

The Austen Intelligencer

Jane Austen Society of North America
Greater New York Region

Fall 2007
Vol. XXVII, No.2

A New Beginning

As your new JASNA-NY Regional Coordinators, we follow in the footsteps of the talented, dedicated people who have led this dynamic region since its founding in 1979. We plan to work very hard to offer interesting programs that will enrich our members' knowledge and appreciation of Jane Austen and her works. We invite your active participation in planning, executing, and publicizing JASNA-NY activities, as well as your ideas, comments, and other "feedback."

We're off to a flying start as you will read elsewhere in this newsletter. In the past few months JASNA-NY members have enjoyed such events as the "May in Cape May" conference and a private preview screening of the new film *Becoming Jane*, featuring an unannounced appearance by the star, Anne Hathaway, as well as participation by the legendary executive producer of Masterpiece Theatre, Rebecca Eaton. Our September Regional Meeting will offer another surprise: a revolutionary new "take" on Mrs. Elton, Emma Woodhouse's rival (at least in her own mind). We have a long "wish list" for the next two years, compiled with the help of old and new members who graciously participated in focus groups that were organized early this summer. Sample items include: a full-day Jane Austen "marathon" with readings and other activities open to the public; outreach to public and private high school students; day trips to historic houses and gardens; locating the "perfect" Box Hill Picnic spot (with picnic tables and rest rooms – your proposals urgently needed!); learning Regency dances, and many more exciting and stimulating lectures, discussions, and outings. Send us your own Jane Austen wish list ideas and we will try to make them happen.

We have also created a Greater New York Region website, www.jasnaNY.org, that will be updated regularly so that you can check on event dates, times and locations, as well as books and cassettes available from the J. David Grey Memorial Library, etc. Our site will be linked to the JASNA website enabling new JASNA members to join us easily. We have contracted with an email service company, Constant Contact, so we can send you email "blasts" about any Jane Austen events that we become aware of, as well as reminders about our own regional events. If you have not shared your email address with us, please do so. Email us at jasnaNY@yahoo.com. With your help and support, we plan to make this region sparkle.

Sincerely,

Nili and Jerry

Email vs. Snail Mail

If you do not have email – you can ignore this notice because you will continue to receive all our mailings courtesy of the U.S. Post Office (popularly known as "snail mail"). However, if our database has your email address, we would like to direct future newsletters and notices to you by email. If you are on the email list, you will receive reminders and notices of last minute opportunities that we could not tell you about otherwise. If you prefer to receive newsletters and/or notices by snail mail, please let us know, either by emailing us at jasnaNY@yahoo.com or by calling us at 212-666-9170, and we will remove your email address from the active list. If you wish us to contact you via both snail mail and email, we can do that, too. Just tell us your preferences.

REMINDER: Our Birthday Meeting will be held on December 15th, mark your calendar now!

Introducing Our Dynamic Duo



Nili Olay and Jerry Vetowich are the first married couple to serve as Co-Regional Coordinators of Greater New York Region. Familiar figures at JASNA-NY events, they have graciously opened their comfortable apartment (with terrace overlooking Riverside Drive) for many regional events. As JASNA members for more than two decades, they are also popular participants at AGMs around the continent, Jerry in his Admiral's regalia and Nili in one of her collection of Regency frocks.

Nili, who retired as Assistant Treasurer of RJR Nabisco several years ago, served as Board Member, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer of JASNA, and on the Coordinating Committee of the twenty-fifth anniversary AGM in Winchester and Chawton in 2003. Educated at the University of Chicago, she plays both piano and harp, and has published articles for travel magazines describing the exotic journeys that she and Jerry have taken to places such as (most recently) Bhutan, Antarctica, and Myanmar.

Jerry — a semi-retired computer programmer — was educated at Wayne State University and Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute. He still works two days a week for a small company that he joined ten years ago as their “first hire.” He too served on the 2003 AGM Coordinating Committee. The recent “May in Cape May” conference — Jerry's brainchild — was a dream-come-true for longtime JASNA-NY members who have dreamed and talked of such an event since the Region began. Jerry plays contra-bassoon with a Manhattan orchestra.

