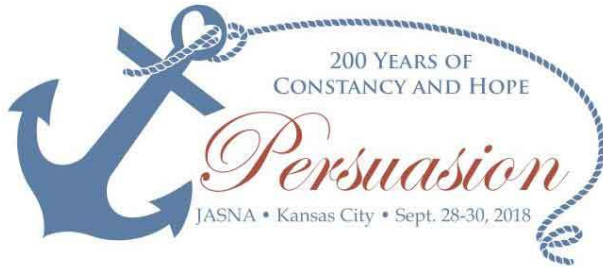


Muse & Musings

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

October 27th Meeting

Recap of the 2018 AGM at Kansas City



The Kansas City AGM was the largest ever (over 900 participants) and was regarded by many as the best organized AGM yet. The big stars were Amanda Root (star of the 1995 film of *Persuasion*) and John Mullan, author of *What Matters in Jane Austen*, and a most entertaining speaker. Ms. Root appeared in a pre-recorded interview, as well as in person reading from her Anne Elliot diary in conjunction with a screening of *Persuasion*. Prof. Mullan gave the opening plenary on self-delusion in *Persuasion*. There were two other plenaries. Jennifer Bettiol presented on one plenary and two breakout sessions.

"The Persuasion of Pounds" – Time and Money in *Persuasion*: Notes from Dr. Sheryl Craig's Plenary Session

Dr. Craig's lecture was about the historical context of *Persuasion*, with the emphasis on financial matters. Jane Austen started writing *Persuasion* in 1816, but she set the novel in the "summer of 1814," the year before Waterloo and the big financial crash caused by the end of the wartime economy. Dr. Craig contends there is tension in the novel is due to the impending crash, which the contemporary reader of *Persuasion* would have known was coming.

After Waterloo 350,000 men in the forces were discharged – one-sixth of the men between the ages of 15 and 40 in England. Food prices dropped, which was not good for the land owners, so Parliament enacted the Corn Bill, a protectionist tariff on grain, leading to the Corn Bill riots. One-third of the banks in England failed.

When a bank failed, the owners were "liable to the last shilling and acre." Some escaped to France to avoid debtor's prison. When Henry Austen's banks failed, everything Henry owned was sold; two of his partners committed suicide; Frank (now on half pay of £230 a year) and Charles Austen lost all their savings; brother Edward Knight and uncle Leigh Perrot each lost £21,000 and his uncle never forgave Henry.

What's going to happen to the characters in *Persuasion* in the year after the novel is set?

- Sir Walter Elliott, with all his debts, does not have good prospects, even with retrenching.
- The Musgroves are farmers who will likely prosper under to the Corn Bill.
- If Captain Wentworth, like most sailors, put his money in the "Navy 5s" (5% interest) – a safe government-backed investment – his fortune is probably safe.



Jennifer, Elspeth and Michelle before the banquet. All the AGM photos were taken by Michelle, who is Queen of the Selfie!

- Charles Hayter, a curate, will not likely be affected by the crash.
- Mr. Elliot will have to repay his debts to Mr. Smith's estate if the estate gets settled (no wonder he refuses to act as executor).

- Anne Eliott had £10,000 settled from her mother's money and it would have been "locked down" – Sir Walter gets the interest while he lives but Anne will get the principal after he dies.

Dr. Craig contends that *Persuasion* is a morale-booster novel: "don't give up the ship." – Jennifer Bettiol

Plans of Economy in *Persuasion*:

Notes from Linda Zionkowski's Breakout Session

As there was much overlap between Zionkowski's breakout session and Sheryl Craig's plenary session, these notes contain only the information not covered by Craig. I have also reordered the notes somewhat to make it more cohesive without the omitted items.

- After the crash, Jane's brothers could no longer pay their sisters and mother an allowance, leaving the burden to Edward.
- Jane West's *Letters to a Young Lady* (1806-07) celebrated domestic economy as patriotism: "Napoleon would be on English shores if you buy extra gloves."
- While men ran the country, women had a crucial role in household management.
- Domestic excess by women of the upper classes was considered bad, as women of the lower classes will try to emulate them.

For Zionkowski, *Persuasion* is about "rethinking choices." – Jennifer Bettiol

***Persuasion's* Plot Enabler: Prize Money How Did Admiral Croft and Captain Wentworth Make Their Money?**

Notes from James Nagle's Breakout Session



James Nagle with Michelle

The prize money system dates in back as early as the 11th century. Except for prize money, wages in the Royal Navy were the same in 1790 as they had been in time of

Charles II. Prize money existed to supplement the crown's wages. It tied the sailor's interest to the king's interest and was a form of economic warfare as capturing a ship disrupted the enemy's trade and economy and added to the captor's fleet of warships.

