



JANE AUSTEN IN THE ARTS

From Jane Austen's practicing the piano in the morning at Chawton to her nephew William's doing cross-stitch while sick in bed, several examples of solitary artistic practice can be found in Austen's life and novels. Yet there is a special enjoyment in experiencing the arts with company: Austen looked forward to observing "several [people] that I want to see" at a concert, and she liked to "attend more to the company" than to paintings at an exhibition. At a ball, casting an "eye at an Adultrous" added to the pleasures of music and dancing.

After a year when we have all been more solitary than we would like, we can look ahead to the pleasures of gathering in person once again. The Greater Chicago Region invites JASNA members to the 2021 Annual General Meeting, exploring "Jane Austen in the Arts." We will celebrate Austen's influence and legacy in the fine and decorative visual arts and performing arts, and Austen adaptations on stage, screen, and other electronic/broadcast media. The theme embraces creative work by amateurs and professionals from Austen's own time as well as those subsequently inspired by her work.

Chicago is the ideal venue: Your hosts are planning a full slate of programs to make the most of the city's offerings, including performances by Chicago music and theater companies, an open house at the world-famous Art Institute of Chicago, and tours to explore the region's renowned architectural heritage. Conference headquarters at

continued on page 4

Virtues of Virtual: 2020 AGM

If you are a frequent Annual General Meeting attendee, this year's Virtual AGM—Oct. 9-11—will honor our favorite JASNA traditions in a new way. If you've never attended an AGM, now is your chance! You won't have to worry about travel, and our virtual platform will deliver AGM content and opportunities for interaction in an easy-to-use site. We think you'll enjoy some delightful innovations that are possible only through the magic of online connection.

The Virtual AGM's presentations, curated by the Ohio North Coast Region, will share new scholarship on Austen's juvenilia and some fun takes on the world of teenage Jane. Brew a cup of tea, kick back in the comfort of your home, and spend time with our eminent presenters.

Juliet McMaster, PhD, a longtime AGM favorite and expert on Austen's early works, will deliver the Carol Medine Moss Keynote Lecture. McMaster's role in studying these texts, including founding Juvenilia Press in 1994, has led to generations of scholars editing the youthful writings of Austen and other important authors. Kathryn Sutherland, PhD—author of *Jane Austen's Textual Lives*, editor of several Austen books for Oxford University Press, and curator of Jane Austen's Fiction Manuscripts Digital Edition for the British Library—will share new scholarship.

Our virtual format will allow unprecedented access to Jane Austen's House in Chawton, where Sutherland will host a show-and-tell of artifacts from Austen's world.

continued on page 5

CONTENTS

Fall 2020—Volume 36, Number 3

President's Column	3
Annual General Meeting	4
Reviews	6
International News	9
Member Profiles	12
Regional News	17
Slate of Officers/Board Nominees	24

DATES AND DEADLINES

JASNA News Winter 2021

Submission deadline: October 1, 2020

Publication date: mid-December

JASNA News Spring 2021

Submission deadline: January 8, 2021

Publication date: mid-March

JASNA News Summer 2021

Submission deadline: April 1, 2021

Publication date: mid-June

JASNA News Fall 2021

Submission deadline: July 1, 2021

Publication date: mid-September

Call for papers, special issue of *Persuasions*

"Staying at Home" with Jane Austen:

Reading and Writing During a Pandemic

Submission deadline: September 1, 2020

Email: sford@deltastate.edu

Call for papers, 2021 AGM

Submission deadline: November 1, 2020

jasna.org/conferences-events/agms

JASNA News

The newsletter of the
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jasna.org
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Saltram House—near Plymouth in Devon, England—portrayed Norland Park in the 1995 adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility*, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year.



President's Column

Liz Philosophos Cooper

The message below was originally included in JASNA's June 10 "Social Distancing" email. We are publishing it here for the benefit of our members who do not receive JASNA emails (22%) and so it can be part of JASNA's written record.

Response to the message has been overwhelmingly positive. I received many emails thanking me for speaking out. That being said, I also received a few notes from members asking whether such a message was really needed or appropriate. Wasn't I underestimating JASNA's members? However, I feel it's important to make JASNA's position known and to share our action plan regarding this important issue. A few anecdotes I've heard since my message was released convince me that we can be more mindful. We can do better.

Dear Members,

These biweekly emails have been aimed at keeping us connected during the COVID-19 pandemic, but events during the last two weeks have left us all shaken. We are a literary society based on words—yet, right now, it is hard to find words.

JASNA takes pains to be nonpolitical, and I will continue to respect that. However, the recent killing of George Floyd and so many others in the Black community is not a political issue. It is a human rights issue that cannot be ignored, and members are responding in a variety of ways. Some are protesting, some donating, some writing letters, some posting on social media, some educating ourselves, some listening, some having hard discussions with friends and family. These are all important things to do.

As an organization, JASNA will also respond by making sure all people feel welcome, valued, and safe at our meetings and events. There is no place in JASNA for racism or discrimination of any kind. Prior to recent events, a committee led by George Justice was commissioned to work on two of JASNA's long-term strategic planning goals: increasing the diversity of our membership and promoting the reading of Jane Austen among more diverse audiences. The committee will also be chartered to develop processes and recommendations to ensure that all members feel



welcome within our organization and feel encouraged to report any incidents of racism that may occur during a JASNA or regional event or discussion.

I have always been proud of the fact that we are an organization of lifelong learners. In *Persuasion*, Jane Austen wrote about the power of the person who holds the pen:

"Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands. I will not allow books to prove anything."

I acknowledge that my U.S. history textbooks presented a version of history from the viewpoint of those who held the pen. I have spent time recently educating myself. The National Museum of African American History and Culture has an excellent educational website called Talking About Race with great resources aimed at parents, educators, and those committed to equity.

We need to keep learning. We need to keep listening with an open heart. Sustaining our sense of community is as important as ever. As I wrote months ago, we are all in this together. All of it.

Sending a virtual hug. Stay well.

JANE AUSTEN IN THE ARTS continued from page 1

the Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile will put you just steps or a short ride away from the city's exquisite cultural attractions, fantastic shopping, and famous restaurants.



Gillian Dow, Devoney Looser, Desmond Shawe-Taylor

Introducing Our Plenary Speakers

The 2021 AGM's lineup of plenary speakers includes stars of the JASNA world as well as internationally prominent figures making their AGM debuts.

Gillian Dow, PhD, former executive director of Chawton House, will deliver the Carol Medine Moss Keynote, "Theatre and Theatricality; Or, Jane Austen and Learning the Art of Dialogue." An associate professor of English at the University of Southampton, Dow has published widely on Austen and her contemporaries. Dow's books include *Uses of Austen: Jane's Afterlives*, and *Women's Writing, 1660-1830: Feminisms and Futures*. She is the instructor of the perennially popular (and free!) online Jane Austen course (futurelearn.com/courses/jane-austen).

Devoney Looser, PhD, Foundation Professor of English at Arizona State University, will present the JASNA North American Scholar Lecture. Looser is author or editor of nine books on literature by women, including *The Making of Jane Austen* and *The Daily Jane Austen: A Year of Quotes*. She was named a Guggenheim Fellow and a National Endowment for the Humanities Public Scholar in support of her next book, a biography of the once-celebrated sister novelists Jane and Anna Maria Porter. Her AGM lecture is "Sisters in the Arts: The Austens and the Porters."

Making his AGM debut will be Desmond Shawe-Taylor, surveyor of the Queen's Pictures since 2005. Shawe-Taylor is responsible for curating the art collection owned by the British sovereign, comprising approximately 7,000 oil paintings and 3,000 miniatures. His publications include *Masters of the Everyday*, *The First Georgians*, *Dutch Landscapes*, and *The Conversation Piece for Royal Collection Trust*. He has curated exhibitions including Bruegel to Rubens, The First Georgians, and Charles I: King and Collector.

Our Sunday brunch will feature a performance/presentation by a fabulous musical couple. Maestro Stephen Alltop is music director

and conductor of the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra at the University of Illinois, and music director of the Apollo Chorus of Chicago, Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra, and Green Lake Festival Choral Institute. He has served since 1994 as a member of Northwestern University's conducting and keyboard faculties. Soprano Josefien Stoppelenburg is known for her dazzling vocal agility and passionate and insightful interpretations. She has performed several times for the royal family in her native Netherlands and currently tours widely as a concert singer, soloist for oratorio performances, and specialist in baroque music. The *Chicago Tribune* called her "an astonishing singer" and praised her "creamy tone, dead-on accuracy, and dramatic interpretation." Together, Alltop and Stoppelenburg have delighted Austen fans with their concert "Sensibility in Sound: Music From the Time of Jane Austen," which features compositions mentioned in Austen's writing, played on an Austen-era Broadwood piano.



