

# Muse & Musings

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

## June 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting

### Books & Berries

At the Books & Berries meeting in June, chaired by Phyllis Bottomer, the following books were reviewed and recommended:

*Confessions of an Igloo Dweller* by James Houston, reviewed by Ron Sutherland.

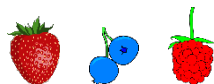
*Jane on the Brain* by Wendy Jones; *Bookworm: A Memoir of Childhood Reading* by Lucy Mangan; *Prejudice and Pride: Celebrating LGBTQ Heritage* published by the National Trust of Great Britain; all reviewed by Phyllis.

*There Are No Ghosts in the Soviet Union* by Reginald Hill, reviewed by Iris Dayson.

*Josephine Butler: Patron Saint of Prostitutes* by Helen Mathers; *The Real Persuasion: the Life of Catherine Bishop* by Peter James Bowman; reviewed by Barbara Philips.

*Rogues' Gallery: the Rise (and Occasional Fall) of Art Dealers* by Philip Hook; *The Road to Little Dribbling: Further Notes from a Small Island* by Bill Bryson; *A Short History of England: the Glorious Story of a Rowdy Nation* by Simon Jenkins; all reviewed by Sandy Lundy.

In addition, the book sale made \$87.75. – Sandy Lundy

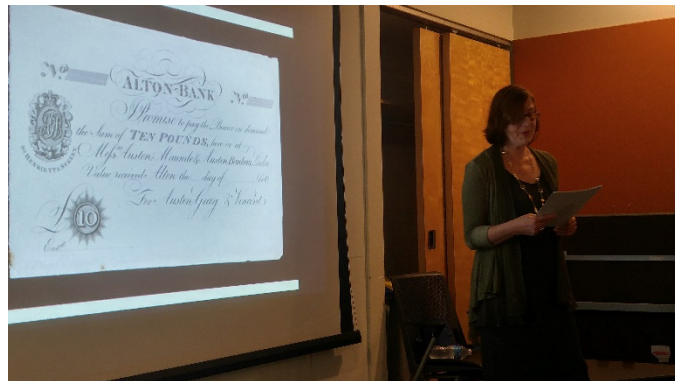


## August 12<sup>th</sup>: Oh what a Henry!

### A look at the first Austen name to appear on a British banknote

For the second year in a row, we have held an extra event in August to provide outreach for new members, and in this case to take advantage of a visit to B.C. by Professor Emma Clery, author of *The Banker's Sister*, about Jane's brother Henry. We were happy to host a lecture by Emma at the Mount Pleasant Library, entitled "Austen & Co., the bank that launched a literary career." We had a great turnout for the professor from University of Southampton.

Emma Clery is a very engaging speaker and her book, pulls together evidence of the close relationship between brother and sister.



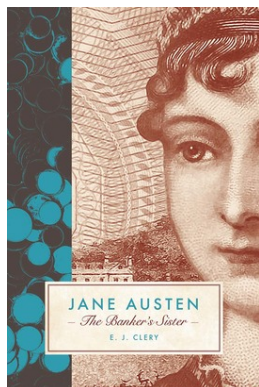
At the unveiling of the new Jane Austen ten-pound note, Canadian Mark Carney, Governor of the Bank of England, pointed out that this was not the first Austen banknote. Henry was partner in several "country banks" that issued their own banknotes. In Jane's time, there was an industry of small profitable country banks and Henry had a high-flying career as a banker before going bankrupt and ending his days as a clergyman.

Henry's bankruptcy nearly bankrupted the whole family – and likely embarrassed them. He was reportedly the handsomest of the brothers, yet the only known portrait of him is taken as an older man, thin and sad in his clergyman's collar and bands. James Edward Austen Leigh described Henry as a "good conversationalist,"

which may be the skill that brought him success in his careers as soldier, banker and clergyman. None of Henry's letters to Jane survive, although references in her letters make it clear there were many. His only surviving letters are formal and stilted business letters which makes it difficult to grasp the sparkle and charm that reputedly made him so special.



