Birthday Tea
Saturday, December 3, 2016
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

“Emma and Motherhood”

Dr. Diane Capitani,
Garrett Theological Seminary, Northwestern University,
Education Outreach Director, JASNA-GCR

The Fortnightly of Chicago
120 East Bellevue Place, Chicago
Parking at 100 East Bellevue
$15 for Fortnightly events

TEA REGISTRATION FORM
Members: $40; Guests: $50
Registration deadline: November 29, 2016 or until we reach our capacity of 135 people

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 Maureen Collins, 2516 Ridgeway, Evanston, IL 60201.
Fall is my favorite season. Perhaps it is the cooler weather that energizes me, or years of the bustle and anticipation that preceded every new school year that inspires me to refocus and recommit to personal goals. High on my list every year is to learn more about Jane Austen.

We, as JASNA members, have the added delight of the Annual General Meeting each autumn, where those who attend enjoy connecting with Janites from across the globe and viewing fascinating presentations about Jane Austen, her novels and her world. At this year’s AGM our own Program Director Jeff Nigro will be presenting and many of our members will be in attendance. I look forward to reading their summaries and seeing their pictures on pages 6–7 of this issue.

This year’s meeting in Washington DC is the culmination of a yearlong bicentennial commemoration of Jane’s fourth published novel, *Emma*. We celebrate Jane Austen at the height of her literary production and fame in her lifetime. In the fourteen months between January of 1814 and March of 1815, Jane wrote her longest novel, *Emma*, while overseeing the publication of *Mansfield Park*. When her brother Henry became seriously ill in late 1815, Jane took over the negotiations for the publication of *Emma* while supervising his care in London. With the help of her publisher John Murray, she successfully performed the dubious honor of dedicating *Emma* to the Prince Regent, and tactfully managed the enthusiastic “assistance” of the Prince’s librarian Rev. James Stainer Clarke.

She was respectful in her letters to Clarke himself at least—privately she, Mary Cooke, and her niece Fanny Knight composed a satire entitled “Plan of a Novel, according to hints from various quarters” that is a delight to read, and can be found in most collections of Jane Austen’s minor works.
Jane did not limit herself to writing for her own enjoyment with friends and family during this period—she began the novel we know as *Persuasion* around August of 1815, while shepherding *Emma* through printing and production.

All this energy began to seep away, however, and by mid 1816 the subject of pain and fatigue have become a consistent theme in Jane Austen’s letters. A year later Jane Austen would pass into “paradise” on July 17th, 1817 in Winchester.

On Saturday, December 3rd we will return to the beautiful Fortnightly to observe the 200th anniversary of Jane Austen’s last birthday. This year the celebration may be slightly bittersweet, as we will conclude the “Year of Emma” with Diane Capitani’s presentation on motherless children and raise a glass with wistful thoughts of what might have been if Jane had lived into her late 80’s or early 90’s as her own mother and siblings did; and who Emma might have been if she had had the guidance of her mother. For more about Diane Capitani’s lecture and registration information, see Jeff Nigro’s Program Director Letter on page 8, and the cover of this issue.

I look forward to seeing you all in December and encourage you to register early, as the December Tea is one of our most highly attended and consistently sold out events.

---

**Members**

**JASNA GCR Board Election Results**

Motioned by Georgia Cibul  
Seconded by Duwanna Wall  
All in favor. No opposed.

**Regional Director** Debra Ann Miller  
(formerly Regional Coordinator)

**Program Director** Jeff Nigro

**Membership Secretary** Becky Dolin

**Member At Large** Laura Whitlock

**Treasurer** Maureen Collins

---

**Wanted!**

We are looking for a volunteer to write a review of *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley* at the Northlight Theatre in Skokie, IL.  
Box Office: 847-673-6300.  
www.northlight.org It will run from November 10 to December 18. Here is the summary:

In this charmingly imagined sequel to *Pride and Prejudice*, the ever-dependable Mary Bennet is growing tired of her role as dutiful middle sister in the face of her siblings’ romantic escapades. When the family gathers for Christmas at Pemberley, an unexpected guest sparks Mary’s hopes for independence, an intellectual match, and possibly even love.

If you would like to be our ace reporter, please contact Sara Okey at okey.sara@gmail.com by November 16!
On an absolutely perfect autumn afternoon at the Evanston Public Library, our very own Debra Ann Miller presented a fast-paced tour through Jane Austen’s novels.