Maestro Stephen Alltop, Soprano Josefien Stoppelenburg

Special Treats From Chicago Institutions

The Art Institute of Chicago, home to a renowned art collection from all over the globe, will welcome AGM attendees to a Thursday open house. Curators and other experts from the museum's staff will be stationed throughout the galleries, ready to discuss works of art from Austen's time. The spectacular



Reading Room of the Ryerson Library will be open just for us, with library staff on hand to share some Georgian treasures brought out specially for the occasion.

Friday evening will feature a reading of an Austen-inspired play presented by one of the most dynamic of Chicago's "off-Loop" theater companies, Lifeline Theater. Its actors are seasoned Austen pros, having presented a number of delightful adaptations of her work. Since their theater space is a tad too intimate for such a large crowd, they will perform for us at the hotel.

Tours will explore the Chicago area's rich architectural heritage, from a boat trip along the Chicago River to the legacy of Frank Lloyd Wright in Oak Park. Our Sunday evening event will feature another significant part of Chicago culture: pizza! Participants will sample the finest pies the city has to offer with a tour of some of the local restaurants specializing in Chicago's (and the world's) favorite food.



Portrait of Mrs. Jens Wolff (1803–1815) by Sir Thomas Lawrence at the Art Institute

Last Call for Breakout Session Proposals

We welcome proposals for presentations exploring the relationship between Austen and the arts through works of visual art and performances mentioned by Austen, of Austen's time, or inspired by Austen. Submission deadline is November 1. For further details and submission guidelines, visit jasna.org/agms/chicago2021/call-for-papers.php

We look forward to welcoming you to Chicago for our Jane Austen in the Arts extravaganza!



The Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile will house the conference.

Virtues of Virtual: 2020 AGM continued from page 1

In breakout sessions, we'll discover novels that were popular in the 1780s and '90s that Austen spoofed, reinterpreted, and critically reviewed in her youthful effusions, and consider questions such as: What do her dedications signify? How does Austen's teenage work compare to the scribblings of modern teenagers? How did Austen learn parody at such a young age? Do themes from Austen's juvenilia show up in her mature novels? A thought-provoking panel will discuss Austen as a creator of adaptive fiction and ways that Austen's juvenilia can be adapted by modern fiction writers.

Entertainments expanding on the juvenilia theme include "Rock Stars of the Regency," a showcase of celebrities from Austen's era—brought to life by Jocelyn Harris, PhD, and friends—and a look at Austen's music books, with performance snippets.

You'll enjoy access to scholars that is typical of an AGM experience since our plenary and breakout speakers will be available for real-time Q&A sessions. And here's a bonus: Presentations will be available for viewing beyond the AGM weekend, so you don't have to miss a thing!

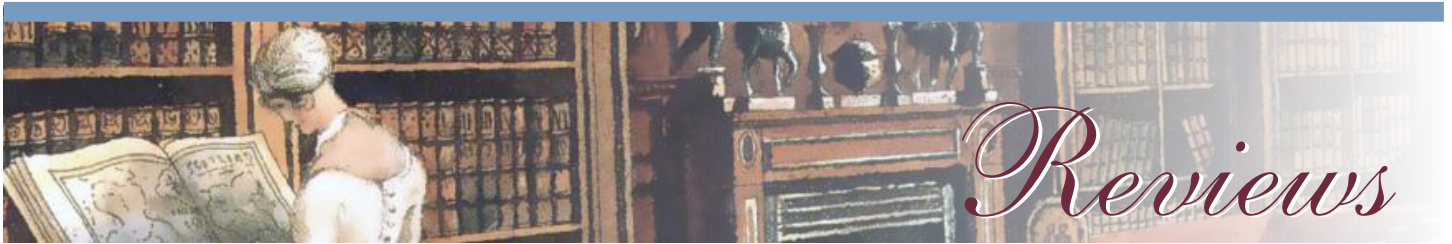
We'll take you into the homes of expert chefs, who will show you how to create authentic Georgian and Regency food and beverages. Collectors will show and discuss their "most precious treasures." The virtual emporium will connect you with the familiar vendors you love to shop with every year at the AGM, plus new ones you may not have seen before. You won't have to carry packages home in your suitcase; vendors will ship purchases to you.

We want you to get involved, too. While we have all faced "misfortunes of a much greater magnitude than the loss of a ball," our virtual promenade will soothe the longing to dress up: Wear your most elaborate yet tasteful Regency attire and share a photo for everyone to enjoy. Test your Austen fandom with virtual bingo and a challenging pub quiz. Chat with friends new and old during our virtual "Social on Saturday," and raise your glasses with us for "Mimosas with Jane" on Sunday morning.

Surprises are in store! We cannot wait to welcome you to our Virtual AGM. Registration closes October 1. Visit jasna.org for details on speakers, activities, and everything you need to know to register and prepare.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

JASNA members are hereby invited to attend the Annual General Meeting of the society to be held Sunday, October 11, 2020, as a virtual meeting. The official purpose of the AGM is for members to attend the JASNA Business Meeting or JASNA Canada Business Meeting. We hope to see you there!



SCRIBBLING WOMEN

A Secret Sisterhood: The Literary Friendships of Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, and Virginia Woolf

By Emily Midorikawa and Emma Claire Sweeney

Foreword by Margaret Atwood

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2017), xx + 331 pages

16 b/w illustrations, hardcover, \$27

Review by Claire Bellanti

Women authors are often depicted as loners, plodding away at their writing in solitude. Even Jane Austen purportedly hid her drafts whenever she heard the door to where she worked creak open.

Midorikawa and Sweeney have studied the literary friendships of four notable English authors of the 19th and 20th centuries to demonstrate that the trope of the solitary female writer is simplistic. They found examples of women who depended on relationships with peers for support, encouragement, and competition. Midorikawa and Sweeney explore the lives of these writers using letters, diaries, and unpublished works, and describe literary friendships that have gone largely unnoticed or been misinterpreted.

Of special interest is the friendship between Austen and Anne Sharp, who was governess to Austen's niece Fanny and an amateur playwright (one theatrical Sharp wrote was titled *Pride Punished or Innocence Rewarded*). They met at Godmersham, home of Austen's brother Edward Austen Knight. The authors describe a relationship that has heretofore been little known, expanding our knowledge through meticulous searches of letters, birth and death records, and unpublished papers. Austen admired Sharp's independent spirit and creativity and, when circumstances removed Sharp from the immediate circle of the Austen family, the two stayed in touch through letters and the occasional visit. Midorikawa and Sweeney surmise that much of this correspondence may have been destroyed by the Austen family, who probably frowned on the friendship's breach of a rigid class divide.

Charlotte Brontë made two close friends while at school in Mirfield, about 20 miles from her home in Haworth. One, Ellen Nussey, led a conventional life. The other, Mary Taylor, was decidedly rebellious, with an interest in politics and improving the lot of women. "Overshadowed today by the more famous trio of the Brontë sisters, often thought to be so devoted to each other that they had no need of anyone else, Charlotte's triangular relationship with Ellen and

Mary was also of profound importance to her" (76).

A writer herself, Taylor's feminist novel celebrating female friendships, *Miss Miles*, was not published until 1890. She was also a traveler, spending years in New Zealand. Taylor was disappointed when Brontë returned home after studying and teaching in Belgium to

nurse family members instead of pursuing the independent life they had both dreamed of in their youth.

Although George Eliot never met Harriet Beecher Stowe in person, they carried on an intense but intermittent correspondence for 11 years, until Eliot's death in 1880. Stowe initiated contact in 1869 with a long letter of critical praise for Eliot's published works. To Eliot, the interest and recognition from a fellow female writer was precious. Because Eliot lived with George Henry Lewes outside of marriage, most women avoided being associated with her. She and Stowe came to value the other's opinions and depended on each other for emotional support.

More well-known is the relationship between Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield. Some critics have described them as "enemies" because of their great ambitions. However, sources reveal a complex relationship and warm reliance on each other's views. They exchanged lovely gifts and entertained each other in their homes. After Mansfield's early death, Woolf frequently wrote and spoke of her friend. They strongly influenced each other's writing, despite egotism, silences, and sometimes hurt feelings.

