Spring Gala

Saturday, May 4, 2013  9:30 am to 3:30 pm
Crystal Ballroom of the Millennium Knickerbocker Hotel
163 East Walton Place at Michigan Avenue
(Parking: valet and nearby garages)
Tea, Coffee and Breakfast Breads
Three-Course Plated Luncheon

Dear Jane, Darcys and Divas

Speakers:
Russell Clark, “Dear Jane On Stage in 1932”
Amy Patterson, “The True Darcy Spirit”
Jeff Nigro and John Nygro, “Divas of Austen’s Day”

Regency Emporium, Table from Jane Austen Books, and Used Book Sale Table

GALA REGISTRATION FORM

Members: $75; Guests and Non-Members: $85
Registration deadline: April 24

Member Name ____________________________________________
Guest(s) Name(s) ____________________________________________
Address ____________________________________________ City _____________ State ______ ZIP ______
E-mail ____________________________________________ Phone ______ Amount enclosed $________

Luncheon Selections

Starter:  Spring Salad of Local Greens, Asparagus, and Goat Cheese, with Lemon Thyme Vinaigrette

Entrees:  Chicken Vesuvio with Fingerling Potatoes and Spring Peas
  or
  Mushroom Gnocchi

Dessert: Lemon-Scented Blueberry Crumble Cake

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.

Starter:  Spring Salad of Local Greens, Asparagus, and Goat Cheese, with Lemon Thyme Vinaigrette
Our yearlong celebration of the 200th anniversary of the publication of *Pride and Prejudice* continues. We have been looking at Austen’s beloved novel, and her work in general, through the prism of her love of the theater and performance, the theme of our exciting Gala, *Dear Jane, Darcys and Divas*, on May 4. The Gala will focus on Austen as an attendee at theatrical performances, as a creator of fully-rounded characters that have been interpreted by so many great actors, and as a dramatic character in her own right (see pages 3–5).

Many distinguished scholars, particularly Penny Gay and Paula Byrne, have long ago exploded the myth that Austen disapproved of the theater, that she was some kind of Prudish Plato in Petticoats. This myth seems largely based on the assumption that Austen identified with her heroines, and so must have agreed with Fanny Price’s disapproval of the theatricals at Mansfield Park. But as anyone who reads that novel carefully knows, Fanny’s “issues” with the proposed performance of Lovers’ Vows are more complex than simple moral disapproval: she is (justifiably, as it happens) afraid of how Sir Thomas would react, she is terrified of being asked to participate, and she doesn’t like the opportunities for inappropriate flirtation (especially, and jealously, between Edmund and Mary Crawford) that the rehearsals afford.

On the other hand, anyone who reads Austen’s letters knows that she loved going to the theater. The Austen family’s own private theatricals that took place at Steventon while Jane was growing up are well documented, and she even wrote some little plays for them. Austen also had her favorite professional actors and, since we also know that she visualized her characters, I often wonder which actors she herself would cast in dramatizations of her novels if she were around today. We certainly hope Austen would approve of the “casting” of our 2013 Gala, and we hope to see you there!
Dear Jane, Darcys and Divas

Four extraordinary speakers will make the JASNA GCR Spring 2013 Gala an event to cherish and remember. Beloved by Janeites from Australia to the United States, Russell Clark needs no introduction, and neither does Jeffrey Nigro, our popular Regional Coordinator. A longtime friend of the region, Russell will surprise us with a lovely new (re)discovery: a forgotten, but enchanting 1930s play about our favorite author, Dear Jane. Jeff will bring with him onto the podium a different kind of revelation: his talented brother John, the distinguished founder and director of the Harwood Music Ensemble, and the two will talk about the divas of Austen’s day. In between these excellent presentations, we feature yet another find: Amy Patterson, owner of Jane Austen Books, who has recently made the headlines with her JARW article “Who is your favorite Mr. Darcy?,” a question she will revisit for our region when she comes to speak to us on May 4. In the following, please acquaint yourself further with the topics and personalities of our presenters by perusing their own excellent synopses and biographies. Then, make sure you sign up soon to hear and see them, as seats are bound to sell quickly with such a splendid line-up!