During the Napoleonic wars, a third of the ships added to the British navy were captured ships, often retaining the name they sailed under for another country.

The Admiralty didn't get any of the prize money, which was determined by the value of the ship and its cargo. All prize money was shared out among the officers and crew, with one-eighth going to the flag officer (the Admiral of the capturing ship) – not shared – so the admirals were getting "staggeringly rich." If another ship showed up at the time of the capture, the prize money had to be shared with that ship's captain and crew as the arrival of the additional ship may have influenced the surrender of the captured ship.

The biggest prize ship ever, was the *Hermione* captured in 1762 full of gold. The Admiral got £81,000 and two captains got £60,000 each – more than 350 years of a Captain's salary! With a "normal prize" the Captain got about £3,500 after costs. Captains who made prize money were brave, resourceful, fearless and lucky. Frank Austen did not make a lot of prize money – Charles Austen made more!

Naval prize money continued in Britain until 1945, and in the U.S. until 1941. – Jennifer Bettiol

Austen Spotting in Daycare!

Phyllis's toddler granddaughter has just started attending the excellent McGill University Daycare part-time. Among the varied names of some of Tessa's little classmates, the boys include Zahair, Leander, Dominion and.....William-Elliott!

November 17th Meeting "Very Little to Distress or Vex Her" Phyllis Ferguson on *Emma*

Phyllis quoted the opening of *Emma* and then asked whether "very little to distress or vex her" was an accurate description of Emma's life to-date, or whether it was JA being mischievous and providing an unreliable narrator. Emma has never left Highbury – she has never been to London, her sister's home, only sixteen miles away. She has never seen the sea. Every day of her life is circumscribed by the need to take care of her father.

Phyllis then went through a checklist of symptoms of autistic spectrum disorder that are present in Mr. Woodhouse, showing that Mr. Woodhouse, as described, would appear to have some degree of autism, and to be

very lucky to have the resources and the loving and honest people around him to allow him to live with “very little to distress or vex” him.



Michelle with Phyllis in a new ball gown.

The specific symptoms that place Mr. Woodhouse on the spectrum are:

- limited “theory of mind” or an inability to understand the world from the perspective of others
- severe, easily triggered anxiety
- gastro-intestinal issues
- communication challenges including difficulty understanding verbal humour and being excessively formal.

Emma’s basically positive, resilient personality means that she has not let herself feel unduly vexed or distressed by the limitations put around her. Harking back to the first paragraph of Austen’s novel, her innately “happy disposition” is indeed one of the best blessings of her existence.

– *Elsbeth Flood*

Phyllis will be teaching a six-session course entitled “Puzzling People: Fictional Characters with Autistic Spectrum Disorders” for the Liberal Arts 55+ program at SFU. It will be on Wednesday afternoons starting on February 20th and will examine characters created over two centuries by authors including Austen, Eliot, Wharton, Kingsolver and Simson.

Memorial for Jean and Virgil Oriente

By Laureen McMahon

Two very strong and committed members of the Jane Austen Vancouver Region passed away this past year. Jean and Virgil Oriente contributed in many ways to JASNA. Jean served on the Program Committee for several years and Virgil penned articles for the Newsletter. He also joined Ron Sutherland in serving wine during the meetings.

I asked Jean and Virgil’s son Damon to write a biographical sketch of his parents and this is what he sent:

Damon’s Tribute

I am pleased to offer a brief historical look at the lives of my parents and to share our memories with the JASNA Vancouver Region membership.

Virgil’s family was originally from the Abruzzo region of Italy. Early in the 1900s, the family immigrated to Argentina before moving to Philadelphia in the U.S. where Virgil was born in 1925. Jean was born in Los Angeles in 1927. Her family roots go back to Holland and England in the 1700s and our family can trace our history in the United States for several hundred years.

Both Jean and Virgil were teachers in the U.S. as well as in Canada where they moved the family in 1971. The change from Los Angeles to Vernon in the Okanagan was both dramatic and wonderful. I know we are all grateful for our life in Canada and proud of them for their courage in making the move.

After retirement, our parents moved to Vancouver. With their good health and energetic natures they travelled extensively and often, visiting many parts of Australia, Asia and Europe.

Jean and Virgil shared a deep love of literature and art so it was natural that they seek out organizations such as the Jane Austen Vancouver Region where they made many friends and delighted in learning more about Austen and her period. Other favourite authors included William Thackeray, Wilkie Collins and Anthony Trollope. With several other members of JASNA they gathered to discuss the works of Trollope. For several years they hosted these delightful meetings in their home on Walnut Street.

Their interest in Jane Austen was shared by my sister Rachele who was a member of the local region for some years. In fact, their love of literature, art, and travel was shared by all our family and proved to be a constant and happily engaging part of our lives.

