. But, as he told Linda then, Bill had not led a quiet life: “As you can see from my front door [where the death toll of soldiers in Iraq is recorded and updated] I am interested in peace and justice. I was also on the board of HiTOPS for five years and I’m a donor to Planned Parenthood. My major occupation was working throughout Latin America and the Caribbean on women’s reproductive rights. I worked for Church World Service [a relief, development, and refugee assistance ministry founded in 1946] and other organizations.” That profile led to a long friendship and this terrifically readable memoir of Bill’s life as a Quaker activist and “liberal artist.”

From Linda’s Foreword:
Here then are reminiscences from a Quakerly life as told to me in the characteristically matter-of-fact way that reveals the man: jobs that might have repelled other young men taken on with enthusiasm – breaking stones for the railroad, farm work, volunteering in a psychiatric hospital; his search for meaningful work; his trip to post-Revolutionary Cuba to cut sugar cane and find out for himself what was going on there; his subsequent encounter with the FBI; his worldwide travels; his constant commitment to problem solving that puts people first. In short, his activism with a small “a.”

*Follow Province Line Press at <https://www.provincelinepress.com/>
To order copies of Bill Strong’s book, or to talk with Linda about your own book project, email her through her website.*



Jeannette Brown has been honored by her alma mater, the University of Minnesota, with the establishment of a new Lectureship in the Department of Chemistry. The Jeannette Brown Lectureship is aimed at bringing “experts in all fields of chemistry from around the world, with emphasis on highlighting the work and careers of Black, Indigenous, and people of color in the chemical sciences. The lectureship reflects and celebrates the pioneering work of Jeannette Brown as a talented chemist in the pharmaceutical industry for 25 years, author, historian, and tireless leader and advocate for the inclusion and advancement of African American women in chemistry-related professional pursuits and careers.”

Jeannette was the first African American to receive a degree from the chemistry

department's graduate program, earning her master's degree in 1958.



Photo by Olivia Holmes

For more about Jeannette and the Lectureship, see:

<https://cse.umn.edu/chem/news/chemistry-establishes-jeannette-brown-lectureship>; *UMN's College of Science & Engineering's spring 2017 edition of **Inventing Tomorrow***: <https://cse.umn.edu/college/inventing-tomorrow-archive>; and Jeannette's autobiographical chapter in her first book, *African American Women Chemists* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

Rich Corbett announces his entry into the world of professional editing and writing through his new website: www.CorbettWriting.com. He draws on his background in health care, insurance, banking, real estate, law, public policy, legislation and government as well as his work writing short fiction and book reviews.

In April, **Shelley Frisch** published her translation of filmmaker Billy Wilder's early journalism with Princeton University Press. The volume was edited by film scholar Noah Isenberg (<https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691194943/billy-wilder-on-assignment>). The book is enjoying ample media coverage; the June 6, 2021 *New York Times Book Review* singled it out as a top

choice for summer reading, and there have also been favorable reviews in the *Washington Post*, the *New Republic*, the *Observer* (UK), the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Financial Times*, and other newspapers and magazines. The book was also excerpted in *Harper's* and the *Paris Review*. Shelley says her favorite review to date came in the *Los Angeles Review of Books* (<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/billy-wilders-amerikanismus/>) "because of the attention it pays to the translation itself-- always a bonus!"

Shelley also reports: "My translation of Peter Neumann's *Jena 1800: A Republic of Free Spirits* will be published in November by Farrar, Straus & Giroux (<https://us.macmillan.com/books/9780374178697>). I have also finished translating a new annotated edition of Kafka's aphorisms for Princeton University Press, slated for publication early next year, and I'm working on another translation for Yale University Press."

Shelley also served on this year's jury for the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize, just awarded to Jackie Smith, for her splendid translation of Judith Schalansky's *Inventory of Losses* (New Directions). Because this year marks the 25th anniversary of the prize, Shelley was asked to contribute a brief essay on the history and significance of the prize (<https://www.goethe.de/ins/us/en/kul/bks/hkw/fri.html>). In addition, she was a panelist at Princeton University's Global Publishing Early Career Conference in June, <https://globalpublishing.princeton.edu/>.