Dear Jane on Stage in 1932

Russell Clark, presenter

This presentation will introduce the seemingly “lost” play Dear Jane, by Eleanor Holmes Hinkley, and explicate it in the context of the New York theater scene of the early 1930’s with references to contemporary icons and divas. Miss Hinkley was a cousin of the poet and playwright T.S. Eliot, and a participant in “the 47” playwriting workshop founded by Prof. George Pierce Baker at Harvard University, where it is believed her play about Austen was first heard. Dear Jane enjoyed a brief professional run in November 1932, produced by the populist, protofeminist Civic Repertory Theatre of New York—a company largely run by women and for the benefit of the immigrant theater-going population of lower Manhattan. Although the run was short, Russell Clark will argue that Dear Jane whetted the appetite for Helen Jerome’s adaptation of Pride and Prejudice, which would become a success on Broadway in 1935 and in London in 1936. The presentation will focus on the actress/director Eva LeGallienne, who both directed Dear Jane and appeared as Cassandra Austen; and the actress who played Jane, Josephine Hutchinson, and was at that time Miss LeGallienne’s lover. “Dear Jane on Stage in 1932” will conclude with a brief readers theater extract from the final scene of the play, in which Jane Austen will be read by Debra Ann
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The True Darcy Spirit
Amy Patterson, presenter

Colin Firth has defined Mr. Darcy for an entire generation of Austen fans—and who can blame them? His smoldering good looks are enough to capture the hearts of even the proudest & most prejudiced fans. But long before The Wet Shirt, other Darcys were making their way onto movie and TV screens, including the master himself, Sir Laurence Olivier. And long after the Firth smolder simmered, Lost in Austen’s Eliot Cowan did an admirable job of once again steaming up the screen, although Matthew MacFadyen left me wondering just which literary character he thought he was portraying. Thankfully, there is one man who has come closer to achieving the “true Darcy spirit” than the others—none other than David Rintoul, Elizabeth Garvie’s co-star in the BBC’s 1980 televised Pride & Prejudice adaptation. He is everything Mr. Darcy should be—young, stone-faced, a bit awkward, hardly the master of his own imposing height and lanky frame. He’s stiff and uncomfortable around women, condescending and a bit of a bully to Bingley. He is Darcy to a tightly-wound tee, and he brings out the best (and worst!) of the sexiest man ever written.

Amy Patterson is a writer, bookseller, and mother of two crazy boys who unfortunately are named neither Henry nor Fitzwilliam. She has a degree in Political Science from Cleveland State University, where she explored the themes of power and social justice that are so prevalent in Austen’s writing. When she is not travelling with her mother and sister under the banner of Jane Austen Books Amy can be found hidden away in her office typing furiously, most likely with an Austen movie playing in the background.

Divas of Austen’s Day
John Nygro and Jeffrey Nigro, presenters

London had a rich operatic life in Austen’s time: the city had long been able to command the services of the finest singers and composers available, from glamorous foreign visitors to home-grown talent. The conflict between the cosmopolitan taste for Italian opera and the preference for English-language operas was a major part of the culture of the day, and there are

James Ward, after Sir Joshua Reynolds, Portrait of Elisabeth Billington as St. Cecilia, engraving

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even faint echoes of it in Austen’s novels. In a presentation richly illustrated with period images and recorded musical examples, the “brother act” of Jeff Nigro and John Nygro will celebrate some of the great operatic divas of Austen’s time, and the music that they made famous. We will hear selections from Thomas Arne’s operatic masterpiece *Artaxerxes*, which we know Austen heard in London in 1814; although Austen says she was bored by the work, many others disagreed, considering it a major contribution to English opera. We will also hear selections by then-famous composers whose music is less familiar today. Among the singers who will be highlighted will be Elizabeth Billington, the first English soprano to achieve a truly international reputation; the Italian Angelica Catalani, who dominated London opera as Austen was publishing her novels; and Catherine Anne Stephens, whom Austen heard at the beginning of what would be an illustrious career.

**John Nygro** is the founder and director of The Harwood Early Music Ensemble. For Harwood he has conducted and performed in more than 175 concerts, lecture demonstrations, radio broadcasts and recordings. With Harwood he researched, scored, programmed, rehearsed and performed more than fifteen hundred compositions covering most musical styles from the Middle Ages through the early Baroque era, and he has coached dozens of singers and instrumentalists in the performance of medieval, Renaissance and Baroque music.