Economics is a neglected aspect of literature, but we need to know more and where better to start than Jane Austen. Henry's ill-fated business should be examined in the context of the dramatic economic changes of the time, and the treatment of finance and money. Jane Austen's relationship with money was more particular than one might think. Jane Austen novels may be love stories with courtship plots, satire and comedy. But they are also about MONEY! Having it, not having it, getting it and losing it.



After the presentation, a group of us had tea with Professor Clery, seen above with Michelle. *The Banker's Sister* is now in our library.

Jane's knowledge of money and finances would have come from her front row seat of Henry's career and the economic changes she witnessed. In the 1790s, the lowest denomination of a bank note was ten pounds (the equivalent of six months' pay for a labourer). When the one-pound note was issued it was completely new to a population that is used to coin only. In the *Juvenilia* there is frequent mention of banknotes, showing Jane is acutely alert as to this new paper money and the widespread anxiety over its theft. Using a counterfeit note was a hanging offence, never mind if you were not the counterfeiter.

Henry's comfort with risk in the banking market led him to encourage Jane to speculate on her publications, to retain copyright, but pay commission to publisher (unusual at the time). Henry guaranteed any losses that might be sustained when *Sense and Sensibility* was published; Jane made £140 profit. Henry managed her writing career behind the scenes, both before and after her death. He was very quick to publish her works when she died, which might have been a way for him to express his grief. We owe a great deal to Henry for getting Jane Austen published.

It is interesting that each novel opens with an economic profile. Jane seems to view her characters much as her brother would have appraised his customers (likely an inside family joke).

Previous writers on Henry see him as inept. Clery refutes that in view of economic landscape of the time. Henry was

"riding the tiger of wartime," where tumultuous economics came from the government imposed paper money against dwindling metal resources. Small banks were printing money in an unregulated and volatile environment. He took the biggest financial risks for his family, such as risky loans in return for admiralty patronage for his sailor brothers.

So what did the neighbours think of Henry going bust then resurfacing as a local vicar? Henry had resigned his bank partnership before the bankruptcy then the remaining partners drained the bank of its funds, making in a sense Henry one of the victims. Henry and his partners had unlimited liability, so Henry lost his home and all his possessions. Caroline Austen noted that all of Eliza's money was lost. After his bankruptcy at the age of 45, he returned to his original Plan A and was ordained as a clergyman. Conclusion: Henry Austen was a sort of "respectable failure."  
— Michelle Siu

## September 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting

### Tribute to Eileen Sutherland 1924 – 2018

The September meeting was devoted to Eileen Sutherland, JASNA-Vancouver's first Regional Co-ordinator and former President of JASNA, who died in July. Eileen was President of JASNA from 1988 to 1992, still the only Canadian who has held that position. In addition, she wrote many articles in the JASNA journal *Persuasions* and she produced the first 110 issues of our JASNA-Vancouver newsletter, all now available on our website: [Newsletters](#). She also coordinated the 1986 JASNA AGM here in Vancouver and she started our library in 1987.



The meeting began with readings from Eileen's writings; Joan Reynolds presented a version of the tribute she gave at the Celebration of Life (see below), illustrated with her



timeline of Eileen's involvement in JASNA. At the Celebration of Life held in August in North Vancouver, there were, in addition to Joan's, various eulogies by Eileen's friends and family members, including a brief summary by her daughter Kathleen.

In 2003, Eileen wrote an article about her early life in the [B.C. Historical News, My Skeena Childhood](#) (this link downloads a pdf.)