In May, **Connie Goddard** gave a talk at Pennington Public Library: “‘Ironsides’: A Ship, a School, and Some Unique Personalities.” She told the story of Delia Stewart Parnell, on whose family estate Bordentown’s iconic Manual Training and Industrial School was located from 1886 to 1955. The school had previously been called Ironsides Normal School in recognition of her father, Charles Stewart, who had commanded the famed ship known as “Ironsides” in the War of 1812. Delia Parnell and her daughters both aided her son Charles Stewart Parnell, an Anglo-Irish aristocrat, in his pursuit of justice for Ireland’s landless peasants. His campaign attracted the attention of New Jersey’s T. Thomas Fortune, a noted agitator and publisher, who sought justice for landless African-Americans. Fortune was one of several Black intellectuals associated with school during its distinguished life. Connie also paid tribute to other women associated with the school, the wives of the men who served as its principals: Ella Mount Rice, Fannie Hagen Gregory, and Grace Valentine.

Joan Goldstein demonstrated the power of PRF networking on her most recent Princeton Community Television program, *Backstory with Joan Goldstein* (Show 4.21), which featured the Princeton author and Revolutionary War historical interpreter, David Price. Joan connected with Price through her PRF colleague, **Rich Corbett**. As noted in the Winter 2021 *PRF Newsletter*, Rich served as David Price’s editor on *John Haslet’s World*, which has just been published by Knox Press. To watch Joan’s interview: <https://vimeo.com/569389949>

Linda Holt will be taking a summer sabbatical from her on-line teaching responsibilities in order to concentrate on her music journalism and PRF. If you haven’t read her posts in *Broad Street Review*, take a look: <https://www.broadstreetreview.com/authors/linda-holt>.

If you despair at mainstream media today, consider **Beverly Jerold’s** new book about the calumnies perpetrated by music journalists in late eighteenth-century Paris: *Disinformation in Mass Media: Gluck, Piccinni and the Journal de Paris*, now out from Routledge: <https://www.routledge.com/Disinformation-in-Mass-Media-Gluck-Piccinni-and-the-Journal-de-Paris/Jerold/p/book/9780367350178>.

From Beverly’s Introduction:

*Truth exists, only falsehood
has to be invented. —*
Georges Braque, *Pensées
sur l’Art*

Modern literature has documented many eighteenth-century French literary quarrels on subjects of every description, but the one concerning the operas of Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714–1787) and Niccolò Piccinni (1728–1800) is worthy of re-examination because it represents an early instance of using daily mass media to sow discord in society at large for political advantage. Before the advent of journalism as a commercial business, eighteenth-century journals and papers were modest enterprises that appeared at

varying intervals with content for the educated elite. This form of journalism underwent an abrupt change in 1777 with the founding of the *Journal de Paris* (JP), a daily paper directed to a large audience in a metropolitan area. Like today, mass media confers great benefits, but can also be used for nefarious purposes.... We [might] take the quarrel to be a musical one, but the truth lies elsewhere. No knowledge of music is necessary to follow this purely political drama in which music was only a pretext for defamatory anonymous attacks on individuals of sound reputation to ensure both the success of the new JP and Gluck's continued domination at the Paris Opéra—with all its glory, fame, and wealth. Ruthless power unleashed by a new medium for financial gain is the subject. Here, disinformation on a grand scale was born.

(The whole Introduction is available open access at:
<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9780429329319/disinformation-mass-media-beverly-jerold> – click “Preview PDF.”)