As they aged, the fun and pursuit of literature become even more important to both. Their book collection was a source of enjoyment when they did not have the energy to remain active in clubs and organizations. In this phase of their lives we were delighted to spend more time with them enjoying family visits and dinners.

I would like to let the membership know how they died. After a heart attack following hip surgery Virgil died last April at nearly 93. It was a shock but we believe he did not suffer. Jean’s last year was different. After discovering some health issues that would likely have become life-ending she felt she wanted to be in full control of the end of her life. Rather than decline into a

very disabled condition she chose the bravest and most powerful route, electing to have a medically assisted death last August 22. We shared many wonderful times together in those last months. It was a gift to be able to say everything we wanted to say and share everything we needed to share. We miss them both very much and are very proud of their endurance, wisdom, bravery and humanity.



Jean and Virgil Oriente on their travels

The McMahons' Tribute

I met the Orientes at Jane Austen and got to know them better at the Anthony Trollope reading group. My husband Brian and I and they spent many happy hours enjoying films, especially at the Vancouver International Film Festival, attending concerts and theatrical productions and sharing meals in each other's homes. Jean was an excellent and versatile cook and Virgil a welcoming host and great wine connoisseur.

We had the chance to introduce them to several friends who came to enjoy their company just as we did. We all had a lot of fun visiting wineries in the Lower Mainland and going to restaurants, especially Italian cafes and French bistros which they loved. Both Jean and Virgil remained great conversationalists right up to the time of their passing. They were always interested in world events and eager to engage in lively debate about the issues of the day.

Virgil, who played the French horn, introduced Brian, a saxophonist, to the A Little Night Music Orchestra some dozen years ago and they performed together at many concerts. Because of failing health Virgil unfortunately had to leave the orchestra some time ago.

Brian and I considered Jean and Virgil role models for successful aging. Even when serious health issues at last took their toll they remained cheerful and uncomplaining.

They were always excellent company and their passing has left a great hole in our lives.

Jackie Johnson, a JASNA Vancouver Region member and a member of the Trollope group wanted to share a few of her favourite memories of the Orientes:

Jackie's Tribute

I first met Jean and Virgil through the Jane Austen society and was very pleased when they invited me to join their book club focusing on the novels of Anthony Trollope. I enjoyed their company very much. Later, Jean became a bridge enthusiast and she and I shared that passion. I was always so impressed with the depth and breadth of their cultural interests whether it was in literature, art, history, film, or travel, not to mention politics, cooking, wine making (and tasting!) Needless to say our conversations were always stimulating and, for me, mind-expanding. I miss them both very much.

Joan Reynolds also had this to share:

Joan's Tribute

I recall Virgil and Jean as a softly spoken, gentle and highly cultured couple. At the very first JASNA meeting I attended, various members were asked to read out loud a paragraph from *Pride and Prejudice* in their second language from a foreign edition of that novel. I had the great pleasure to hear Virgil read the famous opening paragraph in his beautiful Italian. I was hooked! (Then followed others reading in Norwegian, Hebrew, French, Japanese – an impressive introduction to the highly diverse and talented members of the Vancouver group).



Festive decor seen in 2014.

The other memory I have is of Jean years ago rather shyly making a request at one November meeting, that perhaps the December birthday meetings could be made a little more special to lift them from the usual. She asked some of us to please bring seasonal decorative tablecloths to brighten the tables for the upcoming December lunch. It was the very first time anyone thought to make the birthday meeting more festive. Such a simple idea, enthusiastically embraced over the years, was so typical of Jean's creative but gentle personality. Finally, there is an example of both Jean's and her daughter Rachele's work in the manuscript section of our library if anyone is interested in reading the literary contributions made by the talented Oriente family to our group, see catalogue numbers 6013 and 6002.

A Generous Donation to our JASNA Vancouver Library

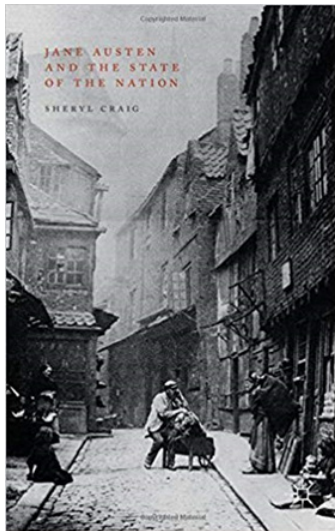
Professor Sheryl Craig was a plenary speaker at the recent Kansas City AGM delivering yet another fascinating talk on the social and economic context of Jane Austen's novels. Her most recent talk "The Pounds of *Persuasion*" was inspired by her book "Jane Austen and the State of the Nation". We are pleased to announce that Sheryl has been extremely generous and donated a signed copy of her book to our JASNA Region's Library. This is no insignificant gift as the book is not only an excellent read and detailed resource that is not available in our local public libraries, it also retails at a fairly hefty price tag so making it less accessible to many of us to buy individually.

