The Great Franklin Debate

The small town of Franklin elected a new mayor, Courtney Hamill, and her first act as mayor was to call a town meeting. For a week, every edition of the *Franklin Times* newspaper presented the same announcement. Citizens were invited to offer suggestions for a fitting monument to Benjamin Franklin, the town’s namesake.

On Friday night, the town hall was full. Mayor Hamill welcomed everyone, “I have called us together tonight to help plan a monument to honor Benjamin Franklin. Our first—”

Mayor Hamill was immediately interrupted by Bill Kim, an inventor. He believed that the statue should honor Ben Franklin for his many inventions. “He was one of the most inventive Americans in our history,” said Mr. Kim.

The editor of the newspaper wanted to make sure that the statue showed Ben Franklin holding a newspaper. “His first article was published when he was just sixteen!” he exclaimed.

Polly Bliss, the town librarian, said the statue of Ben Franklin should show him holding a book. “Exactly who helped establish the first library in America? Franklin!”

Then it was the postmaster’s turn to speak. “I want to see a mailbag over Ben Franklin’s shoulder!” he said. “Franklin was the deputy postmaster of the northern colonies.”

Fire Chief O’Neill had a different idea. “Show him proudly wearing a firefighter’s helmet!” he said. “He helped set up Philadelphia’s first fire department.”

The town decided that the most appropriate monument to Benjamin Franklin was a website containing everything there was to know about their hero. Everyone who visited would know that Ben Franklin was a scientist, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and much, much more!