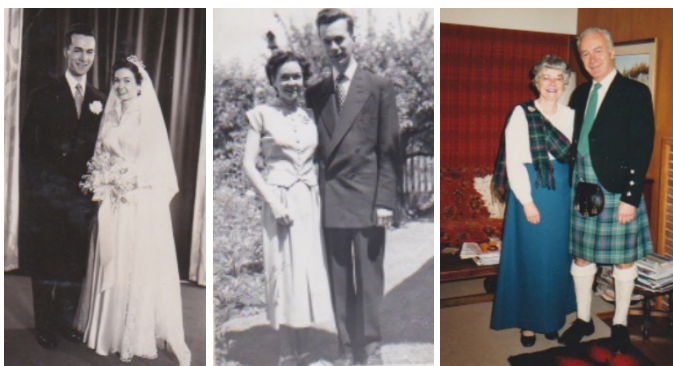
Marg Savery, Sandy Lundy, Pam Ottridge, Mary Atkins spoke of their memories of Eileen and after lunch Michelle proposed a toast to Eileen.

— from notes by Lorraine Meltzer

### Excerpts from Kathleen's Eulogy

Eileen received her BA at UBC in 1946 and taught high school in Summerland B.C. for two years. UBC was only the start of her adult education. She was a tremendous reader and spent many hours at libraries pursuing her interests in history, archaeology, and Jane Austen.

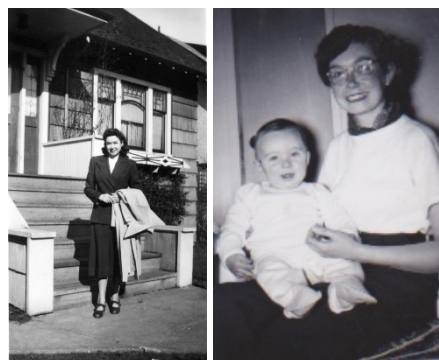
Ron and Eileen met on board the SS *Princess Louise*. The *Princess Louise* travelled from Vancouver to Prince Rupert then to Ketchikan, Wrangell, Juneau and Skagway Alaska. Then passengers and cargo were transferred to the White Pass & Yukon Railway for Whitehorse. From there, Eileen went via stern wheeler to Dawson City, Yukon Territory. Eileen chose this trip specifically to see where her father had been during the Klondike Gold Rush.



Eileen and Ron met at an onboard dance on the second night out and really enjoyed each other's company. Plans were made to see each other in Vancouver. Eileen also travelled independently on an extended trip to the UK and Europe. She managed to visit almost all the countries in Europe and we grew up enjoying her beautiful, framed photographs from that trip. However, she was gently teased by Ron over the years for spending all her money on travelling before marrying him.

Long before *23 and Me* and *Ancestry.com*, Eileen was interested in her family's genealogy. Without the benefit of today's online tools, Eileen compiled a family tree of her parents stretching back to the early days in the

Maritimes with some links to Ireland in 1786 as well as working with Ron on his family tree dating back to Scotland and England in the 1700s – a tremendous accomplishment, done the old-fashioned way, hours in the library, Inter-Library loans, microfiche and notes on file cards.

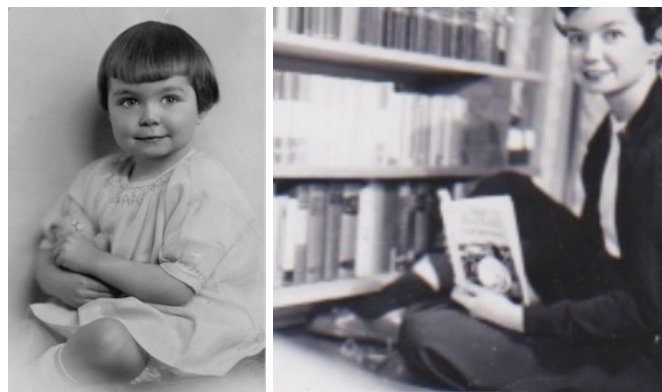


We never heard a harsh word between our parents. A story I will always remember was when Ron yelled, "Dave, Kathleen, Carol come here!" We ran to the living room to see what was up. There was a melted chocolate bar on the stereo. We each denied knowing anything about it. Mum stopped reading and said, "Oh, that was mine." At which point, Dad quietly and sweetly said, "Oh, well please don't do that again."