In addition to serving as Regional Coordinator of JASNA–GCR, **Jeff Nigro** is an Adjunct Lecturer at the Art Institute of Chicago, and an Instructor at the Newberry Library and the Graham School of Continuing Studies. Jeff and John recently co-taught a seminar on Baroque Opera at the Newberry.

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**Welcome New Members**

Patricia Ball
Margaret Barton
Jennifer Capitani
Pam Cipkowski
Seebany Datta-Barua
Kathleen Gietl
Cecilia Jaime
Sherry Leonchik
Carolyn Levin

Elise Masur
Janet Messmer
Gina Morgan
Janice Rumschlag
Kendra Sandstorm
Mona Scheuermann
Betty Stork
Mary Sutherland
Mary Lise Weimers

**Thank you to Contributors**

Karen Doornebos
Geraldine J. Nigro

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JASNA–GCR notes with sadness the recent passing of long-time member **Joan L. Newhouse** a devoted Friend of Austen. We extend our heartfelt condolences to her loving husband Gary, and to all her family and friends.
Staging Austen

On February 3rd, almost one hundred GCR members escaped the winter doldrums by attending our Winter Meeting. Once again, the event took place at the Parthenon Restaurant in Chicago’s Greek Town. Our hearty and delicious Greek lunch included all the old favorites, from flaming saganaki (“opa!”) to baklava.

Lunch was followed by a lively panel discussion entitled “From the Book to the Boards: Staging Pride and Prejudice.”

Debra Ann Miller, Member at Large on the JASNA–GCR Board, had organized this program and moderated the panel, despite having barely had time to catch her breath after organizing the Pride and Prejudice reading on January 28th (see pages 8 and 9).

All four panelists have been associated in some way either with staging Austen, staging her most famous novel, and/or staging period drama: Kristin Leahy, Resident Dramaturg at Northlight Theatre, which presented a splendid dramatization of Sense and Sensibility in 2011; two actors who had given delightful performances in Lifeline Theatre’s 2012 staging of Pride and Prejudice, Laura McClain (Elizabeth Bennet) and Phil Timberlake (Mr. Collins); and David Woolley, a professor at Columbia College Chicago and member of the American Society of Fight Directors. Mr. Woolley confessed that he has not been involved in any Austen stage adaptations (to date), but he was a font of knowledge about Regency military history, dueling, etiquette and deportment, all of which would be invaluable for any Austen staging.

Ms. Leahey addressed the staggering amount of research and detail that goes into an Austen adaptation, and to illustrate the point she passed around the production book from Northlight’s S&S production; the insights into characters and the period details contained therein could prove enlightening even to the most knowledgeable Austen lover. Ms. McClain and Mr. Timberlake regaled us with stories of their auditions and their various preparations for the Lifeline production. The comments of both actors amply demonstrated their deep respect for Austen, as well as the sheer pleasure they took in bringing her characters to life.

We were able to glean many insights from the panel discussion, and from the question-and-answer session that followed. We were reminded (rightly) that Austen’s novels need to be abridged to meet the time constraints of live performance, as well as the financial constraints of theater companies; if an adaptation leaves out your favorite character, scene or bit of dialogue, you can assume that the challenges of compressing a rich and complex story into about two hours or so necessitated some tough decisions. Also, actors really can sense whether or not an audience is “with them”; thank goodness Janeites know the right places to laugh!

We emerged back into an unseasonably mild and sunny day with a greater respect for the thought and care that goes into putting our favorite author on to the stage. It was yet another wonderful way to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Austen’s beloved novel.
Meeting Photos

Clockwise from top left: Panelists Kristin Leahey, Phil Timberlake, Laura McClain, David Woolley and moderator Debra Ann Miller; Early arrivals seated and waiting for the program to start—; Debra Ann Miller, RC Jeff Nigro and, Laura Whitlock take a moment to pose; Guests Linda Ierardi and Mary Griffin enjoying themselves; Natatlie Goldberg and Judy Chemick looking fashionable with scarf and hat; Panelists Kristen and David enjoying their repast; Martha Jameson and Jane Davis happy with the meeting; Laura’s guest, panelists Laura and Phil ready for discussion.
Monday, January 28th was a big day in Austen history as the 200th anniversary of the publication of *Pride and Prejudice* on that date in 1813. It was also a big day for GCR as over 40 participants took part in a public reading of the complete novel. A brave band of dedicated Janeites gathered in the Loop Pedway (Block 37) before 7:00 am. Readers began with “a truth universally acknowledged,” and wrapped things up some 61 chapters and a bit more than 12 hours later with Mr. and Mrs. Darcy “ever sensible of the warmest gratitude towards the persons who, by bringing her into Derbyshire, had been the means of uniting them.”