**Sense and Sensibility**
In four words: Two sisters, men, marriage
In a sentence: Characters that regard others with benevolence turn out happy.
Analysis: This is not a letter novel—it is all about conversations, what is said and not said. Colonel Brandon is a listener. He reveals empathy and kindness through his words and deeds.

**Pride and Prejudice**
In four words: Two sisters, men, marriage
In a sentence: Love is at its best when it is easy going.
Analysis: Elizabeth is the perfect combination of her mom and dad, both good and bad. Case in point: she insults Darcy within his hearing. And as much as the majority of Janeites swoon for Darcy, his guidance might not be the best. Case in point: He trusted Georgiana with Mrs. Younge, leading to a meeting with Mr. Wickham (we all know what happened next). There is no wet shirt in the book, only Elizabeth’s wet dress.

**Mansfield Park**
In four words: Two sisters, inept motherhood
In a sentence: Fanny survives her tour of the deadly sins.
Ok...two sentences: Others can try to knock you down, but you are the one that can let your value grow.
Analysis: Lust: Mr. Crawford is sex and extravagance; Edmund is full of self-love. Greed: Mrs. Norris. Mic drop. Sloth: Mrs. Price and Mrs. Bertram both embody Chaucer’s definition of sloth. Rage: Maria’s lies and anger at Julia inspire her to go for Henry. Envy: Betsy Price and Julia feel the “have not” in their lives. Pride: Henry Crawford and all of his “motivation” is all to stroke his own ego.

**Emma**
In two words: Two sisters
In a sentence: Surround yourself with support.
Analysis: Isabella’s is better at worrying than at caring for Emma. Harriet becomes a piñata for Emma and reveals Emma’s adversity. Emma does learn from her mistakes. From Mr. and Mrs. Elton to Miss Bates and Jane Fairfax, forgiveness is sought and given. Frank Churchill seeks to manipulate and destroy reputations. Emma’s steadiness ends up being Mr. Knightley, but since he has loved her since she was thirteen, it’s a little creepy.

**Northanger Abbey**
In four words: No sister means lonely
In a sentence: Could this be a parody of the lost Cassandra and Jane Austen letters?
Analysis: As sensible parents are left behind, Catherine learns that there are no mysteries or gothic trends, only lies from people like Jim Thorpe, the true villain. Lessons learned: 1) In adversity, find a friend to help with the pain; 2) Read novels; 3) Dress is silly; 4) Lying is bad.

**Persuasion**
In two words: Three sisters
In a sentence: Love never dies.
Analysis: Jane Eliot is a single, striking, and “rich” 29 year old. Mary Eliot Musgrove married beneath her station and does not truly value her own children. Ann is elegant and not dead despite not being heard or cared for. Her true family becomes Mrs. Clay, Mrs. Harville, and Captain Benwick. And despite being blind and deaf to love, she and Captain Wentworth do end up together.

**The Juvenilia—AKA Susan**
In four words: Catherine of Northanger Abbey
In a sentence: Can you imagine a world without a sister?
Analysis: This is Jane Austen’s pure imagination. One learns from acts. Could this be a parody of the lost Cassandra and Jane Austen letters?

**Debra’s Send Off:**
1. Love your sister.
2. Don’t do anything you won’t tell your sister.
Clockwise from top left: member Nicole Corrigan with friend Jose Valle; Marianne Newman and Cathy Feldman; snack arrangement; members mingling; beautiful potted mums; Yuki Shelton and William Phillips; Andrea Ravin and Betty Zausner; a full house; Risha Kotecha, Martha Jameson and Margo Malos.

Photographs by Margo Malos and Sara Okey.
Juliet McMaster (retired U of Alberta—retired) delivered another one of her usual witty and insightful reflections, this one on “Critics of Talk in Emma.” McMasters made the point that as Emma parodies Miss Bates’s style, she represents other characters in the novel who teach us readers how to listen, interpret and appreciate the characters’ best mode of self-expression.

Linda Reinert

On Sunday, Oct. 23, The Folger Shakespeare Library offered a special performance of Sense and Sensibility for JASNA AGM attendees. The play ran from September 13–November 13. The play is a new adaptation by Kate Hamill, directed by Eric Tucker. As noted on the AGM description, “This is the team behind the New York produc- tion that caused a sensation and was a New York Times Critic’s Pick.” The play bridged periods from 21st century to Georgian England to 16th century through a series of dances; as a prelude to the play, petticoat and pantaloon-clad actors danced to 21st century music in the aisles, interacting with the audience, then assembled onstage as the music took them into English Country Dance mode and music. The Elizabethan jig was performed later in the performance, but bits and pieces of Shakespeare’s words (as well as humorously misplaced excerpts from other Austen novels) were woven across the play. Onstage movement was frantic at times, led by chairs and French window panels on casters. Mrs. Jennings seemed to be channeling Pearl Bailey in her humor and constant, unchecked enthusiasm, while bits of Pee-Wee Herman seemed at times to surface in Robert Ferrars. The other eight actors played multiple parts—another nod to 16th century Shakespeare performances. While for the most part, the adaptation was played for wit and laughter, appropriate moments of poignancy surfaced.
exhaled during Elaine Bander’s breakout session, “Liking’ Emma.”

