



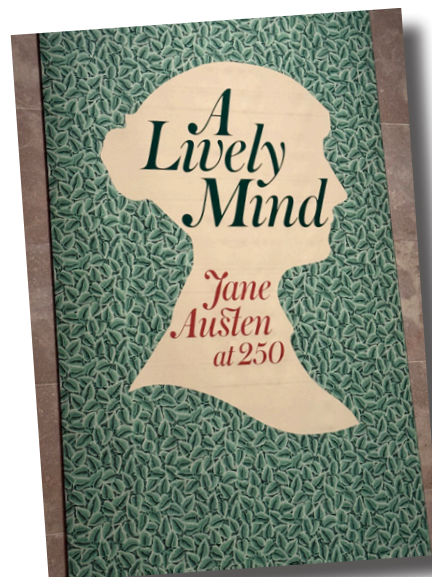
Austen's 'Lively Mind' Displayed

What inspired Jane Austen's genius for emotional insight, social satire, and sparkling prose? "A Lively Mind: Jane Austen at 250," presented from June 6 through Sept. 14, 2025, at New York City's Morgan Library & Museum, provided tantalizing clues. The exhibition gathered artifacts, manuscripts, books, artworks, and other fascinating items from institutional and private collections—illuminating Austen's personal life, literary achievements, and global legacy.

The exhibit was co-curated by Austen scholar Juliette Wells, professor of literary studies at Goucher College, and Dale Stinchcomb, Drue Heinz Curator of Literary and Historical Manuscripts at the Morgan Library. Groups from numerous JASNA regions (including Eastern Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey, New York Capital, New York Metro, and Washington, D.C.) attended and enjoyed guided tours with Wells, while many individual members (from Georgia to Massachusetts to Texas and beyond) also made special excursions.

As an overview for those unable to attend—and a remembrance for those who did—JASNA *News* asked Wells for insights into the creation of the exhibition—and what it meant to her to see it brought to life.

JASNA News (JN): How did "A Lively Mind" come about?



Juliette Wells (JW): Our first conversation about the exhibition took place in 2018, when Christine Nelson—then the Drue Heinz Curator—reached out to me. We knew that 2025 would be a big year for Austen, as well as the 50th anniversary of the major bequest of Austen manuscripts to the Morgan by Alberta Burke.

After Christine moved on, the planning process was shepherded by Philip



Co-curators Dale Stinchcomb and Juliette Wells

Palmer, the Robert H. Taylor Curator and department head of literary and historical manuscripts at the Morgan. He met with curators at the British Library to discuss possible loans and worked closely with me on a "wish list" from other collections. Dale Stinchcomb took over as the Drue Heinz Curator 15 months before the exhibition opening, just in time to request loans from institutions and private collectors. He also visited Goucher College to help select items from Burke's collection.

I thoroughly enjoyed working with the Morgan's highly professional exhibitions, programming, and communications staff—and with the design firm Pure + Applied, which created the show's beautiful look. Every word visitors read was written by me; I also wrote and recorded the audio guide.

JN: How did you secure so many Austen treasures?

JW: The letters were the easy part since all but one are in the Morgan's own collection. The Morgan holds

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DATES AND DEADLINES

JASNA News Winter 2026

Submission deadline: October 1, 2025

Publication date: mid-December

JASNA News Spring 2026

Submission deadline: January 7, 2026

Publication date: mid-March

JASNA News Summer 2026

Submission deadline: April 1, 2026

Publication date: mid-June

2026 AGM Call for Papers

Submission deadline: November 30, 2025

2026 International Visitor Program

Application deadline: December 16, 2025

Info: jasna.org/programs/international-visitor



Austen anniversary celebrations in Winchester, England

JASNA News

The newsletter of the
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President's Column

Mary Mintz

What an amazing year 2025 is turning out to be! I refer, of course, to the celebrations and observances for the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth in 1775.

We are now approaching JASNA's high point for the festivities, our October Annual General Meeting (AGM). This will likely go down in history as the largest gathering of Austen enthusiasts ever assembled. Though all 6,000 members cannot participate in person or even on livestream, the AGM has the potential to reach all JASNA members through *Persuasions*, *Persuasions On-Line*, *JASNA News*, personal reports shared at regional meetings, and videos available for your region to watch together.

I'm profoundly grateful for the hard work and creativity that Jenn Jones, AGM coordinator, Linda Slothouber, JASNA director of conferences, and their teams have put into this conference. Behind the scenes, they have been engaged with a planning process that has literally taken years and stolen time from their personal lives. The result: an AGM worthy of Austen's milestone birth anniversary and an amazing achievement for JASNA.

On a personal level, I'm grateful to my husband, who has treated me to some special trips and puppy-sitting services so I can be away from home (mostly) guilt-free. Would Sir Thomas Bertram have done the same for Lady Bertram's Pug? I think not. Because of this support, within the space of one week, I was privileged to view two special exhibitions, "A Lively Mind: Jane Austen at 250," at the Morgan Library & Museum in New York City, and "Austen and Turner: A Country House Encounter," at Harewood House near Leeds in Yorkshire, and have conversations with their respective curators, Juliette Wells and Jennie Batchelor. Both had similar experiences in preparing their exhibitions—they found the work exhausting but rewarding. The results were stunning. How I wish all JASNA members could see such breathtaking treasures as Jane Austen's ring, her manuscript for *Lady Susan*, volume two of her carefully copied youthful writings, and the manuscript for the unfinished *Sanditon*. Near or far from home, the 250th anniversary rewards us with what Juliette aptly describes as "joy and pleasure and scholarship," a felicitous description that happens to sum up what JASNA offers in every year.

In my travels, I have been frequently reminded of Austen's global appeal. At Winchester Cathedral, Austen's burial place, I had a conversation with four women who were native Spanish speakers. Prompted by a poster announcing the cathedral's own special observances, one woman asked, "Who is Jane Austen?" I helped as much as I could with my rusty Spanish. Their comprehending smiles when I mentioned *Pride and Prejudice* were a pleasure to behold. That title needs no translation! At Harewood House, I encountered two young French

women. Ever on the lookout for potential student members, we discussed Austen in English—because my French is even rustier than my Spanish. I learned that they had first read Austen's novels in French and then in English to appreciate all the nuances of her writing.



In my media encounters this year, I have also been reminded of Austen's universal appeal. The most extraordinary exchanges have come from China. Fortunately, in a wonderful coincidence, Po-Yu "Rick" Wei, our 2025 AGM New Voices speaker, was pleased to share his knowledge of Austen, and Xiao Chuzhou, features editor of the Chinese equivalent of *Time* magazine, was grateful for his input.

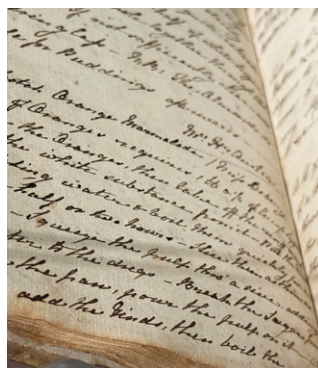
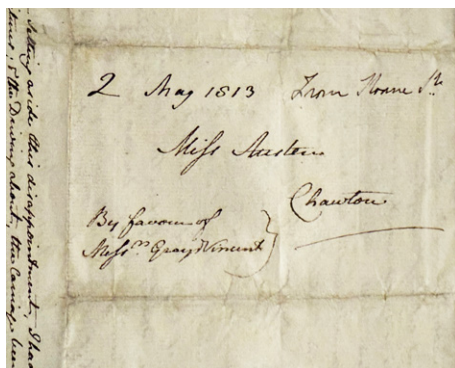
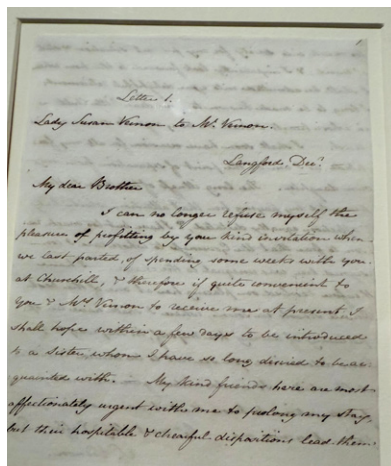
"Our magazine has received a very warm response from Chinese readers, and I'm heartened to see how Jane Austen's work continues to inspire people across cultures," Xiao Chuzhou said. "It's truly wonderful to know that there are so many readers around the world who find meaning and joy in her writing."

Now I'm looking for a translator for this article among our JASNA members! Please email mmintz@american.edu and include "translation" in your subject line.

How very fortunate we are to have Austen and our JASNA community in our lives, wherever and whenever we share our celebrations.



continued from page 1



Clockwise from top left: Austen's turquoise ring; copy of *Lady Susan* in Austen's hand; Martha Lloyd's *Household Book*; letter from Jane to Cassandra

51 Jane Austen letters, the largest group anywhere in the world. Most of the other manuscripts on view also came from the Morgan, including Austen's "Plan of a Novel," pages from *Lady Susan* and *The Watsons*, two notes on the dates of her composition, and letters in her sister Cassandra's handwriting.

Dale and I requested items from the collection at Jane Austen's House that supported the stories we wanted to tell about Austen's lifelong creativity, personal style, and the importance of her American readers. Lizzie Dunford, director of Jane Austen's House, and Sophie Reynolds—head of collections, interpretation, and engagement at the house—were both extremely generous in making available original artifacts: the turquoise ring, a music manuscript volume in Austen's notation, silhouettes of Rev. and Mrs. Austen, and the memorial lock of Austen's hair.

