

# Muse & Musings

*"The company of clever, well-informed people, who have a great deal of conversation"*

## December 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting UBC Opera and birthday cake



On December 16<sup>th</sup> we celebrated Christmas and Jane Austen's 242<sup>nd</sup> birthday with a concert entitled "Opera Comes to Highbury" featuring performances by UBC Opera Ensemble members Baritone Alireza Mojibian (son of our member Azarm Akhavian) and Mezzo-Soprano Charlotte Beglinger, accompanied by Professor Richard Epp on piano. The two sang delightful selections from Rossini, Mozart and Cole Porter. After performing, the two singers and Professor Epp obligingly answered wide-ranging questions from the audience.

Later, we raised a toast to Miss Austen and then tucked into a delicious and very festive luncheon featuring ham and all the trimmings and of course, birthday cake. Thanks to everyone especially who worked hard to make the day a rousing success. Last but not least, the Silent Auction, organized by Pam Ottridge, raised \$288.

– by Elspeth Flood with help from Laureen McMahon

### Darcy's Valentines to Elizabeth

#### The first

Roses are red, violets are blue  
You'd never tempt *me*, so not dancing with *you*.

#### The second

Roses are red, violets are blue  
Can't stand your mother, but I'm nuts about *you*.

#### The third

Roses are red, violets are blue  
My love is unchanged, I think only of *you*.



– By a Lady

## From Eileen's Archive Newsletter #10 – May, 1985

Excerpt from "... prefer a plain dish to a ragout:" comments and recipes from *The Experienced English Housekeeper*, Mrs. Elizabeth Raffald, (1782)

In *Mansfield Park*, Dr. Grant was suffering a "disappointment about a green goose." A young ("green") goose sounds delicious, dressed, spitted, basted several times with fresh cold butter, until it is a nice brown, and served with a little brown gravy and a butter sauce flavoured with sorrel, sugar and gooseberries. How could Dr. Grant's cook have "made a blunder"?

Some of the privations Fanny Price suffered at her family home in Portsmouth were "Rebecca's puddings and Rebecca's hashes." Mrs. Raffald gives careful directions in her chapter on puddings – "take great care your cloth is very clean . . . boil it in plenty of water, and turn it often . . . take the basin and cloth off very carefully, for often a light pudding is broke in turning out." I can understand why the slatternly Rebecca didn't do a good job on puddings. As for hashes, Mrs. Raffald likes the meat cut in very thin slices, tossed with a little good gravy or catchup, flavoured with sliced shallots, lemon pickle, chopped anchovy, cloves, sliced onion or lemon peel, and carefully and tastefully served garnished with scraped horseradish, pickled onions, currant jelly or red cabbage. Rebecca would not be up to this either.



Mrs. Norris was so pleased to have a cream cheese from Sotherton, ("just like the excellent one we had at dinner"). It was probably made like this; "put 1 large spoonful of steep to 5 quarts of afterings, break it down light, put it upon a cloth on a sieve bottom, and let it run till dry, break it, cut and turn it in a clean cloth, then put it into the sieve again, and put on it a 2 lb. weight, sprinkle a little salt on it and let it stand all night, then lay it on a board to dry; when dry, lay a few strawberry leaves on it and ripen it between two pewter dishes in a warm place, turn it and put on fresh leaves every day." In case you are wondering, "steep" is rennet and "afterings" is the last straining (the richest) of milk from a cow.

White soup, which had to be made before the Netherfield ball, and which Emma Watson enjoyed at the Edwards' after their ball, is made by stewing together 6 quarts water, a knuckle of veal, a large fowl, 1 lb. lean bacon, ½ lb. rice, 2 anchovies, peppercorns, 2 or 3 onions, a bundle of sweet herbs, and 3 or 4 heads of celery, sliced. Strain and let stand overnight. "Put it in a tossing pan, add ½ lb. almonds beat fine, boil a little, sieve, add 1 pint cream and 1 egg yolk. Serve hot." It should be very relaxing for excited young ladies who "danced every dance."



Mrs. Bennet's fat haunch of venison might have been roasted on a spit, and covered with paper and paste. "When it is enough, take off the paper and paste, dust well with flour, and baste it with butter; when it is a light brown, dish it up with brown gravy in your dish, or currant jelly sauce." Mrs. Raffald says that half a pound of butter will "dress" a large dish of beef steaks. Almost all meat dishes in her book are basted with butter – even roast goose – rather than with drippings from the dripping pan underneath the spit.