Amanda Haste, Humanities Editor of *The Independent Scholar* (Vol. 8, 2021), wrote in her review of Beverly's work: “This book is a fascinating exploration of the machinations of a few designed to manipulate public opinion and create a furore, which will resonate with anyone who has read a newspaper or delved into social media. ... Academically rigorous, but written in an accessible style, I heartily

recommend this book to musicians and non-musicians alike.”

https://www.ncis.org/sites/default/files/BKREVIEW_TIS%238_Disinformation-mass-media-Gluck-Piccinni-Journal-de-Paris.pdf

In another recent publication, “A 1760 dream for better performance standards,” (*The Musical Times* 161/1952, Autumn 2020: 85-99, and noted in volume 36, Society for Eighteenth-Century Music), Beverly discussed an anonymous writer (probably the J.S. Bach student J.F. Agricola) who wrote a detailed account of a dream in which he visits a city with outstanding music practices and large-scale performances – implying that those of his own day were inferior.

Rare Book Hub's readers expressed their admiration of the recent essay review by **Maureen Mulvihill** of *The Cambridge History of Ireland*, ed. Thomas Bartlett (Cambridge University Press, 2018), four volumes (<https://www.rarebookhub.com/articles/2985?id=2985>).

Maureen surveyed earlier histories of Ireland and noted that digital technologies had not only spurred all kinds of new historical and literary methodologies in Irish history, but also permitted *The Cambridge History* (“some 1500 years of Irish history in over 3000 pages”) to be organized and published in a remarkably short time.

Volume II which “sets out the history of Ireland from 1550 to 1730, focusing mainly on Ireland's intersection with Tudor and Stuart politics,” covers the period Maureen knows best; she judges it the “strongest volume of the entire series and certainly the

saddest, as it surveys the decline and eventual loss of the ‘original’ Ireland (the old order) to a violently invasive foreign power: England.”

WORK-IN-PROGRESS

In February, Ashwini Mokashi gave a Work-in-Progress Seminar, “Putting our Knowledge to Work: Expanding Boundaries of Independent Scholarship,” in which she reflected about her own life as an independent scholar and about PRF’s future. Her vision of a broader concept of – and market for – independent scholarship provoked a lively discussion among the PRF and NCIS Zoom participants, who themselves represented the geographically broadest audience of any PRF meeting (including one from Turkey).

The work-in-progress arose from a conversation between **Ashwini Mokashi** and **Ellen Gilbert**, who moderated the Zoom WIP. Ellen noted Ashwini's appearance on **Joan Goldstein's Backstory** TV show, Ashwini’s popular blog, her upcoming book project on meditation, her philosophical counseling, and her online talks to international audiences as practical applications of her academic philosophical research to contribute to society.

Ashwini noted that joining PRF was crucial for her. When striving to do academic philosophy turned out to be complicated, she looked for other ways of applying her research. As an example of putting philosophical research to work on a community problem, she described how, volunteering in her local emergency medical service, she recognized the organization of successful blood drives in the midst of the

pandemic could benefit from philosophical understanding. Building on philosophy’s long tradition of dialogue, she deliberately sought out people in many different fields for advice and succeeded in organizing safe drives that did not spread any infection.

Similarly, although the lofty philosophical ideas in her book, *Sapiens and Sthitaprajna*, initially felt suitable only for an academic audience, Ashwini came to see that these ideas still work today. She argued that, even though we are all fallible, philosophy gives us tools and perspective for a calm approach to stress, ways to control our reactions and develop the habit of self-examination. Stoicism and the *Bhagavadgita* can serve as "shock-absorbers" to help deal with crises. However, it cannot be done instantaneously.

Independent scholars can make a noteworthy difference, Ashwini asserted. They are not siloed, nor are they at war with any discipline. Psychology, philosophy, science are not pitted against each other. Independent scholars are exposed to multiple ideologies and academic disciplines. When we add up all the years of scholarship represented in PRF, the total represents a fantastic amount of institutional knowledge. Independent scholars can be a bridge between the academic and practical world, serving as consultants, advisors, community leaders. Ashwini has seen through her own outreach that people want to know how to become part of PRF, how to do research, get recognition. Independent scholars can make a difference.