— by Kathleen Sutherland

### Joan's Tribute

I was very honoured to be asked to prepare a tribute to Eileen for her Celebration of Life last month – I had not been fortunate enough to have known Eileen in the early days of JASNA. But I promptly got in touch with some of JASNA's past presidents and various other local people who had known Eileen to find out some of the facts and special memories people had of her. It was an amazing journey – and there was so much to learn that in the end I put it all down in a timeline mixing all of Eileen's contributions, and significant milestones involving JASNA and JASNA Vancouver.



It starts with Eileen growing up, loving to read and in turn becoming an avid fan of Jane Austen. She distinguished herself early by winning the Lieutenant-Governor's

award for being the highest scoring student in her high school graduating year in the whole of BC.

JASNA was officially founded in 1979 but conceived some years earlier by its three founders, one of whom was Victoria resident and great-great-grand-niece of Jane Austen, Joan Austen Leigh. By late 1979, its inaugural meeting took place in New York attended by a small but enthusiastic number of early JASNA pioneers.

Year	Date	Place	Description
1975	Chawton	Edmonton	A North American Jane Austen Society is envisioned after Eileen's visit and Joan's presentation of Jane Austen. Joan Austen Leigh attends a meeting of the UK Jane Austen Society at Chawton in April 1975. After looking at the Jane Austen Society's website from the east coast of England for husband David, Eileen is inspired. The rest of the members by the high society, the society's history secretary, in a recent edition, it is said that North America would have to create Jane Austen Society that will be much more congenial - people would speak to each other, the committee would be democratically elected, and comparisons would be shown for those who needed a website.
1979	Spring	New York City/Victoria	JASNA takes shape between Joan Austen Leigh and Eileen Leigh, who, when it is called the Jane Austen Society of North America is a bi-centennial of Jane Austen in Canada.
1979	Spring	New York City	Potential members and past are contacted to measure interest. Jack Barker joins as co-founder and establishes bylaws. Joan Austen Leigh becomes the first editor of the annual JASNA journal "Persuasions".
1981	October 5	New York City	First AGM held, with 16 members present and 100 attending the inaugural dinner. The Society had 122 members across North America. Four press representatives attended. The Society had forty-four papers and 125 members who joined in the six-month period from March 1979. Sir Hugh Sydney, president of the Canadian and American members of the UK Jane Austen Society and these members were the first to attend the AGM in New York to join the Jane Austen Society of North America.

**1975: Chawton and Edmonton: bicentennial events**

**1979: JASNA's Inaugural AGM in New York**

**1981:**

- JASNA-Vancouver Region?
- Eileen and Ron attend San Francisco AGM
- Eileen sets to work to form Vancouver Region

**JASNA AGM 1981 in San Francisco: "Sense and Sensibility"**

Although Eileen did not attend that meeting, she was one of JASNA's earliest subscribers. In fact, together with Joan Austen Leigh from Victoria, and Juliet McMaster of Alberta, Eileen was one of the prominent Austen scholars from western Canada who joined JASNA from the beginning. These three had previously gathered in 1975 at the Jane Austen Bi-Centennial Conference held at the University of Alberta and organized by Juliet (and mentioned in the *New York Times*).

Thanks to the early involvement of these women and one or two others such as Freydis Welland, Keiko Parker and Elaine Bander the Canadian part of JASNA has always punched above its weight, maintaining a strong Canadian presence in an organization that is naturally populated by a much larger majority of US members. The impact that Eileen's involvement had on shaping JASNA and contributing to its ongoing success cannot be overestimated.

In the spring of 1981 Joan Austen-Leigh gathered a few Austen devotees together at the apartment of her daughter Freydis Welland to discuss over dinner the formation of a Vancouver JASNA group. Everyone agreed it was a terrific idea – and then waited for someone else to do something.

The following October, Eileen and Ron travelled to the JASNA Annual General Meeting (AGM) in San Francisco, and Eileen recorded her pleasure in meeting in one place so many people interested in Jane Austen and

eager to talk about her. Eileen returned to Vancouver determined to establish a Jane Austen group in Vancouver once and for all.