Dr. Bander proved that Austen set out to create a heroine we might not like (“admire”) but like (“get”) the way in which that connoisseur of the ridiculous, Mr. Bennet, assures Lizzy, “I admire all my three sons-in-law highly. . . . Wickham, perhaps, is my favorite; but I think I shall like your husband quite as well as Jane’s.” I hope this lecture becomes a Persuasions article, if not a preface to a future edition of *Emma*.

Lorraine Davis
Birthday Tea 2016

It’s hard to believe that the Year of *Emma* will soon draw to a close. Like the rest of the Jane Austen world, JASNA-GCR has been celebrating Austen’s literary masterpiece through programs planned under the direction of our wonderful then-Program Director, now-Regional Coordinator, Debra Ann Miller. It has been my pleasure to be part of the Program Committee that helped to put these events together, and I am looking forward to continuing to put together programs that we hope you will enjoy.

The next JASNA-GCR event, our annual Birthday Tea, will continue and close out the Year of Celebrating *Emma*. Once again, we will be at the beautiful Fortnightly of Chicago, surrounded by the warm and suitably festive atmosphere, the sumptuous tea and goodies, and the gracious hospitality the Fortnightly always provides. The one program rule that all JASNA regions are happily obliged to follow is that we should program some kind of event in December to celebrate Austen’s birthday (December 16, 1775). The fact that this major event in the Austen lovers’ calendar coincides with a month in which so many people are celebrating is only the delicious icing on the cake.

Speaking of calendars, our members may have been wondering if the members of the Program Committee have been getting our own calendars mixed up. This past summer, we celebrated Christmas in July with a convivial lunch at Goose Island Brewpub and a delightful talk by Stephanie Barron (see pp.10–11). Ms. Barron’s exploration of the Georgian/Regency Christmas related to her own superb mystery novel *Jane and the Twelve Days of Christmas*, and it gave us an opportunity to think about another December holiday enjoyed by Austen and her contemporaries.

As you can see from the front page of this newsletter, the presentation at the Tea is entitled “Emma and Motherhood”. Since we celebrated Christmas in July, why not observe Mother’s Day in December? The speaker will be our own Dr. Diane Capitani, Director of the Writing Program at Garrett Theological Seminary at Northwestern University and Education Outreach Director of JASNA-GCR. As you know if you’ve ever heard her speak, Diane’s presentations are always fun as well as thought provoking, and she is not afraid to take a controversial approach to Austen’s novels. I can personally testify to coming away from one of her talks with a greater respect for, of all people, Mr. Collins. Anyone who can succeed in that is someone who knows how to take a fresh look at a beloved classic.

Jane Austen knew that mothers can be a mixed blessing (just ask Elizabeth Bennet), and she was well aware that mothers (and children) did not always have an easy time of it. Think about how many of the characters in *Emma* have grown up without the benefit of a mother’s love: Emma herself, Jane Fairfax, Frank Churchill. Harriet Smith’s mother is completely out of the picture, and Mrs. Bates is not much of a presence, either. But there are happier aspects of motherhood in the novel as well. Austen’s narrator (with tongue apparently firmly in cheek) calls the doting Isabella Knightley “a right model of feminine happiness”; nowadays, she would probably be called a “helicopter parent”. Let us not forget Mrs. Martin, by all accounts a loving support to her son (and she will no doubt be a lovely mother-in-law to Harriet). And the novel ends with Mrs. Weston, a maternal substitute for Emma, celebrating the birth of her child along with the rest of Highbury.

Diane will explore the varieties of motherhood in *Emma*, and will even engage in a bit of speculation: given what we know about Emma Woodhouse (the new Mrs. Knightley), what sort of mother will she make? We look forward to a fascinating talk, a lively discussion, and a convivial salute to Jane Austen, to Emma, and to the novel named for her. This is always one of the most popular events of the JASNA-GCR year, so make your reservations early!
Eventually, “each discovers ... the true nature of the other—she the sensitive and tender nature of Darcy, he her real dignity and wit—and the novel ends as it should, with their marriage... [O]nly the ‘working-through’ of the misrecognition allows us to accede to the true nature of the other and at the same time to overcome our own deficiency—for Darcy, to free himself of his false pride; for Elizabeth, to get rid of her prejudices...

