Fall Program

Saturday,
September 29, 2012
2:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Harold Washington Library
400 S. State Street, Chicago
Free and open to the public

Panel Discussion:

Jane Austen—
Multimedia Maven?

Karen Doornebos, author of Definitely Not Mr. Darcy, will explore Austen across the media, from an “Ask Mr. Darcy” phone app, to a Mr. Darcy with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Jane Austen-inspired fiction and beyond.

Christine Shih, nurse practitioner and independent writer, will discuss the applicability of the universal quality of Jane Austen’s novels in the psychotherapeutic setting through an excursion into her unique design for bibliotherapy.

Come and discover entertaining, innovative, and enlightening ways of bringing your favorite author into your daily life.

Be prepared for new discussions and new discoveries in the world of Jane Austen!

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Multimedia Austen

I hope you were able to attend the JASNA-GCR 2012 Spring Gala, and that you enjoyed it as much as I did. Thanks to our Program Director, Elisabeth Lenckos, we were able to present a veritable pageant of outstanding speakers and entertaining and inspiring readings. I’m still coming down from that particular “high”; but, as always, we look to the future, or at least to our next event.

The Fall Program on September 29, at the Harold Washington Library Center, will be a panel discussion entitled “Jane Austen–Multimedia Maven?,” about the sometimes-unexpected ways that Austen pops up in our modern world of technology and new modes of thought. You can read more on pages 4–6. As always, the September program is free and open to the public, so tell all your friends!

Speaking of Austen and technology, I hope you are partaking of the many delights of JASNA–GCR’s expanded website. Our Deputy Regional Coordinator, William Phillips, has been combing Austen’s novels and letters to come up with engaging and appropriate items for the Quote of the Day, and he has also devised a new and related feature, the Daily Quote Quiz. Test your Austen knowledge in an easy-to-use multiple-choice format by following the link on the home page: www.jasnachicago.org.

I also want to remind you that our website has exclusive content just for members. It’s one of the many benefits of your JASNA–GCR membership: along with discounts on programs and this very newsletter. It’s time to renew your membership, please turn to page 11 to find out how. The renewal deadline is August 31, so do it today!
In 2010, the JASNA-GCR approved a newly revised set of By-Laws for GCR, which provided for the election of half the board to two-year terms in alternate years (actually six in one year and five in the next). We had our first vote under those by-laws in September of that year, electing six members of the board to one-year terms and the other five to two-year terms. At the next business meeting (September, 2011), we elected the six one-year term members to full two-year terms. The six who will continue on the board until their terms expire at the time of the 2013 GCR Business Meeting include the following:

- William Phillips, Deputy Regional Coordinator
- Shirley Holbrook, Recording Secretary
- Lori Davis, Publicity Director
- Sara Okey, Publications Director
- Diane Capitani, Education Outreach Director
- Linda Reinert, Member at Large

That brings us to the nomination/election process for this year. Since I have decided to stand for re-election as Regional Coordinator, I asked William Phillips, as Deputy Regional Coordinator, to chair a nominating committee this time around. The committee includes one member of the Board, Diane Capitani, who is also not up for election and one non-member of the Board, Debra Ann Miller, familiar to us for her portrayal of Jane Austen.

When William contacted the current members about remaining on the board, four of us agreed. However, one member of the Board, Sue Forgue, who has served as Member at Large for two terms, has asked not to be considered for re-election.

Once Diane and William learned that there would be one definite vacancy to fill on the Board, they pounced on Debra Ann Miller to accept the nomination and are delighted to announce that she accepted.

With that explanation, the committee is very pleased to announce the following nominations for the five terms that expire in September:

- Jeff Nigro, Regional Coordinator
- Cathy Feldman, Treasurer
- Patricia Wieber, Membership Secretary
- Elisabeth Lenckos, Program Director
- Debra Ann Miller, Member at Large

The bylaws provide for nominations to be made by any of the members of GCR. If you have a nomination to submit, please contact www.jasna.org. The committee will contact any further nominees to firm up a slate for the September election. If you wish to submit a nomination, it would be very helpful to the Committee if you could do two things: (a) determine the position(s) for which you’d like to make a nomination, and (b) contact anyone you’d like to nominate to make sure she/he/they would accept the position.