Midorikawa and Sweeney are literary sisters themselves. Their lively, breezy narrative and thorough research ensure that *A Secret Sisterhood* will appeal to many readers. If you enjoy this book, you will find additional accounts of female writing friendships in the somethingrhymed.com blog.

Claire Bellanti is a retired UCLA librarian and immediate past-president of JASNA.



ILLUMINATING ‘INTIMATE IRONIES’

Art and Artifact in Austen

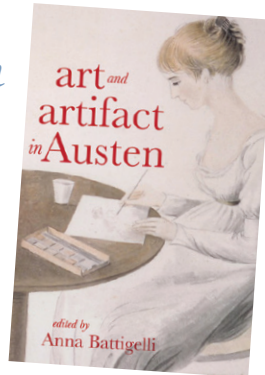
Edited by Anna Battigelli
University of Delaware Press (2020)
xi + 288 pages
20 b/w illustrations
Hardcover, \$75/paperback, \$37

Review by Kristen Miller Zohn

Anna Battigelli has gathered 12 essays inspired by presentations given at SUNY Plattsburgh’s conference “Jane Austen and the Arts,” seeking to illuminate some “intimate ironies” (1) found in Austen’s work. Although the arts functioned as a unifying social bond for Austen and her family, her characters possess artistic sensibilities and skills that are socially disruptive and add to an atmosphere of disorder and change in her novels. The outward signs of art making signal her characters’ interior thoughts and show their feelings about contemporary cultural norms that “Austen invites us alternatively to sympathize with or judge” (4).

The essays highlight a variety of Regency-era fine, decorative, and performing arts. Peter Sabor argues that portraits often defy expectations about their significance to Austen’s characters and readers. Jocelyn Harris explores how Austen might have appreciated the social satire of caricaturists such as James Gillray and Charles Williams. Tonya J. Moutray finds parallels in the treatment of abbeys by Austen and William Gilpin in that they both focus on the buildings’ aesthetic virtues instead of referencing religion or politics. Natasha Duquette equates Fanny Price’s amber-colored cross to her simple elegance and moral virtue. In what I found to be the publication’s most enlightening essay, Juliette Wells uses art-history theories to explain the power dynamics between Emma Woodhouse as portrait artist and Harriet Smith as sitter.

The contributing authors disagree somewhat about the extent to which the arts influenced Austen’s oeuvre and the motivations of her characters. In her excellent essay on the “artless” heroines (44) Catherine Morland and Fanny Price, Elaine Bander demonstrates that Austen asks her readers to refrain from equating aesthetic excellence with moral good. However, Linda Zionkowski and Miriam Hart believe that characters who decide against the serious study and performance of music have a deficiency in introspection and self-development. Although Cheryl Wilson identifies an increasing focus on female physicality in Austen’s work and in ballets and other staged dance pieces of her era, Deborah C. Payne brilliantly asks readers to question the assumption that Austen’s pleasure in amateur and professional theatrical performances led to that art form exerting any real artistic influence on her work. Payne points



out that the author decided at a young age to abandon playwriting because it did not offer her “narrative control and psychological interiority” (77).

Battigelli’s introduction explains that an examination of artifacts has been included in the publication due to the era’s “increasing association between amateur artists and consumer activity” (9). Barbara M. Benedict sees parallels in the ways that Alexander Pope and Austen contrast the vulgarity of consumable goods, including decorative arts, with their characters’ rich interior lives. In examining the marginalia in copies of books that Austen read, Marilyn Francus shows that a deep engagement with text ran in the Austen family. The inclusion of artifacts as a concept leads to the presence of an essay that feels out of place in the publication: Nancy E. Johnson deals with the baronetage and navy list in *Persuasion* as legal artifacts rather than in any way connected to the arts.

The only other disappointment is a general lack of illustrations, with only 20 black-and-white images. Still, these thought-provoking essays could not have been published at a more opportune time for JASNA members as we prepare for the 2021 AGM in Chicago with the theme “Jane Austen in the Arts.”

Art historian Kristen Miller Zohn is RC of the Georgia Region, a JASNA board member and Life Member. She has published articles about Austen and the visual arts in Persuasions and Persuasions On-Line. She is executive director of the Costume Society of America and serves as curator for the Lauren Rogers Museum of Art in Laurel, Mississippi.

LOVE AND LOSS AND HUMAN CONNECTIONS

The Jane Austen Society: A Novel

By Natalie Jenner
St. Martin’s Press (2020), 304 pages
Hardcover, \$26.99

Review by Lynda Hall

The Jane Austen Society, as the subtitle indicates, is a novel. As Jenner explains in her “Historical Note,” “The people and events described in this book are completely fictional and imaginary; the places are not” (305).

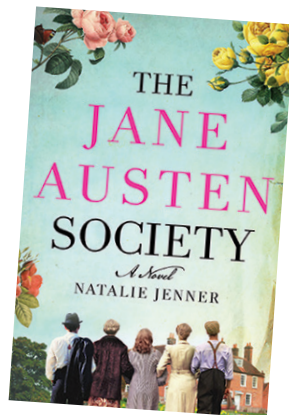
If you are looking for the real history of the Jane Austen Society, go to the society's website. If you want the real history of the Knight family, read *Jane & Me* by Caroline Jane Knight. But if you want to indulge in a heartwarming story with characters who love to read and reread Austen novels while mirroring some of the characters and plots of those stories, then this is your book.

Jenner begins her tale in 1932 with a chance encounter between a young Chawton farmer and an American actress on a quest to find some trace of her favorite author in the small Hampshire village. The story then jumps to 1943 when we meet the village doctor and a school-teacher with a penchant for introducing female authors to her students—a practice that does not sit well with the local school board. What follows is a story about love and loss after two world wars and the human connections that can be strengthened through reading and rereading Jane Austen.

As the narrator explains in chapter 4, "Part of the comfort they derived from rereading was the satisfaction of knowing there would be closure—of feeling, each time, an inexplicable anxiety over whether the main characters would find love and happiness, while all the while knowing, on some different parallel interior track, that it was all going to work out in the end."

The eight fictional characters who come together to preserve the home of their favorite author also work to save each other from loss and loneliness.

Lynda Hall is associate professor of English at Chapman University in Orange, California. A JASNA member for more than 30 years, she has presented at several AGMs, has had several papers published in Persuasions On-Line, and is author of Women and "Value" in Jane Austen's Novels (Palgrave 2017).



He wrote the book (dialogue and stage directions), music, and lyrics, and this production excels in all three areas.

The book is faithful to the novel, partially because much of the dialogue uses Austen's own words. By eliminating most of the minor characters, Gordon is able to omit numerous scenes and conflate others, allowing him to focus on the essential elements. Everything moves quickly without leaving out any important narrative.

Gordon freely uses multiple genres of popular music to great effect. One critic described the music as "veering from a lush orchestral sound to that of a '90s alt-rock band, maybe à la the Gin Blossoms or Blues Traveler." Gordon skillfully reprises the same tunes to mark the changes in Darcy's and Elizabeth's opinions of each other, with the lyrics shifting at each reappearance. The lyrics are both intelligent and unpredictable.

It's the songs that keep me coming back to rewatch this musical. The show is filled with gems but my favorite is probably Elizabeth's musical rejection of Mr. Collins, "Last Woman on Earth." This upbeat song cuts Mr. Collins off at the knees.

The cast is uniformly strong. Any *Pride and Prejudice* adaptation must have an Elizabeth Bennet with whom the audience can identify, and Mary Mattison proves to be a great Lizzy. Mattison's acting and singing are outstanding, and her charismatic energy dominates every scene in which she appears. She is now, in fact, my favorite Elizabeth in any adaptation.

The musical is so good that I recommend purchase because it allows unlimited views online.

Patrick McGraw is a JASNA Life Member and co-RC of the Central Missouri Region.

WORTHY OF REPEAT VIEWING

Pride & Prejudice: A New Musical

By Paul Gordon
streamingmusicals.com (2020)
Rental, \$4.99/purchase, \$19.99

Review by Patrick McGraw

On April 10, Streaming Musicals hosted the virtual opening night of a filmed version of Paul Gordon's musical adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. Gordon previously turned *Sense and Sensibility* and *Emma* into musicals, and this new show is his best yet.



The winner of the drawing for a free copy of Miss Austen by Gill Hornby is Bethany Planton of the Greater Louisville Region.



International News

Happy 80th Birthday, Jane Austen Society!