The newest member of the GCR Board, actress and playwright, Debra Ann Miller, really “hit the ground running,” having organized this event and the GCR Winter Meeting held less than a week later.

Teams of four readers at a time carried out the rather daunting task with expertise and alacrity (to use a good Austen word). The range of readers was prodigious:

1. more than 20 GCR members;
2. a dozen members of several theater and performing groups—Remy Bumppo Theatre Company, Kirk Players, Terra Mysterium Performance Troupe, and Improvised Jane Austen
3. ten published authors

4. as well a smattering of other passionate Janeites who came from as far away as Springfield, IL and Minneapolis, MN.

Readers received a handsome button proclaiming their participation in the event. The button had the additional benefit of giving participants the chance to slip upstairs in Block 37 to Magnolia Café, one of the sponsors of the event, to receive a complimentary coffee and cookie. Other sponsors (all of whom lent equipment and/or set elements) included Chicago Scenic Studios, Audio West, and the University of Chicago Logan Center.

All day long, there was a rather steady stream of interested passersby as well as those who lingered to listen for a while. In addition, the event had an impact well beyond Chicago-land. In mid-morning, organizer Deb Miller and Chicago Regional Coordinator, Jeff Nigro, participated via Skype in a similar reading that was going on at the Jane Austen Centre in Bath, England, providing that audience with Chapter 16. Media coverage of the event ranged from the *New York Times* to Chicago’s own [www.gozamos.com](http://www.gozamos.com), which spotlights community and culture. We haven’t yet heard from Mrs. Bennet as to whether “it was in *The Times* and *The Courier,*” or if so, that it was “put in as it ought to be.” Undoubtedly, however, our 200th anniversary reading of *Pride and Prejudice* was all that it ought to have been and more.
Clockwise from top left: Readers Shirley Holbrook, Judy Chernick, Natalie Goldberg, Larry Santoro, Debra Ann Miller standing; pedway listeners; Readers from the Terra Mysterium Performance Troupe: Amy Christensen, Jim Kollenbroich, Song Marshall, Keith Green; A gentleman enjoying Austen; More listeners; Readers from the Remy Bumpo Theatre: Susan Scunk, Annabel Armour, Eliza Stoughton, Nick Sandys; Members enjoying chapters read by others; and while all had a good time, for some it was just too much!
My First Austen

by Tess Fontana

Although the events in the novel *Pride and Prejudice* took place in the early nineteenth century, Jane Austen did an astonishing job characterizing and portraying everyday life for even the twenty-first century audience. This novel examines the weaknesses of humans, including the first reaction to judge. It also highlights the capacity that people have to forgive and to love. In the end, it’s hope and love that endures.

Austen’s style and diction kept me at the edge of my seat throughout the whole read. I felt as if I was Elizabeth and that I was the one going through the struggles, confusions, and frustration. Who wouldn’t feel disappointment when Darcy openly voices his disapproval of Bingley and Jane’s attraction? Who wouldn’t want to tell Mr. Collins to shut up? Who wouldn’t be embarrassed when Mom tells a group of intimate friends that you want to marry the rich guy in the neighborhood? It’s obvious that Austen understands the teenage psyche.

The Bennet family is filled with excitement for their children and their futures. And it’s not just for “beautiful Jane.” Jane is quiet proper and kindhearted. She checks herself often, probably because she feels the enormous burden of future security thanks to her mother. Elizabeth is witty and takes after her father. Mary is obsessed with piano and books. Kitty and Lydia are youthful and foolish. They might as well be joined at the hip to their mother. All five daughters are loved, but loved in different ways. It just proves that parents are human, too.

The novel redefines the concept of a love story. I loved the evolving romance between Elizabeth and Darcy, watching a man so full of determination reach an understanding that he accepts Elizabeth for who she is. Elizabeth and Darcy start out as people who want to be loved, yet they both are against falling in love with each other. They both resist the idea of falling in love (and as a reader, one gets very excited when the two finally kiss!). You want them to be together but they have to figure it out on their own.

