Birthday Tea

Saturday, December 7, 2013
1:00 pm–4:00 pm

You Must Follow Suit If You Can: Card Games in Austen’s Life and Fiction

William Phillips,
JASNA–GCR Deputy Regional Coordinator

The Fortnightly of Chicago
120 East Bellevue, Chicago

Parking at 100 East Bellevue • $15 for Fortnightly events

TEA REGISTRATION FORM

Member Name ____________________________

Guest(s) Name(s) ____________________________

Address _______________________________ City ____________ State ______ ZIP ______

E-mail ______________________________ Phone ____________ Amount enclosed $__________

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, 500 N. Lake Shore Drive, #1511, Chicago, IL 60611.
Playing Games With Austen

The Austen world’s celebration of the 200th anniversary of the beloved novel *Pride and Prejudice* has been ongoing, including the veritable *P&Pfest* that was the JASNA AGM in Minneapolis at the end of September. JASNA-GCR will close our 2013 programming with a bang: our annual Birthday Tea will once again be at the beautiful and seasonably-decorated Fortnightly of Chicago. It will feature our own William Phillips presenting an expanded version of the engaging and informative program he presented at the AGM about card games in Austen. How will it be expanded? Not only will we learn how Austen used card games as plot points in *P&P* (and in her other writing as well), we will actually be able to play some of the games!

The Minneapolis AGM was a lot of fun, as AGMs always are, and it also provided fresh perspectives on a novel about which you would think there would be nothing more to say. One of the most thought-provoking sessions was the talk by Plenary Speaker Joan Klingel Ray, Past President of JASNA and one of the most exciting speakers around. Her basic idea was that Elizabeth Bennet, famously described by her creator as “one of the most delightful creatures that has ever appeared in print” may not be…all that delightful, when you think about it.

Joan’s provocative point was that, while Darcy keeps trying to explain himself and “move forward”, Elizabeth simply refuses to listen, because she is...
psychologically “stuck”. Elizabeth just won’t let go of Darcy’s initial snub at the Meryton assembly; she’s still bringing it up months later, while playing the piano at Rosings.

Needless to say, there were some protests from the audience—we Austen fans do love our favorite characters! I myself felt like jumping to Elizabeth’s defense, partly because I confess that I’ve become a little grouchy about the Darcymania that has taken over the world ever since a dripping Colin Firth sauntered into the camera frame. It has to be said, though, that Joan had a point: Austen’s characters are (to use E.M. Forster’s famous phrase) truly “round”, not “flat”. Part of the message of *P&P* is that trite but true expression, “nobody’s perfect”, not even our beloved Elizabeth Bennet or (dare I say it?) the world’s beloved Mr. Darcy—after all, he admits it himself!

The sparring of Elizabeth and Darcy remains, of course, one of the many delights of *Pride and Prejudice*. As Michael Suk-Young Chwe discusses in his recent book *Jane Austen, Game Theorist*, Austen understood the strategic thinking and social maneuvering that have become major areas of study for social scientists. In a culture in which single men of good fortune were assumed to be in want of wives, and young women and their mamas were constantly trying new ways to nab them, strategic thinking would be an important skill. No wonder Austen’s characters spend so much time at the card tables! Card playing was one way to get to know people (prospective mates included), as well as to learn how to make your way through tricky social situations. All of this is to say that you won’t want to miss the Birthday Tea on December 7. Whether you’re an expert hand at cards or (like me) . . . not so much, I guarantee that you will be both enlightened and entertained.

### Members

#### Welcome New Members

- Shon Abegaz
- Amanda Balice
- Maureen Collins
- Marilyn Duff
- Elizabeth Dylong
- Janet Fullenkamp
- Noreen Kaminski
- Sravan Kannan
- Sarah Landis
- Janet Messmer
- Karen Sennet
- Kerry Wagoner

#### Thank You To Our Generous Donors

- Yuki Shelton
- Shelley Gottel
- Constance Kozikowski

Sue Forgue ready to give her breakout session, “Where’s Wickham” at the AGM.

Georgia Cibul, Holly Field, and Diane Capitani pose for a photo between AGM events.

William Phillips presenting his special interest session “Pride, Prejudice & Piquet.”

*Photo courtesy of Dave O’Brien.*
It is a wonderful time to be a fan of Jane Austen and her novels. The 200th anniversaries of her published works have pushed Jane Austen to the center of popular culture; inspiring blogs, web series, spin-offs, mash-ups, anime and phone apps. In the midst of all the t-shirts, book totes and ten pound bank notes, there is also a lot of serious and not so serious research going on.

