

My Dear Cassandra.....

**Jane Austen was born December 16th, 1775,
making her a Sagitarian.**

Profile of a Sagitarian women

She's not always going to say the kind of things you want to hear. Most of the time, she'll curl your sideburns with her remarkable, flat statements and her embarrassing questions. But now and then she'll say something so special and splendid it will make you feel like singing.

We are pleased to announce

“Hats off to Jane”

A birthday celebration to be held

January 19, 2008. 2pm – 4pm

Good Companion Activity Centre

2609 – 19th Avenue S.W.

Calgary

**We are asking all those that wish to celebrate Jane's birthday
in grand style to wear their very best hat.**

(Of course if you don't have a very best hat, any hat will do and if you don't have a hat – well – okay, you can still come.)

Tickets are \$5.00 each and can be purchased at our meeting on Nov. 17th from 2:00 to 4:00 in our usual meeting room at the William Castell Public Library. Contact for tickets Susan Spooner 243.8942

**Do you know who else was born on December 16th?
Check the last page.**

Our November program

will be a travelogue of Derbyshire presented by Tom Barton.

With the mention of Derbyshire, there were many ideas connected. It was impossible for her to see the word without thinking of Pemberley and its owner. "But, surely," said she, "I may enter his county with impunity, and rob it of a few petrified spars without his perceiving me".
Pride and Prejudice

Tom's slides and commentary will trace the Derbyshire connections of the Austen family, explore the idea of Chatsworth as a possible model for Pemberley, and give us a virtual tour of the splendours of this part of England. Please join us on Saturday, November 17th from 2:00 to 4:00 in our usual meeting room at the William Castell Public Library.

As well, I would like to request all those who attended the Conference in Vancouver to be prepared to share a two minute highlight of the weekend.
Randie Lind

Such an Odd Mixture: Along the Autism Spectrum in Pride and Prejudice

Phyllis Ferguson Bottomer delighted us all with her insightful look at the oddities presented by some of Austen's characters in *Pride and Prejudice*. Phyllis began by giving a brief explanation of autism and its defining characteristics such as limited emotional subtlety and response, a tendency to obstinacy/rigidity, difficulty with social situations, conversational limitations of various sorts, and physical awkwardness. She then showed how these characteristics can be applied to characters as diverse as Mr. Collins and Lady Catherine de Bourgh! Her arguments were well backed up with examples and quotes and certainly gave us new insights as well as a continued admiration for Jane Austen's observational abilities. Phyllis is the Regional Coordinator for the JASNA Vancouver.

Randie Lind

Edmonton Gala: We hope to hire a coach to travel en masse to the Edmonton Gala day in the spring. Details to follow...

Is this the Austen Opportunity You Have Been Waiting For??

We need a volunteer to produce the play/dramatic reading for our Birthday Tea. We have the script of Diana Birchall's "**The Courtship of Mrs. Elton**" as well as permission to 'lop and crop' it as desired. The play runs for about an hour, and needs 8 readers, hopefully in costume... Please consider helping either to organize or read/act in the play.

As well, November is the time when we need to re-organize our responsibilities re other volunteer positions in the group. Jennifer Hamblin is taking over as Regional Coordinator, and Margaret Crichton will be the new Program Committee chair.

We will need someone to write the newsletter and send it to Ann Craig for publication and distribution, as well as someone to take over advertising and publicity.

Is anyone knowledgeable about, or interested in researching how to play Regency card games such as whist, speculation and loo? We think learning how to play these games might make for a fun meeting. Please tell Margaret if you are interested in taking this on.

A Ladies remembrance of a recent outing.

Dear Friends:

Our recent outing to Discover Emma in the great city of Vancouver brought great enjoyment to all those who could attend. While the refreshments were scanty, the company of so many companionable ladies and gentlemen ensured a fine weekend for everyone.

The presentation by Jean Barman on "British Columbia at the Time of Jane Austen" was thinly stretched to include our own Jane's thoughts about a country so wild and inhospitable. Much more diverting was "Emma at Eventide", where enthusiasts from all corners entertained quite a large group with quotes from the novels, going on to give opinions of their worth. Diversions abounded, most particularly in the short play, "Mrs. Knightly Pays a Call", bringing evidence of the universal truth that not even marriage will limit Emma's lively concern for her friends and their fates.

Considerable friendship was felt in "A Tribute to Bruce Stovel", taking the form of his paper, "The New Emma in Emma", read with genuine warmth by Nora Stovel. While impossible to describe all the sessions attended, note must be taken of the charms of "Exploring Neighbours and Neighbourliness", "Harriet Smith is Smarter Than You Think", and "Worth Looking At: Performance Prowess in Emma's Scenes of Dance". To highlight what may be obvious to some, we are our neighbours' keeper, Harriet does recognize where bread is buttered, and dances encourage vanity.

On the subject of dance, myself a dancer (of very little skill), praises can never be too high for the Ball. Well costumed Calgary JASNA dancers acquitted themselves well in the glittering ballroom of the Hotel Vancouver, standing up with over a hundred dedicated admirers of English Country Dancing. Pat Barton admired her protégés as they quickly learned new steps from an unfamiliar instructress. Nothing can surpass the beauty of young spirits moving in harmony.

