

## **PROGRAM**

# **A CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF JANE LUCILLE RINDEN 1940-2018**

Packer Collegiate Institute  
October 28, 2018





Sally Herb, sister ..... Childhood

Beth Rush, goddaughter ..... "Growing Up" by Jane L. Rinden

Ann McChord, friend ..... The Early Days

Barbara Minakakis, student, colleague and friend ..... The Packer Years  
Maggie Levine, student, colleague and friend

Debbie Deane, student and friend ..... "Friday Night"  
Gregg August, neighbor and friend ..... Music by Gregg August  
Lyrics based on the poem by Thor Rinden  
In honor of Jane and Thor's 50th Wedding Anniversary

Rosetta Cohen, friend ..... Jane & Thor  
Samuel Scheer, friend

Louisa Hall, goddaughter ..... "On The Train" by Jane L. Rinden



Ann Klotz, colleague and friend ..... The Chapin Years

Diane Spillios, colleague and friend  
Wanda Holland Greene, student, colleague and friend  
Haydée von Sternberg, colleague and friend  
Ilana Pergam, student, colleague and friend

Wanda Holland Greene ..... "For Good"  
Music & Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz

Ken Rush, colleague and artist friend ..... Life After Thor  
"Stone City, Iowa" by Grant Wood

Lucy Boyle, student and friend ..... "Immortality" by Jane L. Rinden

Slide Show ..... From Jane's beloved Ring cycle:  
Der Augen leuchtendes Paar,  
from Wotan's Farewell, *Die Walküre*  
by Richard Wagner  
(arr. by Gregg August)

Ushers  
Sarah Ross & Marie Vadillo-Glasier

*"Forever is composed of nows."*

*- Emily Dickinson*

## Sally Herb: Childhood



Hello, I'm Sally Herb. Thank you all for coming today to honor my remarkable sister Jane Lucille Rinden. Many of you have traveled long distances, and it's so appreciated that you made that effort.

First of all, I want to say that getting to know so many of Jane's close friends over these past painful months has been a spectacular gift. All of you are testimony to her ability to choose well. She had no time for those who are rude, unkind, intolerant, prejudiced or insensitive.

In her choice of people to spend time with, I sometimes think of her as a mining prospector, sifting through worthless pebbles to find true gold. It actually became an easy task and second nature to her. As a result she was among the richest persons ever to live dedicated to and also surrounded by Quality. You present that Quality.

Jane clearly knew at a very early age that she wanted to be a teacher, and, as a few of you know, I was actually her very **first student!** Our Dad, a generous and loving man who taught US History at Metuchen High School in New Jersey for more than 40 years, was her role model. Once I had started school at age 5, upon arriving home I'd be sat down at a desk, and studies started all over again! There were tests, homework and even pop quizzes, but since she was my admired older sibling, I never complained. Actually, I basked in her attention. And I think it benefitted both of us. But what I don't understand is how she ever came up with that idea at age 7!

Travel was a big part of the Herb family life, enabled by our teacher father's summer vacations. We all know that Jane took note of that professional perk, for she later took advantage of every single summer, traveling, studying, and as her dear friend Rosetta Cohen knows, sometimes combining both.

As children, our most memorable summer vacation was in 1953, when we took a 5-week trip across the US, heading out through Arizona to CA, then upward to Oregon and back home on a Northerly route. It was a fabulous trip, in a new Pontiac station wagon, but totally on the cheap. I recall large cans of compressed whole chickens, and cabins that cost as little as \$6.50 a night, one in particular at the Grand Canyon.

And if you're now saying to yourself that it's not *possible* that a whole chicken could be in a can, or that overnights can cost as little as \$6.50, it's probably because you're either really young--or are lucky enough not to have had to count your pennies!

A highlight of this Western escapade was when the two of us got lost in Bryce Canyon. When we arrived at the site, Jane and I were so fascinated by the terrain that we went exploring on our own, transfixed by the rainbow of colors and organic forms. We were down in the canyon for so long that our apprehensive parents had to send a couple rangers after us. We thought that was a bit excessive, for WE knew where we were the whole time!

For this trip our parents had adopted an intriguing plan. Each of us would be in charge of choosing the restaurants and overnight accommodations every four days. That person would also determine whether or not we'd have a snack or ice cream cone in the afternoon. The goal was to economize and to come in at the lowest amount.

It is, I'm sure, not a surprise to many of you that Jane was somewhat frugal. She was pretty upset when she got stuck with the city of Las Vegas. That was our only accommodation in the whole 5 weeks with the luxury of a swimming pool. A temperature of 114 degrees in the shade persuaded her to be kind to the whole family. The Kit Carson Motel was forever etched in her memory as the symbol of a day that just wasn't fair to her.

Another sort of travel experience was the opposite, an occasional week in New York City. Our parents wanted us to know what a metropolis had to offer, and we nibbled at the smorgasbord of Radio City Music Hall, Broadway musicals, the Museum of Natural History, etc. Jane was smitten, and I don't think she ever really questioned her decision to choose city life after that exposure to NYC in the 1950's.

Jane slid through High School fairly quietly, pursuing her passions of reading, writing and baking. But once she arrived at Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg VA, she began to blossom into the woman she was destined to be. Jane painted watercolors, wrote poetry and essays, worked in the bookstore, started to determine which areas of literature she most

enjoyed, became enthralled with the world of art, plus she absorbed all things Southern including hush puppies and grits.

Her great friend Mary Elizabeth Wahrenbrock, known as M.E., who unfortunately couldn't be here today. But two other Randolph-Macon friends, Perry Craven and Anne Hancock ARE here.