The Election will be held at our Annual Business Meeting at the Harold Washington Library on September 29, 2012 at 2:00 pm, immediately preceding our Fall Program.

On behalf of the Membership and Board of JASNA–GCR, I’d like to close this announcement by expressing our profound thanks to Sue Forgue for all the contributions she has made to GCR while serving two terms as Member at Large on the Board. Among other matters, Sue made a major contribution to drafting of the revised By-Laws which were adopted in 2010. As Chair of the GCR Website Committee, Sue’s leadership and expertise have made possible the extensive redesign of the GCR Website which was launched earlier this year. I certainly hope everyone is making regular visits online and would encourage you to continue the practice as new features are continually under development.
Bibliotherapy with Jane Austen: Spring and Fall 2012 Events

“Bibliotherapy” is a word creation I have come to cherish since I first heard it from Christine Shih, one of our talented team of two panelists in the fall 2012 program, who uses the term to describe the method she uses as nurse practitioner and therapist to heal patients with mental problems through the act of reading. Christine and I had a wonderful conversation about the work she does using books “as medicine,” when she came from Nashville to be with us for our Chicago Spring Gala, and I have since come to think of the ways of which we use literature as a palliative. Some of us read so as to forget the stress and pain of our everyday lives, others read simply to give ourselves joy, and the mothers and grandmothers among us might even still read bedtime stories to children. If we are instructors, we teach reading as a communal experience, an activity which brings me to our programs, in which we as JASNA-GCR members celebrate the invigorating skills of the author we love to read most.

Looking back, we held a wonderful celebration of our preferred bibliotherapist Jane Austen last Spring at our Gala which, as you probably have heard by now, was a best-selling event in our long history as lovers of Austen.

Small wonder, when we consider that our presentations included

- a solo-performance by the most beloved Lizzie Bennet of all time, Elizabeth Garvie,
- a fascinating theory of possible murder by arsenic poisoning of Jane Austen by Cambridge criminologist and crime writer extraordinaire Lindsay Ashford,
- the launch of Chawton House Founder Sandy Lerner’s Austen sequel Second Impressions,
- and the Report from Chawton by Steve Lawrence.

We also had a charming toast by William Phillips and Debra Ann Miller, as well as a series of enchanting readings by Vicky Hinshaw, Karen Doornebos, Holly Bern and others, to celebrate the Chawton House Library Short Story Competition, organized by Lindsay Ashford in 2011. Jeff Nigro was, as always, a perfect host, and he and the remaining members of the board worked hard to deliver our own special potion of “bibliotherapy” to our fellow members in our region. As Director of Programs, my thanks go to them, and I hope very much you enjoyed the day as much as I did.

Please return for another dose on September 24, when we gather again at the Chicago Public Library for our Panel Discussion entitled “Jane Austen: Multimedia Maven?” Jeff Nigro will be in conversation with Karen Doornebos, whose interview was included in our Winter Newsletter. Allow me now to introduce you to her fellow panelist, Christine Shih.

Interview with Christine B. Shih, member of our September 24, 2012 Panel Discussion “Jane Austen: Multimedia Maven?”

Could you give us a little information about yourself? I became a determined and serious reader at three years old (seriously!), a musician at five years old, and later an academic and clinical researcher in nursing and psychology through university and graduate school. As a nurse practitioner, I developed pilot studies looking at novel ways to utilize the nurse practitioner in the clinical setting as well as clinical intervention for leukemia patients in the outpatient setting. Then to my great joy I became a mother, and in that grand transition, I began to dream about becoming a writer, and thus directed my attention to Jane Austen and British eighteenth-century writers. I utilized these disciplines to arrive at the professional place that I am today as a nurse practitioner contributing to the scholarly discussion of the intersection between literature and its nearly unlimited effects on the human psyche.
Why do you read Jane Austen in your bibliotherapy sessions?
There is a long and a short answer to this question! I have chosen Jane Austen’s novels as the main author focus of the bibliotherapy group because her novels explicitly address the Borderline dilemma in a consistent and objective manner, leading the reader to understanding clearly what is diabolical behavior compared to what behavior leads to harmony and joy in a person’s journey.