We join the Jane Austen Society (JAS) in celebrating the foresight of its founder, Dorothy Darnell, who met on May 29, 1940, in Alton, Hampshire, with her sisters Elizabeth and Beatrix, Mr. and Mrs. Curtis, Elizabeth Jenkins, and Dr. Marjorie Sanders to form the Jane Austen Society and purchase and preserve Chawton Cottage.

World War II postponed this effort until December 1947, when an appeal was placed in *The Times*. A total of £558 of the £3,000 needed was raised, including more than £100 from the United States as a result of a “Boston Tea Party” held by a Mrs. Koch. Thomas Edward Carpenter, whose wife was a devoted Janeite, purchased the cottage in memory of his son, Phillip, who had been killed leading his regiment in Italy in 1944.

Being in private ownership, the house had to be placed in a separate trust run by JAS committee members, with the mission of managing the house and garden. The house opened to the public in 1949 and JAS held its first Annual General Meeting in July 1950.

By 1955, expanding administrative and financial management duties dictated that the house should be overseen by a set of trustees, separate from the society, which continued to run as a literary charitable organization. Over the years, JAS collected Austen artifacts, such as Jane and Cassandra’s topaz crosses and gold chains, Jane’s writing table, and the family patchwork quilt. JAS lent them to Chawton Cottage for preservation and presentation, but ownership remained with the society.

Chawton Cottage is now an accredited museum under UK charitable regulations. To celebrate that milestone, the house organization’s 70th birthday, and JAS’s 80th birthday, the society transferred ownership of the artifacts to Chawton Cottage to ensure their long-term safety and preservation for future generations.

On behalf of JASNA, I sent birthday wishes to JAS during its Annual General Meeting, which was held virtually on July 11. I congratulated them on all their efforts over the last 80 years to preserve Jane Austen’s house and promote the appreciation and study of her life, work, times, family, and legacy.

To commemorate its 80th anniversary, JAS has published past issues of its annual reports (1949 to 2018) through the University of Southampton’s Internet Archives. For more about the project and the wealth of information now available online, visit janeaustensoci.freeuk.com/pages/annual_reports.htm

JAS has inspired a network of Jane Austen societies all around the world that share a wonderful sense of community. JASNA has a special kinship with JAS. Our own founders met at a JAS Annual General Meeting and were inspired to create a society for Austen admirers across the pond. Just last year we celebrated JASNA’s 40th birthday. I have to say, I think we have both aged brilliantly.

Everyone in JASNA joins me in wishing JAS a wonderful 80th birthday. Many happy and healthy returns of the day, and we look forward to the next 80 years.

—Liz Philosophos Cooper, JASNA President



Jane Austen’s House has launched an emergency appeal to secure its future. The museum is at risk of closure because of the pandemic as it receives no public funding and is dependent on visitors and supporters. To help, go to the JASNA member portal and select “donate to JASNA or the English institutions.”



IN THE GARDEN WITH JANE AUSTEN

Since we can't travel to Hampshire this year, the next best thing is to virtually explore grounds that were well-known to Jane Austen—the gardens surrounding her brother Edward Austen Knight's manor house in Chawton. North American Friends of Chawton House, including numerous JASNA regions and members, participated in a fundraising effort to support Chawton House's ongoing work to foster greater understanding of early women writers.

Follow in Austen's footsteps along the Jane Austen Garden Trail, a walking route with signs at iconic spots throughout the grounds featuring quotes by the author. The signs are erected on wooden plinths made from trees sourced from the estate and were prepared and placed by Paul and Jeremy Knight, descendants of Edward Austen Knight. The garden trail opened in spring 2019. Check out a video of the trail at tinyurl.com/y2x9x6xv

Photos are courtesy of Clío O'Sullivan, Chawton House communications and public engagement manager.



*"I will not say
that your mulberry
trees are dead,
but I am afraid
they are not alive."*

—Jane Austen to her sister,
Cassandra (31 May 1811)



Named plaques along the Jane Austen Garden Trail

- 1 Lime Avenue—Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Region
- 2 Game Keeper's Hut/Gypsy Camp—South Oregon and Oregon/Southwest Washington regions
- 3 Shrubbery Walk—Jeanne Talbot and Erna Arnesen
- 4 Mulberry Trees—Janine Barchas
- 5 Rose Garden—Eastern Pennsylvania Region
- 6 Strawberry Beds—Elizabeth Steele and Jennifer Winski
- 7 Orchard Fruit Trees—Joan and Bill Doyle
- 8 Approach to House/Driveway—Gina Heath King
- 9 View to the Church—Greater Louisville Region
- 10 Pride and Prejudice Rose Walk—Southwest Region
- 11 Herb Garden—Wisconsin Region
- 12 Wilderness—JASNA Canada
- 13 Serpentine Path—Paul Savidge and Daniel Macey
- 14 Library Terrace—North Texas Region, honoring Rosalie Sternberg, founder
- 15 Upper Terrace—Vermont Region
- 16 Fernery/Shady Dell—San Diego Region, in memory of Paula Tupper
- 17 Walnut Tree—Debbie and Skip McNeil
- 18 South Lawn—Jane Austen Society of Australia
- 19 Ha-Ha—New York Metro Region
- 20 Parkland Views—Rebecca and Joann Weersing



"The girl who could be gratified by a Robert Martin's riding about the country to get walnuts for her might very well be conquered by Mr. Elton's admiration."

—Emma



Member Profiles

Our member profile section is a regular feature in JASNA News. With 5,000+ members, not every submitted profile can be published, but we will do our best to include as many interested members as possible. You may nominate yourself or another member at any time. Responses may be edited for length, style, and format. For more information, email JASNA News Editor Susie Wampler at jasnaneeds@gmail.com.

LAURA HANSEN

Wisconsin



When did you first discover Jane Austen?

My first exposure to Jane Austen was at age 10, when I was invited to a friend's house to watch *Northanger Abbey*, the 1987 adaptation. It became our obsession and we watched it many times together over the next few years.

What do you love most about Austen?

I love the escape. Her novels are beautiful in so many ways, and escaping into her world is something I treasure.

Member since: 2017

What do you enjoy most about JASNA? I love our local Madison book club meetings. We have tea and treats and discuss three books each year. It has been so lovely to get to know local members this way.

Tell us about your involvement in JASNA. I have three young kids and don't get out much, so I have been to only a couple of regional lunches and most of the local book clubs. I hope to someday attend an AGM.

Background: I was a stay-at-home mom for eight years until this past June when I returned to working full time as a professional engineer. During those years at home, I became a soap maker but never had any interest in going into business until I hit upon the idea of making Austen-inspired soap. Suddenly it was irresistible and exciting, as I could combine my two passions. I have operated *Northanger Soapworks* for the past three years.

Other passions/interests: I love soap making. It began as a needed mental outlet when I had depression after birthing my second child, and applying myself to the rather complicated art

form was stimulating in many ways. When time permits, I am a voracious reader of fiction and have recently discovered the delights of *Pride and Prejudice* variations. I read nearly 40 of them in the three months leading up to my new job start.

Favorite Austen work/character: I have to choose *Northanger Abbey* for sentimental reasons, and Henry Tilney because he's the perfect man. He's witty, clever, and loves to dance.

Other favorite authors/genres: I love reading classics, fantasy, historical fiction, and romance. My favorite book is *Middlemarch* by George Eliot.

What are you reading now? I just finished *All We Ever Wanted* by Emily Giffin and am about to start *Lovely War* by Julie Berry.

Fun facts: My third child is named after Henry Tilney. I read all of Austen's works by the time I was 16, as well as the Ann Radcliffe novel *Catherine Morland* is obsessed with: *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.

BETTYE DEW

Metropolitan St. Louis



When did you first discover Jane Austen?

Not until my college years in the 1960s did I read Jane Austen. I wish I could say my first Austen novel, *Sense and Sensibility*, hooked me immediately, but it took nearly

another decade and a period of relative tranquility for me to begin to read and appreciate the rest of the six novels.

What do you love most about Austen? The dialogue gets me every time. When Austen's characters speak, the reader learns so much about them.

Austen was a genius at developing characters through their conversations or, sometimes, monologues. Their most revealing action is opening their mouths.

Member since: 1980

What do you enjoy most about JASNA? It is a joy to be with others who know and love the novels as I do and who debate the strengths and weaknesses of Austen's characters as if they were real people. I have made wonderful friends in JASNA.

Tell us about your involvement in JASNA. I joined the year our St. Louis Region was founded and soon began hosting. I have frequently served as program chair for our region. Not only did Austen leave us six novels full of rich material, but she also came from a large, close-knit family, lived in interesting times, and masterfully evoked a sense of place. All this creates wide-ranging possibilities for topics. It has been especially fun for me to write and coordinate a readers' theater presentation for our December birthday luncheons.