The Olay-Vetowich duo have three adult children and an assortment of six grandchildren and step-grandchildren.
—Elsa Solender

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There are no dues to belong to Greater NY Region. But you must be a member of the national organization (www.jasna.org) to belong to the local group.



Diana Birchall, Bold Defender



Mrs. Elton by Juliet McMaster

COME & MEET THE “OTHER” MRS. ELTON

If Emma Woodhouse is the heroine of *Emma*, why should we care about Mrs. Elton, a minor character and a rather nasty one at that? Ah, but do we really *know* what Jane Austen was telling us –sotto voce – about Augusta Elton, née Hawkins, about her circumstances and her intriguing “back story”? Fortunately, we have engaged Mrs. Elton’s boldest defender, Diana Birchall of Los Angeles, to enlighten us at our Autumn 2007 JASNA-NY Regional Meeting on Sunday, September 16 at 1:30 pm at the House of the Redeemer, 7 East 95th Street.

Diana’s “day job” is serving as a “book person” for Warner Brothers Studios, reading novels to evaluate whether they can – or should – be made into movies. Preparing all those plot synopses for film moguls has clearly sharpened her own literary skills. She is the proud author of “The Mrs. Elton Trilogy”: *In Defense of Mrs. Elton*, *The Courtship of Mrs. Elton*, and *Mrs. Elton in America*. An enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and vivacious Janeite, Diana will reveal to us some of the amazing, little known “facts” she has uncovered in her many, many, many close readings of Jane Austen’s novel. In a more serious vein, she will discuss the challenges of trying to imitate persuasively Jane Austen’s inimitable style. While Austen’s characters and plots are routinely “borrowed” as the basis of sequels and prequels, the distinctive Austen style is rarely (if ever) captured. Diana Birchall, however, comes very close to succeeding where so many other wannabees have fallen dismally short.

After her talk, Diana will be joined by several actors for a performance reading of a short play based upon her witty tale, *The Courtship of Mrs. Elton*.

Is this the perfect pre-conference introduction to the 2007 AGM’s theme novel, *Emma*? Possibly not, probably not, but what a fine time we will have! Come meet Diana, enjoy the lecture, discussion, and show, have some tea and sweets, and treat yourself to some very lively “Jane Talk.”

NOTE: *If this will be your first JASNA-NY meeting, come a half hour early so we can welcome you properly and introduce you around.*

Diana Birchall’s Books

In Defense of Mrs. Elton, and other Jane Austen-related books by Diana Birchall, will be available for purchase from Pug’s Boutique at the September 16th Regional Meeting. If you would like to read them before the meeting, you can buy them through her website at www.dianabirchall.com.

What to read when you are not reading *Jane Austen*

A Passage to India - E. M. Forster

E.M. Forster's protagonist, Dr. Aziz, an idealistic Indian, enables readers to perceive the tensions of India under the rule of the British Raj.

Two English ladies come to visit India. The elder is mother of the City Magistrate; the younger is the would-be fiancée of the Magistrate. Dr. Aziz, in his anxiety to please the visitors, arranges an expedition to the caves of Marabar. An unexpected incident creates disillusionment and anger among the principals, foreshadowing, in its way, the coming dissolution of British rule.

I found Forster's narrative style compelling. My overloaded memory, to my satisfaction, was jogged into vividly recalling a monumental piece of history that took place during my lifetime.

Mariam Attarian Bryer

Bayou Folk - Kate Chopin

Kate Chopin— author of the celebrated (and, in its day, extremely controversial) novel, *The Awakening* — vividly evokes life in rural Louisiana in the late nineteenth century in this, her first published collection of short stories (1894). Her style is engaging and engrossing, and her ear for the dialects of the region is flawless.