– by Eileen Sutherland

All of Eileen's newsletters are now available on our website at: <http://www.jasnancouver.ca/newsletters/>

### Future JASNA member



Megan Barker reads *Emma* to her new daughter Marilla Elizabeth. The middle name is technically after Meg's mom, but it certainly doesn't hurt that it connects with *P&P*! She was born on November 8<sup>th</sup> and was a pretty big baby at 8lb 15oz – continues to thrive as those adorably chubby cheeks attest.

### Wickham's Valentine to Lydia

Roses are red, violets are blue  
Too bad you've no money, seems I'm stuck with you



– By a Lady

### From our Library

There are several biographies of Jane Austen in our Library. One of the most detailed, well researched and sympathetic biographies is *Jane Austen, a Life* by Claire Tomalin, who has just been awarded the Bodley Medal for her work in literary biography (click link): [Tomalin Bodley Award](#).



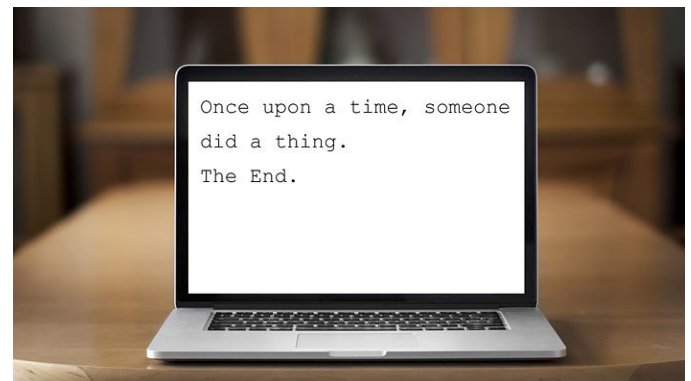
Another with a great deal of detail and original material is *Jane Austen: Her Life* by Park Honan. *A Portrait of Jane Austen* by David Cecil does not reveal any new facts as such but is a very fond tribute to our favourite author. All are illustrated. Anyone of these is recommended reading for any lover of Jane Austen's work who wants to know more about her life.

If you have questions about our library, please see Cathleen Boyle or Carol Sutherland

### The Editor is Distraught

#### More submissions needed!

What did you do on your winter vacation? Or your summer vacation? Did you manage to find a Jane Austen connection? What have you been reading that your fellow members might like to hear about? Do you have any deep (or shallow) thoughts about Jane Austen's needlework or the meaning of it all? The Editor needs help!



## Excerpt from a Novel

Submitted by Phyllis Ferguson Bottomer

This excerpt, which makes reference to Mr. Bennet, is from *Celestial Harmonies* by Peter Esterhazy, who was leading figure in 20<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian literature and a descendant of the Prince who was a patron of Haydn. It is insightful, poignant and tragic, so be warned:

My older brother, Gyula, would often stand with my father at the window of the small salon that afforded a view of the hilly vineyards, where the Riesling was too sour. Gyula was allowed to stand on a chair...which brought them to the same height; they didn't talk, they watched the perfectly aligned rows of vine – beauty and industry. They rested their hands on the nape of the other's neck, and from time to time, with a gentle stirring of the thumbs, they would stroke each other.

On March 2nd, Gyula ran a fever. It happened to be a Saturday, and my mother had gone to visit her younger sister....My father had given the servants the weekend off....my father was glad when the servants got the day off, because only then could he really be on his own and he liked being on his own. In this sense, my mother was much more consistently an aristocrat. You were born into the wrong family she used to say to my father, laughing.

My father was in the library reading, a favourite pastime of his. He loved English novels, especially *Pride and Prejudice*, and imagined he was Mr. Bennet. Mr. Bennet's wry wisdom, his unambitious intelligence, was close to his own heart. He felt that Mr. Bennet, too, was a sad human being. Gyula was given permission to read along with my father i.e. at a distance from him, in the other half of the room and, in imitation of his father's posture, he was leafing through a picture book with colored etchings. King Louis II dead in the River Csele, for instance. And the best of all, Frederick Barbarossa surveying his troops. At which point, the fever came like a flood. My brother, Gyula, began to shake, his brow burning up, his lips chapped. *Daddy*, he whispered. *What?* my father yelled. Mr. Bennet was especially particular about one thing: being left in peace with his books. He didn't see and he didn't sense the danger. Go on, read.