I attended my first JASNA AGM in Minneapolis this September and I was impressed, informed, delighted and proud. Impressed with the sheer number of devoted Austen enthusiasts, and their depth of knowledge—when John Mulan, in his plenary speech asked, “How many umbrellas are there in Austen’s novels?” the number of hands that went up was, well, more than the number of Jane’s umbrellas. Informed on not only umbrellas, but as to the importance of food (Julienne Gehrer’s “Did Jane Austen Prefer a Plain Dish to a Ragout?”), the infirmities (Cheryl Kinney, Theresa Kenney and Joan Ray speaking on “What’s the Matter with Anne de Bourgh?”), and the servants (Maureen Kelly “Ring the Bell for Hill: Servants in Pride and Prejudice”) in her novels. I was delighted by the more whimsical and outright inflammatory presentations, and by the outpouring of support for the Authors at the book-signing event. Most of all I was proud. JASNA-GCR members graced the stages of a number of breakout rooms and special events with their knowledge, their humor and their aplomb. I look forward to receiving my copy of Persuasions this year to read the presentations I did not get a chance to see.

As we close the year of Pride and Prejudice, and begin the bicentenary celebration of Mansfield Park, I am all excitement for our upcoming GCR events. Our December tea will feature our own William Phillips with “You Must Follow Suit If You Can” an exploration of card games in Austen’s novels—a subject he presented much to the delight of the attendees of the AGM, and has expanded upon to include a “hands-on” round or two. For our February luncheon, we will return to the Parthenon Restaurant and welcome a panel of distinguished JASNA members to discuss the world around Mansfield Park in “The ‘A’s of Mansfield Park: Architecture, Acting and Abolition”.

And then there will be the Gala... I am delighted with our line up and can hardly wait to share it all with you, but as Jane wrote to her sister Cassandra on June 2, 1799:

“Some wish, some prevailing Wish is necessary to the animation of everybody’s Mind & in gratifying this, you leave them to form some other which will not probably be half so innocent.”

Stay in touch with our latest news by visiting our website www.jasnachicago.org, and our Facebook page www.facebook.com/JASNA.GCR
Wheaton Public Library in 200th Anniversary Celebration of Pride and Prejudice

Sponsored by the Wheaton Public Library, “Wheaton Reads: Pride and Prejudice” was an October-long celebration of the 200th anniversary publication of Jane Austen’s most-known novel. As part of the celebration, through a grant from the Joân Pawelski Fund, JASNA-GCR joined forces with the Wheaton Public Library and the Wheaton North High School English Department to bring the improvisational comedy group Improvised Jane Austen to perform at the high school for students who had just completed a study of the novel, are enrolled in Creative Writing, and/or are studying acting/drama.

The Wheaton Public Library offered a variety of other ways to celebrate the bi-centennial of the novel, including the following events: author Kim Wilson speaking on content from her book, In the Garden with Jane Austen; silhouette artist Cassidy Alexander presenting “The Art of Silhouette;” live music and English country dancing with Old Fezziwig’s Band; “Tea Time with Chef Michael Maddox,” including recipes and tastings; “Taking Tea with Jane Austen,” presented by Eileen Shafer, author of Royal Teas with Grace and Style; JASNA-GCR’s own author Karen Doornebos, presenting “How Not to Write A Jane Austen Inspired Novel;” culminating with another JASNA-GCR member, Debra Ann Miller, in her original performance piece, “Jane Austen Speaks.”


Wheaton has truly paid respect to Austen, her times, and Pride and Prejudice in a most becoming manner.

Linda Reinert is Recording Secretary of JASNA–GCR and she also serves on the Outreach Committee.

Poster created of Wheaton North Students who meet twice a week for “Lunch with Jane Austen.” It was displayed at the library and each student received a copy of P&P sponsored by Friends of Wheaton Public Library.

Chef Michael Maddox demonstrating pastry decoration.

Improvised Jane Austen with Wheaton North sophomore Izzy LeBrot (standing fourth from left), whose life became the theme of their second Emma-inspired improv.
Almost 150 people attended GCR’s Free Fall Program on September 7 at the Harold Washington Library in downtown Chicago, when JASNA President Iris Lutz presented a delightful lecture on houses in Austen’s life and fiction.

Clockwise from top left: Speaker Iris Lutz with Geraldine Nigro before the presentation; Janeties in the audience included Natalie Goldberg, Marsha Huff and Russell Clark; The Vyne, which some believe to be Donwell Abbey; The Vyne ballroom; Pat Wieber announcing the slate of GCR board members; outgoing board member Shirley Holbrook accepting a gift in recognition of her outstanding service to GCR; Ithorpe House sitting room; Ithorpe House exterior; RC Jeff Nigro; attendees awaiting the presentation.