How did you come upon the idea of bibliotherapy?
The idea of bibliotherapy evolved out of my ruminations on the significant limitations of the client/counselor relationship in a therapeutic setting. The client has great need for an expanded and shared experience of their childhood, and a book-group setting allows for the building of relationships with others who are not concerned in any way with a client/therapist code of confidentiality or professionalism.

Could you explain to Austenites the method and procedures you employ?
The method of bibliotherapy involves the directed reading of a specified text through the lens of the understanding of Borderline behavior and the Borderline dilemma. Borderline Personality Disorder is a personality development found in people who experience repeated emotional, behavioral, or spiritual abandonment by parental figures, causing self-preserving behaviors that weave in and out of sanity and insanity. The Borderline in all of its variations is taught first through a fundamental text on the Borderline found in the familial setting, and I provide a set of questions that guide the reader through a psychological exploration of each assigned novel. These questions allow the reader to apprehend the Borderline(s) in the story, and are capable of creating a larger understanding of the issue of abandonment along with the behavioral and emotional developments of the abandonment crisis. I have also decided to include a significant commitment to journaling as the reader goes through the text as a way to utilize and tap into the imaginative process of association of the text to the reader’s personal past.

Could you describe a typical class?
There is a book assigned with its associated questions, and we meet once a month for three hours to discuss the Borderline issues of the particular text and how those identified issues relate to the group members’ experiences in life, both past and present. Then we transition by relating our own personal experiences with a Borderline in our life, or the Borderline dilemma, and discuss how our experiences reflect the author’s story. And through this profound association with the author, we consistently experienced something akin to alchemy in our group.

How did you yourself find out that Jane Austen was your inspiration?
Since I read *Pride and Prejudice* as a seventeen-year-old senior in high school, I have been heavily drawn to the relational components of her writing. But the most important moment of my realization of Austen’s work to my imagination was as a college student. I was taught that after World War I and II in England the soldiers that survived were given Jane Austen’s novels to read as a therapeutic intervention for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The idea of reading literature as a tool to healing accords with the actual behavior of the myriads of individuals who find that reading is the most pleasurable and life-sustainable act that can be done on a daily basis. Reading is the stuff of life, which certainly reflects Jane Austen’s behavior towards reading. This act of reading is almost free—outside of the cost of the book (which can still easily be attained for free) and finding the time to sit down, quiet one’s self, and engage in the story. It is such an uplifting idea for almost anyone who requires therapy, as the therapy prescribed for PTSD is involved, time-consuming, and financially consuming. I find the trade a most beautiful one indeed, if a person is allowed to trust her or his imagination to travel down the road to healing with an author instead of a psychotherapist.

When and why did you make the connection between nursing and literature?
I began to connect my love of literature with nursing while in my Master of Science in Nursing program at the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing in 1998. I was taking a nursing theory course and was asked to be creative about a theoretical paper (my favorite kind of writing assignment!) and decided to
associate Louisa May Alcott’s experience as a Civil War Nurse with her literary vision and development as an author. My nursing professor, Dr. Barbara Petersen, loved the paper and encouraged me in creating and evolving this vision of interdisciplinary writing.

Would you like to share with us what your plans for the future are? I know you are working on a children’s book! I plan to continue to contribute to the critical knowledge of literature through my new direction of understanding and developing the psychological, relational, and familial aspects of literature as it associates with the Borderline dilemma through my associations with JASNA and the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. I am working on a monograph with this goal in mind, and have plans to create a manual on my concepts of bibliotherapy to be utilized by others who have an interdisciplinary interest in literature and psychotherapy for personality disorder. I would also love to know how the British would respond to my idea of bibliotherapy!