Only when the child tumbled off the chair did he look up from his book. He didn't know what was happening. Gyula gave a thump, then lay inert. First my father rang for the servants, only then did he spring to his feet. The child was lying on the carpet like a small, still animal rolled up into an incredibly small ball. This disproportionate smallness was death itself, for a moment he thought his son was dead. He shook his head. He had a facile view of the world, about order, about what is possible and what is not. Our mothers, our fathers, yes, that's in order, it's difficult but such is life. But a child....If only the servants

were in the house. Or my mother. He lifted the child up in his arms. He could tell that he was alive. He watched over him the whole night, wrapped a wet rag around his wrists and ankles. By morning the child was dead.

My father could not suffer the tragedy. The following day, he died, as they say, of a broken heart. He died as he had lived, he pined away. The father's heart had broken on the death of his son, this on March 5, the thirty-second year of his life.

### Lady C's Valentine to Elizabeth

Roses are red, violets are blue  
There's no freakin' way Darcy's marrying you



– By a Lady

## Member Profile

Barbara Phillips

### 1. Tell us a bit about yourself and your life to-date.

I am Barbara Phillips. I have lived in this (Dunbar) neighbourhood most of my life; in fact, I attended Crown Pre-School in 1956. I worked as a nurse for many years, raised four children and made a garden.



### When did you join JASNA?

I joined in 1991 – I thought it would be a respite from small children.

### 2. How did you first get started with Jane Austen?

I was 16 and in the Dunbar library; I thought I'd start in the As and work my way through. "Austen" sounded like a name I should know and I started with *Pride and Prejudice* and have never looked back.

### 3. What do you like about JASNA?

I particularly like the intelligent conversation. For years I was content just to listen.

### 4. Has JASNA given you any special memories?

My favourite memory is having lunch with a former member. She was telling us how she had recently fallen in love. She was 90, he was 70 and they agreed to be 80. She was upset about her family's reaction to their living together. I suggested that maybe they were worried that she would get pregnant. She replied with great drama, "I would love to bear his child!"

## In Memoriam

### Sybil Hartley



We are sorry to note that our member Sybil Hartley died on December 29, 2017. A memory from Joan Reynolds: “I remember her during the *Pride and Prejudice* dramatic reading – she had donned Lindsay’s top hat for her character, and it was too big and fell over her face, so without missing a beat she put on two hats, all fitted beautifully – we were in stitches.”

There will be a memorial service at 10 am, Saturday February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at St. Chad’s Anglican Church, 3874 Trafalgar Street (at 23<sup>rd</sup>) in Vancouver. Click here to read her obituary: [Sybil Hartley obituary](#).

## Spring 2018 meeting dates

### Mark your calendar!

- March 17 UBC professor Miranda Burgess “Mary Shelley and *Frankenstein* Neuroscience in the novel” (published January 1818)
- April 21 Jane Austen Day with Elaine Bander, JASNA Canada President + TBA
- Reserve** your spot now: Members, \$40; non-members \$50  
email: [treasurer.jasnavaancouver@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.jasnavaancouver@gmail.com)
- May 12 Panel discussion on “The Importance of Aunts” (tentative)
- June 16 Books and Berries

For more up-to-date information, please see the program of events on our website: [JASNA-Vancouver program](#)

### Mr. Collins’s Valentines

#### to Elizabeth

Roses are red, violets are blue  
You keep saying “no,” but I know it’s not true

#### to Charlotte

Roses are red, I need someone to woo  
Lady C. has directed, so Miss Lucas, you’ll do



– By a Lady

**This Newsletter**, the publication of the Vancouver Region of the Jane Austen Society of North America, is distributed to members by email and posted on our website. Members who so request may receive a hard copy either at a meeting or in the mail. All submissions and book reviews on the subject of Jane Austen, her life, her works and her times, are welcome.

Email: [elspeth.n.flood@gmail.com](mailto:elspeth.n.flood@gmail.com) Or mail: Elspeth Flood  
#501 – 1520 Harwood Street  
Vancouver, B.C. V6G 1X9

JASNA Vancouver website: [www.jasnavaancouver.ca](http://www.jasnavaancouver.ca)