Lizzie and Sophie understand the value of introducing a large New York City audience to Jane Austen's House—and they hope visitors to our show will want to visit the house in the future. We were also fortunate that the British Library wished to make Austen manuscripts available for display at the Morgan in this anniversary



Lock of Jane Austen's hair

year. We selected *Volume the Second* as vivid evidence of Austen's teenage ambition—and of her father's support for that ambition—and the pages from "Opinions of *Emma*" to highlight her keen interest in the responses of family and friends.

In total, "A Lively Mind" presented materials from a dozen collections, which made it one of the most wide-ranging Austen exhibitions ever.

JN: Tell us about your choice of the theme.

JW: "A Lively Mind" wasn't my first idea for a title. I had hoped to use the word "imaginist," which Austen coined in *Emma* to refer to Emma Woodhouse's elaborate imagination. I was overruled, however—and rightly so, since a title needs to be easy to understand and memorable.

I then came up with "A Lively Mind" because it suggests imagination and encompasses that of Austen, her characters, her family, her readers, and her collectors. When I realized how many Austen novels feature variations on that phrase, I knew it was the right title. And I knew which pages I wanted to show from those novels. We were careful to foreground women's experiences and intellects, as Austen does, rather than scenes of courtship. Viewers saw Darcy complimenting Elizabeth Bennet's "liveliness of mind," for instance, and Edmund Bertram fretting that Mary Crawford has "too lively" a mind.

JN: Tell us about the inclusion of Amy Sherald's painting *A single man in possession of a good fortune*.

JW: I've been using an image of Sherald's *A single man* in my undergraduate teaching since I learned of the painting's existence, and I wrote an article for *Persuasions On-Line* [vol. 41, no. 2, summer 2021] about how useful that artwork has been in starting conversations among my first-semester college



Illustrations for Austen novels by English wood engraver Joan Hassall



Recreations of Austen's writing table and pelisse



students. While I had never seen *A single man* in person, I had viewed other paintings by Sherald and knew how compelling, thought-provoking, and moving they are. So I really wanted *A single man* to be one of the final experiences for viewers of "A Lively Mind."

JN: Can you share how the replica of Austen's writing table and other items were created for the exhibition?

JW: Lizzie and Sophie at Jane Austen's House commissioned a 3-D scan of the famous 12-sided writing table and authorized the Morgan to have an exact replica made for our show. It was the first object viewers saw when they entered the gallery, and it really set the scene of thinking of Austen as a writer, one who didn't have unlimited resources and who worked from home.

Our expert exhibition designers were very excited to learn that the Hamilton Weston company has produced wallpaper patterns based on fragments surviving at Jane Austen's House. The green "Chawton Vine" pattern, installed in the dining room at the museum, welcomed visitors on our exhibition banner and as they entered the gallery. The yellow

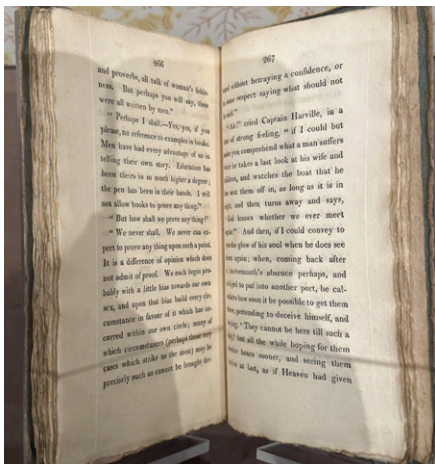
"Chawton Leaf" pattern appeared later in the show.

On loan from Jane Austen's House was Hilary Davidson's reconstruction of Austen's silk pelisse. Hilary and her colleague at the Fashion Institute of Technology, Larissa Shirley King, developed a wonderful video for "A Lively Mind" that showed how the pattern pieces of the garment come together, how it was worn over a dress, and how it would have moved when its wearer walked.

Every object on display had a specially constructed mount or support. Each book in "A Lively Mind," for example, rested on a custom-made cradle that supported that exact volume as it was open to that page.

JN: What was the most rewarding aspect of putting together this exhibition?

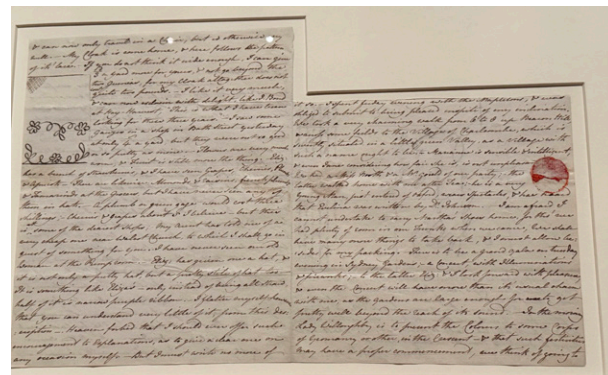
JW: Having researched Austen, her readers, and her collectors for more than 25 years, it was a thrill and an absolute joy to see so many objects together in one gallery, all contributing to the inspiring story that we were telling about Austen's authorship and legacy, including the importance of Alberta Burke's expertise and collecting. Some of the ideas that "A Lively Mind" shared go back to my doctoral dissertation when I was writing about feminine accomplishments in the lives and novels of Austen and her successors. Other discoveries come from my books *Everybody's Jane*, *Reading Austen in America*, and *A New Jane Austen*. Once visitors to our show walked through the doorway that led from the England section of the exhibition to the North American portion, they entered my own lively mind, meeting copies of the 1816 Philadelphia edition of *Emma* and learning about Austen fans in the 19th century United States. Like Anne Elliot in *Persuasion*, I felt the "happiness of being listened to" as I shared my ideas and hopes with the Morgan's staff.



First edition of *Persuasion*



Austen in translation



Letter to Cassandra from Jane in which she includes a sketch of a lace pattern

International News

TOURS TO CELEBRATE THE 250TH

By Liz Philosophos Cooper

JASNA members celebrated Jane Austen at 250 with May and July tours exploring the houses, towns, and cities that shaped Austen's life and fiction. Enthusiastic participants visited Steventon, Chawton, Winchester, Lyme Regis, Bath, and Kent locations long associated with the Austen family.

We learned why Kent is known as the Garden of England with its green landscapes, orchards, fields of hops, blossoming trees, and lush gardens. Members of the Jane Austen Society Kent branch graciously led us in discovering Austen connections in Sevenoaks and Tonbridge. Stops at Goodnestone Park and Holy Cross Church preceded an afternoon at Godmersham Park, where Jane and Cassandra often visited their brother Edward and his family.

Members of the Kent branch were on hand at St. Lawrence the Martyr Church to unveil the replacement memorial plaque to Susanna Sackree, nursemaid to Edward and Elizabeth's 11 children and later Edward's housekeeper. The original plaque had been badly eroded; its replacement was made possible by contributions from JASNA members.

Austen's 1805 holiday in the seaside town of Worthing—which may well have influenced her unfinished novel *Sanditon*—was brought to life by members of The Worthing Society. After lunch and a presentation at Stanford's Cottage—now a Pizza Express—a walking tour



Liz Philosophos Cooper inside 8 College Street

helped us envision what the fashionable health resort would have been like when Jane was there.

A highlight of every JASNA tour is a pilgrimage to St. Nicholas Church in Steventon, where we met with Rev. Michael Wheeler and local parishioners. It was especially poignant to view Austen's baptism entry in the parish register from 1775. Later, we visited the Hampshire Cultural Trust for a talk by trustee Louise West and the opportunity to view Regency-period items and clothing including Austen's pelisse, laid out in a way that made the inside stitching visible.

In Winchester, we enjoyed the rare opportunity to enter No. 8 College Street, where Austen spent the final weeks of her life. As part of the 250th anniversary celebrations, the residence has been restored and is open to the public for the first time. Original paint colors have been replicated on the refurbished walls and an original excavated stairway can be viewed through a glass tile on the floor. It was poignant to stand where Austen once did and read her words written on the wall: "We have a neat little drawing room with a bow window overlooking Dr Gabell's garden." This moving visit was followed by a prayer service in Winchester Cathedral, where we laid pink carnations on Austen's grave.



Godmersham Park



In Chawton, Chief Executive Katie Childs welcomed us to Chawton House. Before lunch in the Great Hall, we were left to roam the house, spending considerable time viewing the wonderful exhibition curated by Kim Simpson, “Sisters of the Pen: Jane Austen, Influence, Legacy.” This impressive collection spotlights the women who shaped and were shaped by Austen’s wit, words, and world.

We were warmly greeted at Jane Austen’s House by Director Lizzie Dunford and introduced to two terrific exhibits. “The Art of Cassandra,” curated by JASNA member Janine Barchas, brought together 10 examples of Cassandra Austen’s art for the first time. An upstairs bedroom is now home to the fabulous permanent exhibit “Jane Austen and the Art of Writing,” which celebrates her creative genius and the hard work she put into her writing. It shares her inspirations, pioneering techniques, and the publication process from her earliest teenage writings to her mature novels. First editions of her novels sit in a



Spring tour farewell dinner at Farleigh House



“Jane Austen and the Art of Writing” exhibition at Jane Austen’s House

stunning display case at the center of the room. It was both exciting and moving to be immersed in the writing process that resulted in Austen’s six novels in the home that was so important to her domestic happiness.

Both tours ended with a farewell dinner at Farleigh House, with its stunning grounds and mansion and breathtaking views. We all felt fortunate to have had this enriching experience.

Liz Philosophos Cooper is past president of JASNA, coordinator of JASNA’s Tours of England, and chair of the 250th Anniversary Celebration Committee.