The summer before their senior year, Jane and M.E. convinced their parents to buy a VW beetle for a trip across Europe. Apparently Jane never admitted to M.E. until they were already on the road that she couldn't drive a stick shift....although I understand she did eventually pick it up and did rather well. M.E.'s very recent long email account of that adventure-packed summer was a window on a Jane who was both delightfully different and yet very much the same as the Jane most of us have known and loved. With so many English teachers in the room, it seems possible that that email could become an amusing short story.

Because the little blue bug was still part of their lives during their senior year, it ultimately transported the two seniors at R-M across state lines to Fort Bragg, where M.E.'s beau at the time was sharing a house with a mid-Western wonder named Thor Rinden. As M.E. says, "the rest is history."

It's impossible to talk about Jane without touching on the subject of Food. When we were young, our amazing mother, who grew up on a PA farm and loved to cook and bake, managed to nurture our culinary enthusiasms by getting us involved in the process. We eagerly helped with the formation of delectable cinnamon buns or stirred the berry jam, kneaded the meat loaf and flipped the corn fritters. All the while the inescapable aromas kept us totally engaged.

As adolescents, Jane's and my special times foodwise were the weekend evenings in our basement TV rec room, when our parents trusted us to stay alone while they went to play bridge with friends. Our dinners almost always consisted of lamb chops with mint jelly and ABC's (a kind of pasta close to orzo), or alternatively, spaghetti with garlic butter and Parmesan cheese. Back then we were totally predictable, and totally satisfied!

During those evenings our visual accompaniment was often "Your Show of Shows" with Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca. Or Jackie Gleason. We adored his version of the tango and used to slide across the linoleum floor together until we made the quick turn, snapping our necks. We couldn't stop laughing at those 50's comedians!

In a NYTimes cooking article I read that it's important to "prepare food not simply because you're hungry, but because cooking is an act that makes others feel better. **And making the lives of others better is why we are here.**" Doesn't that sound exactly like someone we all know??

In more recent years, when my amazing friend Bob and I were able to help Jane out with household tasks in either Brooklyn or Stone Harbor, in return we received the scrumptious meals that she labored over for hours. And I, no doubt like most of you, was never able to assist her with, say, cutting julienned carrots or some other labor-intensive task. Nope. After several attempts, it just wasn't worth asking any more. Some of us took some time to learn that lesson from our teacher.

While driving home, Bob and I would agree that we'd try hard to "Eat Like Jane". In fact, when I thought about it more, she nurtured us just as she nurtured her legions of students over the years, giving us just the right amount of something truly delicious that would whet our appetite for more of the highest quality ingredients. We'd have to follow a mouth-watering recipe and preparation. But arriving home, it was now time for us to aim for the same results on our own, just as her students had to learn independent study.

Now more than ever I aim to **Eat Like Jane**. Not just with food, but in *life*, for making the lives of others better is indeed a worthy goal, one that she practiced every single day. We will all miss Jane tremendously, but fortunately we have that lesson etched in our hearts.

Thank you all so much for being here.

## Beth Rush: “Growing Up”



### GROWING UP

I remember the photograph of me  
on Craig's Hill  
when I had red hair

I remember the sleigh rides  
down that hill on snowy nights  
the thrill of sailing on ice  
all the way to Crystal Street

I remember rushing through homework  
so I could race across the frosty fields  
behind the house to Connor's Pond  
where the bonfire burned high  
and I learned to skate backward  
before I learned to skate forward

I never remember falling

*--Jane L. Rinden*



## Ann McChord: The Early Days



I'm Ann McChord and have known Jane for 54 years. My introduction to her was through Thor, a childhood friend from Marshalltown Iowa. He and I had known each other well from the late 1940's, then through junior high, high school and college, and we arrived in NY about the same time. My first introduction to his new bride, Jane, was at the Bohack grocery store at the corner of Henry and the well named, Love Lane. John and I were about to be married and were delighted when we learned that we would be living just a few blocks apart in Brooklyn. Thus, began our lives as devoted friends as married couples.

Our earliest years were filled with our work in various professions: Jane as a teacher finishing up at NYU; Thor as a teacher and artist; John as a lawyer and me a financial analyst at a bank. Despite our different approaches to life, there were no two people we would rather spend time with. Our weekends after a full week of work including many dinners with the Rinden's emulating our beloved Julia Childs, museum outings, and music. It was a carefree time in our lives.

Then came the time for settling in – meaning the purchase of 12 Second Place for the Rinden's which became a labor of love for them. It was not quite a Syrian War zone as no one was shooting at them, but their dedication and patience to this project was beyond belief. Preparing all meals in the living room in an electric frying pan and toaster oven; having the house jacked up to repair the staircase, building bookcases everywhere; painting the living room themselves – 15-foot ceilings, using 4 different shades of off white, designing the kitchen floor after one in a favorite painting, and of course doing it themselves. When their work was more or less complete there was a memorable house warming in late 1968 with many of the brownstone pioneers from Carroll Gardens in attendance; some are here today.

From then on, we shared many adventures in both our beloved New York as well as further afield: our place in Harlemville in the Hudson Valley, Saratoga, the Adirondacks, Cooperstown, Chicago, Sarlat in the Dordogne, among others. Even our pups – Mushroom and Joy – enjoyed outings together. I was privileged to join Jane and her Packer students on one of her amazing trips to Russia in 1979. She definitely could have had a profession as a tour leader most anywhere. Her meticulous research and curiosity made traveling with her an immersive learning experience.

Over these past 3 months my mind has been filled with many remembrances of my beloved Jane with whom I have shared some of life's most poignant moments. Each of us faced the extended time of illnesses of our husbands. In fact, I was with her when Thor died, and she was nearby during John's final days. At last I am able to reflect upon the quiet personal strengths of my elegant, dignified friend with the well-furnished mind. Never have I met anyone who knew more about what was going on culturally in our city – whether it was film, ballet, museums, music, opera, poetry readings. Not only did she know about these things she took full advantage of most everything on a fairly limited budget. And all of this was being done while teaching and grading papers, writing college recommendations, reading voraciously, maintaining many friendships, gardening both in Brooklyn and at the shore, travelling, and still producing elegant meals with recipes with about 15 ingredients per dish. Amazing!