At the same time, and for the same reasons, I have also turned my literary interests to children’s literature with the goal to contribute creative literature that embodies the Borderline dilemma and how a child can learn to apprehend this dilemma and operate in a healthy way through it for life. It is a deliberate goal on my part as a writer and children’s advocate with this vision, and this is the area of literature to which I desire to contribute the majority of my efforts. With that, I have a vision for creating a children’s literary arm of the Jane Austen Society of North America and have been developing literary project ideas for consolidating Austen’s novels and select juvenilia into chapter books for children ages 8–14 to bring that age into the discussion of Austen so that they can find her as a trusted and reliable friend much earlier in their life. To that end, I am in collaboration with our wonderful scholar and friend Juliet McMaster in creating a children’s picture book from Jane Austen’s unfinished The Watsons.

Longtime JASNA–GCR member Jane S. Rishel died peacefully at home in Oak Park on June 13 at the age of 92. Jane was employed as an executive secretary by R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company in Chicago from 1951 until her retirement in 1984. For 40 years she served the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, as Treasurer and then as President for 10 year, after which she became a life director. Jane was the beloved wife of the late Leo Rishel. An avid reader of Austen, Jane was a gracious presence at many GCR events over the years.

I am very sorry to announce that Lori Davis will be stepping down from the JASNA-GCR Board in September to care for her brother, who has been diagnosed with terminal cancer. Lori has served on the GCR Board for the past five years, most recently as Director of Publicity. On behalf of the Board, I thank Lori for her devoted service to the organization, and wish her all the best that can be wished during this difficult time. In keeping with the GCR bylaws, the Board will appoint a replacement to complete the remaining year of Lori’s term as Publicity Director. A new Publicity Director will be nominated in time for the Board elections of September 2013.

—Jeff Nigro
Clockwise from upper left: Elizabeth Garvie and Diane Capitani; Members enjoying the Regency Emporium and the table from Jane Austen Books; Jenny Capitani, Karen Doornebos, and Julie Eisenhut; Members enjoying the Crystal Ballroom; Dr. Sandy Lerner with copies of her book, *Second Impressions*; Laura Whitlock and Debra Ann Miller; Marsha Huff, with Elizabeth Garvie in the background.
Not Your Mother’s Jane Austen Society?
Imagine a group of people getting together to discover and share a delight in Jane Austen, to enjoy a sense of sociability, and, of course, to eat. While this may sound like JASNA-GCR, it is a new group, the Jane Austen Social Club.

Started about a year and a half ago, the Club was created by Vy Chazen, because, as she says, “my husband and daughter are pretty much done listening to, watching, hearing me talk about anything to do with the Regency period!” Looking for more outlets, Vy (pronounced “vee”) did some Internet searching. Then she launched her project by means of an online invitation, through meetup.com. (Never heard of it? See footnote.) Her initial invitation received fifty responses, and members of the group have gathered once or twice a month ever since.

Some Social Club events have been at Vy’s home, like the Pride and Prejudice pajama party, and some out in the community, like trips to dance in Oak Park or see the Jane Austen improv group or Lifeline Theatre’s production of Pride and Prejudice. There are book discussions, but no lectures. Vy, a member of JASNA-GCR, sees the Social Club as appealing to some different people. Club activities are less formal than JASNA’s, a good way for newcomers to get their feet wet. There is no membership fee and no commitment. People need not feel they should have read all the books. Events are light-hearted, with off-beat door prizes such as a Sense and Sensibility comic book or a set of four Jane Austen postage stamps.

Vy traces her love of Jane Austen to the time when she was ten years old and her brother took her to see Clueless. The 2005 movie of Pride and Prejudice prompted her to reread that book, and she discovered she was addicted. According to her blog (more in footnote below!), “All things Jane Austen is my hobby. I love her books and all the things she has inspired.”

At first Vy’s husband and daughter were the sole beneficiaries of her enthusiasm. At six, her daughter knows all the Austen characters. But as Vy sought more outlets for indulging in the fun of talking about Jane Austen and her characters, especially the heroes, she built a much wider audience. And that group is about to expand again as her personal interest converges with her profession.