As a final flourish, some were privileged the next morning, after Sabbath prayers, to listen to a melodious performance of parlour music with a square fortepiano, a violin and a soprano soloist.

May you have the good fortune to join our friends and neighbours next year in Chicago.

Yours faithfully,
Lady Judith Umbach

Jane Austen and Tom Lefroy

- During the Christmas and New Year's season of 1795-96, Jane Austen met a young Irishman named Tom Lefroy, who was visiting his uncle and aunt in Hampshire. Lefroy was on a break from his legal studies at Lincoln's Inn, London. Both Austen and Lefroy were twenty years old.
- Austen's only sister, Cassandra, was engaged to a young clergyman, who, in January 1796, sailed with his patron-employer to the West Indies. While Cassandra was staying with her fiancé's family that month, Austen wrote two letters to her describing Tom Lefroy and their encounters.
- The encounters included three balls, during which Austen and Lefroy danced and enjoyed each other's company. After the last ball Austen wrote to Cassandra (January 9, 1796): *I am almost afraid to tell you how my Irish friend and I behaved. Imagine to yourself everything most profligate and shocking in the way of dancing and sitting down together. . . . He is a very gentlemanlike, good-looking, pleasant young man, I assure you. . . . [H]e has but one fault, which time will, I trust, entirely remove—it is that his morning coat is a great deal too light. He is a very great admirer of Tom Jones, and therefore wears the same coloured clothes, I imagine, which he did when he was wounded.*
- In Austen's next surviving letter (January 14, 1796), she anticipates, with characteristic irony, an upcoming party at the home of Lefroy's uncle: *I look forward with great impatience to it, as I rather expect to receive an offer from my friend in the course of the evening. I shall refuse him, however, unless he promises to give away his white Coat. . . . Tell Mary that I make over Mr Heartley & all his Estate to her for her sole use and Benefit in future, . . . as I mean to confine myself in future to Mr Tom Lefroy, for whom I do not care sixpence.*
- The next day she wrote: *At length the Day is come on which I am to flirt my last with Tom Lefroy, & when you receive this it will be over—My tears flow as I write, at the melancholy idea.*
- Shortly thereafter Lefroy returned to London and resumed his legal studies, in which he was supported by his great-uncle Benjamin Langlois.
- Seven months after Lefroy left Hampshire, Austen and her brothers Edward and Frank stopped in London on their way to Kent. A letter from Austen to Cassandra dated August 23, 1796, from "Cork Street" suggests that they stayed at the home of Benjamin Langlois, who lived in Cork Street. The accommodation probably came about through the Austen family's friendship with the Rev. George Lefroy in Hampshire (Benjamin Langlois's nephew and Tom Lefroy's uncle, with whom he was staying when he met Austen). There is no evidence that Austen saw Tom Lefroy or that he was even in London while she and her brothers were there.
- Two years later (November 1798) Tom Lefroy again visited his uncle and aunt in Hampshire but did not see Austen during his stay. In 1797 Lefroy had become engaged in Ireland to the sister (an "heiress") of a college friend, and in 1799 they married. Lefroy practiced law in Dublin and eventually became Lord Chief Justice of Ireland.
- A discussion of facts and theories about Austen and Lefroy is presented in Linda Robinson Walker's essay in *Persuasions On-Line*, "[Jane Austen and Tom Lefroy: Stories.](#)"

Family Members

- Cassandra Austen's fiancé (whose name was Tom Fowle, not Robert) died of fever in the West Indies in February 1797. She never married.
- Eliza de Feuillide was Austen's sophisticated cousin, whose first husband, Count de Feuillide, was guillotined in Paris during the Reign of Terror. *Becoming Jane* includes an imagined depiction of her romance with Austen's brother Henry. Eliza and Henry were, in fact, married in 1797.
- Austen's elder brother George was mentally or physically impaired, though the details of his infirmity are not known. He lived with a family in a nearby village. It is not likely that he attended church with the Austens, as depicted in the movie.

More About Jane Austen

- Before meeting Tom Lefroy, Austen had written "Elinor and Marianne," which she later revised as *Sense and Sensibility*, and a large body of short fiction, including *Lady Susan*. A list of her [writing](#) and a brief [biography](#) are available on this site.
- In 1802 Austen received a proposal of marriage from a wealthy man she had known for many years, Harris Bigg-Wither, the brother of two of her close friends. During a visit with her friends, she accepted his proposal one evening but changed her mind and withdrew her consent the next morning. She never married.

By Marsha Huff

Upcoming

Birthday Tea: Our birthday tribute to Jane Austen will be held on **January 19, 2008** at the Good Companions' Club in Killarney. Margaret Crichton and Alicia Morgan are coordinating the Tea, and will provide more details at the November meeting. **Please bring you donations for the raffle to the November meeting.**

Austen's Heroes in Film: The March 15 meeting will look at the film portrayals of some of our favourite heroes, and members will have the opportunity to discuss and vote!

Other notable people who were born December 16th.

1485 Catherine of Aragon

1770 – Ludvig Van Beethoven - Composer

1899 Sir Noel Coward

1901 - Margaret Mead - Anthropologist

1917 – Sir Arthur C. Clarke - Writer