Beside our long friendship, the thing we shared most frequently was Opera. We have seen hundreds together including 3 entire Ring Cycles – the old and new Met productions and one at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Since Thor's death in 2009 I have shared their Met subscription with Jane in the far reaches of the Family Circle, seats Jane loved as there was a perfect spot to place our coats. Each February when the next season was announced we would spend hours deciding which operas we would see. Though our taste was quite similar, there was always some negotiation involved around dates, casts, etc. – when was Netrebko singing?; was Jonas Kaufman likely to last through a run, etc. Finally, we would come up with our schedule and Jane would mail it off to the Met. And all of this for a princely total of about \$300 each.

A friendship of 54 years is an absolute treasure, especially at this stage of life. I was blessed to have a most loyal friend who taught me so much over the years. Her quiet demeanor belied her gentle strength and independence. Her disdain for advances in technology were a source of frustration for her, and she held her ground. During her last couple of weeks, I spoke with her most every day. Though there were many uncertainties about a diagnosis, some humor emerged. Her initial self-diagnosis when she began not feeling well was that Trump had completely upset her equilibrium.

I have made my first two trips to our seats to the Met this season and there is a huge gap as I turn to exchange critiques with Jane during intermissions. I miss her very much.

## Barbara Minakakis: The Packer Years - Part I



In September of 1967, both Jane Rinden and the graduating class of 1971, my class, entered Packer's high school or, as it was then called, the Academic School. We spent the next four years together.

Mrs. Rinden was an immediate hit with her students. To Jana Miller North she was "classy and smart"; to Marilla Palmer Zaremba, "stylish and hip." Amy Plumb Oppenheim recalls her "calm, lovely deep voice and wonderful way of speaking"; and Christine Dombrowski, her "grace." Of this newest member of Packer's English department, Amy Finkle Cobb writes: "Jane was a young teacher with radical ideas and not afraid to stray from the traditional approach to teaching."

Mrs. Rinden had her students reading Pirandello, Stein, Ferlinghetti, Kazantzakis. Mary Byrne remembers being assigned Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice* and says: "This low-key, gentle teacher was a radical who ran under the radar to teach us the relevancy of literature to real life." She taught her students to appreciate, as Helen Zrake Dodson puts it, "the power of words."

And the power of different types of expression. She sent us out to the far east of Midtown — a grittier place in those days — to see Trufaut's *Jules et Jim* and Alan Arkin's *Little Murders*; to the New York City Ballet; to MOMA; and to Broadway to see Claire Bloom in *A Doll's House*.

Along the way, Jane taught us to be subway-smart. And to become resilient.

Those years at Packer were rough ones. In early spring of 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. was murdered; two months later, Robert F. Kennedy. The next spring, the Stonewall riots. The Vietnam War, all the time. College students were organizing, demonstrating; and in the spring of

1970 at Kent State, four were killed by the Ohio National Guard. Terminating a pregnancy was illegal.

How did Jane Rinden manage her students' heartbreak — and anger?

She let us talk, and argue; and sweetly, deftly refused to offer her own thoughts during our passionate class discussions. Flavia Mastellone remembers: "I loved her and was always exasperated at the way she would lead us into debates about controversial topics, and never hinted at her own opinion."

Exasperating, yes — but Jane Rinden knew how to give young women their own voices. And backbones.

Those were also the years when Jane and Thor Rinden were renovating their newly purchased house in Carroll Gardens — themselves. I can still see Thor, clad in bluejeans and T-shirt, waiting outside Packer after school so that he and Jane could walk home together. Janet Mainzer recalls Thor and Jane's giving her flowers from their garden to plant in her own.

And Mary Byrne remembers Jane, sitting atop her big teacher's desk, "with her signature, perfect posture," reminiscing about how Thor had proposed to her in Washington Square Park. (Flavia, in corroborating this memory, confirms both Jane's joy when telling her engagement story and her students' delight in hearing it.)

Jane taught us that people have lives beyond the context in which one knows them.

All that was a half a century ago. And yet in everything that she writes, still, Chris Dombrowski always asks herself, "How would Jane phrase this?"

For those of her students who have become educators, we might very well ask, *How would Jane Rinden handle this?* When I was in IV Ac., and obviously hadn't done my reading, Jane kept me after class and said, sorrowfully, "Oh, no, Barbara, not you too? You have senior slump?" I resumed my good reading habits pronto.

Decades later, I tried that voice on a frisky group of Chapin seventh graders. They sighed, "Oh, no, she's giving us the guilt trip," I laughed, and we moved on. Jane was inimitable. As I wrote her after she retired, she was — borrowing a phrase from the poet Dante, and T.S. Eliot after him — *il miglior fabbro*, the greater craftsman. The greater teacher.

I might add, the greater gardener, the greater baker, the greater bricklayer — as anyone who's been to the Rindens' backyard oasis can tell you; and she also knew exactly whom to hire for shoring up circular staircases, for plastering, for plumbing. The longer I knew Jane, the more her expertise seemed limitless. She was the greater craftsman.

And that's because, unfailingly, what she created; everything she said and wrote and did, came from her great spirit, and her happy, assured embrace of the world.

She touched everyone she met; but her students, particularly. She helped shape who we are.

Marilla, looking back, writes: "Packer was an oddly anachronistic place in a turbulent time, and Mrs. Rinden somehow managed to bridge the gap."