Photos courtesy of Margo Malos.
The Janeiac Game
More playful nonsense consumes an entire page of the New York Times with an article and a fanciful board game, The Janeiac Game. A roll of dice moves each player’s Lizzy over humorous squares; the first to land in Mr. Darcy’s arms wins. An example of a silly square: Though “Fitzwilliam” (Darcy’s first name) means “son of William,” the prince and Kate inexplicably decline to name the baby after our hero.

The accompanying article, Jane, Plain No More: A Year of Austen Glamour by Mary Jo Murphy and Jennifer Schuessler begins, “Oh, Jane. What a summer it’s been for your insatiable cottage industry.” The Bank of England announced that Austen would appear on the £10 note, and the British cultural minister prohibited the removal of Austen’s gold and turquoise ring Kelly Clarkson had bought at auction to see if now money could be raised to buy it.


Ketchup
On Fast Company’s Co.Design website John Brownlee has written on the long history of ketchup. The first recipe dates to 544 A.D. Chinese sailors introduced ke-tchup, a form of fish sauce, to British settlers. In the 17th century it was brought to England by traders, but it was another 200 years before tomatoes were thrown in. They had been considered poisonous. Brownlee claims walnut ketchup was Jane Austen’s favorite kind.

Now, I was a bit skeptical, and consulted with our own expert on all things related to Austen and food, William Phillips, who declared it to be “quite possible.” He consulted Kirsten Olsen’s book, Cooking with Jane Austen, where he found that walnut ketchup is a “tasty condiment that cannot be found commercially and must be homemade” and was very popular in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Olsen’s recipe for making it in the modern kitchen involves walnuts, beer, cider vinegar, garlic, anchovy fillets, and red wine.

As to why I was originally skeptical: some time ago I found in Hugh Thomas’ highly-regarded book The Slave Trade a food reference I could not verify. “Jane Austen’s Sense and Sensibility records a moment of anxiety when impending poverty threatens the heroine’s family’s purchases of sugar.” This is definitely not in the novel. William solved the dilemma by noting that the sugar-anxiety is in the 1993 film by Emma Thompson. Somebody simply assumed it came from the novel. Be sure not to assume that Heinz has “57 Varieties.” Brownlee says this has “literally always been playful nonsense.”
Four members from the Greater Chicago Region, Sue Forgue, Corinne McArdle, Kathy Mueller and Lynn Shevelenko, made the 4,000 mile journey across the Atlantic to brave the blistering English heat for the 2013 JASNA tour, Celebrating 200 years of Pride and Prejudice.

We joined 32 other JASNA members from across the US and Canada to visit filming locations for both the 1995 BBC television series and the 2005 film. On this trip we visited two Pemberleys; Lyme Park and Chatsworth, where they were also filming P.D. James’ Death Comes to Pemberley (we saw lots of lights and cameras but alas, no acting), two Merytons; Lacock and Stamford, one Lambton (Longnor), and we followed Lydia’s example by also pursuing redcoats to Brighton.

In addition to the filming locations, there were also visits to places Jane Austen either lived at or visited but especially two once in a lifetime visits. The first of these was to Steventon, her childhood parish, where the parishioners adorned the church in flowers and mini Union Jack flags and rang the newly restored (partially funded by JASNA) bells upon our arrival. At the other end of Austen’s life, we were allowed a very rare visit into College Street, Winchester. The owners of this small house allowed us to tour both the bedroom she stayed in and the sitting room where she died. We were all deeply moved by both visits.

We all came back from the tour with lots of great memories, photos and new friendships.
Preparing for more filming at Chatsworth.

The suit of clothes worn by a young Edward Austen on display at Chawton House Library.

You can buy a taste of the “healing” water from this fountain in the Pump Room, Bath.

You can buy a taste of the “healing” water from this fountain in the Pump Room, Bath.

The North Forecourt of Wilton House, with a very inviting fountain on a hot day.

Seen at Chatsworth, one of the oldest baby carriages, constructed about 1730, would have been pulled by a goat.

The 14th century gatehouse at Stoneleigh Abbey.

Beechen Cliff in the distance from the Circus, Bath.

High tea at Chatsworth.

The suit of clothes worn by a young Edward Austen on display at Chawton House Library.