Apply for 2026 International Visitor Program

JASNA members in the United States and Canada who are working on creative or scholarly projects focused on Austen, her life, works, and world are eligible to apply for the JASNA International Visitor Program (IVP) to support research in England. The fellowship award comes with \$3,250 to be used toward transportation, housing, and expenses.

The selected recipient will spend up to six weeks in Chawton, Hampshire, in summer 2026. The scholar is expected to work 14 hours per week for JASNA’s program partners: Chawton House, Jane Austen’s House, and/or St. Nicholas Church. The IVP also requires that the recipient attend the Jane Austen Society’s Annual General Meeting and provide staff assistance as the honorary secretary may request. The remainder of the time may be spent on research.

Applications and additional information will be posted in mid-September at jasna.org/programs/international-visitor. Applications must be received by Dec. 16, 2025. For more information, please contact IVP Chair Susan Farnsworth at chawtonivp@jasna.org.

Supporting the Austen Family's Ecclesiastical Heritage

By Roger E. Moore

One of the many ways that JASNA fosters the study and appreciation of Jane Austen is through financial support of the churches with deep connections to the Austen family.

These Austen Family Churches are proud of their associations with one of England's greatest writers and eager to preserve the Austen heritage and educate the public about it. Each year, JASNA's Churches Committee aids these efforts by offering grants to help fund restoration and other projects.

Participants in the May 2025 JASNA spring tour saw firsthand the difference that JASNA's support can make during their visits to St. Lawrence the Martyr Church, Godmersham (Kent); St. Nicolas, Great Bookham (Surrey); and Holy Cross, Goodnestone (Kent).

At St. Lawrence the Martyr, JASNA's funding restored a memorial to Susanna Sackree, beloved nurse of Elizabeth and Edward Austen Knight's 11 children and later Edward's housekeeper. St. Nicolas—where Jane Austen's godfather, the Rev. Samuel Cooke, held the living—sought funding from JASNA in 2023 to defray the costs of renovating the church-hall bathrooms, a project that is ongoing. JASNA's grant to Holy Cross, Goodnestone, in 2024 facilitated repair of the churchyard path, which proved especially helpful to our recent tour members in avoiding the muddy conditions of an English spring!

Immediate Past President Liz Philosophos Cooper, who participated in the tour and assisted with the official unveiling of the refreshed Sackree memorial, noted the "great goodwill toward JASNA" engendered by its generosity toward the Austen churches. A call for proposals for the 2025 grant cycle was issued, and the Churches Committee is reviewing submissions. The committee looks forward to further strengthening our connections with these historic institutions through another round of grants this year.

JASNA members may express their commitment to preserving the Austen ecclesiastical heritage at any time by making designated donations on jasna.org through the Member Portal or when they renew their annual memberships.

The Austens were a clerical family, and Jane Austen's love and reverence for the church were deep. Considering the importance of religion in Austen's life, I encourage everyone to contribute to ensuring the vitality of these churches for generations to come.

Roger E. Moore is a member of the JASNA Board of Directors and chairs JASNA's Churches Committee. He is principal senior lecturer in English at Vanderbilt University, where he has taught since 1995, and author of Jane Austen and the Reformation: Remembering the Sacred Landscape (Ashgate/Routledge 2016).



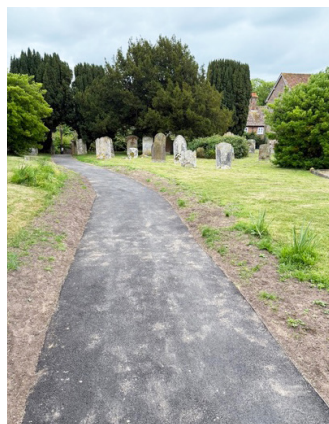
Sackree unveiling ceremony



St. Nicolas Church, Great Bookham



Holy Cross Church, Goodnestone



Finished walkway at Holy Cross Church



Annual General Meetings

Plenary Speakers Announced for 2026 AGM



Tucson, Arizona, is the setting for the 2026 Annual General Meeting (AGM), to be held Oct. 29–Nov. 1, 2026, over Halloween weekend, with the theme **Jane Austen’s Bath Novels: *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion***, the two novels considered bookends to Austen’s career.

The AGM will explore Austen’s maturation as a writer, from her first major novel to her last completed work. It also will examine health and wellness; innocence and experience; models of masculinity; youth and aging; home, holiday, and exile; deception and authenticity; and travel, tourism, and resorts.

Plenary speakers will lead our exploration of *Northanger Abbey*, *Persuasion*, and the city of Bath:

Hazel Jones—author of *Jane Austen and Marriage*, *Jane Austen’s Journeys*, and *The Other Knight Boys: Jane Austen’s Dispossessed Nephews*—will be the 2026 Carol Medine Moss Keynote Speaker. She has taught Austen courses and presented talks at a variety of venues in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the U.S., and Australia. She is secretary and co-founder of the Jane Austen Society South West branch and editor of the U.K. society’s annual report. Her essays have appeared in journals including *Persuasions* and *Persuasions On-Line*.

Devoney Looser, Regents Professor of English at Arizona State University, will be the 2026 JASNA North American Scholar lecturer. A popular speaker, Looser has presented at many AGMs over the years. She is author or editor of 11 books, including *The Making of Jane Austen* and *The Daily Jane Austen: A Year of Quotes*. Her series of 24 30-minute lectures on Austen is available through The Great Courses and Audible. Looser’s latest book, *Wild for Austen: A Rebellious, Subversive,*

and Untamed Jane, was published in September 2025.

Lidia Chang, flutist, musicologist, and assistant professor of music at Colorado College, will speak at the Sunday plenary session. She has given talks and performances at JASNA AGMs in Washington, D.C., and Kansas City and at JASNA regional meetings. She has performed with a number of period instrument ensembles and has released two albums of Regency-era dance music, some of which can be heard on the BBC’s adaptation of *Poldark* (2015–19). Her current work focuses on “gentlemanliness” in the Georgian era.

Breakout sessions are part of every AGM experience, with intriguing speakers from academia and a wide variety of backgrounds. For details on the Call for Papers and how to apply for a New Voices Breakout Speaker grant, which supports a first-time AGM presenter, visit jasna.org/conferences-events/2026-agm/call-for-papers. Submissions close Nov. 30, 2025.

Mark your calendars for the 2026 AGM in a unique and vibrant Southwestern setting.

2025 LIVESTREAM/VIRTUAL AGM STREAMING OCT. 9–12

Access to recordings until Feb. 1, 2026

Members \$185 • Student Members \$150

The Livestream/Virtual package includes:

5 plenary lectures, featuring Paula Byrne, Juliette Wells, Vanessa Riley, John Mullan, and the plenary panel consisting of Janine Barchas, Inger Brodey, Devoney Looser, and Collins Hemingway

5 pre-selected breakout sessions, including Celebrating Jane Austen’s Birthday; Jane Austen and the Ethics of Shyness; Jane Austen’s Flamboyant French Cousin, the Countess Eliza de Feuillide; Books as Children; and Austen: The Adaptation Machine

3 special guest sessions, featuring Caroline Knight (Jane Austen’s fifth grand-niece), Deborah Charlton (leader of the Steventon archaeology project), and Susannah Harker (Jane Bennet in the 1995 BBC *P&P* miniseries)

Fashion Show and more, including impromptu programming and Emporium vendors’ information

For more information and to register:

jasna.org/agms/baltimore2025/livestream.php

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

JASNA members are hereby given notice of the Annual General Meeting of the Society to be held October 10–12, 2025, in Baltimore.

The primary purpose of the AGM is for members to attend the JASNA Annual Members Meeting or the JASNA Canada Business Meeting, at which the slates of nominees will be voted on.

Features

Clueless Watch Party Celebrates Film's 30th Anniversary

Nearly 250 JASNA members tuned in on the 30th anniversary of *Clueless* for a watch party, followed by a live Q&A with the film's writer/director, Amy Heckerling, moderated by VP for Regions Susie Wampler. As if we would miss the chance to celebrate this iconic modernization of *Emma*, which transports versions of Austen's characters to a mid-1990s Beverly Hills high school.

Clueless was a hit on its release and has only grown in cult status since its premiere. The soundtrack went platinum, the costumes by Mona May spawned a Versace collection in 2018 and continue to be referenced by fashion designers, and new generations keep discovering this now-classic work. The film led to numerous books, a television show, a musical—and is now being developed as a new TV series for Peacock with Alicia Silverstone once again starring as Cher, with Heckerling executive producing.

During the Q&A—which can be viewed in the Member Portal in the new “Member Extras” section—Heckerling discussed how she translated Austen's characters into their modern counterparts, created the lexicon of iconic catchphrases, and much more. She also shared the film's challenging journey through the studio development process. For instance, Heckerling said she faced pressure from the initial studio, Fox, to make the story less female-centric.

In describing her heroine, Heckerling noted that Cher and Emma are both caregivers, which makes them feel like they're in charge of people. “Cher makes up whole scenarios in her head that are wrong,” Heckerling added, providing the example of Cher's not realizing Christian—the Frank Churchill counterpart—is unavailable. “She doesn't question whether he is even interested in girls. It just wouldn't occur to her.” Heckerling said she named the Mr. Knightley character, played by Paul Rudd, Josh after the biblical Joshua and the battle of Jericho. “They're both knights, warriors,” she said of Mr. Knightley and Josh. “They're people who will go out and fight for you.”



Amy Heckerling



Alicia Silverstone as Cher, Brittany Murphy as Tai, and Stacey Dash as Dionne

WHO SAID IT?

Test your *Clueless* knowledge (answer key at bottom).