The Packer graduating class of 1971 will always remember Jane. For us, she will be, in Elizabeth Shine Bishop's words, "eternally young and full of energy"; and we echo Betsy Gilbride de Soye when she says: "Thank you to Mrs. Rinden from the bottom of my teenage heart. Thank you for caring so much."

## Maggie Levine: The Packer Years - Part II



Eleven years after Barbara entered Packer's Academic School, I fell in love with Mrs. Rinden as a freshman in her American lit class. My favorite part of the course was an American painting unit that Mrs. Rinden created in conjunction with the recently reopened American Wing at the MET. Each student was assigned to research a different painter, and when Mrs. Rinden handed out the list of pairings, I stared at the names: Arthur Dove, Charles Sheeler, Frederic Edwin Church, Reginald Marsh, Jackson Pollock. I'd never heard of any of them.

The following month, when Ben Katock, Packer's 6' 8" star basketball player gave a surprisingly enthusiastic presentation on the pugilist painter, George Bellows, I had a realization. Mrs. Rinden hadn't just randomly assigned the class painters; she'd actually taken the time to think about whom we'd be most likely to appreciate.

Allison Miller had a similar memory of Mrs. Rinden assigning specific *classics*. She wrote: "I took my turn on line waiting begrudgingly to be handed a book I would 'probably hate' and struggle to get through. Mrs. Rinden assigned me *The Good Earth*. There was something about the way she handed me the book and said the title out loud, thoughtfully in her calm way. This book seemed so precious to her and she appeared happy that I was going to get to read it."

I wonder if Alison remembered this moment because she too relished the idea that when Mrs. Rinden had been assigning books, she had to take the time and ask herself: Who is *Alison*? What would *she* enjoy?

For me, that's what made Mrs. Rinden's such an outstanding teacher; of course she inspired a love of literature and writing. But her real gift was her ability to see her students individually, to make each one feel recognized and valued. It didn't matter if they were not, as Leslie North said, "lit likers who would eventually go on to major in English." Every student had something to offer. And isn't that what we all want as human beings? *To be seen? To be appreciated?*

And I don't think it's a coincidence that like Barbara, many Packer and Chapin students' have memories of Mrs. Rinden asking to speak with them outside of class. On Facebook posts and in condolence letters, many recounted stories of disappointing Mrs. Rinden in some way. Yet, they

never described any sense of feeling “guilt tripped,” as Barbara’s students joked. What stuck with them was the feeling of how much Mrs. Rinden seemed to care about them.

I have my own vivid memory of Mrs. Rinden asking me to stay after class. It was in Room 319 - right behind that door. I stood next to her desk, and she started to explain how disappointed she’d been with a chapel announcement I’d recently made. It was odd. She was so uncharacteristically inarticulate. And as she struggled to describe what about my demeanor had troubled her (I’d probably been too glib or lacked poise), I saw tears forming in her eyes. I couldn’t fathom it: how could *one* chapel announcement could have affected her that much? But now, as I stand in the same spot where so long ago Mrs. Rinden watched me fail to present my best self, I marvel at how just how much I mattered to her. Jane, if you’re watching, I hope I’m doing a better job today.

In 1981, Mrs. Rinden left Packer to teach at Chapin, and I headed to France for my senior year. But, that wasn’t the end of our relationship. Mrs. Rinden became Jane, one of my closest friends, and when I went on to teach English at Chapin, my mentor. I’d had a crush on Thor in high school (my friends and I thought he looked like David Bowie), and I got to know him and fell in love with his work.

When my husband Bruce came into the picture, I couldn’t wait for him to meet them. One summer when Bruce and I were apart, I forwarded him one of Jane’s letters, and he replied: “I had to stop and write to you when I came across Jane’s use of the term ‘In high spirits we...’ I mean, really, who else but Jane can be that charming and sincere in the use of the phrase?” Then he added, “I love love love them both.” There was nothing Bruce and I looked forward to more than a date on the calendar for dinner at Jane and Thor’s.

Every time Jane and I got together, she wouldn’t let us begin to catch up until she handed me *something*: it might have been clippings she’d saved for me -- an article, a review, a recipe -- or perhaps a little baggie with a few homemade cookies, or 3 or 4 just-plucked-from-her-garden red cherry tomatoes. Sometimes she took out one of her little slips of scrap paper on which she’d listed an agenda of topics she wanted to cover during our time together. I had the same feeling I’d had as her student; Jane managed to make me feel that as she moved through her life, I was on her mind. That I was important to her.

I think this is why Jane -- and Thor -- loved to entertain. What better way to express their care and appreciation for you than to welcome you into their exquisite home, mix you your favorite cocktail, then serve you a divine meal served on Limoges china?

In the last few years, when I’d visit Jane in Stone Harbor, she never minded that I slept late. She knew how glad I was to have some kid-free time, and when I’d come downstairs to find her in the kitchen, she refused to let me help. She’d shoo me on to the patio where my place would be set with a small vase of flowers she’d picked just for me in the corner of my placemat. I can still imagine Jane in her apron as she leaned over to garnish the dish with a sprig of mint or to spoon an extra morsel of something delicious from the skillet to my plate. Her gestures were always so precise and delicate that for someone like me who has a tendency to hurtle from moment to moment, being in Jane’s presence gave me no choice; I had to slow down and take in all the details.

And she didn't just treat students and friends with this kind of care and attention— Jane made *everyone* feel they meant something to her - the mechanic who fixed her car over the years and was devastated to learn of her passing. Paul, the librarian at the Carroll Gardens library. And Donna, her cleaning woman for whom Jane would make lunch and then join at the table (but only after helping Donna clean).

Recently, Jane's sister perfectly captured the magic of Jane. Sally wrote: "I've noticed how many of those reacting to her passing felt that she considered them special...and she DID. It makes us all stand up straighter, both literally and figuratively, when we have knowledge that we are deemed important."

There is not a doubt in my mind that that's how Jane made all of you feel.