Bust of Mr. Darcy (Matthew MacFadyen) made of marble dust in resin. This is the bust from the film that Elizabeth (Keira Knightley) admires on her tour of “Pemberley.”
A Very Easy Distance

For years the enticing postcards announcing The Jane Austen Festival of Louisville, Kentucky, had spilled out of my AGM goody bag—not quite as insistently as an acceptance letter from Hogwarts, but front-and-center all the same. Those postcards had made it as far as eye level on the family fridge—to be smoothly ignored by my husband on his way to the almond milk, but smiled at by me. Sensible thoughts like “whole weekend,” “motel costs,” and “gas prices” made the trip a topic I never tried to broach. I even began to wonder, “Could Jane Fairfax afford to be a Janeite?”

But then I looked at the videos of past festivals on youtube* and visited www.jasnalouisville.com. I saw that for only $84 I could enjoy two fest-filled days, a play, a bonnet workshop, and a lovely four-course tea. In today’s money! An authentic Regency ball with abundant refreshments would add only $20. Suddenly 325 miles of good road seemed a very easy distance indeed! And so it proved for my daughter, Anne, and me.

Set in Historic Locust Grove, a restored Georgian mansion amid “extensive grounds” sure to satisfy even Mrs. Elton, this Greater Louisville JASNA festival was graced further by more than four hundred attendees in Regency garb. Perhaps many had been schooled in years past by Betsy Bashore, who presented, arguably, the finest Regency clothing talk I’ve ever encountered, with dozens of garments illustrating period details of cut, cloth, and craftsmanship.

To accommodate over 1500 attendees, Regional Coordinator Bonny Wise and her committee scheduled more than ten events around the grounds each day. Surprisingly, many were as appealing to men as women, such as demonstrations of bare-knuckle boxing and dueling, a cricket match, a royal naval encampment, and the programs “So You Think You’re Mr. Darcy?” and “Dressing Mr. Darcy.”

Concurrent with the programs, there were bobbin-lace demonstrations, Regency hat and turban workshops, a costume display, a strolling musician, shadow puppets, a food tent, an author’s panel, and a Pride and Prejudice Reading Marathon. Eighteen unique vendors converged as the Shoppes of Meryton—each so unusual that Anne and I kept wandering over to examine (and buy) their wares. (In fact, it’s one-stop shopping for historically accurate fabrics, patterns, notions, accessories, and advice.)

Alana Gillett’s thoroughly enjoyable play adaptation was aptly entitled “Elizabeth & Darcy: A Love Story.” Even with only twelve characters and less than two hours to do the story justice, Gillett’s fine cast made us know, understand, and root for Lizzy and Darcy’s happily ever after. Only in afterthought did we miss the seeming-essentials Mr. Collins and Mary! I’d love to see the script remounted at a JASNA-GCR event.

Moments after Darcy’s declaration in “Elizabeth & Darcy,” Miss Elizabeth Stanley is similarly charmed by Mr. Kevin Locker. The Festival anticipating a yes provided Miss Stanley with a personalized bouquet.

Some cast members of “Elizabeth & Darcy.” Playwright/Mrs. Bennet Alana Gillette, with her congratulatory bouquet, is seated on the right.
Unfortunately, our decision to venture to Kentucky came too late to attend the ball or one of the three different hat workshops. With far more than a thousand attendees at the festival, the ball sold out six days after registration opened on June 1. (Next year I’ll treat it like the AGM and be poised at my computer to register the moment it comes live.) If we do get ball tickets next year, Anne and I will have to pace our pleasures more carefully and pack extra water bottles in case the Locust Grove water fountains are again overwhelmed by the crowds. By Saturday evening I was exhausted by a day of highs (my own spirits and Locust Grove’s heat index), and I was glad for a bed rather than a ball (even though both had central air). This made me wonder: Would July in Meryton be cooler than in Louisville? Yes. Central England Temperature (CET) for July 1811 averaged 61 degrees Fahrenheit. Downright balmy!

Even so, no rise in the mercury could keep me away from such a charming, informative, delight-filled gathering of Austen lovers. Come July 19-20, 2014, you’ll know where to find me. Better yet, come along for a foretaste of the 2015 Louisville AGM—Living in Jane Austen’s World. I can’t think of a Region better prepared to welcome us home to Regency England.

* [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hf7DXw-omvg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hf7DXw-omvg)
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Saturday, December 7

Calendar

**December 7**
**Birthday Tea.** “You Must Follow Suit If You Can: Card Games in Austen’s Life and Fiction”. Talk by William Phillips. 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. The Fortnightly of Chicago, 120 E. Bellevue Place, Chicago.

**February 9**

**May 3**
**Spring Gala.** Woman’s Athletic Club of Chicago, 626 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago.

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