The first AGM I attended was in Philadelphia in 1983. In JASNA's earliest years, AGMs were comparatively simple, featuring plenary sessions with a lineup of speakers. As program chair of the 1984 AGM, I added breakout sessions, which immediately became an indispensable feature. With *Persuasion* as our topic, we attracted the largest AGM attendance up to that time: 200 people.

Background: I am retired, but I worked as an editor, taught English in high school and community college, and taught ESL at Webster University. It has also been my pleasure to lead classes on Austen novels at Washington University's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

Other passions/interests: I am editor of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute's newsletter. I also take classes there and lead a writing class on creative nonfiction.

Favorite Austen work/character: My favorite book is *Emma*, with Mrs. Elton being the character I love to hate. *Northanger Abbey* may be second; I enjoy the interplay of Henry Tilney's irony and Catherine Morland's guilelessness.

Other favorite authors/genres: I belong to a book club that reads only writers from the 19th century. Although English-language writers dominate, our scope is international. My favorites include Elizabeth Gaskell, Anthony Trollope, and Anton Chekhov.

What are you reading now? *The Semi-Detached House* by Emily Eden and *Afterlife* by Julia Alvarez

Fun facts: In 1986 and '87, I served as editor of the first four editions of *JASNA News*, with Harriett Gray (also from our region)

doing the layout. Nowadays, those early editions look quaint but, with a budget of zero, Harriett and I did our best at a time before computers revolutionized publishing. *JASNA News* has come a long way.

AYANA OLATUNJI

Louisiana



When did you first discover Jane Austen?

Kindergarten! My mother let me watch the movie adaptations with her when I was home sick, and I couldn't wait to learn to read the books.

What do you love most about Austen?

How witty her novels are. You have to really read between the lines to know whether a character is being admired or mocked. Sometimes it's both.

Member since: Spring 2020

What do you enjoy most about JASNA?

I love that it's such a broad range of people with so many different reasons for enjoying Austen's works, life, and era in history. I love hearing all the different and interesting perspectives centered around her writing and times.

Tell us about your involvement in JASNA.

I only recently joined JASNA, but am excited to be serving on the newly created diversity committee.

Background: I currently have an administrative role at a university English department and was previously a middle and high school English teacher. I also write fiction and am hoping to come out of this pandemic with my first book on the way.

Other passions/interests: Recently, I've taken up historical costuming and have an active social media and blogging presence (@thevintageguide-book) with a community of followers who likewise appreciate the Regency period. These days, each time I read what a character is wearing, I can only

think of the painstaking hours of sewing by hand it would have taken to create it!

Favorite Austen work/character: *Emma* is hands down my favorite of Austen's novels; I think it's a funny but poignant look at the wealthy and would-be wealthy classes. Also, it's genius how Austen makes an endearing protagonist out of a character who is as spoiled and oblivious as Emma can be at times.

Other favorite authors/genres: Almost any historical fiction is my weak spot.

What are you reading now? *A Song of Ice and Fire: A Game of Thrones* (Yes, that Game of Thrones) by George R. R. Martin

Fun facts: On the agenda for my first post-pandemic activity is hosting an Austen-themed tea. Costumed, of course.

BOB NEWELL

Hawaii



When did you first discover Jane Austen?

I discovered Jane Austen as an early teen. I had seen a play of *Pride and Prejudice* and then read the book. It was a huge influence on me and my whole approach to dating and relationships. I spent years looking for an Elizabeth (not realizing that I was hardly a Darcy).

What do you love most about Austen? Her insights into human character and her keen, sharp, and sarcastic wit. Her intelligence and character shine in every line.

Member since: 2012, I think

What do you enjoy most about JASNA? I love the opportunity to share my Janeite passion with others of like mind. Being a Janeite is something that non-Janeites just don't get. In JASNA, everyone gets it and it's wonderful.

Tell us about your involvement in JASNA. When I joined JASNA, Hawaii literally wasn't on the map—not only was there no regional group but the state wasn't even listed on the JASNA website. I started corresponding with Deborah Yaffe (author of *Among the Janeites*), who suggested that I ought to start a Hawaii Region. I've been RC since our founding in 2013, and I'll step aside at the end of 2021. We've tripled our membership since those first days and, although we're still a tiny region, we are active and thriving. We especially like to welcome mainland JASNA visitors.

Background: I'm an MIT electrical engineer by background, now retired, and worked in that field and others during a long career. I've done a lot of things on the side, including running a recording studio. My family consists of five children and seven grandchildren.

Other passions/interests: I've published a couple of Austen fan-fiction novels, as well as a wide variety of other fiction. I'm a checkers and chess enthusiast. For more than 15 years, I've published the blog checkermaven.com. I'm tournament director for the Hawaii Chess Federation. I play jazz guitar (poorly) and do daily Talmud study. I'm a crossword fan and opera lover. At the University of Hawaii, I've studied theoretical mathematics and various languages such as Hawaiian and Hindi. I have far too many interests and never enough hours in the day.

Favorite Austen work/character: My favorite novel is *Emma*, perhaps because it has a theme of growth and redemption. *Pride and Prejudice* would be next. My favorite character without a doubt is Elizabeth Bennet. She seems to represent the ideal: intelligent, witty, independent, and fun to be around. Beauty is there, too, but that's far down on my list.

Other favorite authors: In addition to Austen fan fiction, I love sci-fi and authors such as Peter Hamilton. I've always liked classics like Hardy and Eliot. In French, I'm partial to the work of Henri Troyat and, in German, I like Thomas Mann and Günter Grass. One day I'd like to see Austen translated into Hawaiian but I'm not the one to do it.

What are you reading now? I always read several things at once. I'm reading Pamela Aidan's Darcy trilogy and a novel set during the American Revolution. And I'm into one of the French classics, Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*.

Fun facts: Being a Janeite suits my iconoclastic nature. As a male fan, I was often subjected to questioning looks. But the more of that I got, the more my resolve increased. What would life be without Austen?

JENNIFER WEINBRECHT, BETH DEAN, AND AMY PATTERSON

Ohio North Coast

Cassandra Shofar



Sisters Amy Patterson and Beth Dean with mom Jennifer Weinbrecht

When did you first discover Jane Austen?

Jennifer: At around age 11, I read *Pride and Prejudice*, which I had put off for a while because the Brock illustrations looked girly to me. I was into pirates and adventures. I immediately read *P&P* again and kept returning to it during my teen years. I gradually moved on to the other novels, then in my 20s, to biographies, letters, and Austen lit crit. When Beth and

Amy were little girls, I used to read to them almost every night—pirate and adventure stories and also *Pride and Prejudice*, the first time when they were around 6 and 4. They probably had no choice but to become Janeites.

What do you love most about Austen?

Jennifer: Her portrayal of strong women

Beth: Her insight into human nature and different personalities, and her ability to point out human foibles with a sense of humor

Amy: The way her books are like those novelty sequined shirts that say secret messages if you rub them the wrong direction. Layers upon layers of meaning, references to private jokes and obscure novels. People who read only for history or romance sometimes miss the snark, the political commentary, or the bold feminist undertones.

Member since:

Jennifer: 1995

Beth: 2008

Amy: 2007

What do you enjoy most about JASNA?

Jennifer: Finding out about this bigger world of people who love my favorite author. Getting to know Austen scholars whose names were on my bookshelf for years! JASNA also led to our discovery of Jane Austen Books at the AGM emporium and, eventually, to our taking over the bookstore in 2008 when Pat Latkin was ready to sell it. It's wonderful to have a family business that we love so much, where my daughters and grandkids can get involved.

Beth: Learning about all the different types of people from different backgrounds who love Austen

Amy: JASNA is a part of my extended family. We all speak a certain language to each other and, even though we come from different

backgrounds and worldviews, there is a shared sense of needing to preserve and promote Austen's genius.

Tell us about your involvement in JASNA.

Jennifer: I've been RC for our region. Amy and I are Cleveland AGM co-coordinators.

Beth: I've gone to meetings since I was a kid. I've grown from being a tagalong to going to every AGM, working in the bookstore, and making lots of JASNA friends from all over the world.

Amy: I've served on our region's programming committee for many years. In addition to co-coordinating the Cleveland AGM, I've presented programs to our region and been invited as a guest speaker at others.

Background:

Jennifer: I've spent most of my life working for an entrepreneurial company that repairs turbine-engine parts for all the major airlines, in quality and regulatory compliance.