Jane and Thor are gone. As executor of Jane's estate, I've spent hours looking at their photo albums, going through their closets, files drawers... I've cataloged their furniture, their antiques and their personal art. Their lives were so rich and filled with beautiful things -- getting to take it all in in such an intimate way has been incredible. A privilege. But at the same time, the task of deciding what to do with their treasures and choosing who will live in their home has been heartbreaking.

Every day I wrestle with impossible questions: Who will appreciate the love they put into restoring every floorboard of 12 Second Place, What happens to the stories behind each piece of carnival glass or each of Thor's bespoke suits? Who will read the faint and tiny writing in the margins of Jane's books? Why did Thor meticulously document every aspect of their life and their family histories? Why did Jane save every letter she ever received, and every brochure from every gallery show she attended? Playbills, Opera Newsletters are stored in perfectly labeled boxes. *Why? Where would all of these things go? What happens to their memories?*

Some of them have been recorded in the memoir that Jane wrote after Thor's death, and when you leave today, you'll be able to pick up a copy. I want to thank Lucy Boyle who was Jane's student at Chapin, and Louisa Hall, one of Jane's goddaughters, for editing it.

I know many of you are wondering about Thor's work. Sam Scheer and Rosetta Cohen are hoping to place it in galleries and museum collections. If you're interested in being apprised of developments, there will be place where you can sign up for email updates when you pick up your book.

Last month, as Ken Rush and I sat in Jane's living room, immersed in her absence. I told him how I was struggling: "What am I going to do with all of this? Where it will go?"

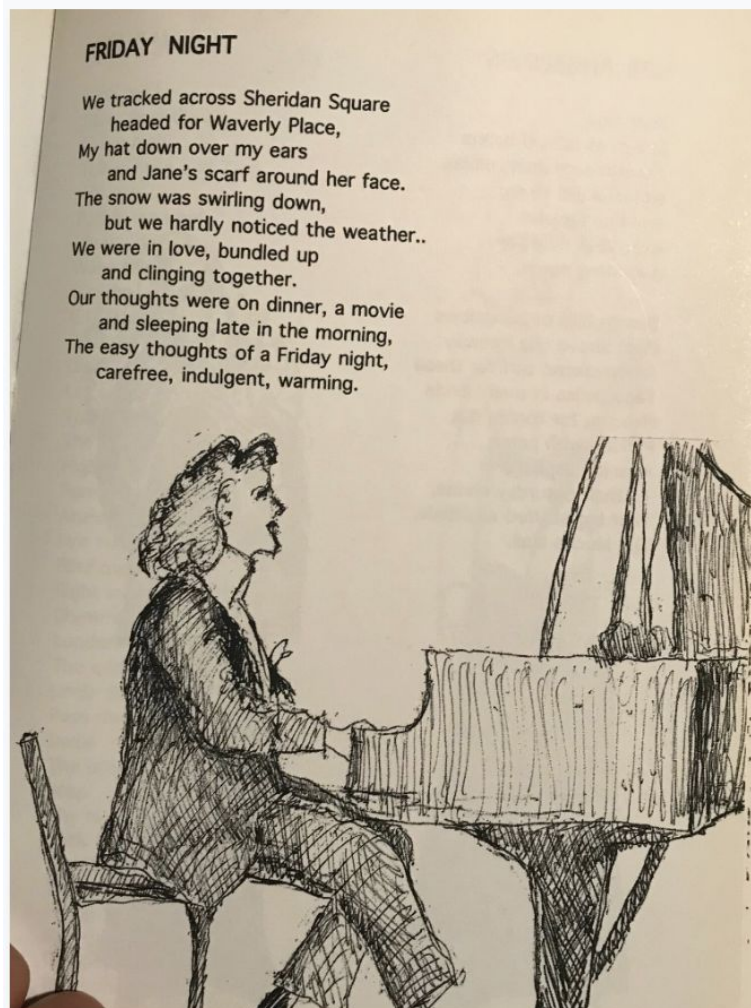
Ken said, "you know, if Jane and Thor had been famous, scholars and archivists would pour over their materials for years to come."

"Yes," I agreed. "That's so true."

Then he said something wise, and I'm going to leave you with his words: "But, now their story belongs to us."



Gregg August and Debbie Deane: “Friday Night”  
[Link to Music](#)



## Rosetta Cohen: Jane & Thor



I met Jane in 1982, when both of us—independent school English teachers-- were recipients of an English-Speaking Union summer grant to study Victorian literature for six weeks at the University of London. On the first day of the seminar, I was the first to arrive at the giant auditorium on Tavistock Square where our lecture was scheduled to take place. Jane arrived second, and she, (not knowing me and uncharacteristically, I think) walked across the empty auditorium and sat down in the seat right next to me. From the moment we introduced ourselves to one another, we were friends. And when, later that day, I met Jane's dashing artist husband Thor, we became a threesome—sticking together throughout the summer, passing poems and drawings under each other's doors at night, taking day trips to Rye and Stonehenge, and laughing together about the terrible food in the dormitory. I can still see Thor staring disconsolately at a grey, gelatinous piece of mutton placed in front of him at dinner, and Jane delicately moving her mashed peas to the side of her plate. In any event, by the time we got back to New York, our friendship had solidified into something I knew would last for the rest of our lives.

From the start, Jane and Thor served as a model for me of the kind of marriage I wanted for myself. Lovers of poetry and painting, together they had seemed to craft a life that was in itself a work of art. They were, to quote the poet, "a marriage of true minds," or--to quote my own husband: "artists of being." More than anything, I admired their love for one another. It seemed then, and continued to be, so absolute and so uncomplicated, and the aesthetic world they created around themselves--in their beautiful home, in the food they ate and how they prepared it, in their talk of art and ideas--it was all profoundly appealing to me. As a young single woman, I was deeply impressed by Jane's ability to be both an intellectual and a domestic goddess. Her love of cooking, it seemed, was somehow akin to her love of language--the way her recipes,

carefully culled and cut from magazines and organized in a small box, reflected—like the literature she loved-- her concern for precision and rigor, and her impeccable taste.