1. “You see how picky I am about my shoes and they only go on my feet.”
2. “I'm calling your mother!”
3. “You're a virgin who can't drive.”
4. “I've got a .45 and a shovel. I doubt anybody would miss you.”
5. “I totally paused.”
6. “I thought it reeked.”
7. “You jeepin' behind my back?”
8. “You found someone even more clueless than you are to worship you.”

Young Filmmakers Contest Receives Record Number of Entries

How do two young students get rid of Mrs. Bennet, who has landed in their living room?

Where did Jane Austen really get the inspiration for her heroines?

What would a Project Runway design look like if it had taken a page (or 200) from Austen's books?

If you had a pain in your head around 1811, would your doctor cure what ails you ... or would he kill you?

These and many other questions were entertainingly presented in a bumper crop of short films submitted for this year's Young Filmmakers Contest (YFC). Thanks to increased marketing and the expansion of the contest internationally, the YFC enjoyed a dramatic uptick in entries from North America and beyond.

"This year's innovative short films reflect an arresting diversity in genre and technique," YFC Chair Erika Kotite adds. "Experimentation in mixed media adds to the fun."

Ten countries are represented in the 2025 contest: Australia, Canada, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, the Philippines, Romania, Russia, and the United States. The filmmakers range in age from 14 to 30 and possess a high level of familiarity with the source material, Kotite notes.

The YFC team narrowed down the entries before submitting the finalists to this year's distinguished judging panel. The finalist films will be screened at the awards gala at the Baltimore AGM on Thursday, Oct. 9, when the winners will be announced. The audience at the screening will also be able to vote on their own favorite from among the films. The results will be shared on Instagram (@jasnaorg).

Andrew Davies
Screenwriter: *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sanditon*, *Emma*, *Sense and Sensibility*

Lindsay Doran
Producer: *Sense and Sensibility*, *Nanny McPhee*, *Dead Again*, *Leaving Normal*

Susannah Harker
Actor: *Pride and Prejudice*, *House of Cards*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Abigail's Party*

JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA
YOUNG FILMMAKERS contest
MEET OUR 2025 JUDGES PANEL

Vanessa Riley
Author: *Island Queen*, *Murder in Drury Lane*, *Year for Sister Mother Warrior*; Consultant: *Sense and Sensibility* (Hallmark)

Robert Rodi
Author: *Bitch In A Bonnet: Reclaiming Jane Austen*, *Edgar & Emma*, *Amelia Webster*

Rebecca Romney
Author: *Jane Austen's Bookshelf*; Rare book dealer; Rare book specialist on *Pawn Stars* (History Channel)

UPCOMING AUSTEN-RELATED PRODUCTIONS

New Austen adaptations are heading to big and small screens in the near future. Here's a quick overview:

Pride and Prejudice—Netflix six-part miniseries starring Emma Corrin (Elizabeth Bennet), Jack Lowden (Mr. Darcy), Olivia Colman (Mrs. Bennet), Rufus Sewell (Mr. Bennet), and Fiona Shaw (Lady Catherine) with Dolly Alderton adapting and Euros Lyn directing

Sense and Sensibility—feature film starring Daisy Edgar-Jones (Elinor Dashwood), Esmé Creed-Miles (Marianne), Catriona Balfe (Mrs. Dashwood), George MacKay (Edward Ferrars), Frank Dillane (Willoughby), Herbert Nordrum (Colonel Brandon), and Fiona Shaw (Mrs. Jennings) with a screenplay by Diana Reid and direction by Georgia Oakley

The Other Bennet Sister—10-episode miniseries for BBC/BritBox based on the novel by Janice Hadlow and starring Ella Bruccoleri (Mary Bennet), Indira Varma and Richard Coyle (the Gardiners), Dónal Finn (Mr. Hayward), Laurie Davidson (Mr. Ryder), Tanya Reynolds (Caroline Bingley), and Richard E. Grant (Mr. Bennet)

Miss Austen Returns—a sequel to the recent *Miss Austen* series, based on Gill Hornby's novel *The Elopement*, with Keeley Hawes returning as Cassandra Austen along with several other members of the cast



First look at Netflix's new *Pride and Prejudice* miniseries

Unexpectedly Austen

All year, Co-Editors Liz Philosophos Cooper and Sarah Emsley have been sharing tributes to Austen and her work by noted public figures on the *Unexpectedly Austen* blog. Following are edited excerpts from the collection. View the full content at jasna.org/austen/unexpectedlyausten.

"I have a particular reason for feeling grateful to Jane Austen. She changed my life. I adapted *Pride and Prejudice* for the BBC's 1995 version starring Colin Firth and Jennifer Ehle. This led on to TV adaptations of *Emma*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Sanditon*, and stage versions of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*." — Screenwriter and novelist Andrew Davies



"I was nonstop watching *Sense and Sensibility*, the Ang Lee one. That was for an album called *Evermore*." — Singer-songwriter Taylor Swift, discussing the films that inspired her albums

"I have yet to see a stage or film version of one of Austen's novels that successfully communicates the wit, humor, and acerbic voice of the narrator who is Austen. It's the bite of the Austen voice that really fully realizes the brilliant slice of the Austen intellect—her novels are Scotch bonnet to the vanilla dramatizations commonly paraded as examples of her craft and genius." — Adjoa Andoh, actor, writer, director, and producer



"[*Pride and Prejudice* is] one of my favorite books, which usually surprises people. I guess they wonder how a love story from Regency England could be relevant to a 21st century basketball player from the South Side of Chicago. Class struggle, overcoming stereotypes and humble beginnings, getting out of your own way, and letting love take over: These are things I can relate to." — Dwyane Wade, three-time NBA champion, Olympic gold medalist, and 13-time NBA All-Star

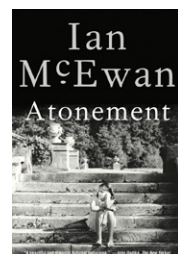
"I felt this connection between her characters ... and my family in Singapore. I felt like I was reading about members of my family." — Novelist Kevin Kwan, author of *Crazy Rich Asians*



"I've been reading *Pride and Prejudice* every few years for two decades now. I studied Austen at university, spent 10 years in a Jane Austen-themed improvised comedy group called Austentatious, and *P&P* only gets better. Just when you think you've got everything out of it, you find more jokes, more wisdom, more understanding. It's stunning. Plus, everyone fancies Lizzie." — Andrew Hunter Murray, writer, podcaster, and comedian



"Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* profoundly influenced my novel *Atonement*." — Ian McEwan, whose award-winning novel was made into an Oscar-winning film



"When our common sense and sensibility overcome our pride and prejudice, we are unstoppable." — French Prime Minister Emmanuel Macron, speaking at a banquet hosted by King Charles



"From [Jane Austen] I learnt that you need to be deserving of true love, ready to see through the eyes of your beloved not just your strength but your flaws." — Azar Nafisi, author of *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books*



"I was a solemn male teenager. I foolishly thought, 'Oh these novels are the same. They're about girls finding a husband.' I was shown her genius by lots of now forgotten students who responded to her ingenuity with their own insights, and it dawned on me how complex and endlessly rereadable these apparently simple stories were." — John Mullan, author of *What Matters in Jane Austen?: Twenty Crucial Puzzles Solved*



"The first submission turned down flat, the second arriving in print without even her actual name on the title page. Who in the early 19th century could have predicted the 21st: read by millions, endless editions in every language, dozens of versions on film? Jane Austen is, and will always be, the improbable inimitable immortal." — Anna Quindlen, author of 10 novels and Pulitzer Prize recipient





WILD BEAST HUNTING

Wild for Austen: A Rebellious, Subversive, and Untamed Jane

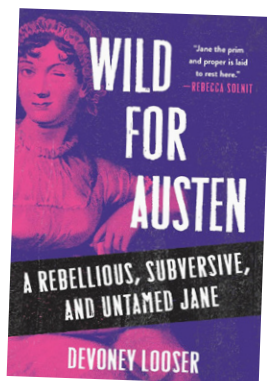
By Devoney Looser

St. Martin's Press (2025)

336 pages, 8 pages of illustrations

Hardcover, \$30

Review by Lizzie Dunford



I always look forward to new research and writings from Devoney Looser. She brings such energy, warmth, and clarity to her work, often pushing the boundaries of our understanding of Jane Austen and her world. *Wild for Austen* is no exception. Also, I often lament the sea of pastels and beige that seem to dominate the world of Austen-related design, so to be met with a Schiaparelli-pink, winking Austen on the front cover is as refreshing as it is inviting.

Wild for Austen is split into three parts: “Part I: Wild Writings,” which looks at each of Austen’s writings in turn, through the lens of “wildness”; “Part II: Fierce Family Ties,” which explores the activities and opinions of her relations and connections; and “Part III: Shambolic Afterlives,” which takes us on a journey through the many ways in which Austen has been interpreted and reinterpreted after her death.

The text is accessible and engaging, with 25 focused chapters that both hold the attention and drive the reader onward. My review copy (which I read the first time in just over one sitting) is now full of turned-down pages with key facts and insights to return to, quote from, and think on further.

Looser carefully navigates the frequently polarized responses to Austen (conservative versus radical) while returning to her central argument—laid out in her opening paragraphs—that “[w]e must shed for good the old, tired stereotypes of safety and simplicity that still cling to Austen” (5). In part I, the theme of wildness in Austen’s writing is studied through the use of language: Looser tells us that Austen employs the words “wild” and its variants more than 40 times throughout the novels (8) and goes on to explain the nuance and significance of wildness.

