Birthday Tea
Saturday, December 8, 2012
2:00—4:00 pm
The Fortnightly of Chicago
120 East Bellevue
Parking at 100 East Bellevue
$15 for Fortnightly events

Social Dance
and Social Consciousness in
Jane Austen’s Times

Lucia Mauro
Adjunct Professor of Dance History at Loyola University Chicago and its Rome campus, and Dance Critic for WBEZ–Chicago Public Radio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEA REGISTRATION FORM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members: $40; Guests: $50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration deadline: December 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guest(s Name(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can register by
1. Going online to www.jasnachicago.org and pay using your Visa or MasterCard.
or 2. Mailing your check—payable to JASNA-GCR—and this form to Cathy Feldman, 17 East Goethe St., Chicago, IL 60610-2312.
A Little Dose of Jane Will Do You Good

At the JASNA–GCR Fall Meeting on September 29, we were treated to a lively discussion that proved the continued relevance of Jane Austen in our age of lightening-speed technology and dwindling attention spans, as well as for those who are experiencing stresses and traumas, even of the most horrific kinds (see page 6).

The positive reactions and thoughtful questions at the September panel made it clear that Austen lovers have long known that reading her work can be good for your mind, heart and soul. Like many of you, I’ve been known to dip into Austen to relieve moments of stress, not just as an escape, but as way of cleansing the mind and providing a sense of focus.

As former GCR Regional Coordinator Margo Malos reminded us at the September panel, shell-shocked soldiers after the First World War were assigned Austen novels as therapy. The distinguished Austen scholar and critic Marcia McLintock Folsom addressed this phenomenon at a GCR Gala a few years ago. Prof. Folsom believes this form of healing worked not because of nostalgic escapism, but because Austen requires active reading, filing in gaps in a way that can change the way we think.

Even the charge of nostalgia isn’t fair: as dance historian and critic Lucia Mauro will discuss at our Jane Austen Birthday Tea on December 8, dance plays an important psychological role in Austen’s novels,
as it did in her time. An immersion in the historical context of the novels can bring revelations that are timelessly true and remind us of our common humanity, despite superficial differences.

All of this Austen therapy is, apparently, not simply Janeite wishful thinking: you may have read (in various news sources) or heard (on NPR) about the fascinating study being conducted at Stanford University by Prof. Natalie Phillips (assistant professor of English at Michigan State), which proves that focused reading can stimulate brain waves in a way that casual browsing does not. And what do the study’s participants read? Mansfield Park, arguably Austen’s most challenging novel. The experiment is still underway, but the evidence that Austen is good for your brain is compelling.

Of course, the sure-fire kiss of death to is to describe something as being “good for you”, but we know that Austen is as delicious as she is nutritious. In the famous and heart-breaking letter Cassandra Austen wrote two days after Jane’s death, she describes her beloved sister as “the gilder of every pleasure, the soother of every sorrow”. The phrase strikes a deep chord for Austen lovers today, expressing gratitude for a genius of a writer who has been there for us through thick and thin.

Welcome New Members
Jan Ashton
Marie Axel
Lauren Burke
Lois Easley
Judith Kollar
Keri Kolozsi-Greene

Thank you to Contributors
Diane Capitani
Barbara English
Robin Gaston
Shelly Gottel
Beth Havlat
Constance Kozikowski

Margo Malos
Marianne Newman
Jean Perkins
Yuki Shelton
Gertrude Swygert
Duwanna Wall

Photo courtesy of Dave O’Brien.

Sue Forgue presenting her breakout session, “Jane Austen in the ‘Hood”; Jeff Nigro and William Phillips at their AGM presentation, “Austen, Madame de Staël, and the Seductiveness of Conversation”; Sara Okey and her friend, Cornel West.
Our Seasonal Tea in honor of Jane Austen’s birthday this year features a most distinguished speaker, Dr. Lucia Mauro, who will conclude our year of looking at our author and her connection with the arts by informing us about the social and polite aspects of dance in the Regency era. For those interested in Dr. Mauro’s splendid career and biography, she provides the articles referenced below.*

Dr. Mauro also took time out of her extremely busy schedule to answer the questions I had in anticipation of the fascinating-sounding lecture she is offering us on the occasion of Jane Austen’s anniversary. I have heard Dr. Mauro lecture on ballet and dance on numerous occasions and know her to be a knowledgeable, compelling speaker, who illustrates her talks with a plenitude of images and movies from the world of dance. I hope that my fellow Janeites share my great excitement in welcoming Dr. Mauro to the Fortnightly for one of the nicest events we hold throughout the year, the Jane Austen Birthday Tea.