Beth: I am a licensed mental health counselor but these days spend most of my time raising two avid readers who, like me, have no choice but to be Janeites.

Amy: I'm a journalist and writer, covering politics and education as well as local news. I have two little boys who humor me by, every now and then, dressing up and dancing at AGMs.

Other passions/interests:

Jennifer: I like to hang out with my grandkids and take them to the Cleveland museums. Art museums are my favorite institutions (after JASNA).

Beth: I enjoy traveling, especially to England to visit family there, and passing on to my kids my love of music and crafting.

Amy: I knit, quite badly. I play the piano, moderately well. I cook and bake, most excellently.

Favorite Austen work/character:

Jennifer: Probably Elizabeth Bennet. But the Beautifull Cassandra is a pretty amazing young lady—probably my runner-up.

Beth: Austen's characters feel like part of my extended family. It's hard to pick a favorite. *P&P*

reminds me of reading it with my mom and sister when I was little.

Amy: I love characters like Anne Steele and Mrs. Norris, who are so vividly drawn that we feel like we've met these people in real life. I am also firmly on #TeamTilney.

Other favorite authors/genres:

Jennifer: Science, anthropology, history, science fiction

Beth: Edward Gorey, young adult novels

Amy: Besides Austen (and related works), I enjoy reading science fiction but, as I'm a "policy nerd," I mostly read nonfiction political and history books.

What are you reading now?

Jennifer: *Becoming the Gentleman: British Literature and the Invention of Modern Masculinity, 1660-1815* by Jason D. Solinger

Beth: I'm reading *The Collectors* by Jacqueline West with my kids.

Amy: *The Man Without a Face: The Unlikely Rise of Vladimir Putin* by Masha Gessen

Fun facts:

Jennifer: On our family vacation to the UK in 1996, we visited Jane Austen sites in Winchester and Chawton on our first day. I had set up a B&B reservation in the village of Lacock based on its location. I had a hard time convincing my husband that I had no idea that it was the filming location for Meryton in the 1995 BBC *P&P* miniseries!

Beth: I have been crocheting Jane Austen dolls for our region's fundraisers. My daughter, Izzy, was Austen for her third-grade wax museum project.

Amy: I've snuck inside Godmersham House, been chased off the front lawn of James Austen's first home, and eaten pizza inside the Austen lodgings along the seacoast in Worthing.

NILI OLAY AND JERRY VETOWICH

Florida Southwest



When did you first discover Jane Austen?

Nili: I was assigned to read *Pride and Prejudice* as a freshman at the University of Chicago. It was love at first sight.

Jerry: Nili and I read to each other while driving in the car. When it was her turn to choose the book, she chose *Pride and Prejudice*. That was about 40 years ago.

What do you love most about Austen?

Nili: Her characters become so real to me. I love the humor and use of words as well.

Jerry: I love the poetry of the words and sentences.

Members since: 1985

What do you enjoy most about JASNA?

Nili: Meeting with friends, dancing, and delving deeper into the books and the period

Jerry: Meeting friends at the events

Tell us about your involvement in JASNA.

Nili was JASNA treasurer and assistant treasurer for many years. She is still on the JASNA Finance Committee. We have both been active in the New York Metropolitan Region for 35 years. We were RCs from 2007 to 2011, ran the 2012 AGM in Brooklyn, and were key committee members for the 2003 AGM in Winchester, England. Jerry was responsible for setting up and maintaining our region's website. Since we moved to Naples, Florida, in 2015, we were instrumental in starting the Southwest Florida Region. Jerry is the current RC and webmaster.

Background: Nili is an accountant and retired from RJR Nabisco as assistant treasurer in 2000. Jerry is a retired IT professional.

Other passions/interests: Nili plays the piano and harp and loves to knit and read. Jerry plays the bassoon, sings barbershop, and sails. Both of us love to travel. We have been to more than 80 countries.

Favorite Austen work/character:

Nili: *Pride and Prejudice* with *Persuasion* a close second. I love Lizzy but am more of an Elinor.

Jerry: *Persuasion* and Captain Wentworth

Other favorite authors/genres:

Nili: I love the classics. My runner-up favorite author is L. M. Montgomery. I love Georgette Heyer, Trollope, and the Brontës, and classic mysteries by Agatha Christie and Robert B. Parker.

continued on page 23

Regional News

CANADA

Alberta, Edmonton

In September, Nora Foster Stovel previewed her 2019 AGM paper on *Northanger Abbey*. She explained that Regency country-dance patterns and steps foretell courtship and marriage, as film clips from Andrew Davies' 2007 adaptation demonstrate. Our October talk, "Fallen Pride: What Lizzy and Darcy Got Up to in *Pride and Prejudice*," included humorously illustrated readings, arranged by Beatrice Nearey, of the 26 significant events that occur in the novel during autumn—from the seeds of Lizzy and Darcy's acquaintanceship and misunderstandings the first year to the following fall when, spoiler alert, they marry. In November, Vici Wynn presented "Christmas in the City," another of her illustrated and informative themed "walks" around London, featuring information on Austen and Dickens' Scrooge.

In December, some members attended and helped out at Juliet McMaster's fascinating talk on Austen's juvenilia, presented to a community group. Afterward, our elegant Regency-garbed crew cleaned up. At our annual tea in January, McMaster gave an overview of JASNA history and Wynn, along with Bridget and Andy Toms, performed a humorous skit: "The Collins-Lucas Match: The Sportscast," authored by Nearey. Our February get-together again featured Wynn. Her presentation, "If Jane ran away to London ..." was based on a letter in which Austen wrote that her family was worried she would run away to London to walk around the hospitals, enter the temple, and see the guards at St. James's Palace.

British Columbia, Vancouver

Our last in-person meeting, held in February, was a panel discussion on the topic "She Said 'Yes.'" The discussion centered on two



Liane Chen, Megan Barker, Jayne Laviege, Joan Reynolds, Keiko Parker, Michelle Siu, Elaine Wong, and Maureen Williams at the *Emma* screening

controversial marriages—Charlotte Lucas and Mr. Collins, and Jane Fairfax and Frank Churchill. Each of the four speakers either defended or opposed one of the matches. In late February, a group of members saw the new film version of *Emma*. We have since held three well-attended virtual meetings. In April, we watched a video of Devoney Looser's entertaining and erudite presentation "The Words and Wisdom of *Northanger Abbey*," from the Williamsburg AGM. Our May meeting featured a talk by Nicky Didicher, University Lecturer in the English Department at Simon Fraser University, on "Jane Austen's Songbooks." At our June meeting, we viewed a video of James Nagle's breakout session on "The Importance of the British Army" in Austen's lifetime, family, and fiction, followed by an extended Q&A session. Also attending was JASNA President Liz Philosophos Cooper.

Ontario, London

In February, poet and fiction writer Robyn Marie Butt gave an entertaining talk, "*Emma* Considered as a Detective Story." Butt creatively incorporated a live, informal reading of *Emma* into her presentation, using several of our members. Much of the talk was taken from a 1988 address to the Jane Austen Society by mystery writer P. D. James. Our photo-illustrated newsletter, *Jane Austen eNotes*, now in its 16th year, is edited by Sandra Safran. A recent highlight was a feature on the online exhibit A Woman's Wit: Jane Austen's



About 40 members, including some from other regions, attended the Vancouver Region's June Zoom meeting.

Life and Legacy at themorgan.org/collection/a-womans-wit-jane-austen. It includes a scholarly 15-minute video, images of Austen's drafts and letters, original manuscripts, and commentary. May marked the 20th anniversary of our region, launched through the enthusiasm of Eileen McCurdy, then a ninth-grader and avid Janeite.



Sandra Safran

UNITED STATES

Alabama

In December, we celebrated Austen's birthday with a luncheon that included traditional dishes such as Christmas pudding, Regent's punch (crafted by our host, Bill Crowe), and trifle. Each guest who contributed to the feast discussed the dish's history and recipe. In February, Katharine Armbruster gave a presentation on art in Austen's time, with an emphasis on female artists. The presentation included a discussion on handwork and needlework as well as paintings. In April, we launched our book club via Zoom.

California, Greater Sacramento

This spring, we gathered online to discuss *Emma* and *Sense and Sensibility*. We also read Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*, which some think was partly inspired by *Pride and Prejudice*. Joy Prevost also employed Zoom for our Movie Fan Club. We watched and discussed the *North and South* miniseries, *From Prada to Nada*, and *Jane Austen in Manhattan*.

