

## Henry James

### President's column for January 2014

#### My New Year's Resolutions

Dear Patrons and Friends of the Manchester Library,

This year my Resolutions are focusing on the success of the Friends of the Manchester Library. I am promising myself to do all the following:

**\*Recognize all of our terrific volunteers**

Throughout the year, we have over 75 individuals who donate more than 2000 hours to help the FOML support the operation of our Library; we need to all let them know how we value their efforts on our behalf.

**\*Help improve our web-site**

Thomas Uemoto is our web-master and has worked hard to improve the organization of our web-site. He is dependent on all of us for information and critical review of our existing site and how to improve its use.

**\*Tell patrons that KRL doesn't own the Manchester Library building nor pay for all the utilities and maintenance:**

I suspect that most of our patrons have no idea that the Library isn't fully-funded by tax dollars. We need public support at all of our fundraising events to insure the on-going viability of the Library.

**\*Work to keep our fundraising strong to insure we keep our Library open**

Our major event chairs are busy planning events to keep our fundraising strategy strong, we will add some new twists this year to further build on our existing base of events.

**\* Find new funding sources**

Many public companies support non-profit charities and we need to be constantly working to keep the FOML in the running for these grants.

**\*Improve our ability to bring new members into the Friends:**

We aren't getting any younger, so we need to draft younger, energetic community members into our group to bring new ideas to expand our horizons.

**\*Have more fun than we thought possible!**

What good is volunteering if it isn't enjoyable to each and every one of us....let's make volunteering for the FOML so fun that we can hardly contain ourselves!

Wishing you a very healthy and happy 2014.

John Winslow-President

**Consumer Reports** are available starting January 7<sup>th</sup> from home using the KRL.org website using the main navigation menu item-Research and Learn, the a-z list of online resources and KRL's OPAC record for Consumer Reports.

Born to wealth in New York City, Henry James (1843-1916) spent the bulk of his life in England, so he writes from both a European and an American point of view. The most influential writer of his age, James is a master of the complex moral situation. His stories, however, can make you feel like the male dancer in a Balanchine *pas de deux*. They have an Edith Wharton quality, and can go unresolved. Some marry American money to moth-eaten European titles, dwell on the protagonist's riches, then make a mad dash for the exit. Others emphasize psychology (his older brother, William, was a world-renowned psychiatrist), and center on an artist making his/her way through society.

In the dark moral drama *The Wings of the Dove*, James plays out a love triangle against the backdrops of London materialism and Venetian decay. In *The Golden Bowl* an American millionaire searches for European works of art to fill his hometown museum. In time, the subtly flawed bowl becomes a symbol of adultery (and the means by which the protagonist discovers she's been had). In *What Maisie Knew*, the daughter of a divorced couple enjoys a perceptive clarity free from adult distractions. In *The Turn of the Screw* James develops nerve-wracking ambiguities that blend somewhat awkwardly in this unfulfilled story. In *The Ambassadors* (his best novel) he tells how the social and aesthetic attractions of Paris cause a middle-aged New Englander to re-evaluate American and European cultures – – with tragic consequences.

James writes in clear terms, calls upon all five senses, and employs vivid analogies. But he hates calling a spade a spade, and can be caught actively searching for his story's epiphany. His heroines are often petulant and neurotic; his heroes effete. His dialogues, though revealing and evocative, can get tedious. That said, they're always stimulating. Bottom line: reading one of his economical stories is like viewing an Impressionist painting – and who doesn't like doing that?

Essay by Bill Lounsbery

### 2014 Winter Reading Books (continued)

#### more Recommendations from Your Friends

*On Looking: Eleven Walks with Expert Eyes* (2013)

by Alexandra Horowitz

*Ramage (The Lord Ramage series)* (2000) by Alexander Kent

*What Makes This Book So Great* (2014) by Jo Walton

*The Vikings* (2013) by Neil Oliver

*Bad Blood* (2013) by Dana Stabenow

*The Goldfinch* (2013) by Donna Tartt

*The Signature of All Things* (2013) by Elizabeth Gilbert

*The Hobbit (or There & Back Again)* (1937) by J. R. R. Tolkien

*The Dinosaur Feather* (2013) by S. J. Gazan

*The Gentleman from Finland* (2013) by Robert M. Goldstein

We will have more recommendations in our Valentine's Issue.

If you have a recommendation, send it to the Editor (address below)