Alongside the big revelations and passionate appeal for pulling Austen out of her lavender-scented drawing rooms, I particularly enjoyed all the little facts that were new to me. Did you know that in 1752 Austen’s father delivered the annual address for the Academy of Encouraging the Art of Drawing at the University of Oxford (22)? I didn’t, but I do now—and it has spurred many more thoughts and questions.

“If I am a wild beast, I cannot help it” is one of my favorite Austen quotes (and was indeed an inspiration for the special 2025 Jane Austen’s House logo) so it was great to see part II open with a discussion of this key but often overlooked quote. The closing chapter of part II also takes us to the heart of one of the important and ongoing discussions about Austen’s position within women’s history and the feminist movement. It’s a study of Austen’s “involvement” in the fight for women’s suffrage at the turn of the 20th century. At a time when women’s rights are being eroded around the globe, an awareness and understanding of this history feels more vital than ever.

Running throughout *Wild for Austen* is a consistent and well-evidenced refrain that the love of Austen in public consciousness started early. Significant examples are discussed in the opening chapters of part III—“Seeing Jane Austen’s Ghost” and “*Sense and Sensibility* Goes to Court.” Here we see the predominance of Austen’s writing in the 1820s.

The text closes with Looser’s self-declared manifesto on “Loving (and Hating) Austen.” It is a considered and balanced piece of writing that, as throughout *Wild for Austen*, acknowledges the many contradictions and fractures within the “world” of Austen, as well as the love that ultimately underpins it all.

Wild for Austen opens a conversation and suggests multiple metaphorical woodland paths for readers to follow as we explore her work outside the confines of domesticity and into the wild. It is also a timely text, especially within the context of Austen’s 250th anniversary. Having been part of the celebrations and watching the astonishing vivacity of the engagement with Austen’s ongoing legacy, I couldn’t agree more with Looser’s comment that “we’re living in a galvanizing moment for Austen” (274). I would add that *Wild for Austen* is itself a big, galvanizing text. Let’s all embrace the wildness of Austen.

Lizzie Dunford is director of Jane Austen’s House. An avid reader and part-time writer, she is currently focused on the 2025 anniversary celebrations and planning what comes next for Jane Austen’s House.

AUSTEN READERS, HOME AND ABROAD

Austen at Sea: A Novel

By Natalie Jenner

St. Martin's Press (2025), 304 pages

Hardcover, \$26.97

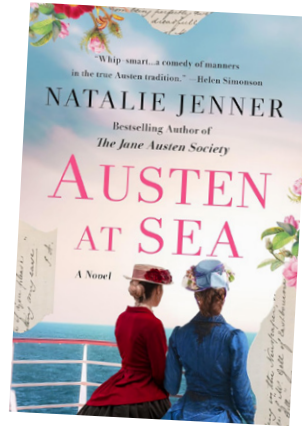
Review by Lynda A. Hall

Austen at Sea, like its predecessor *The Jane Austen Society* (2020), is fiction. But this time, Natalie Jenner has woven her invented characters and events into the real lives of Jane Austen's last surviving brother, Francis, and the American novelist Louisa May Alcott.

Jenner begins her novel in Boston in 1865, with two Austen-loving sisters, Charlotte (Charlie) and Henrietta (Harry), and their widowed father, William Stevenson, a member of the Massachusetts Supreme Court. She also introduces two brothers, Nicholas and Haslett Nelson, who run a bookshop in Philadelphia and collect early editions of Austen's novels. Both sets of siblings are corresponding with Sir Francis Austen, who encourages them all to visit him at his home, Portsdown Lodge, where he will share some unpublished Jane Austen artifacts. Sir Francis dreams of matching up the siblings, as he "thought more and more of love and how to inch it along" (13) in his 91st year. The two pairs of siblings travel to England by boat. They're joined onboard by other American and English travelers (real and imagined), who stage a play written by Alcott and based on Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*.

Once the ship arrives, the story alternates between Austen lovers and skeptics on both sides of the Atlantic. In Boston, we witness Justice Stevenson's budding love affair as he convenes a Jane Austen summer "reading circle" (47) with his judicial colleagues and worries about his daughters' voyage to England. Meanwhile, the travelers meet up with Sir Francis and his remaining single daughter, Fanny-Sofia, tour Chawton, and witness the historical events that lead up to Sir Francis' death.

While in Chawton Cottage, Henrietta muses, "Imagine if everything of hers could be brought back together somehow. ... What we would learn—what we could see" (168), which deftly anticipates the current Jane Austen's House. As the characters discuss the author and her novels, however, they most often refer to her as "Austen," rather than "Jane" or "Miss Austen" as readers in the mid-19th century would have done. Nevertheless, the story is compelling and incorporates Dickens' life and novels, Emily Dickinson's poetry, the beginnings of Reconstruction, the early transatlantic telegraph system, women's suffrage, marriage and property rights, and the evolving legal systems of England and the United States as it reveals Alcott's early travels and creative impulses.



Various chapters pay homage to other works of American and English literature, including Walt Whitman's "O Captain! My Captain!," Samuel Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," and Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*. Astute Austen scholars and readers will enjoy Easter eggs hidden throughout this lively tale that brings Jane Austen's legacy into the legal world, reflecting the judicial drama of *A Tale of Two Cities*, and reconciling the various friends and lovers introduced throughout Jenner's novel.

Lynda A. Hall is associate professor of English and department chair at Chapman University in Orange, California. She has published several essays in Persuasions and Persuasions On-Line, has spoken at several AGMs, and has attended more than 20 AGMs.

MEMOIR OF A LIFETIME

Living With Jane Austen

By Janet Todd

Cambridge University Press (2025), 246 pages

Hardcover, \$25.95

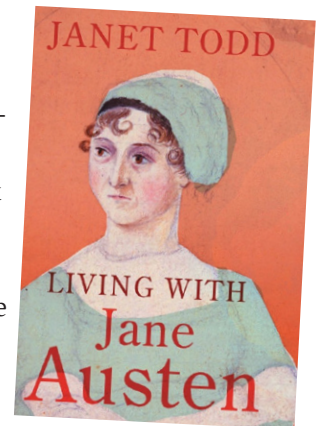
Review by Diana Birchall

In her thoughtful new literary memoir, distinguished professor and author Janet Todd opens by declaring herself old, in terms universally understandable to any Janeite. She quips:

"I'm now twice the age she was when she died

and I'm still listening to girls who will always be twenty" (12). I hastily note that her elder state in no way resembles that of, say, Austen's oldest fictional character, Mrs. Bates, who was "past everything but quadrille." Rather, after reading Todd's memoir, I am moved to say, with Mr. Darcy, "You have employed your time much better." Having chosen Austen to live with, and possessing extraordinary literary qualities herself, Todd reflects on her own life with a spice of Austen's singularity and wisdom.

Born in Wales, Todd has led a life of wide experiences and travel, teaching in places ranging from Africa and the West Indies to the U.S. and the U.K., with her last post as president of Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge. Her scholarly pursuits have been



prodigious. Immersed in Austen's predecessors in the development of English literature by women, Todd has written definitive biographies of some of these foremothers, specifically Mary Wollstonecraft and Aphra Behn, as well as encyclopedias of women writers and complete editions of Wollstonecraft, Behn, and Austen. Like Fanny Price's brother William, in *Mansfield Park*, with his own impressive achievements (at a very young age!), Todd "has a right to be listened to."

She provides discreet yet tantalizing glimpses from her own decades of relating observations of current female experiences to what she found in Austen. Of course, Austen was an author who, ever the artist, showed just exactly how much she wanted to show—no more or less. It takes a scholar of Todd's caliber, writing with shrewdness and grace, to distill a lifetime's insights into her subject while telling us, "I hope ... I can convey a little of the excitement that still overwhelms me as I go on reading Jane Austen" (11).

In her first chapter, "The Brightness of Pemberley," Todd discusses the "ancestors" of Pemberley, such as the great house in one of Austen's favorite novels, Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*. Like Grandison, Darcy is "defined by his large house," (23) and in "The Darkness of Darcy," she examines this hero's mastering attitudes. These are filtered through her experiences in immigrating to academic America in the 1970s, when the field of women's studies was getting underway. She asks, "In the old feminist terms of the 1970s, is Darcy not Patriarchy itself, with all its glittering, merciless, unequal glamour?" (53).

Seeking her place in the academic world, Todd wrote her seminal *Women's Friendship in Literature* (1980) as a gesture toward current literary theory, afterward returning to England to become "the happy biographer of little-known women" (86). Now looking back, as through a beloved garden, she wanders in her memoir among topics enlighteningly and enjoyably treated, such as "Poor Nerves," speculating that Austen's letters are "nervous" ones. "How could the creator of the perfect fictional sentence write those tumbling-over-themselves letters?" (98). In other chapters—with titles such as "The Unruly Body," "Advice," "Talking," and "Making Patterns"—Todd rambles through her own mind and Austen's as she admits that as a girl she made extracts à la Mary Bennet, and suspects Austen did the same.

On politics, Todd has come to a different view than when she strove to bring Wollstonecraft and Austen closer together in liberal, internationalist views. Growing up when a patriotic Englishness was still strong, built on "an almost abstract love of country and countryside" (195), she asks, "But may we not allow her to feel something just a little like what was so prevalent in the 1940s and '50s? Would it be so odd?" (195). For, unlike Wollstonecraft, Austen "never questions the morality of her country's political system or its imperial adventuring" (197).

The book fittingly finishes with a moving chapter on "How to Die." Death, Todd observes, always seems to hover on the edge of comedy in both Austen's letters and the novels, but Austen "showed fortitude in life, patience in death, kindness and gratitude in both" (232). Austen, she concludes, "can't be used for divination ... but if you

open any page of her novels, you can find a good sentence" (233). And there are many good sentences, as well as illuminating ideas, in this eloquent examination of Todd's own life pacing by the side of Austen's. The result is a generous sharing of both writers' spirits and high abilities.