California, San Diego

We reprised two previous in-person presentations for an online audience: In April, RC and wine educator Alisa Shorago revisited her talk on port; in May, J.J. Springer again focused on tea in the Regency era, with members sipping tea in the comfort of their homes while discussing everything from the Austens' tea set to the East India Company as well as where to buy great tea in San Diego. In June, a new virtual presentation hosted by Jeanne Talbot, "Juvenilia in June," featured staged readings from Austen's early works. These writings were designed to be performed



Greater Sacramento Region's summer reading picks



Jeanne Talbot leading the "Juvenilia in June" presentation

among family and friends, and we kept that tradition alive. One can imagine a young Jane Austen laughing out loud as she wrote some of these delightful works.

California, Southwest

Our third annual Young Filmmakers Contest is well underway. The contest is open to all amateur filmmakers in North America under age 30. We are excited to announce this year's judges:

- Ashley Clements of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, who is starring in and producing *A Tale Told by an Idiot*, a modern adaptation of *Macbeth*
- Laurie Viera Rigler, author of *Confessions of a Jane Austen Addict* and its sequel, and creator of the Babelgum web series *Sex and the Austen Girl*
- Thomas Rigler, Emmy-winning director, executive producer, and showrunner
- Robin Swicord, director and screenwriter of *The Jane Austen Book Club*
- Kenneth Turan, longtime (recently retired) film critic for the *Los Angeles Times*
- Aydrea Walden, writer/producer/actor and creator of the Webby-nominated *Black Girl in a Big Dress*



Clockwise: Ashley Clements, Laurie Viera Rigler, Robin Swicord, Aydrea Walden, Kenneth Turan, and Thomas Rigler

For information on upcoming regional events, visit jasna.org/conferences-events/event-calendar.

Submissions from Austen enthusiasts in high school, college, and graduate school are especially welcome. Cash prizes and adulation await the top three original shorts of five minutes or less. Deadline for entries is October 30, 2020. We encourage all regions to share this info with anyone you think would be interested, especially among high school and college film and English teachers and students. Details, entry forms, and videos from past winners are available at jasnasw.com/young-filmmakers-contest or email youngfilm@jasnasw.org

Colorado, Denver/Boulder

We met via Zoom in April to discuss Austen's juvenilia. Several members made presentations about select stories, sharing with the group the context of their chosen story and the ways that it revealed Austen's early talent as a writer. A discussion of the merits and disappointments of the latest adaptation of *Emma* ensued. Members shared information on films, books, virtual presentations, and other diversions they are indulging in during this time of physical distancing.

Florida, Southwest

We held our second Zoom meeting in May, with Sarah Rose Kearns and Laura Rocklyn reading Kearns' play *Manydown*. *Manydown* Park was the home of Austen's friends the Bigg-Withers. This engrossing play follows Jane and Cassandra's conversation the evening after Jane receives a proposal from Harris Bigg-Wither. We were at the edge of our seats, even though we knew the outcome. The reading was followed by a Q&A and discussion among the 18 participants. Kearns' stage adaptation of *Persuasion*—directed by Eric Tucker for his company Bedlam—was slated for an off-Broadway debut this year (janeaustenspersuasion.com). Kearns has been selected as JASNA's 2021 International Visitor to Chawton, where she plans to conduct research for another biographical play about the Austen sisters.



Southwest Florida's May Zoom meeting

Georgia

In May, we took our juvenilia discussion online for our first virtual meeting. Twenty-four members joined in as we discussed "Catherine, or The Bower" and "The History of England." In June, we participated in the San Diego Region's virtual "Juvenilia in June" event.

In July, we attended the Greater Louisville Region's virtual Jane Austen Festival, watching the two sessions in which our very own Soniah Kamal spoke and taking part in the Q&A sessions that followed.



An illustration by Cassandra Austen in her sister's "The History of England"

Hawaii

We held our annual Belated Birthday Tea in February at Orchids in the Halekulani, in Waikiki. We played a lively round of Jane Austen volleyball and awarded thematic door prizes. A member from the neighbor island of Kaua'i flew over for the gathering. In May, we gathered virtually to discuss the many and varied editions of *Sanditon*, from the original fragment to the recent miniseries.



The Hawaii Region's Zoom meeting on *Sanditon*; Belated Birthday Tea

Indiana

In June, we conducted our Box Hill picnic via Zoom.

Iowa

In January, a few of our members, some in costume, attended an Iowa PBS screening of the first episode of the *Sanditon* miniseries. Also that month, we considered Austen's fragment in relation to the adaptation. In February, we discussed *Camp Austen: My Life as an Accidental Jane Austen Superfan* by Ted Scheinman. As our overarching theme for 2020 is the juvenilia, we paid particular attention to what the book had to say about Austen's early work. In March, RC Allison Petersen and Jessica Bishop made a joint presentation on childhood during the Georgian and Regency eras. Topics included clothing, family life, education, and entertainment, with references from Austen's life—through her letters and biographies—and from her novels. In May, our first virtual meeting dove into the juvenilia's *Volume the First*, with Twila Glenn leading a discussion of "Jack and Alice." She also read from "The Beautifull Cassandra." Our June meeting focused on *Volume the Second*, with Penny Rittgers guiding us through the delights of "Love and Freindship" and Sarah Macht conducting us on a trip through "The History of England."

Maryland

For our birthday meeting, our presenter was Maggie C. Sullivan, author of *The Jane Austen Handbook* and *Jane Austen Cover to Cover*. In March, we helped host Hilary Davidson as she gave a talk on "Dress in the Age of Jane Austen: Regency Fashion" at Goucher College. We sponsored a Regency dress for the Maryland Historical Society's Spectrum of Fashion exhibition. In May, we reviewed the latest *Emma* film in a Zoom meeting. And in June, also via Zoom, we learned how to dress like Austen and how to make a reticule.



Maryland RC Rita Baker-Schmidt at the Spectrum of Fashion exhibition

Massachusetts

In May, Marcia Folsom, professor emerita of literature at Wheelock College, gave a virtual talk on "The Implicit Dramas of *Northanger Abbey*." Her paper, written with her colleague John Wiltshire, argues that two threads of meaning run throughout the novel. One follows the love developing between Catherine Morland and Henry Tilney, while the other shows the self-centered ambition of General Tilney and Isabella and John Thorpe. Folsom's talk gave us a new appreciation of the novel. The full paper can be read in *Persuasions On-Line*, No. 41.



Marcia Folsom

Mississippi

Well before the lockdown, we gathered to see the new *Emma* adaptation at the cinema and shared our mixed reactions afterward.



Back row: Beth Graham, Laura Flint, Hunter Newell, Jan Taylor, Carla Wall, Mississippi RC Carolyn Brown, Brenda Ware Jones, and Wes Saylor; front row: Emma Lewis, Linda Thompson, Nancy Rivas, and Carole McKellar

Missouri, Metropolitan St. Louis

For our June meeting, via Zoom, many members showed up online in their Regency finery or customized a background for the occasion. Members Kay Thurman, Bettye Dew, Rose Nester, Charlotte Ellis, Karen Daues, Phyllis Thorpe, Amanda Rosen, Dixie Franklin, Amber Crafton, and Cheryl Hassenstab prepared dramatic—and highly comic—readings highlighting Austen's juvenilia: the famous, the infamous, and the obscure!

Nebraska

Following our Zoom meetings in the spring, we were able to meet in person in July at an Omaha city park, employing physical distancing to keep members safe. Laura Vranes, an Omaha school librarian, told us that she won an opportunity to be featured as a character in a new novel—*Undoing*, by L. L. Diamond—thanks to a donation she made to an Austen Variations fundraiser. Vranes' and her husband's passion for collecting art gave the author inspiration for the character.



Laura Vranes

New Jersey

Our spring book discussions, held via Zoom, drew better-than-usual attendance. In May, we discussed Lucy Worsley's 2017 biography *Jane Austen at Home*, and in June we discussed *Northanger Abbey*.

New York, Capital

In December, we held our annual celebration of Austen's birthday at the Inn at Saratoga, a Victorian hotel in Saratoga Springs. Participants enjoyed high tea, a fashion show of Regency attire, a raffle for Austen-related items, and a group reading of reviews and comments about Austen's novels from her own time, led by Austen scholar David Shapard.