Although she set out to be a chef, Vy evolved into what she calls social media guru and webmaster at Mather LifeWays, a non-profit based in Evanston. Her forthcoming contribution to their offerings for older adults will be a Jane Austen program. She hopes her program will expand the reach of the Social Club and suspects it will build interest among men as well as women.

Vy deserves full credit for the flourishing of the Jane Austen Social Club. She often provides her home and food and door prizes and only sometimes collects donations. She creates programming and handles communications. Her outreach efforts continue to evolve. Finding meetup.com expensive, she now maintains a Facebook page and blogs, familiar tools for young members.

Footnotes
Meetup describes itself as “the world’s largest network of local groups. Meetup makes it easy for anyone to organize a local group or find one of the thousands already meeting up face-to-face.” You can learn more at http://www.meetup.com/about/

Read more about Vy and the Jane Austen Social Club at Vy’s blog: http://janeista.wordpress.com/ Among other things, it includes a clip of the song “Jane Austen” performed by Holly Christina, a singer-songwriter from Auckland, New Zealand. There’s also a link to the Club Facebook page.
Becoming a Janeite

My first impression of *Pride and Prejudice* was classic Jane Austen. I got it all wrong: Jane was the heroine because she was the most beautiful and married her prince. I was thirteen, not much of a reader (obviously), and a product of my own small-town childhood. In spite of all these limitations, I liked the book, even though “not much happened.”

It was not until almost twenty years after my initial exposure to *Pride and Prejudice* that I read it again. This time I was thunderstruck. I wanted either to be Lizzy or have her as a sister, and, of course, fell in love with Mr. Darcy. The other five novels were devoured in quick succession, and I have been rereading them on a regular basis ever since. I used to turn to the first chapters of *P & P* whenever I was distressed; by the time I got to Mr. Bennet’s permission for Kitty to cough at her leisure, I was almost always cured of whatever had been bothering me.

My connection to Jane took a more serious turn in the summer of 1981 when I took a literature course at Oxford, one of the attractions being that *Emma* was on the reading list. At the end of my program, I did a Jane Austen tour that included Bath, Lyme Regis, Box Hill, and Chawton. Even better, one of my classmates told me about the Jane Austen Society of North America. When I returned home, I was delighted to discover there was a Chicago chapter. While I am not exactly sure when I first attended a meeting, I think it was in 1982; I remember it was at what was then the Chicago Public Library, in a small, nondescript room upstairs, and featured a cast of characters right out of a Jane Austen novel. Seven AGMs and countless JASNA-GCR meetings later, I am still amazed at how much there is to learn about Austen’s writings, both books and letters, along with the history, food, clothes, architecture, gardens, and social structures featured in the novels.

Like many long-time fans of Jane Austen, I have watched the growth of Austenmania with mixed feelings. What started as a modest collection of Austen-related books now takes up almost a quarter of my bookshelves and includes sets of the novels, biographies, criticism, continuations, mystery stories featuring Jane or her characters, and modern versions of her stories. Zombies, however, were more than I could take; it is the only Austen-related book I discarded. What other author has at least two film versions of all of her novels? I have a watch, a calendar, a cookbook, a book of walking tours, a t-shirt that says “Mr. Darcy finds you tolerable,” and a sign in my study with a picture of Colin Firth and the slogan “Keep Calm and Marry Mr. Darcy.” It is a full-time job keeping up with Jane.

In the end, though, when a friend asked me recently what has made me such an Austen fan, my answer was the people I know because of her, both fictional (though some of them seem more real than actual acquaintances) and real. I met my husband, Joe, while taking my course at Oxford, and my daughter Amy Elizabeth (middle name not a coincidence) is carrying the torch for another generation. JASNA-GCR and the Graham School at the University of Chicago (which featured *P & P* as part of its Basic Program) both introduced me to new, interesting friends with a shared interest in books. The fun generated by all things Austen shows no sign of slowing down.

Thank you, Jane. I owe you big time.
Readers
What do former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and mystery writer Mary Higgins Clark have in common?