Diana Birchall, retired from her career as a story analyst at Warner Bros., is author of numerous Austen-related novels, stories, plays, and essays, as well as a biography of her grandmother, the first Asian American novelist.

COMIC GENIUS

The Novel Life of Jane Austen: A Graphic Biography

By Janine Barchas

Illustrated by Isabel Greenberg

Full-color illustrations throughout

Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers (2025)

144 pages; hardcover, \$28

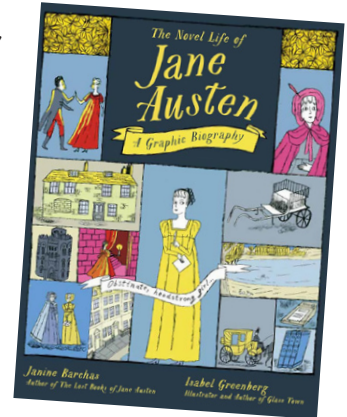
Review by Emma Kantor

Jane Austen didn't travel far in her 41 years, but wide reading expanded her knowledge and experience far beyond the confines of the Regency drawing room. This brisk yet brimming graphic biography sets

out to explore the question, "How did Austen emerge as a literary powerhouse of her own?" (from the "Note to Reader" in the introduction).

Collaborators Janine Barchas and Isabel Greenberg prove themselves more than fit for the task, dramatizing pivotal moments in the novelist's private and creative life that informed her characters and plots. Austen scholar Barchas has written several books about the author and created the digital project "What Jane Saw," which reconstructs two Georgian art exhibitions witnessed by Austen. Greenberg is the author-illustrator of graphic novels including *Glass Town: The Imaginary World of the Brontës*, and has a gift for animating the interior lives of writers.

The timing of the book could not be more auspicious, as the 250th anniversary of Austen's birth is upon us. It's also a welcome companion to the recent *Miss Austen* television series, based on the novel by



Gill Hornby, which offers a window into Cassandra's point of view as sister, confidante, and keeper of Jane's literary flame.

The Novel Life of Jane Austen unfolds in three parts, following Austen's years as "Budding Writer," from 1796–1797; "Struggling Artist," from 1801–1809; and "Published Author," from 1809–1817, transporting us from Bath to Southampton to Chawton. The illustrations are rendered in fine lines, calling to mind the delicate scratches of quill on paper.

Throughout, Greenberg depicts the Austen sisters in complementary hues, with the dark-haired Jane dressed in yellow and the fair-haired Cassandra in blue. It's a clever visual shorthand that allows us to single out each of the women while also symbolizing their strong sisterly bond: Together, they create green, a color suggesting the growth and renewal of spring. Jane's flights of fancy, in which she imagines scenes from her various novels-in-progress, take on a warmer color palette of red and pink. Her creative ardor is palpable when reading aloud from her manuscript for *First Impressions* (what would later become *Pride and Prejudice*). The family's collective enjoyment of her stories only makes the initial rejection by publishers more painful (part 1, chapter 2).

A trip to Bath with Cassandra to visit the Leigh-Perrots, their aunt and uncle, is the perfect balm for Jane's disappointment. "If adventures will not befall a young lady in her own village, she must seek them abroad." That famous line from *Northanger Abbey*, referring to heroine Catherine Morland, is here spoken by Jane (part 1, chapter 4). Sure enough, her sojourn in Bath provides ample material for her next novel. But the charm and novelty of the city wear off when Rev. Austen announces that they are to move there upon his retirement. A period of upheaval follows his death as the three Austen women seek to find a new home in Southampton with their limited means. They ultimately settle in Chawton Cottage, where Jane spends her most content and productive years.

Greenberg stages the death scene with gentle pathos. In a two-page spread, Jane lies in a canopy bed, wrapped in the cozy cocoon of a yellow-and-blue quilt, emblematic of the Austen sisters; she is also

surrounded by her heroes and heroines, who are clad in pink (part 3, chapter 13). The action then fast-forwards to contemporary times, showing Austen fans making their literary pilgrimage to Jane Austen's House. This apt and poignant coda brings the book full circle, hearkening back to early scenes capturing Jane's visit to the Boydell Shakespeare Gallery in London in 1796 alongside her brother Frank (part 1, chapter 1). After the author's lifetime of financial precarity and professional ups and downs, Austen's name and work are now hallowed alongside that of Shakespeare and other giants of English literature.

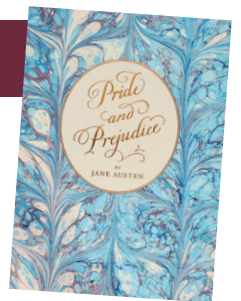
The final image takes up an entire page: Jane and Cassandra appear arm in arm in their signature colors of yellow and blue, looking on as a visitor approaches Chawton Cottage, accentuated with green lawns and ivy. *The Novel Life of Jane Austen* celebrates both women as individuals as well as their joint legacy that Cassandra took such care to cultivate—even if modern readers may lament her pruning of Jane's letters due to concerns about privacy and propriety.

For such a slim volume, Barchas and Greenberg succeed in evoking not only the everyday reality but also the emotional lives of Austen and her family—especially her beloved Cassandra. And for readers who wish to delve deeper into the world of the Austens, the endnotes offer an enriching guide to the many Easter eggs—including quotes from Austen's novels and correspondence, Regency-era context, and other details—that populate the panels.

Emma Kantor is a Brooklyn-based writer, comedian, and senior children's books editor at Publishers Weekly.

SPECIAL 250TH ANNIVERSARY EDITIONS

Pride and Prejudice: Collector's Edition—The Complete Novel, Featuring the Characters' Letters and Papers, Written and Folded by Hand. Curated by Barbara Heller. This eye-popping, lavish new edition builds on the 2020 (merely) deluxe edition. Published in two volumes in a beautiful marbled slipcase, it offers historically accurate paper, luxurious bindings, five new pieces of ephemera (including a newspaper clipping, invitation to a ball, and marriage license), as well as contributions from noted Austen scholar Juliette Wells and Morgan Library curator Philip Palmer. (Chronicle Books, \$80)

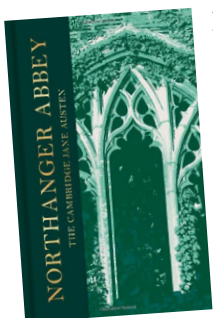


Northanger Abbey: The Collector's Edition. Distinguished Austen scholar Janet Todd provides an insightful new preface along with extensive endnotes for this edition, placing the novel in its cultural, historical, and literary contexts. (Cambridge University Press, \$24.95)

Jane and the Blue Willow Princess by Catherine Little, art by Sae Kimura. A charming picture book for young readers that uses the blue willow pattern on the Austen family china as a springboard for a fanciful story of Jane (already a writer) and Cassandra Austen as children. (Plumleaf Press, \$24.95)



—Reviews by Betsy Groban, JASNA News book review editor



Regional News

CANADA

Alberta, Calgary

In May, we had a record turnout for our annual tea with this year's theme, "Austen at 250—Celebrating Her Life and Legacy." We played Austen Mad Libs after our feast and wrapped up the afternoon with a performance by the Sprigged Muslin Dancers and a group dance. In June, our Midsummer Country Assembly attracted 40 attendees. Mel Airbib and Vivienne Jones demonstrated each dance.



Vivienne Jones and Mel Airbib; Midsummer Country Assembly participants

Ontario, Toronto Metro

We held our inaugural event in June at the Oakville Film Festival during its gala celebration of Jane Austen's 250th. RC Tabinda Kamal and region members enjoyed connecting with local Janeites while hosting a table for the region.



Toronto members Aili Wang, Adam Quinan, RC Tabinda Kamal, Elizabeth Webb, Nancy Kinsman, and Sue Draper

INTERNATIONAL

In June, we watched two videos from the 2024 Cleveland AGM, with Sheila and Hugh Kindred providing additional details and research. Ron Dunning, a descendent of Francis Austen, then shared fascinating details about other Austen relatives drawn from his extensive genealogical studies.

UNITED STATES

Arizona, Phoenix-Flagstaff

We changed our name to better reflect our geographic reach. In March, we unraveled the mystery of why Emma and Cher are so *Clueless* and explored the connections between these two coming-of-age protagonists. Northern Arizona University political science student Nilay Jones guided us in taking novelist P. D. James' intriguing challenge of reading *Emma* as a mystery novel.



Reading Emma

Later in the spring, Liz Barrett invited other members to a curated tea at the Majestic Theatre in Gilbert, where we discussed the 1995 film *Sense*



Phoenix-Flagstaff members

and *Sensibility*. We also held a Box Hill picnic at Fort Tuthill County Park.

California, San Diego

In April, we were treated to a Zoom presentation by Hilary Davidson, author of *Jane Austen's Wardrobe*. It was fascinating to learn about Austen's fashion sense and the type of clothing she enjoyed wearing. In May, several members traveled to the Southwest Region's "A Star Is Born" gala.