How popular was dance in Jane Austen’s time?
Dance was extremely popular during Jane Austen’s time and regarded as a way of life. English country dancing served as an enjoyable social activity in the English great houses (both indoor ballrooms and outdoors in the gardens) and public assembly rooms. The melodies provided by the live-musical accompaniment were a combination of rustic and lofty—simultaneously earthy and intellectually stimulating. The dances—often performed in circles or in orderly lines—also could be simple and intricate. English country dancing is generally regarded as a style that evolved from English folk dances and Continental courtly dances brought to the Elizabethan court by Italian dancing masters. It gained popularity throughout England, Scotland, Ireland, Europe and the American colonies, with interest peaking in the late 18th century.

What where the most important dances and their function?
Though English country dances evolved in England and influenced other parts of Europe, some of the more popular ones were actually imported into England from France—especially during Jane Austen’s time. For instance, the Cotillion was performed in a square formation and included a speaker to announce the patterns; it’s considered the forerunner of American square dancing with its swift geometric patterns and a caller. The Cotillion is related to the Quadrille, which was danced in a more rectangular formation. Some of the footwork could get quite complex and involve interlacing of the feet, while the upper body had a more regal and still bearing. The function was mainly that of entertainment and a safe environment for members of the opposite sex to be in close contact.

Why were balls such an important feature of eighteenth century life?
Balls were critical ways to meet eligible and cultured men and women. They were lively and entertaining but also discreet and promoted communal interaction within an acceptable structure. In addition, men and women of various social standing often judged each other’s level of culture and knowledge by the perceived stylishness of the dances they were performing. It was not
unlike modern-day judging of one’s social status via his/her interest in the latest movers and shakers in classical music, literature, architecture and visual art.

**How much time was there to converse and flirt?**
As noted above, yes, there was time to demurely converse and flirt as couples had an opportunity to talk out of hearing range of the young ladies’ chaperones. Women also had clever ways of communicating with their fans to indicate interest or disinterest in a gentleman.

**Did her era waltz or not?**
This is a fascinating question because the waltz, early on, was a matter of great controversy. The waltz was introduced into English country dancing around 1807. Its origins point to Austria and Germany. But Jane Austen and her contemporaries would have danced waltzes very sparingly because the close physical contact was considered scandalous. The waltz gradually gained favor following the Napoleonic Wars.

**Did her era know ballet as we do? Was ballet being performed in her time, perhaps in France?**
No. Jane Austen’s era did not know ballet as we do because it was still in its formative stages, mainly in France. But the Regency Era was a key time of balletic reform through the scholarly work of French ballet master Jean-Georges Noverre and post-French Revolution developments. The pointe shoe had not yet been invented, and stage performers were constrained by wigs, masks, shoes with heels and buckles, and cumbersome costumes. Noverre set out to revise the costumes and shoes. In England, by the 1820s and 1830s, gas lighting allowed for special stage effects and helped usher in the Romantic Age. I also wish to add that, in England, music halls and boulevard theaters provided a more accessible theatrical approach to early ballet performances, and this idea was felt in Paris during the earliest story ballets, such as *La Sylphide* and *Giselle*.

**Did colonial dance practices, say, from Africa or India, influence the dances of Jane Austen’s contemporaries?**
From what I’ve researched over the years, dance practices from Africa or India were not integrated into European dance because they were far removed culturally. Dance styles mainly migrated across Europe, and some made their way to the American colonies.

**And since you will be speaking at our December function, was there a Christmas dance?**
There was not a specific Christmas dance to my knowledge. But the holiday season was one of great merrymaking that included special foods, singing, dancing, and live musical accompaniment. Related to dance are the famous English Christmas pantomimes – movement-based moral dramas often presented by men *en travesti*.