Darcy’s pride is not a simple positive state of things existing independently of his relationship with Elizabeth; .... it takes place, it appears, only from the perspective of her prejudices; vice versa, Elizabeth is a pretentious empty-minded girl only in Darcy’s arrogant view... [T]he deficiency of the other is simply an objectification of the distortion of our own point of view.”

Another contemporary philosopher is Australian Peter Singer, who writes on animal rights, charitable giving, and euthanasia, from a utilitarian viewpoint. “One’s own interests cannot count for more than the interests of others.”

Therefore, one must take a “course of action most likely to maximize the interests of those affected.” In The Guardian he is quoted as saying of Pride and Prejudice. “If it is not the best novel ever written, I don’t know what surpasses it for fine observation of manners, character and passions, all told with the most delightfully delicate sense of humour.” In The N.Y. Times he says of Austen, “If you cannot enjoy her prose, something must be wrong with you.”
Stephanie Barron Brings Her Latest Austen Mystery to GCR

In addition to the 200th anniversaries of the publication of Austen’s novels, the 2010s have seen the 20th anniversaries of several significant Austen related events. In 1996, those of us (like me) who admit to Austen addiction were delighted with the publication of *Jane and the Unpleasantness at Scargrave Manor*. In this novel, Stephanie Barron introduced us to Jane Austen as an extremely adept sleuth with Barron employing both profound knowledge of Austen and remarkable historical accuracy. Barron may not have been too sure of where Austen might go as a detective, so her subtitle was “Being the First Jane Austen Mystery.” She then did the same for *Jane and the Man of the Cloth*, “Being the Second Jane Austen Mystery” (1997). Since the publication of *Jane and the Wandering Eye* (1998), it has been clear that the series would receive a hearty welcome for some time and the ordinal number has no longer been used.

July 30th of this year saw two “Seconds” of note. We enjoyed our second summer meeting at Goose Island Brewery, where a full house was both enlightened and entertained by GCR’s second visit from Stephanie Barron. Most of us know that “Barron” is the pen name of Francine Matthews, who also let us know that “Stephanie” is her “real” middle name. She gave us an informative excursion through elements of her writing process and the history of the “Jane and . . .” series. She then gave us an enticing introduction to the thirteenth member of the series, *Jane and the Waterloo Map*, published this year. Many of us remember that her first “official” visit to GCR was when she was a major presenter at the JASNA AGM in Chicago in 2008.

In addition to being able to order a pleasant lunch from the Goose Island menu, enjoying the company of fellow GCRers, and relishing Barron’s fascinating presentation, a selection of books was on offer from The Book Cellar in Lincoln Square which attracted eager shoppers. With my copy of *Jane and the Waterloo Map*, I received a cool blue wrist band that announces “Jane Austen.” I’ve been wearing it around proudly.

Some of Stephanie’s slides as she walked us through her process.
Clockwise from top left: Jeff Nigro and presenter Stephanie Barron; Goose Island sign; Stephanie during her presentation; audience; Stephanie’s book *Jane and the Twelve Days of Christmas*; the title slide Jane Austen’s Christmas; Stephanie’s book *Jane and the Waterloo Map*; Dominos slide; another group shot; Debra Ann Miller. Photos courtesy of Margo Malos.
Birthday Tea
Saturday, December 3

Calendar

December 3  Birthday Tea. 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. “Emma and Motherhood”, Diane Capitani, Garrett Theological Seminary, Northwestern University and Director of Educational Outreach, JASNA-GCR. The Fortnightly of Chicago, 120 E. Bellevue Pl., Chicago, IL

December 4  Gift Wrapping at Barnes and Noble. 12:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Donations to support JASNA-GCR. We are looking for volunteers to help wrap for 1 or 2 hour shifts. If you are interested in wrapping, please contact Elia Rivera at publicity@jasnachicago.org. Barnes & Noble, Village Crossing, 5405 West Touhy Avenue, Skokie, IL 60077.

Feb. 12, 2017  Winter Meeting. 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm. “Panel Discussion: Austen Ever After.” Marcello’s Lincoln Park, 645 W. North Ave., Chicago, IL

May 6, 2017  Spring Gala. Woman’s Athletic Club of Chicago, 626 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL

Our website is www.jasnachicago.org