As the events in the novel continue, they finally discover that they’ve endured the hardship of Wickham. From that point, I got into the book even more because I loved reading how the two continue to figure out their relationship. Because they both experienced the same hardship, Georgiana’s false courtship and Lydia’s fall from grace thanks to Wickham, they were able to realize they were meant for each other.

This is the only novel I have read by Jane Austen. I really enjoyed reading the book. The story was one of my favorites. I would reread the book just to uncover more of the storyline.

*Tess Fontana is a junior at Rockford East High School. She enjoys reading many books, writing short stories, and spending time with friends. This is her first published article.*
A great scientist, Mary Somerville (1780–1872), astronomer, mathematician, physicist and chemist, is one of the two subjects of Robin Arianrhod’s recent book, titled so wonderfully, Seduced by Logic. She writes about Somerville’s memoir Personal Recollections from Early Life to Old Age. “It is no surprise that Mary’s descriptions of her youth read like a Jane Austen novel, because Austen was writing at exactly the same time and in exactly the same kind of provincial, middle-class circumstances that Mary was describing…” Somerville writes in Recollections, “I met with Miss Austen’s novels at this time [1818], and thought them excellent, especially Pride and Prejudice. It certainly formed a curious contrast to my old favourites, the Radcliffe novels and the ghost stories; but I had now come to years of discretion.”

Another memoirist, the third woman justice on the U.S. Supreme Court, Sonia Sotomayor recounts her youth in a dysfunctional family in Bronx public housing and the course of her education and career up to her first appointment to the bench. In My Beloved World she writes, “I was a keen observer and listener. I picked up on clues. I figured things out logically, and I enjoyed puzzles. I loved the clear, focused feeling that came when I concentrated on solving a problem and everything else faded out.” One problem she encountered when she went to college at Princeton was her lack of familiarity with what are sometimes called “the classics.” “I came to accept during my freshman year that many of the gaps in my knowledge and understanding were simply limits of class and cultural background, not lack of aptitude or application as I’d feared.” With her customary perseverance and logic she tackled this problem, catching up on reading as a college friend guided her “thoughtfully toward a long list of classics she had read while I’d been perusing Reader’s Digest. What did my mother know of Huckleberry Finn or Pride and Prejudice?”

**Digital Eve**

The New York Times reported, “(A) recent study has found Jane Austen, author of ‘Pride and Prejudice,’ and Sir Walter Scott, the creator of ‘Ivanhoe,’ had the greatest effect on other authors, in terms of writing style and themes. These two were ‘the literary equivalent of homo erectus, or if you prefer, Adam and Eve,’ Matthew Jockers wrote in research published last year. He based his conclusion on an analysis of 3,592 works published from 1780 to 1900.” Jockers developed software that, according to the publication New Scientist, “categorizes novels according to the frequencies with which certain words appear, as well as how the words are grouped to form themes. The result is a set of ‘fingerprints.’ The links between novels are ‘determined by the similarity of their fingerprints.’” These fingerprint-links of Austen and Scott to later novels “position them at the beginning of a stylistic-thematic genealogy.” For more digital Austen, catch the New Yorker blog on books celebrating the bicentenary of the publication of Pride and Prejudice with Joshua Rothman on Charlotte Lucas’s choice, Rebecca Mead on Austen’s influence on George Eliot, and William Deresiewicz on what Austen taught him.
LETTER FROM CHICAGO
JASNA-GCR
5439 Dierks Drive
Rockford, IL 61108

Calendar

May 4  Spring Gala. Dear Jane, Darcys and Divas. 9:30 am–3:30 pm. Millennium Knickerbocker Hotel, 163 E. Walton Street, Chicago.

June 1  Summer Program. Pamela Whalan, Jane Austen Society of Australia presents Adapting Austen’s Novels for the Stage—Additions, Omissions, and Essentials. 2:00 pm–4:00 pm. Location TBD.

September 7  Free Public Program. Iris Lutz, President of JASNA presents ...in proportion to their family and income: Houses in Jane Austen’s Life and Fiction. 2:00 pm–4:00 pm. Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State Street, Chicago.

Sept. 27–29  JASNA Annual General Meeting. Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice... Timeless. Minneapolis, MN

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