Then I met my husband Sam (having been set up, by the way, on various horrible blind dates by Jane and Thor), and we were immediately a foursome. Jane and Thor embraced Sam from day one with love and enthusiasm, and Sam responded as I knew he would--seeing them exactly as I did: as soulmates.

Over the next 33 years, Sam and my love for the Rindens grew deeper and deeper until it was an organic part of our own marriage. Every summer we, like many of you, spent time with Jane and Thor in Stone Harbor. All four of us continued to exchange poems and drawings on a regular basis. We reveled in their dinner parties, delighting in their wonderful array of friends--some of whom are here today, some of whom have long ago passed away. They influenced us in countless ways, as Sam and I constructed our own married life, with our own house full of art and books and our own Rinden-like garden.

When our daughter Elizabeth was born, she too was brought into the circle, adopted by Jane and Thor as their own--an honorary godchild--doted on and drawn and painted again and again by Thor, in charcoal, in pencil and in oils. Seeing our own love and admiration for the Rindens, Liz quickly grew to love them too. Like Thor, she grew up to become an artist. Like Jane, she grew up to become an English teacher, and in the last decade, after Thor's death--much to Sam and my great pleasure--Elizabeth became a friend of Jane's in her own right, her opera and dinner companion, her pen pal--literally, since both of them still wrote letters with paper and pen. When I think of Jane and Thor's impact on Elizabeth it still stuns me; it was so deep and various.

There are so many wonderful memories we will cherish of their later years, but two stand out above all: In 2004, one of Thor's woven paintings was taken into the permanent collection of the Smith Art Museum, a coup for any artist, given the quality of that museum's collection. Soon after the painting was hung, Jane and Thor came up to Northampton to see it hanging between a Rothko and a Motherwell in the main gallery space. The whole room was filled with modernist masters--Rauschenberg and Kandinsky, DeKooning and Klee-- and there was Thor's canvass as beautiful and profound as any of them. I remember the unalloyed joy of that day, the hours we just stood in the museum space, not wanting to leave. Jane held her trusty camera, shooting the event from every angle, and documenting, for posterity, the moment when her beloved Thor had finally gotten his due as an artist. It felt like an equal triumph for both of them. One other memory--this one just of Jane. In the aftermath of Thor's death, many of us worried how Jane would continue on her own. I remember coming to visit her several months after the funeral, and being so deeply moved by the way she had so meticulously catalogued and wrapped each of Thor's paintings, lovingly swaddling them as if they were mortal things. She was in the midst of writing her memoir then, and I remember her reading parts of it aloud to us, carefully and stoically, as if her own life depended on getting the story just right. These efforts to document and preserve his legacy, we understood, were her final acts of love for Thor.

When Jane died this summer, Sam, Liz and I were not only grief-stricken. We understood that a certain way of life was over for us.. A world that no longer exists; but one we will do our best to mirror and to celebrate for the rest of our own lives.

## Louisa Hall: “On The Train”



### ON THE TRAIN

The whistle warns of our coming down the track,  
but faintly, as if it were an echo, far away. We meander  
through city centers, asphalt parking lots smudged with snow,  
distant cousin of the pristine piles lacing fields and forests.  
Removed from the daily underpinnings of our lives,  
Isolated behind glass, we gaze at the slurring scene,  
the train a speed skater now intent on making up lost time,  
as though time can be lost and found again,  
picked up and placed in a crystal bowl  
to save for a special occasion.

*--Jane L. Rinden*



## Ann Klotz: The Chapin Years - Part 1



Jane and I are on the floor of 12 Second Place, carnival glass twinkling behind us. As we re-design our American Lit curriculum, she tells me the story of making a home with Thor.

We are on a ferry to Ellis Island—newly re-done. We’ve come to prepare a scavenger hunt for our 11<sup>th</sup> grade, who will, in costume, take a field trip in role as members of immigrant families. MJ Quigley, then the 11<sup>th</sup> grade Supervisor at Chapin, will be the inspector as families “land.” We are gleeful about making the themes of American literature come alive.

We are at the Met designing another English assignment that will feature Hudson River School paintings.

We are with the tenth grade at Frost Valley in February. Jane and I each teach a section that year; it is a small class. The girls are presenting “Songs of Myself,” personal reflections inspired by Whitman and Dickinson—For her own Song of Self, Jane invites us all to put on our boots and gloves and coats and scarves. She laces up her figure skates and, in the dark—though I seem to remember light—the moon, a floodlight?—Jane twirls and pirouettes on the ice. We hold our breath. It is magic, wholly unexpected, extraordinary.

After much sadness, my husband and I finally have a baby. Jane arrives to meet Miranda and brings, as a gift, her own baby spoon and fork.

Jane and Thor come to see our summer theatre program in action; they charm my mother, sitting on our front porch, imbibing libations, brilliant conversationalists that they are.

I go to visit Jane in her new classroom on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor. Flowering quince in a jam jar decorates her desk. I’ve come—again—to seek her counsel—she is my confidante. When I leave Chapin, it is hard to leave the daily-ness of Jane.

It is July. Jane has been ill, but is on the mend. I phone her to hear her voice and she tells me she is longing to read *Asymetry*, but hasn’t been to the library. I send it to her via Amazon. She

zaps me an email, her loopy penmanship giving way to technology for short correspondence. She's incredulous that the book has arrived so fast, waiting to feel a little stronger to dive in—I have the feeling Amazon goes into the same category as taxis for Jane—both to be eschewed. Nevertheless, she is her gracious self. I thought I'd see her the following week.