Both were interviewed, separately, in the “By the Book” section of The New York Times Book Review. What was the last truly great book you read? Clark replied, “After many years, I just reread ‘Pride and Prejudice’ and understand why it is, and always will be, a classic.” Albright said it was the best book she read as a student. “I even played Mr. Bennet, complete with mustache, in my high school play.” Wish we could have seen that!

Mothers
Two women writers’ books about their problematic relationships with their mothers have recently been published. Quoted in Redeye, Alison Bechdel, creator of the graphic novel Are You My Mother?, credits Austen with influencing her storytelling style. “I have always been a big Jane Austen freak, but in my early 20s I was just constantly reading one of those books or another… I just thought she was very funny in that dry way. And very socially perceptive.” Jeanette Winterson’s Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal? is a memoir dealing with her troubled adoptive mother who once exclaimed, “The Devil led us to the wrong crib.” For solace Winterson read the books from the library section “English Literature in Prose A-Z” in order alphabetically. “Thank God her last name was Austen.”

Colm Tóibín’s new essay collection New Ways to Kill Your Mother: Writers and Their Families opens with “Jane Austen, Henry James and the Death of the Mother.” He writes, “The novel in English over the nineteenth century is filled with parents whose influence must be evaded or erased to be replaced by figures who operate either literally or figuratively as aunts, both kind and mean, both well-intentioned and duplicitous, both rescuing and destroying.” He analyzes the mothers and aunts in Mansfield Park and Pride and Prejudice. They enable Fanny’s “singleness … her solitude as a force in the book [to] emerge.” They don’t have “actual power” over Elizabeth. Her power “arises from … her own intelligence. It is her own ability to … come to conclusions alone that sets her apart.” Darcy, in refusing to obey his aunt, attains “a sort of freedom” making him “worthy of Elizabeth and worthy too of the novel’s moral shape.”

Lydia
Ann Rutherford, Lydia in the 1940 film of Pride and Prejudice, died at the age of 94. In her honor TCM aired ten of her movies, including P & P. Along with her filmed reminiscences of acting in it, P & P is available on Amazon where it is described as “Jane Austin’s [sic] comic classic about five husband-hunting sisters in 19th century England.”
Jane Austen Society of North America-Greater Chicago Region (JASNA-GCR)

Annual Regional Membership 2012–2013

• One-Year JASNA-GCR Membership Dues are as follows:
  With full-color e-newsletter* Individual: $15.00; Family** $20.00
  With full-color e-newsletter AND black and white printed newsletter delivered by mail: Individual: $25.00; Family** $30.00

• Membership dues cover the present to August 31, 2013

• Membership includes newsletters, discounts on JASNA–GCR events, and the opportunity to invite your friends to events open only to members and their guests

• Please fill out this form and return with check made out to JASNA-GCR or renew online at www.jasnachicago.org

Important Information: This form and your payment are for Regional Dues only.
Our Charter requires you to join or renew with our parent organization, the Jane Austen Society of North America (JASNA), requiring separate dues. The JASNA membership form is available online at www.jasna.org.

Check one: ☐ Renewing Member ☐ New Member

Name: ____________________________________________

Street Address: __________________________________ Apt. __________

City: _________________ State: ____ Zip Code: __________ - ________

Telephone: _____________________ E-mail: ___________________

Please indicate if any of the above information has changed, so that we may update our records. Your complete address, including apartment number and 9-digit zip code, will help ensure timely delivery of mail. If you are not receiving regular e-mails from JASNA-GCR, please provide your current e-mail address to be used for all online transactions.

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I am enclosing $$ for JASNA-GCR Regional Dues 2013:

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☐ $20.00 for Family w/e-newsletter .......... __________________

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*Requires valid e-mail address

**Family defined as two family members at the same address

Summer 2012 Letter from Chicago
Calendar

**September 29**  **Fall Program.** Panel discussion: *Jane Austen–Multimedia Maven?* 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State St., Chicago. Free and open to the public.

**October 5–7**  **JASNA Annual General Meeting.** *Sex, Money and Power in Jane Austen’s Fiction.* New York, New York.

**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 5:00 pm. The Fortnightly of Chicago, 120 E. Bellevue Place, Chicago.

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