* Feel free to consult the following links—the first is an article from this month in *Dance Studio Life Magazine* on my Dance History Webinars; the second is a profile from 2008 for Chicago Artists Resource. Both provide information on my background.

http://www.dancestudiolife.com/2012/08/fast-track-to-the-past

http://www.chicagoartistsresource.org/dance/node/15074
Let me think, when did I meet Jane? First, let me explain my family. We all lived near each other in Hyde Park and read voraciously (except my grandfather and brother). There were books everywhere—on the tables, floor, bookcases and bedside tables. We also made trips to the Blackstone Library and neighborhood bookstores. So there was plenty to read. But one day, when I was about 13, and at my aunt’s house, for some reason, I had no book to read. I was pacing around her apartment and driving her crazy. She grabbed a book and handed it to me. “Sit down and read this,” she ordered. It was Sense and Sensibility, and I was hooked! It took about a year to read all of Jane’s books; after, all, I did have homework. Of course, I thought they were great romances. What did I know?! I read them all again in college in a course and I began to understand what the books were really about. Then, I read them again at my first job as an occupational therapist at Manteno state Hospital. By that time, I also began reading Georgette Heyer. I went to my next job in Pediatrics at Michael Reese Hospital and I read Jane again. By the time I married and had two daughters, my friend, Diane Capitani and I discovered the Jane Austen Society in Chicago. Our families thought we were very strange and all four of our daughters made fun of us. No normal person could possibly be reading the same books over and over and over again! What do they know!! So here I am, a JASNA-GCR board committee member and to this day, I cannot count how many times I have read these books, and I have to say—they are a wonderful pleasure each and every time.

JASNA–GCR kicked off its 2012-2013 program year on September 29. Once again, the venue for our free fall meeting was the Harold Washington Library Center in downtown Chicago. The proceedings began with business meeting, which allowed us to express our grateful thanks to our departing Board members, Lori Davis and Sue Forgue, and to welcome our new Board members, Debra Ann Miller, as Member at Large), and Elia Rivera, who will serve the remainder of Lori’s term as Publicity Director. This was followed by a lively and thought-provoking panel discussion about some of the new and creative ways that Austen can enrich our lives. Author Karen Doornebos took us on a delightful journey through the internet, where Austen seems to be everywhere. Nurse practitioner Christine Shih discussed the health-giving role that Austen plays in her work with people coping with Borderline Personality Disorder (see her discussion of the project she calls Bibliotherapy in the fall Letter from Chicago). The audience of GCR members and members of the general public were engaged and enlightened, as was proven by their thoughtful questions and comments. It was a great way to begin our program year!

My First Austen

Georgia Cibul

September Program

Letter from Chicago

Fall 2012
Clockwise from left: Presenter Christine Shih shared insights she has gleaned from Austen’s novels for her Bibliotherapy project; Karen Doornebos and Christine Shih answered informed questions from the audience; Regional Coordinator Jeff Nigro conducted the JASNA-GCR Business Meeting and introduced the program; the audience included GCR members, new members and the general public; Elisabeth Lenckos, program director, is ready to relax and enjoy the program.
Sartorial Satisfaction

On June 23rd, GCR members and guests gathered at the Women’s Athletic Club on North Michigan for a fascinating lecture and a very high-brow afternoon tea. So far as this attendee could tell, a terrific time was had by all. The program, “The Sartorial Choices of Jane Austen’s Gentlemen: Manly Fashions 1795-1815,” was presented by Janet Messmer, Head of the Costume Technology Program at the Theater School of DePaul University. I must confess that the combination of the title and a speaker from an organization called a “Costume Technology Program” first made me wonder if this was going to be a discussion of what has come to be called “wardrobe malfunctions” or even a considerably more unsavory phrase from a novel by Erica Jong.

What I got was an incredibly well informed, entertaining, and (well, yes) stimulating discussion of the rather huge changes in men’s fashion that were going on throughout Jane Austen’s life time, particularly as she was doing her mature writing. The program got off to a great start in my book because Prof. Messmer was introduced by one of her former students, GCR’s very own resident milliner, Laura Whitlock. Armed with lots of remarkable images, Prof. Messmer not only told us about the topic but also let us see a lot about what was happening in menswear in Austen’s era. Basically, men’s clothing went from the colorful splendor of highly ornamented and embroidered fabrics (through most of the 17th and 18th centuries) to a more sober palate of black and brown along with dark green and blue for more form fitting coats and waistcoats using primarily various weights of wool. These topped slim breeches to just below the knee, often of calf or kid. Below the knee, snug knit hose displayed the required well-turned calves.

Underwear was minimal or frequently absent; however, manly endowments were often augmented.

Messmer pointed out that tight leather breeches might be lubricated with powder to help the wearer struggle into them (as well as facilitating his exit). Form-fitting styles and footwear were often influenced by military styles as well. Under the direction of such male fashion gurus as George (Beau) Brummell, it was dictated that linen (used “generically” as cotton was increasingly used for shirts and neckwear) must be of the purest white and spotlessly clean with the latter requirement applied to the wearers as well.