A lover of language and art and this pulsing city, Jane was my teaching buddy, my recommender of what to read next or what play or exhibit I simply had to see. Even long-distance, she offered encouragement and travelogues and musings and love.

In the past several months, I've come to realize the exponential extent of her love for those of us lucky enough to be in her life.

## Diane Spillios: The Chapin Years - Part II



Let me tell you about Jane at Chapin's Field Day. Using all of her natural organizational and peace-making skills, Jane held the coveted position of scorekeeper for the fiercely competitive annual student/faculty croquet game.

With great skill and tact, Jane not only checked the equipment, sorting through mallets, balls, and wickets, but she also had to sort through and manage all of the different personalities as well, including those who wanted to win at all costs (both students and teachers), those who had no idea how to play croquet (both students and teachers), those who were fierce but erratic (yes, both students and teachers), and those whose loose interpretations of the rules were legend.

As the Department Head, Jane also was a gracious hostess on Field Day. Each year she arranged a tasteful, tasty luncheon for the Upper School English Department. No deli sandwiches for us! No, we would have a grand picnic and eat elegantly.

This is my most vivid memory of Field Day luncheons:

Before the event, Jane asked me if I would make a salad for our feast. Knowing I could not pull off finding all of my Field Day paraphernalia (lost in a closet for about a year) and also making food, I said to Jane, "There are many wonderful gourmet shops in my neighborhood. Their food is much better than mine would be. Let me buy something"

Undeterred and determined to have homemade foods, Jane gently prodded, “Oh, Diane, you probably have a can of fava beans in your pantry. You could mix up the beans with some fresh herbs and make a delicious salad.” Humble about her own cooking expertise, Jane, I think, could not imagine my inability to prepare something she considered so simple.

“Jane,” I laughed, I don’t know what fava beans are, and I don’t have a pantry.” Gracious in defeat, Jane conceded, and my contributions to the luncheon were delicious lemon squares my husband got from a neighborhood bakery. Jane even complimented me on my shopping savvy. As always, Jane’s luncheon was a success.



## Wanda Holland Greene” The Chapin Years - Part III



It has been thirty-three years since my graduation from The Chapin School, yet my extraordinary English teachers remain a symphony of sound and sense:

- the melody of Helen Handley’s voice reading e.e. Cummings
- the bounce in Charity Hume’s walk
- the green pens and yellow legal pads filled with Barbara Putnam’s thoughts
- the typewritten essays-- with polka dots of White-Out-- that I proudly presented to Judy Phelps
- the white copy of Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple* handed to me by Jane Rinden

When Jane handed out the syllabus for *The Color Purple*, I remember thinking, “My English teacher has guts.” Then I remember thinking, “My English teacher sees me.”

In a grade of about 45 girls, you could count the number of black girls on one hand. In Jane’s English class in 1984, there were two of us. What I loved most is that Jane did not make the two black girls the mouthpieces of black Southern dialect, though she knew full well that Faith Hendricks and I could read Celie’s words with ease. Instead, Jane insisted that the white students read the text out loud and listen to its beauty and strength. I sat in Room 11, feeling the academic playing field level under the penny loafers on my feet. After all, if I could read William Faulkner’s punctuation-absent sentences in *The Sound and the Fury*, then surely others could attempt Alice Walker. As with every text, Jane insisted that we take in the story, its structure, and its message to us. She wanted her young female students to find the liberation, love, and independence that Celie had found.

It has been about thirty-three days since I met Alice Walker for the first time. After she read poetry from her new poetry anthology, I rushed over to her. She held my hands and looked

directly into my eyes as I told her about the English teacher who first gave her words to me. As Alice Walker smiled at me, the words she wrote in *The Color Purple* came rushing forward. It is the moment when Celie grieves the loss of her missing children and her sister Nettie.

**I now give Alice Walker's words back to Jane: "And I don't believe you dead. How can you be dead if I still feel you? Maybe, like God, you changed into something different to I'll have to speak to in a different way, but you not dead to me. And never will you be."**

## Haydee Von Sternberg: The Chapin Years - Part IV

I'm Haydée. Jane and I met in 1983.

Jane had a virtue rare today – she reached across the aisle, across divisions.

From the Upper School at Chapin to the Lower School  
From the English department to a math teacher!

Some background—

I grew up in Cuba. During college in the United States, I majored in math because I loved the discipline and because I dreaded writing... in English.

Jane guided me in the how to's of report writing, an inescapable part of the job, so that they were done with less anxiety and more skill. That was her first professional gift to me.

Personally, she offered a greater gift.

She was the Show and Tell of a person with a true sense of self: confident, curious, gracious, welcoming, encouraging, loving.

When she befriended me, I felt the wonder of a lowly freshman who is approached by the sophisticated senior.

She seemed to say “I'm Somebody, who are you?  
**You** --are Somebody too.

All of us here are Somebodies, chosen by Jane.  
She did not call us friends; she called us Dear Ones.

Jane, how I miss you and how present you are to me.

## Ilana Pergam: The Chapin Years - Part V

My name is Ilana Pergam, and Jane Rinden was my teacher, and later my colleague, and most importantly, my friend and loving guide. I landed in Mrs. Rinden's Russian Literature class my senior year at Chapin because the School was wise enough even then to know that when students choose their areas of study they are immediately more connected to and invested in their own learning. I'm a little embarrassed to say that I chose Russian lit because I was always working on perfecting the accent of my alter ego, a character I named Marla Vichenko, after an evil-doer on an episode of the Hardy Boys. But never mind... there I was.