San Diego members at the Southwest gala

California, Southwest

In April, our booth at the *Los Angeles Times* Festival of Books drew a record-shattering 3,400 visitors. Our cardboard Mr. Darcys attracted hundreds of guests eager to snap photos with them. In May, we held a two-day gala themed "A Star Is Born: A Truth Universally Acknowledged" at Pasadena's Hotel Dena and The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens in San Marino. Chair Nancy Gallagher oversaw the weekend's events, which included presentations, a ball, and a preview screening of *Miss Austen*. Costumer Mela Hoyt-Heydon explored sartorial choices in Austen adaptations. Jossalyn Emslie discussed why Sophia's advice to Laura in "Love and Freindship"—"Run mad as often as you chuse;



(Clockwise from top left) JASNA VP for Conferences Jane Boltz; Southwest's Festival of Books Co-Chairs Linda and Sarah Lawson; Josselyn Emslie, Jess House, and Mela Hoyt-Heydon; Devoney Looser; Southwest Gala Chair Nancy Gallagher; RC Melissa Buell

but do not faint"—continues to resonate. Jess House reprised her popular Denver 2023 AGM breakout on "The Darcy Wars."

On Sunday, Devoney Looser discussed Austen's star power and adaptations that never made it to production. UCLA and Opera League lecturer Kristi Brown-Montesano critiqued the use of music in various adaptations.

Colorado, Denver/Boulder

Lidia Chang gave a presentation on "Frivolity, Foppery, and Frank Churchill: The Dangers of Male Music-Making." An associate professor of music at Colorado College, Chang shared how Austen's novels offer a window into the restrictive musical culture of Georgian England, revealing nuances about how different social classes, genders, and nationalities were allowed to engage with music.



Lidia Chang

In June, we gathered for our annual Strawberries at Donwell Abbey celebration.

District of Columbia, Metro

We partnered with the Alexandria Chamber Music Society and the Alexandria Assembly in April to present "Jane Austen: Music and Dance." The audience at the historic Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum enjoyed music by Haydn, Pleyel, and Arne—composers who would have been familiar to Austen—and dances whose tunes Austen copied in her music books. Region members Joan Walker and Colleen Dougherty collaborated on the dances.



Musicians at The Lyceum



Dancers at the D.C. Metro event



Orlando members at the Modiste Market

Florida, Orlando

We joined with the Winter Park Library for "A Year With Jane" in honor of Austen's 250th.

April began with "Songs & Sensibility," a lecture on music from Austen's era, followed by a "Regency Blooms" workshop. Our discussion of *Mansfield Park* was capped with a screening of the 1999 film. Further highlights included thought-provoking talks about "The Villains of Jane Austen's Novels," "Jane Austen and Georgian Theater," and "Incorporating Jane Austen in the Classroom." We also attended a 20th anniversary screening of the 2005 *Pride & Prejudice*.

In May, we spotlighted Regency heroines and delighted young readers at our whimsical Jane Austen Junior Tea at Mead Botanical Garden. We celebrated the book release of *Scandalous: The Secret Diaries of Jane Austen's Bad Girls* by member A. L. Ady. At the local Kids Fringe Festival, we debuted an original interactive play, *A Game of Graces*, teaching kids about the finer points of Regency etiquette.

Our *Persuasion* book discussion paired beautifully with a screening of the 1995 adaptation at the Enzian Theater. Finally, we partnered with the city of Mount Dora for the Modiste Market, a Regency-style vendor fair.



Persuasion screening

Florida, Southwest

Last winter, we met via Zoom for a slow read of *Emma*. In the spring, we watched five scenes—including Elton's proposal, the Box Hill picnic,

and Mr. Knightley's proposal—from five *Emma* adaptations. We discussed the various characters, how they were viewed by each director, and how close (or far) they were from our own conceptions.

Georgia

In June, we traveled to The Crafty Rabbit Meadery to hear all about “Jane Austen and Mead” from Sacramento Region member Joy Prevost.



Georgia's June event

Idaho, Southern

In May, we discussed *The Bluestockings: A History of the First Women's Movement*, which features a surprisingly diverse group of powerful women who provided the foundation for so much of what we take for granted today—a woman's right to get an education, vote, own property, and run for public office.

In June, member Tamara Mackenthun and her husband hosted our annual Box Hill picnic at their Sweetbriar Vineyard & Winery in Mountain Home. Later that month, we hosted “An Evening With Gillian Perry,” during which the London-based writer, speaker, and broadcaster gave a presentation at the historic Bishops' House in Boise on the social history of the English afternoon tea and tea drinking.



Gillian Perry



Southern Idaho members at the Box Hill picnic

Maryland

In May, we gathered virtually to discuss the *Miss Austen* miniseries. In June, we facilitated a bus excursion to New York City to experience the “A Lively Mind: Jane Austen at 250” exhibition at the Morgan Library, with private tours



One of Maryland's tour groups

led by co-curator Juliette Wells. Members of the D.C. Metro and Eastern Pennsylvania regions joined us on the bus and tours.

Massachusetts

We welcomed Hostos Community College Professor Elizabeth Porter to the Charles River Museum in May for her talk titled “Austen's London.” Using quotes from Austen's novels and letters, Porter described how the perception of London in the novels contrasted with the author's personal experience. Austen enjoyed visiting London, where she went to art galleries, museums, and the theater.



Elizabeth Porter

Michigan, Western

In April, several members attended a theatrical adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility* performed by Twin City Players in St. Joseph. We partnered with the theater to advertise JASNA and premiered our newly created logo. In June, we attended a stage presentation of *Pride and Prejudice* (scripted by Andrew Davies) in Lansing. Also in June, a few members toured the Heritage Hills Historic District of Grand Rapids.



Bev Sobolewski, new member Sara Claybaugh, Jo Ellyn Clarey, and Grace Richards



Western Michigan members with the *Sense and Sensibility* cast

Minnesota

In April, we enjoyed recreating Jane Austen's 1804 portrait. May brought us together for two events. First, we were invited to a pre-screening of *Jane Austen Wrecked My Life*. Later that month, we visited the Minneapolis Institute of Art, where we enjoyed a guided tour of the

museum's Regency exhibits, gaining insight into the aesthetics and culture of Austen's world.

Nebraska

In April, we held our fourth annual JASNA bingo event, with this year's focus on *Persuasion*. Prizes were awarded, and everyone got to eat the bingo-token M&Ms when we were done.



Recreation of Austen's 1804 portrait; Minnesota's Elly Setiadi, Ginny Ogura, Beth White, and Ruth Maramis



Nebraska bingo players

New Jersey

In April, we met at a Princeton tea house to discuss *The Other Bennet Sister* by Janice Hadlow. In May, we met via Zoom to discuss Inger Brody's *Jane Austen and the Price of Happiness*. The author herself graciously attended to offer further insights.



Juliette Wells with members of the New Jersey Region

In June, we met at the Morgan Library in New York City for a tour of "A Lively Mind: Jane Austen at 250" led by co-curator Juliette Wells.

New York, Capital

We joined the Metro New York Region for a tour of the Morgan Library exhibition, with 30 of our members attending. Afterward, we gathered for lunch with members from both regions.

New York, Metro

In March, Sheila Johnson Kindred spoke via Zoom about Jane Austen's naval brothers, Frank and Charles, and their influence on Jane's work.

In May, Mary Bly (aka novelist Eloisa James) and Vanessa Riley shared their insights into writing historical fiction. They also discussed whether factual accuracy should take precedence over fictional fun. Later, we attended a screening of *Jane Austen Wrecked My Life*. Writer-director Laura Piani and the film's star, Camille Rutherford, were both on hand for the Q&A afterward, moderated by our own Prerna Ramachandra.

In June, we enjoyed a lively, funny three-person adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* by the Guildford Shakespeare Company as part of the annual Brits Off Broadway Festival. We arranged a post-show talk-back with the three actors, director, and choreographer. Also that month, we attended the opening weekend of the Austen exhibition at the Morgan Library, with a private tour led by co-curator Juliette Wells.

North Carolina

In April, we welcomed JASNA President Mary Mintz for her talk, "Jane Austen in American



North Carolina members

Periodicals: Highlights of the First Hundred Years."

We met for our virtual book club in May, reading Susan Allen Ford's *What Jane Austen's Characters Read (and Why)*, and welcomed the author for a Q&A and discussion. In addition we gathered to see *Jane Austen Wrecked My Life*.

June also featured our annual Tea & Miscellany meeting, where we enjoyed discussing the 2025 Jane Austen Summer Program, our movie outings, and the miniseries *Miss Austen*.

Oregon, Southern

In April, Marsha Salcedo gave a talk on the fascinating lives of Jane Porter and Anna Maria Porter, who published 26 books in their lifetimes. Lauren Lind read a passage from Jane Porter's *The Scottish Chiefs* to help us compare her style with Austen's. RC Linda Thomas noted a mention of Anna Maria Porter in Austen's 1808 letter from Southampton.



Lauren Lind

In May, Lind gave a presentation referencing Jan Merriman's *Jane Austen's Remarkable Aunt, Philadelphia Hancock*, which chronicles Hancock's journey from millinery apprentice to bride in India and from connecting with powerful government officials—including Warren Hastings, governor-general of Bengal and rumored father of Hancock's daughter, Eliza—to her return to England and the impact of Hastings' bequest to Eliza.

In June, Jenni Presley led a multifaceted session featuring Janine Barchas' essay "Cassandra and the Art of Copying" and Barchas' latest book, *The Novel Life of Jane Austen: A Graphic Biography*. We also discussed Gill Hornby's novel *Miss Austen* and the recent PBS miniseries.

Oregon/Southwest Washington

In May, we held our annual spring tea at the Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in Beaverton. Collins Hemingway delivered a presentation

about his book *Jane Austen and the Creation of Modern Fiction: Six Novels in “a Style Entirely New.”* Cynthia Eckersley gave a



Janine Barchas; Cindy Filer; Cynthia Eckersley at the piano

piano performance from the 2005 *Pride & Prejudice* film score by Dario Marianelli. We also held a sale that included many items from the estate of former RC Bill Boyd and a silent auction for the 1905 Winchester edition of Austen’s novels from the estate of Mary Cammann.