Whereas other groups met for tea and a general social chit-chat about Jane Austen, Eileen wanted more. Meetings comprised special events and a dinner or lunch gathering. As the group grew larger, talks were held in local public libraries and featured various expert speakers, such as university professors and local librarians talking on a wide variety of Austen-related topics. These speakers were all chosen and organized by Eileen. Her desire was that members should be given the opportunity for further study of Jane Austen's writing and her times. But not all gatherings were serious. Keiko Parker, another original JASNA member from Vancouver, recalls arriving unavoidably late at a meeting at Ron and Eileen's home to a very loud and spirited gathering involving the Regency card game "Speculation" – Keiko could hear the shouts and laughter from down the street.

For Eileen and Ron, the following years were busy with successive AGMs in Toronto, Philadelphia, Savannah, Santa Fe and Ottawa among others. At these gatherings, Eileen earned a reputation for being the perennial winner of the annual Jane Austen Quiz. She was the one to beat. She became a JASNA Board Member and later a member of the Editorial Board of JASNA's annual journal *Persuasions*.

If this wasn't enough to keep her busy, she had also initiated the publication of Vancouver's own Quarterly Newsletter. This she edited for 27 years producing 110 issues: she researched and wrote articles, gathered snippets of Austen news from all over the world, sourced illustrations, summarized each meeting's activities, typed, photocopied and mailed out each issue, in these days before electronic composition and distribution.

**Jane Austen Society of North America**

**Jane Austen club picks local for president**

**27 years producing 110 issues of the JASNA Vancouver Regional newsletter: from February 1983 to June 2010**

This newsletter was especially important at this time as it was the only means of sharing information with local



members and other Regions in the days before websites, email blasts and social media. They are now available so that everyone can enjoy them on our website today. They are indeed a treasure trove of Eileen's incredible knowledge and beautiful writing. Eileen did all this while still the very active Regional Co-Ordinator of the local Vancouver group.

By 1983 Eileen had taken on the very challenging and all-consuming role of Co-ordinator for the 1986 JASNA AGM to be held in Vancouver at the Hotel Georgia during Expo year. As many of you know that were involved in the later one in 2007, it requires years of planning.

Keiko Parker recalls that in the months leading up to the event, members regularly gathered at Eileen's to stuff and stamp envelopes to send to the registrants. These were the days before email, websites or on-line registration.

The theme of the 1986 AGM was *The Watsons* and by all accounts it was an amazing event. We are lucky to have an account of it from one attendee from Chicago – if you want to read the lively summary, it is in [\*Persuasions\* Number 8](#). The proceeds from the conference were used in part to establish a University Essay contest – some of you will remember we have had various guest winners over the years present their winning essays.

And if this wasn't enough, two years later Eileen agreed, albeit rather hesitantly, to take on the most important role of all, becoming JASNA's North American President, a position she held for the next four years. Eileen was the first and (so far) only Canadian to be elected to this post, illustrating as Eileen herself said that "JASNA knows no boundaries." As recalled by Elsa Solander, herself a former JASNA President, Eileen never really wanted the spotlight, but she served graciously. She was a quiet force for excellence and authenticity during her years as JASNA President and offered wise counsel to those who succeeded her.

During this time, Eileen was still preparing scholarly papers for *Persuasions* and the AGMs based on her meticulous research. She was apparently a reluctant speaker but when she did present, she won rave reviews. At the 1997 San Francisco AGM on *Sanditon* she wowed everyone with her standout plenary on the history and development of the English seaside resort during Jane Austen's life, titled "A little sea bathing will do you good". One account recalled gorgeous slides of "bathing machines, bathing costumes, and – a lack of bathing costumes!" Ron was by Eileen's side operating the slide projector and providing his usual unflagging support.

Meanwhile, back in Vancouver, Eileen was still maintaining her role as Regional Coordinator, and Newsletter editor.