After a lively question and answer session, we adjourned to a beautifully laid buffet tea table and gathered in conversational groupings to discuss the delights of both the program and the pastry (aided by the appealing ambience of the WAC). This observer noticed that quite a few GCR members and their guests engaged Prof. Messmer in further conversations about the sartorial choices of Austen’s gentlemen. It was a most pleasing afternoon.
Summer Photos
A highlight for me was the recital by soprano Julianne Baird. I’ve been a longtime fan of hers, and I knew her to be a devoted Austen fan who has recorded a lot of music from Austen’s music books. I was also privileged to meet her, and she was most gracious and charming while I played gushing fan.

The most moving moment for me: Cornel West’s ‘shout out’ to Jocelyn Harris during his plenary talk. Citing the brilliant work on Persuasion by ‘Sister Jocelyn’ (as he called her), it proved that two people of such diverse backgrounds and experiences can bond through their shared humanity, thanks to an English writer who lived 200 years ago.— Jeff Nigro

The Regency Ball is so magical, no matter what the hotel banquet room looks like. We’re all in our beautiful finery and to see the ladies gowns flowing in these elegant dance moves from 200 years past is truly special. After so many years of sitting on the sidelines watching, I’m hooked & feel like Audrey Hepburn in ‘My Fair Lady’, I could have danced all night! — Sue Forgue

The one thing I would feature was that the session on publishing was really outstanding. I’m sure that for many of us, myself included, we were inspired to work on that story or novel we have never managed to get around to. Maybe this year! — Russell Clarke
The Olympics

Did you catch a glimpse of her on the opening night of the Olympics? If you blinked you missed it. Just before the Opening Ceremonies from London began there flashed briefly on the screen images of the notables of Great Britain. Right after Shakespeare and Newton came Austen!

Not only that, but Box Hill where Emm had never been but “wished to see what everybody found so well worth seeing” was one section in the road racing cycling competitions. Emma’s party of nine traveled seven miles from Highbury to Box Hill for their two hour adventure. At the Olympics thousands of spectators from around the world lining the cycling route found the races “well worth seeing.”

Mr. Knightley!

It was Emma’s rudeness to Miss Bates on Box Hill that brought her a rebuke from Mr. Knightley. We read more about him in John Sutherland’s new book Lives of the Novelists: A History of Fiction in 294 Lives. He covers Austen in 3 pages of the 797 page book. “All six novels,” he writes, “are about the rocky road to a young woman’s happy marriage. Seducers lie everywhere in ambush: Frederick Tilney, George Wickham, John Willoughby, Frank Churchill, William Elliot—predators all.” One of Sutherland’s students found it “creepy” that 38 year old Mr. Knightley says he has loved 21 year old Emma since she was thirteen at least. Was he really so pure for all those years? “The leading Austen scholar Deirdre LeFaye offers a more down to earth theory: [she says] ‘It is not excessively far-fetched (if rather un-Austenish) to suspect that Mr. Knightley has a respectable lower-class mistress tucked away somewhere. Maybe some innkeeper’s wife whom he visits when he goes to Richmond or Kingston markets.’” Despite D. H. Lawrence calling Austen a “narrow gutted spinster” Sutherland claims, “In the background of the narratives, of course, the prurient ear can usually detect some suspicious rustling.”
Birthday Tea
Saturday, December 8

**Calendar**

**December 8**  
**Birthday Tea.** “Social Dance and Social Consciousness in Jane Austen’s Times” talk by Lucia Mauro, Adjunct Professor of Dance History, Loyola University, and Dance Critic for WBEZ-Chicago Public Radio. 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm. The Fortnightly of Chicago, 120 E. Bellevue Place, Chicago.

**February 3**  
**Winter Meeting.** *From the Book to the Boards: Staging* Pride and Prejudice. Debra Ann Miller chairs a panel discussion with representatives from local theater companies that have dramatized Austen novels. 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Parthenon Restaurant, 314 S. Halsted Street, Chicago.

**May 4**  
**Spring Gala.** *Jane Austen and Other Divas.* Crystal Ballroom, Millennium Knickerbocker Hotel, 163 E. Walton Street, Chicago.

For more events and programs that will be of interest, visit our website at jasnachicago.org, and click on Events>Austen-Related Events.