David Shapard giving his presentation; New York Capital Region's Drunk Austen contingent; Heather Hanson and Misaka Dreibelbis

North Carolina

We are thrilled to be reaching more people across the state through our virtual meetings. In April, we discussed the latest *Pride and Prejudice* musical from Streaming Musicals and shared our favorite outdoor scenes in Austen's novel (in honor of our gorgeous spring). Our May meeting featured romance author Heather McCollum presenting "How Tea Came to England: A Brief History Lesson & Paper Tea Favor Demonstration." McCollum dressed as Catherine de Braganza, the queen consort of Charles II who brought tea to England. And she taught us to make cute little favors in which tea bags and packets of sugar can be placed and given, for example, at a tea party. In June, we held our first virtual book club and discussed the juvenilia.

Oregon, Southern

In April, at our first Zoom meeting, we discussed several aspects of *Mansfield Park* with a focus on exploring the character of Fanny. Does being the child of an



Heather McCollum, dressed as Catherine de Braganza

alcoholic create a character that is a milquetoast—or a quiet and resilient survivor? Mrs. Norris found no sympathizers or apologists for her style of manipulation to



Lauren Lind

retain power. In May, we enjoyed two lectures by Collins Hemingway—first an enlightening history of the East India Company and, after a break, a talk from his essay collection on Austen's development as a writer, further exploring the plots and minds of the *Mansfield Park* characters. In June, we were able to meet safely in person in the large and shaded backyard of Diana and Charles Roome. Lauren Lind gave a presentation chronicling the history of ladies' fashion magazines in the Regency.



Physical distancing in the verdure of Charles and Diana Reynolds Roomes' backyard

Oregon/Southwest Washington

In May, we participated in a bicoastal edition of Jane Austen bingo via Zoom with JASNA members from Oregon, Washington, South Carolina, and New York. Co-RC Marcia Hamley hosted and Lisa Brown of the Central and Western New York Region called bingo, with cards she had designed herself using characters from Austen's novels. We prattled on about Miss Bates and racked our brains to remember the Otways. In June, Sharmini Kumar of the 24 Carrot Productions theater company in Melbourne, Australia, hosted a private Zoom event for our region, "Who Killed Mr. Collins? A *Pride and Prejudice* Murder Mystery." Members played characters from *Pride and Prejudice*: Aniela Wolkonowski (George Wickham), Sharmini Kumar (Lady Catherine), Kim Higgins (Charlotte Collins), Julie Buck (the Bennets' maid, Sarah), Stephanie Fleming (Lydia



Sharmini Kumar as Lady Catherine

Emma Characters				
Dr. Hughes	Caroline Otway	Anna Taylor Weston	Mrs. Smithridge	Mrs. Gilbert
Miss Prince	Miss Nash	Mrs. Dixon	Hannah	Mrs. Churchill
John Saunders	Mr. Wingfield	Elizabeth Fairfax	Augusta Hawkins	Mr. Suckling
Mrs. Hodges	Mrs. Wallis	Mrs. Cole	The Misses Cox	Harry
Patty	John Knightley	Milmans	George Knightley	George Otway

Emma bingo card

Wickham), Elaine Blatt (Mrs. Bennet), Amy Myer (Mary Bennet), Marcia Hamley (Elizabeth Darcy), and Bill Boyd (Mr. Bennet). Our instructions were: “Do not lie. Please do feel free to evade and redirect and say things that are technically true but may be misconstrued in ways that are helpful to you. Solve the mystery before Lady Catherine is most seriously displeased.” We guarded our secrets and interrogated other suspects.

Several of our members joined Zoom meetings hosted by other regions. Vonnice Alto and Bill Boyd attended the Beau Monde virtual writers’ retreat, participating in fiction-writing and historical workshops on the Regency era—including one by JASNA member Victoria Hinshaw on “Developing Characters.” Our members also took a virtual tour of the Jane Austen Garden Trail at Chawton House, where we viewed the plaque at the Game Keeper’s Hut, which we co-sponsored with the Southern Oregon Region.



Ellen Cooper, Marcia Hamley, Lisa Brown, Agnes Gawne, Elaine Blatt, Chris and Sharon Cassidy, Wendy Jones, Pat Pohl, Julie Buck, Marna Tisdell, Bill Boyd, and Heather Paton during the Zoom bingo session

Washington, Eastern/Idaho, Northern

In March, we celebrated all things *Emma*, which included several members meeting in Spokane to view the new film. We also hosted a book and adaptation discussion of *Emma* on our Facebook page. In April, we had an online book discussion of *Pride and Prejudice* and hosted a Facebook watch party of the 2005 film version with

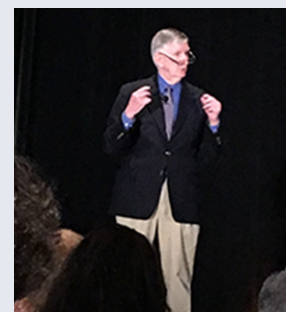


Clockwise from top: Jane Provinsal, Jen Oss, Diana Sebastian, and Melody Faris at the Emma screening; Debra Peck; Jane Provinsal

attendees from around the world. In May, we held our annual meeting as a virtual tea on Zoom. We thanked Amy Lyons, founding co-RC, for her dedicated service. Jane Provinsal was elected co-RC and Debra Peck was elected secretary. JASNA President Liz Philosophos Cooper dropped by to chat about JASNA and answer questions. We finished with a fun game of Jane Austen Pictionary. In June, we had a book discussion/Pictionary game for *Sense and Sensibility* on Zoom and were joined by several members from the Oregon/SW Washington Region.

Washington, Puget Sound

We held our first Zoom meeting in April with 120 attendees—a record for our region—featuring our own James Nagle. We have been collaborating on cross-regional programming, and it has been wonderful to meet those from our neighboring regions as well as from the farthest reaches of the continent.



James Nagle

NILI OLAY AND JERRY VETOWICH

continued from page 16

Jerry: Dickens, Amor Towles, Robert A. Heinlein, Shakespeare, and lots of poetry—especially Ezra Pound and E. E. Cummings

What are you reading now?

Nili: I just finished *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman and am reading Miss Read's *Over the Gate*.

Jerry: *Belgravia* by Julian Fellowes

Fun facts: Jerry was kissed by Ann Rutherford (Lydia in the 1940 *Pride and Prejudice*) at the 1989 AGM in Santa Fe. She was still Lydia. Nili had the privilege of going to the journalists' roundtable and interviewing most of the actors from the 2005 *Pride and Prejudice*.

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Edgar And Emma
Henry And Eliza
Sir William Mountague
Amelia Webster

The History of England from the
Reign of Henry the 4th to the
Death of Charles the 1st
A Collection of Letters
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Pride and Prejudice

January 2021

9 Charlotte Lucas and Mr. Collins marry. (P&P)

1773 - JA's sister, Cassandra [CEA], is born.

1796 - JA writes CEA, "All my money is spent in buying white gloves and pink persian."

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Zona Gale, NY Times Book Review, 1922

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Virginia Woolf, *The Common Reader*

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THE 2021 AGM WILL BE HELD
OCTOBER 15–17, 2021, IN CHICAGO.

THE 2022 AGM WILL BE HELD
SEPTEMBER 30–OCTOBER 2, 2022,
IN VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA.

2020 Slate of Nominees



**JASNA's Nominating Committee has submitted the following
slate of candidates for JASNA officers and board members:**



OFFICERS

President—Liz Philosophos Cooper
First Vice President (Regions)—Debra Roush
Second Vice President (Publications)—Erika Kotite
Third Vice President (Conferences)—Linda Slothouber
Secretary—Julie Arnold
Treasurer—Vicki Petersen
Assistant Treasurer—Marcia Merrill
Membership Secretary—Carol Medine Moss

DIRECTLY ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS

(terms expiring in 2023)
Renata Dennis (Georgia)
Kelly McDonald (Vermont)
Kristen Miller Zohn (Georgia)

Renata Dennis holds bachelor's degrees in biology and nursing as well as a master's in public health. She is a member of the Division of Infectious Diseases at The Hope Clinic at the Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta. Active in her region, Dennis serves on JASNA's society-wide Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee.

Kelly McDonald is a returning board member and co-regional coordinator for Vermont.

Kristen Miller Zohn is a returning board member and regional coordinator for Georgia. She is executive director of the Costume Society of America and curator of collections and exhibitions at the Lauren Rogers Museum of Art.

Voting for officers and board members will be held during JASNA's virtual meeting on Sunday, October 11, 2020.

Susan Jelen (North Texas) chairs JASNA's Nominating Committee. Mary Mintz (District of Columbia) and Carrie Bebris (Dayton) also serve on the committee.