A look back at the various activities the Vancouver group engaged in is remarkable. One of the early Jane Austen Day events held at Brock House involved no less than four guest speakers, as well as a musical performer, a folk singer singing sea shanties. In those days there were no membership dues, Eileen just made a request for contributions when the postage kitty was empty. By 1986 it was deemed necessary to institute dues of \$5 a year. The library started in 1987 was small but popular, such that people forgot to return books on time.

Another of Eileen's legacies was in 1999 when, mindful of the importance of continuous learning in a young person's life, she suggested to the then outgoing President that the annual David Grey Student Essay Contest be revived. This contest fosters the study and appreciation of Jane Austen's work, and several hundred students compete each year. There is a cash prize and the chance for the winning student to be present at that year's AGM. Winners have come from as far away as India. The competition had lapsed because of insufficient interest, inadequate funding and a lack of qualified judges. Thanks to Eileen's passion and ideas to ensure its revival, the competition flourishes today.

Eileen stepped down as North American President in 1992; as Vancouver's Regional Co-ordinator in 1999; and Vancouver Newsletter Editor in 2010.

In 2008 Eileen co-edited with Freydis Welland the book *Life in the Country* a beautiful collection of James Edward Austen-Leigh's intricate hand-cut silhouettes of country scenes from the Austen-Leigh family collection, accompanied by appropriate quotations from Jane Austen (see "From our Library", below).

In recent years, Eileen was sadly unable to attend our Vancouver meetings, and her company and contributions were very much missed, but her years of guidance set a solid foundation for others to build upon.

One quick memory. My first AGM was in Vancouver in 2007 – and here is a picture of Eileen in her blue ball gown. It was lovely to see Carol, Eileen's daughter wearing the very same ball gown at last year's AGM in Huntington Beach. Regency never goes out of style.



Eileen Sutherland was indeed an essential part of making JASNA into what it is today: JASNA now has 76

Regional groups across North America of which 12 are in Canada, including 3 in BC. The membership has grown to more than 5,000 from all over the world making JASNA the largest literary society devoted to Jane Austen, quite an achievement since the first small gathering in New York of almost 40 years ago. Our local group maintains a steady membership of over 50 members.



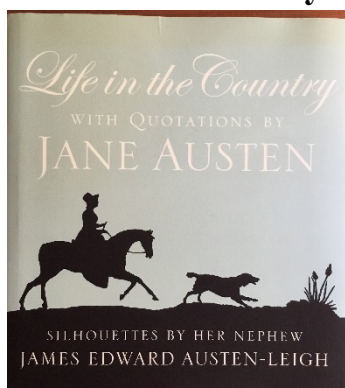
In summing up all that Eileen gave to JASNA I would say that crucial was her early work which set the tone for the future:

- Her vision ensured that both JASNA and JASNA-Vancouver should be enlightening and educational without being stuffy.
- She left us a wonderful legacy of her writing; her personality shines through her beautifully written newsletters – they are a treat to read.
- Her scholarship and impeccable research are evidenced in her many essays and articles.

The world of JASNA will miss Eileen and owes her a great deal. Thank you, Eileen, for all you gave us, and for all that you leave behind for us to enjoy still.

– by Joan Reynolds

### From our Library



*Life in the Country: With Quotations by Jane Austen and Silhouettes by her Nephew James Edward Austen-Leigh*

This edition of From Our Library is a tribute to Eileen Sutherland as we are featuring a book she was involved in bringing to press. The book, *Life in the Country*, which was referenced at our September meeting, is a collection

of silhouettes by Jane Austen's favourite nephew, James Edward Austen-Leigh, accompanied by quotations from his aunt's writings. It was edited by Freydis Jane Welland (daughter of Joan Austen-Leigh) and Eileen Sutherland.

Shadow portraits were cut in Europe as early as 600 B.C. and by 1750 the art of silhouette had become a favourite pastime in England. James Edward exhibited artistic talent from an early age and as a boy he created silhouettes of hunting hounds. Later as a father he continued this hobby for the amusement of his children. In the mid-1830s he was forced to take a sabbatical from his clergy work due to an illness, and during this time he resumed creating silhouettes and it is these which are featured in our library book.

