



NEWS RELEASE

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Emily Dickinson Birthday Lecture and Dinner Scheduled for Dec. 6

AMHERST, Mass.—Biographer Polly Longworth will deliver the 2007 Emily Dickinson Birthday Lecture and participate in a reception and booksigning Thursday, Dec. 6, at 4 p.m. at the Lord Jeffery Inn in Amherst. Longworth's talk, titled "'Nothing but a Sword': Austin and Mabel and the Publication of Emily Dickinson's Poems," will examine the publication history of Emily Dickinson's work through the lens of her brother Austin's long relationship with Mabel Loomis Todd, one of the first editors of Dickinson's poems. The event is co-sponsored by the Emily Dickinson Museum and the Amherst College Archives and Special Collections and is free and open to the public.

Longworth, who is known for her book *Austin and Mabel: The Amherst Affair & Love Letters of Austin Dickinson and Mabel Loomis Todd* (1984), will delineate the dramatic story of the posthumous publication of Emily Dickinson's poetry by focusing on the following central question: Would Dickinson's poetry have been published if Mabel Loomis Todd had not been involved? Todd, as Longworth will discuss, was intimately connected to the Dickinson family through her 13-year affair with the poet's brother, and their largely untold story pits pride against love and stars some fascinating personalities, including several publishers, numerous academics and critics and a couple of major educational institutions.

Longworth herself is held in high regard for her insights into Emily Dickinson's life. Author of several Dickinson-related books, she is currently at work on a single, comprehensive biography of the poet. In addition, she is an active supporter of the Emily Dickinson Museum and serves on its board of governors, of which she was also its first chair.

At 6 p.m., after the lecture and booksigning, a special birthday dinner will be held. The meal will feature readings and a special portrayal of David Peck Todd and Mabel Loomis Todd by actors Walter Carroll and Ann Maggs. Guests will be treated to multi-course dinner served in Victorian style with items such as salmon timbales, soup with noodle puffs and ice cream from Susan Huntington Dickinson's famous entertainments of the mid-19th century. All proceeds from the dinner, which costs \$50 per person, will support the work of the Emily Dickinson Museum. For more information, please contact Donna Abelli, development and marketing manager, at 413-542-5084 or dmabelli@emilydickinsonmuseum.org.

The Emily Dickinson Museum: The Dickinson Homestead and The Evergreens is devoted to the story and legacy of Emily Dickinson and her family. Owned by the trustees of Amherst College, the museum is overseen by a separate board of governors charged with raising its operating and capital funds. The Dickinson Homestead was the birthplace and residence of the poet (1830-1886), and The Evergreens was the 1856 home of the poet's brother and sister-in-law, Austin and Susan Dickinson.

The museum is located at 280 Main Street in Amherst, Mass. The official museum Web site is www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org. Hours through Dec. 8 are Wednesdays and Saturdays from 12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. (closed the Wednesday before Thanksgiving). The museum's season ends on Saturday, Dec. 8, with the annual Birthday Open House from 1 to 4 p.m.

The Archives and Special Collections at Amherst College houses the college's rare books, literary manuscripts, written materials of unique value and materials that relate to the college and its history. It houses one of the world's largest collections of Emily Dickinson manuscripts and related material. Located on Level A of the Frost Library, the Archives and Special Collections is open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 4 p.m., year round.

The lecture is part of "Bookmarks: A Celebration of the Art of the Book," a region-wide festival from September 2007 to January 2008 that brings to life the Pioneer Valley's great literary traditions through film, family events, lectures and readings. This initiative is sponsored by the Emily Dickinson Museum and Museums10, a partnership of ten museums linked to the Pioneer Valley's institutions of higher education. More information about Bookmarks and Museums10 can be found at www.museums10.org.

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