And there was Mrs. Rinden, teaching us words in Russian, showing us that beautiful Cyrillic alphabet, describing the Russian tea service we would eventually enjoy with her own samovar. Mrs. Rinden introduced us to the works of Pushkin, Gogol, Chekhov, and Bulgakov. I — or Marla Vichenko — was in heaven.

When Mrs. Rinden assigned Ivan Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*, I found a copy of the text in my parents' bookshelves — this one. Even in 1986 its pages were brittle and its spine taped in place. My uncle's name is stamped on the inside. He must have read it during his last years of high school, the year this volume was printed.

In 1862, when Turgenev wrote *Fathers and Sons*, he may have been thinking about conflicts between Russia's 1840s intelligentsia, idealists and romantics and the 1860s raznochintsy, who praised materialism, science, and rationalism.

All I cared about was that I saw myself, and my messy relationship with my parents, reflected in Turgenev's text. To me, this was a book about the generation gap — and it gave me comfort that fighting with one's parents with passion and tears was an age-old custom. And while Mrs. Rinden may have hoped each of us would write a well-informed, richly argued literary analysis of the text, I will never forget how she generously allowed me to use my paper about *Fathers and Sons* to come to a greater understanding of my own family dynamics.

Mrs. Rinden recognized Turgenev's work was a critical touchstone for young women on the cusp of adulthood fighting with their own parents. More than that, she understood what cognitive scientists have since researched in depth: that an emotional connection to what we learn is more likely to result in learning that is enduring.

Jane Rinden sparked in me a desire to learn more about Russian language, literature, and thinking, and so, inspired by her class, I focused on Russian history and language in college. I daresay I am but one of many of Jane's former students out in the world whose intellectual curiosity was sparked by Jane's introduction to great prose and poetry and, more than that, whose sense of self-worth, was rooted in Jane's loving encouragement as we struggled with everyday adolescence.

As I grew up and returned to Chapin as a teacher, Jane became a colleague and friend. She and Thor welcomed my husband Jeff and me into their lives and their home. My favorite room in the world will always be Jane and Thor's dining room at 12 Second Place. Federal blue walls and textiles, candlelight glinting off the mirror above the mantel, scrumptious food lovingly prepared by Jane wearing a long calico apron with a ruffled edge around the pinafore top. And our conversations... stories and reminiscences that always made me marvel... these were people my

parents' age, and yet they made us feel like peers — like we had something of value to share with them.

The author Henry James, who loved and admired Turgenev, once said, *Fathers and Sons* is about “the battle of the old and the new, the past and the future, the ideas that arrive with the ideas that linger.”

Jane showed me that new ideas and those that linger can find space together through our love of learning and discovery. And whenever I have the opportunity to open learning for a young student so that her personal interest, the question she is struggling with, is the driving force for her learning, then I know I have done just a little of what Jane Rinden did for me. I love you, Jane.

## Ken Rush: Life After Thor



## REMEMBERING GRANT WOOD

We ALL have so many memories of Jane and Thor. Over the last three years since I retired from Packer, I had the pleasure of doing what I call Art excursion with Jane. Every few months Jane would call me and ask if I had seen a particular exhibition. We would quickly agree on an itinerary, and each time our trip started in the same way. I would arrive at number 12 2nd Pl. promptly at 9:30 and before I even stepped up to the front door it would open and Jane would briskly come out ready to go. She of course always had on a wonderful scarf or hat, carried an umbrella and if the day were cool have on a pair of gloves. Before we left her stoop she would hand me a sheef of reviews from the New York Times or the New Yorker of the days offerings. We would march to the F, and even though it was still rush-hour Jane would always manage to find a seat ...neatly placing herself between two passengers and spend the trip busily reading. For my part I would be standing in the crowd swaying back-and-forth until we reached our destination. Our last trip together was in the spring, And for it Jane wanted to show me the grant wood exhibition at the whitney.

Normally we had an unspoken rule that we would only go to exhibits that neither one of us had seen, but Jane explained to me that she couldn't resist seeing it before hand and that seeing it twice would allow her to enjoy Woods anew.

Now, although I'm in admirer of Grant Woods, he's not an artist that I would choose for repeated viewings, So I went into the show really having little idea of how important Grant Wood was to Jane. After we looked at all the famous iconic, and ironic stern-faced Mid-western portraits ,Jane lead me to the last room of the exhibit which contained the artist's landscapes. I tried to catch up with her as she briskly motioned me to a painting in the corner.

As I approached I saw a modest sized painting , the one which we see here, but I was really rather perplexed as to why Jane was so excited by this particular work? The painting, titled STONE CITY, was done by Wood in 1929, and depicts an idealized representation of the Iowan quarry town of Stone city. It is a charming work, full of late-afternoon summer light, and, with its meandering road, is a forerunner of Wood's famous *Midnight ride of Paul Revere*.

As we stood in front of the work, Jane explained the reason for her enthusiasm. She told me that, years earlier, she and Thor had visited Stone city, Iowa, because they so loved this Grant Wood painting. Jane told me how they had hiked above the town through cow pastures and corn fields until they located the very spot where Wood must have stood for this view.

As I gazed into the painting, Jane's words began to sink in, and I sensed the importance of the moment. I realized that a young Jane and Thor had made a pilgrimage where they drove through the Iowan countryside, climbed over fences and hiked through fields to share their love of a work of art, the artist who created it, and most of all their love of each other. For me, the indelible memory of Jane and Thor's adventure with Grant Wood's charmed world is exactly how I am privileged to remember them.





## Lucy Boyle: “Immortality”



### IMMORTALITY (For Millie)\*

Fog cocoons the island as  
Abruptly as she left us  
Muffling voices and thoughts  
Leaving no trail of footsteps  
On the beach she once walked

Immortals leave no outer sign  
Their radiant touch is on the soul  
Burning indelible true  
--Jane L. Rinden

\*Mildred Berenson was a beloved headmistress of The Chapin School



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