The silhouettes, reproduced in actual size, are beautifully executed and are very detailed; I can't imagine how much time and precision were required to create each one. I found the chosen Jane Austen quotes, which exhibit her wit and keen observations, enhanced the silhouettes, and conversely, I found that the silhouettes brought to life Jane Austen's quotes – a lovely complement. Unfortunately Jane did not live to see these images, but certainly she would have enjoyed them as we are able to do in this book.

– by Cathleen Boyle

*If you have questions about our library, please see Cathleen Boyle or Carol Sutherland. We welcome your submissions on books from our library.*

### Kudos from Miranda Burgess

#### Acknowledgement to us

In March 2016, Miranda Burgess presented a talk entitled "Jane Austen on Paper". She subsequently reworked the topic into an essay which was published in the journal *European Romantic Review* in June of this year.

In the Acknowledgements at the end of the article, she says: "I wish to thank the Vancouver chapter of the Jane Austen Society of North America for excellent questions and informed discussion in response to an earlier version of this essay."

– Michelle Siu

### Member Profile

#### Carol Wylie

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



I'm originally from Winnipeg, moving after I retired to New Westminster to be where my grandchildren live. My career began with teaching and school administration and ended with working for the teachers' union negotiating contracts and legislation. I've always been active in

community affairs, including chairing the Board of Regents of the University of Winnipeg. Retirement has allowed me to travel and to volunteer for organizations I support.

## 2. When did you join JASNA?

I joined JASNA as soon as I knew the Vancouver chapter existed – time flies – five or six years ago?

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

After a very cursory introduction to *Pride and Prejudice* in high school (oh, those “character sketch” assignments) I kept my copy and never looked at it again until my daughter was a teen. She was reading *Sense and Sensibility* with an excellent high school teacher and she and I had wonderful discussions about the problems of teen dating (was he a Willoughby? a Colonel Brandon? an Edward Ferrars?). I found my copy of *P&P* and then visited my local library to sign out the others. Now I’m never without one of “Jane’s books” close at hand. My favourite is *Persuasion*.

## 4. What do you like about JASNA?

Lorraine Meltzer mentioned to me that she “had a JASNA meeting coming up” which piqued my interest and I tagged along. I was hooked from my first meeting. Our chapter excels at programming. I especially enjoy the discussions that provide historical/social/cultural background, as well as any speaker who challenges me to find out more once I’m home. The group is very welcoming and the potluck luncheon after the formal meeting is a perfect way to get to know other members. I have made good use of the library to read further on related topics.

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

Rather than memories, JASNA has given me introductions to events, places, cultural organizations, etc. within the Greater Vancouver area. For a newcomer this is very special.

## Note regarding Ruth Nesbitt

Several weeks ago, I was delighted to make contact with Ruth Nesbitt, a long-time member of JASNA. She had relocated last year from her apartment in the West End to Vernon, and it was quite a project. But the dust has settled, and she is now living in luxury, “or pretty darn close!” Ruth is fortunate in that a married niece lives not far away, and she has found a great book shop which incorporates “an exchange table,” so she is able to keep herself well-entertained. She has been receiving the newsletter, which she very much appreciates, and Ruth would be happy to hear from some of her friends in JASNA.

You can reach Ruth through:

Sue Trusler, [susantrusler@yahoo.ca](mailto:susantrusler@yahoo.ca)

or Sandy, [sandyl.4620@gmail.com](mailto:sandyl.4620@gmail.com)

– Sandy Lundy, with information from Sue Trusler

## Fall 2018 / Spring 2019 meeting dates

### Mark your calendar!

November 17	Tentative: Stella McLean VPL Writer-in-Residence
December 15	JA Birthday lunch: program TBA
February 9	TBA
<b>March 2 note date change!</b>	Nova Scotia member author Sheila Kindred on Fanny Palmer, wife of JA’s naval brother Charles
April 13	Jane Austen Day
May 11	TBA
June 15	Books & Berries (and Book Sale)

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

**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.

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