Ashwini listed several ways PRF as an organization could foster this broader view of independent scholarship: getting institutional grants to save time for individual members in grant writing;

collectively addressing specific social problems; reaching out to academic institutions locally and internationally to offer teaching and mentoring in fields not taught by their own faculties; inviting sympathetic academics to join PRF as affiliates; creating blog platforms for members; establishing repositories for members' work; supporting individual websites for members to showcase more than their publications; providing practical expertise as consultants on research methods and writing.

We should, Ashwini urged, reinvent ourselves in and beyond the COVID world. Our multi-disciplinarity is something valuable to bring to any enterprise. The pandemic has a bearing on this: we are more eager to be in touch with one another. And Zoom technology helps make it possible.

Through technology, too, we can and should create alternatives to academia, to become influencers via, e.g., podcasts, Facebook, LinkedIn. We should be marketing ourselves by self-publishing to non-academic audiences. The tenure process stifles productivity and creativity, but we, as independent scholars, are instead free to experiment with non-traditional genres and approaches. We need to push for acceptance of online scholarly work published outside traditional scholarly venues – an excellent Wikipedia article should count as a contribution to scholarship. PRF and NCIS should create a task force of IS peer reviewers. PRF and NCIS should become publishers! More and more tenure committees are looking for other kinds of peer-reviewed platforms. They need the names of their peers working outside academia. More and more, PRF will become

the norm. As one of the participants observed, the trend is already there.

PRF and NCIS: STRENGTHENING OUR TIES

PRF is an affiliate member of NCIS, the National Coalition of Independent Scholars (<http://www.ncis.org/>). The most obvious value of being a Partner Group is that PRF members can submit manuscripts, book reviews, and our own books for review to NCIS's open-access, peer-reviewed journal, The Independent Scholar, www.ncis.org/the-independent-scholar/tis – see, for example, this Newsletter's item the review of Beverly Jerold's new book. Address queries to <mailto:tis@ncis.org>.

NCIS also sponsors H-Scholar, an international web-based listserv/discussion group for independent scholars, where subscribers can post announcements, queries, and join in discussions on topics affecting independent scholars. H-Scholar is part of H-Net, a group of discipline-based listserves and related services to scholars in the humanities and social sciences. To explore H-Scholar and H-Net Commons: <https://networks.h-net.org/> <https://networks.h-net.org/h-scholar>.

While PRF members are not automatically NCIS members, by joining NCIS as an individual member – as a number of PRF members have done – you benefit as an individual (want a webpage?), as a member of PRF, and as a part of the larger community of independent scholars.

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 2021-2022 will be December 31, 2021. But it's not too late to mail checks for 2020-2021 (nor too early for 2021-2022) to:

**Princeton Research Forum
PO 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.

Pandemic note If your presentation was or will be online, talk to Karen about ways a PRF Presentation Grant might apply to the costs you've incurred.

NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

Spring/Summer Issue: *deadline* mid-June for publication in July.

Fall Issue: *deadline* mid-late October for publication in November.

Winter Issue: *deadline* mid-late February for publication in April.

PRINCETON RESEARCH FORUM OFFICERS 2021-2023

President: Linda Holt
Vice-President: Donn Mitchell
Treasurer: Joyce Irwin
Secretary: Roger Moseley

Members-at-Large:

Joan Goldstein
Ludmilla Popova-Wightman

Committee Heads:

Calendar: Connie Goddard
NCIS Liaison and Grants Chair: Karen Reeds
Library Access: Jamileh Gerber
Membership: Terri McNichol
Newsletter: Karen Reeds
Program: Pamela Sheehan
Publicity: Winifred Hughes
Webmaster: Lina Genovesi
Work in Progress/Presentation Seminars: Ellen Gilbert
Digital Resources (volunteer): Jamileh Gerber
Associate Newsletter Editor (volunteer): Grayson Barber

Chairs of Study Groups:

Humanities: Jeff Spear
Poetry: Winifred Hughes
Science/Science History: Boris Katz