In June, we held a “Jane and Janine” meeting hosted by Cindy Filer and featuring Janine Barchas, who gave a behind-the-scenes slideshow on the creative process of developing *The Novel Life of Jane Austen: A Graphic Biography*.

South Carolina

In April, we toured the Charleston Tea Garden, delighting in a trolley ride around the Wadmalaw Island farm and picnicking beneath the property’s oak trees. We also savored a tasting of teas from the largest producer in the U.S.



Charleston Tea Garden event

Tennessee, East

In April, we gathered for an afternoon of Regency card games. In May, members attended the Historic Rugby British Festival, honoring British culture in the mountains of East Tennessee. Held at the restored village of Rugby—founded in 1880 as a utopian community by author Thomas Hughes—the event featured a table of Jane Austen-related items, English country dancing, cricket matches, maypole twining, and visits to the village’s original library. In June, we viewed the *Miss Austen* miniseries.



East Tennessee members

Tennessee, Middle

In May, we immersed ourselves in the art of Regency-era floral arranging and botanical illustration during a hands-on workshop inspired by the book *Jane Austen’s Garden: A Botanical Tour of the Classic Novels*, guided by author Molly Williams and illustrator Jessica Roux.

Also in May, we took part in a program in Rachel’s Garden at The Hermitage, “The World Through Women’s Eyes: Jane



Brenda Jackson-Abernathy with Co-RCs Debbie Carroll and Brenda Vaughan



Middle Tennessee picnic attendees

Austen and Rachel Jackson Garden Talk.” Co-RC Debbie Carroll spoke on Austen, while Brenda Jackson-Abernathy, Belmont University professor of history, discussed Jackson.

In June, we hosted a Box Hill picnic and tea at Percy Warner Park. The event offered a promenade through bonnets, scones, and readings from *Emma*. Guests received commemorative fans celebrating Austen’s 250th anniversary.

Texas, Coastal Bend

Under the leadership of founding RC Betty Torres, we secured a hub at La Retama Central Library and inaugurated a book club. We now have a Facebook page, Instagram account, and domain for a future website. We also published our first newsletter.

Texas, North

At Gardenuity in Dallas, author Molly Williams discussed her new book, *Jane Austen’s Garden: A Botanical Tour of the Classic Novels*, for our March event.



North Texas members with author Molly Williams (second from left)

Williams shared how she conducted her research, drawing connections between Austen’s writing and the flora of her world, while also reflecting on her own upbringing on a flower farm. In April, we discussed the Box Hill picnic scene from *Emma*, exploring the scene’s wit and social tension, and Austen’s subtle mastery of dialogue. Then a local art teacher led a hands-on watercolor lesson focused on painting strawberries.



Susan Allen Ford

At the historic Aldredge House in Dallas, Susan

Allen Ford, editor of *Persuasions* and *Persuasions On-Line*, gave a talk on the history of JASNA's literary journal, tracing its origins and evolution and highlighting some of its most memorable articles.

Texas, South Central

Region members volunteered for Jane Austen Day at a local bookstore. The highlight was an author event featuring Janine Barchas and her new book, *The Novel Life of Jane Austen: A Graphic Biography*. We also participated in Regency dance lessons, an Austen-hero scavenger hunt, children's story time, special teas, and a photo booth. We distributed bookmarks with a QR code to join JASNA and connect with other Janeites in the area.



Jodi Leckbee, RC Angela Kuempel, Cheryl Moczygamba, and Rachel Bloom at Jane Austen Day



Angela Kuempel and Janine Barchas

Utah

We revived our "Stroll Through Red Butte Garden" and were lucky enough to enjoy picture-perfect weather for our "very long walk." Later in April, we attended a preview of *Miss Austen*, sponsored by PBS Utah and the Salt Lake Film Society. The evening started with a quiz about Jane Austen's life presented by RC Kim Deacon.

May brought another book club meeting, held at Jessica Mathewson's home. The surrounding Wasatch Mountains formed a perfect backdrop for our discussion of gothic novels and Ann Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest*. In June, we held our fourth annual Regency Costume Fair, at which we painted fans and learned to make soft bonnets (toques).

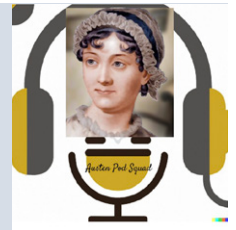
(Right) Jenaia and Jenesse Durling, Lauren Lambert, and Brittany Henage at the Regency Costume Fair; (bottom) Utah members at Red Butte Garden



Virtual

We launched the first episode of our *Austen Pod Squad* on the topic "Bitches in Bonnets: Nothing Lost in Translation Here!" Podcast hosts

RC Marcia Johnson and Sherry Lockwood chatted with Sarah Makowski, a member of the region and author of *Bitches in Bonnets: Life Lessons From Jane Austen's Mean Girls*.



Virtual Region's new podcast

Washington, Eastern/Idaho, Northern

In May, we had our Jane Austen Garden Party at an early 1900s house in Spokane. We enjoyed a scavenger hunt based on Austen quotes as well as tea and an array of offerings including lavender ice cream homemade by co-RC Jane Provinsal. Michele Larrow was elected co-RC, Cassandra Bates treasurer, and Cindy Bell secretary. Afterward, we walked to nearby Manito Park, where Larrow spoke on "The Regency Shrubbery 'in Fine Weather.'"



(Above) Rose Crilly, Melody Faris, co-RC Jane Provinsal, Sara Thompson, Cecily Van Cleave, and Katie Bradley at Manito Park; (right) Cecily Van Cleave and Co-RC Michele Larrow



Wisconsin

Our annual spring luncheon, held at the Blackhawk Country Club in Madison, featured the presentation "Peonies, Berries, and Bees: Jane Austen's Cottage Garden" by Kim Wilson. We hosted spontaneous movie meetups—including two for the 20th anniversary release of the 2005 *Pride and Prejudice*.

Several members met to see *Jane Austen Wrecked My Life* at the Milwaukee Film Festival. We also held virtual gatherings after each episode of *Miss Austen* on PBS.



Wisconsin's Merri Cvetan, Brooke Furmanek, Kim Wilson, and Amy Van Hecke at a 20th anniversary screening of *Pride and Prejudice*

In Memoriam



Marcia McClintock Folsom

Massachusetts

JASNA lost a great leader, scholar, and friend in April, when Marcia McClintock Folsom passed away after a brief illness.

A professor of literature at Wheelock College for more than 30 years, she loved introducing students to Austen and inspiring educators on the best ways to teach Austen. For the Modern Language Association's series Approaches to Teaching World Literature, she served as editor of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* and co-editor with John Wiltshire of *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*. She was a JASNA Life Member, frequent presenter at AGMs, and contributor to *Persuasions* and *Persuasions On-Line*. In 2000, she co-chaired, along with Isa Schaff, the Boston AGM, *Pride and Prejudice: Past, Present, and Future*. Most recently, she was co-RC for the Massachusetts Region.

Her intelligence, knowledge, wit, and sense of style will long be remembered. Most of all, her welcoming and gracious presence will be missed.



Joan Marchaterre

Greater Chicago

Joan Marchaterre died in June at age 96. A graduate of Rosary College, she lived in Naperville, Ill., where she raised three daughters, all Jane Austen readers.

She joined JASNA's Greater Chicago Region in the 1980s at the urging of one of its earliest members, Maggie Cantrall. She particularly enjoyed the annual birthday tea, which she frequently attended with her daughters. An Anglophile who immersed herself in English literature, Marchaterre made several trips to England, studying at St. Clare's, Oxford, visiting Chawton House, and buying books and fine fabrics. She was an accomplished seamstress. A member of several book clubs, including one for over 60 years, she never tired of recommending Austen or JASNA to anyone with an interest in reading.

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PAPER JANE: 250 YEARS OF AUSTEN

A new exhibition at the Grolier Club in New York City celebrates Jane Austen's 250th birthday by measuring her fame at 50-year intervals: 1825, 1875, 1925, 1975, and 2025. In accordance with the collecting tradition of the Grolier Club, America's oldest and largest society for bibliophiles, three of its members—Janine Barchas, Mary Crawford, and Sandra Clark, who are also JASNA members—served as exhibition curators, building a timeline for Austen using books and paper from their own collections. The resulting exhibition, "Paper Jane: 250 Years of Austen," is therefore a one-of-a-kind celebration.



"Paper Jane" mixes bibliomania and serious whimsy: Rare first editions and original manuscripts sit irreverently among popular reprintings, giveaways, movie posters, illustrations, theater playbills, and all manner of paper ephemera—from Austen's first appearances in print to the recent fan fiction she inspired. The kaleidoscopic mix reflects Austen's heady reputation—a revered canonical author whose books are also enjoyed as popular "chick lit."

"Paper Jane" offers two strong throughlines: book production and Austen family involvement. On the one hand, ever-lowering prices for books made Jane Austen a household name, growing readership by dropping the cost of her stories. On the other hand, generations of Austen family descendants offered new materials: biographies, letters, juvenilia, and even alternative endings or fan fictions of their own. Interestingly, the stodgy family lore about "Dear Aunt Jane" was often at odds with the public's perception of the witty "Miss Austen" found in these new materials.

Because Austen has been in print for more than two centuries, she has also witnessed every innovation in book production. This simultaneity turns an exhibition about one author's growing fame into a broader story about changes in publishing and reading. So, by all means, bring a reading friend who remains a stranger to Austen. If you can find one!

"Paper Jane" will be free and open to the public at the Grolier Club, 47 East 60th Street, New York, Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., from Dec. 4, 2025, through Valentine's Day 2026.