We are indeed very grateful to Sheryl for her thoughtfulness and spontaneous generosity, and extend our many thanks to her. (Details follow on Sheryl's book in our regular feature "From our Library").

— by Joan Reynolds

From our Library

***Jane Austen and the State of the Nation* by Professor
Sheryl Craig**



Jane Austen's England was plagued with widespread poverty, an unprecedented national debt, economic recessions, bank failures, and the Post-Waterloo crash, followed by a national financial depression. No wonder Austen's characters are preoccupied with money. *Jane Austen and the State of the Nation* delves into Austen's novels for references to all these economic upheavals and to taxation, the Poor Laws, minimum wage debates, the Bank of England bailout, and the Corn Laws; and in doing so, reveals the motivations of her novels' characters, her own political beliefs, and her personal insights as a novelist and chronicler of her time.



Sheryl presenting the book to Joan at the Kansas City AGM

Sheryl writes in a clear style that helps break down the social and economic complexities that existed during the time of Jane Austen. It reveals new insights into Austen's characters that would not be obvious unless one knew the social and economic context in which they operated. A recommended read that will increase your enjoyment of any one of the novels.

About the Author: Sheryl Craig is Instructor of English at the University of Central Missouri, USA. She is an Austen scholar with a PhD in nineteenth-century British literature from the University of Kansas. She is the editor of *JASNA News* and has been a JASNA International Visitor and Travelling Lecturer. She is a regular contributor to many publications including *Persuasions* and *Jane Austen's Regency World Magazine*, and has lectured on Jane Austen at regional, national, and international meetings and conferences in North America, Australia and Scotland. She is currently writing a book entitled *Jane Austen and the Plight of Women*.

— by Joan Reynolds

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

RC's Corner

Michelle Siu

As 2018 comes to a wrap, we have much to look back over this past year. And looking ahead, here are some things to share with you from the AMG in Kansas City.

Unconfirmed reports are that the AGM in Kansas City was the largest ever at 900 attendees. An increase in membership of 7% brings our numbers to 5,636. Wonderful to see that our band of Janeites is ever growing

year on year. 2019 will mark the 40th anniversary of JASNA so stay tuned to celebratory notes!

Upcoming AGMs planned

The next three AGM venues, dates and themes will be:

- 2019: Williamsburg, Virginia, October 4th to 6th, *Northanger Abbey*
- 2020: Cleveland, Ohio, October 9th to 11th, *Juvenilia*
- 2021: Chicago, Illinois, October 17th to 20th the Arts

Mark the dates in your planner!



Joan and Michelle getting ready for the ball

JASNA Member Portal

The online member portal makes it easy to see your membership information and to manage your email list subscriptions and more. So don't delay to activate your account. (For help logging in, or if you have forgotten

your email associated with your account, contact membership@jasna.org)

Chawton House

When next you visit Chawton House, you'll be able to find a few JASNA Canada commemorative signs. While strolling in the grounds, you'll find a plaque for JASNA Canada's support of the garden's maintenance and rehabilitation. And in the Reading Room, there will soon be a plaque in memory of Eileen Sutherland as together our members and Eileen's family and friends raised funds that converted to £525. Eileen's name was also added to the virtual wall of donors on Chawton's website

<https://janegreathouse.org/fundraising>

Spring 2019 meeting dates

Mark your calendar!

February 9 (closest meeting to Robert Burns Day January 25)	Spencer W. Stuart, Book Historian and Collections Advisor: "Now or Never: The Origins and Influence of the Kilmarnock Burns"
March 2 note change of date!	Nova Scotia member author Sheila Kindred "Presenting Fanny Palmer: Jane Austen's Transatlantic Sister"
April 13	Jane Austen Day
May 11	TBA
June 15	Books & Berries (and Book Sale)

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





Michelle with: Regency costume aficionado Baronda Bradley (aka BB); past president Marsha Huff. **Right:** Phyllis Ferguson and Lindsey Bottomer



At left, JASNA President-Elect Liz Philosophos Cooper; centre, regular speaker Juliet McMaster, dressed as a gentleman.



Star speakers Amanda Root and John Mullan; JASNA Canada Board: Phyllis Ferguson, Elaine Bander, Renée Charron, Anne Thompson.



Our banquet table Jean Brown (Keiko's roomie), Keiko Parker, Elspeth Flood, Elaine Wong, Joan Reynolds, Jennifer Bettiol, Jessica Basar, Michelle Siu.

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 Or mail: Elspeth Flood
#501 – 1520 Harwood Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6G 1X9

JASNA Vancouver website: www.jasnavancouver.ca