I recently gave a copy of the book to a dear friend, and I want to share her reaction with you: "As for the stories in *Bayou Folk*, they are delightful, absolutely delicious. Oh, yes, I love them...I think you've unearthed a real treasure, so rich a piece of French Americana in a touching blend of plantation life, recently freed slaves (and the still existing cotton gin), all centered around French parish life! Plus some heart-rending portraits of isolated, poverty-stricken souls with happy or tragic loves (*Désirée's Baby* is a real masterpiece), and such evocative background detail. It all comes magnificently to life, warm and hopeful in spite of the sometimes unbearable disappointments. She certainly keeps you riveted.

"Probably it's taken all this time for her to surface because this isn't mainstream Americana. It's all the more precious because of that French blend, which I imagine has been wiped out by Katrina if there was still anything left of it before."

Marilyn Goldfried and (mostly) Paulette Martin

Monthly Book Group

Did you know that the New York region has an active book group that meets monthly on the third Thursday of each month, in members' homes? We have been meeting for 20 plus years but have not yet run out of things to talk about. People have asked us, "there are only six books, what do you talk about?" We discuss the characters, the biographies, unfinished books, the juvenilia, and other contemporary authors. The participants suggest topics. Come join us – send Mary Ann Linahan your email address at mclinahan@aol.com, or call her at 718-896-2469, so that she can notify you about future meetings.



DOES THIS WOMAN LOOK FAMILIAR TO YOU?

If you answered yes, you were one of the fortunate JASNA-NY members privileged to hear the distinguished actress, Kathleen Chalfant, read selections from Jane Austen's works at the Donnell Library Center on March 20th. What a treat to hear Austen's words read with such perception and in a perfect English accent! This reading was a gift from Miss Chalfant (a confirmed Janeite) to JASNA-NY, and we are very grateful for her generosity.

Miss Chalfant's remarkable performance brought to life young Jane Austen's charming and incisive wit in *The History of England*; John and Fanny Dashwood's hilariously gruesome selfishness as they consider how to help the Dashwood sisters; and the arrogance and foolishness of Mr. Darcy in his first proposal to Elizabeth Bennet, and of his aunt Lady Catherine de Bourgh when she confronts Elizabeth with her supposed engagement to Darcy. The audience, which also included members of the general public, showed its appreciation with lots of laughter.

After the reading, a panel consisting of Stephen O'Leary, Valerie Peterson, and Elsa Solender, discussed the origin of the new film *Becoming Jane*, loosely based on Jane Austen's own account, in two of her letters, of her relationship with Tom Lefroy. The panelists then answered audience questions about Jane Austen's life and works. The lively discussion included such thought-provoking questions as why, or whether, we need to read biographies of Jane Austen, and whether rivalry existed among Jane and her siblings.

Warm thanks go out to Gene Gill, who arranged this magical evening for us.

Sony Films invites you to a private screening of **THE JANE AUSTEN BOOK CLUB**



This charming film of Karen Joy Fowler's novel celebrates the pleasures of reading and discussing Jane Austen's books. It presents a very positive picture of women as friends and mutual supporters. Ms. Fowler is an active member of the California region of JASNA and has spoken at an AGM.

In September, Sony Pictures Classics will preview the film exclusively for JASNA-NY, at a time and theater to be announced. Depending upon her schedule, Robin Swicord, who adapted the novel for the screen and directed the film, may be available for a Q&A following the screening.

Check www.sonyclassics.com/thejaneaugenbookclub for an EXCITING contest.

Fall 2007

will be an event-packed season for JASNA-NY, so check out the listing of exciting treats on the last page and mark your calendar now!

Juliette Wells, Anne Hathaway, Rebecca Eaton, Elsa Solender (photo by Guilherme Cunha)



next film will be a feature reviving the old “Get Smart” comedy series. Besides the panel discussion, which was moderated by Elsa Solender, Ms. Hathaway graciously read Austen to a later screening audience, which included some JASNA members on the waiting list for this exciting event.

Other panel participants were Professor Juliette Wells of Manhattanville College, whose presentation at JASNA-NY’s May in Cape May conference was very well received (see story elsewhere in this newsletter), and the legendary Rebecca Eaton, executive producer of PBS’s Masterpiece Theatre. Before the feature was screened, the audience viewed (and applauded) a trailer for the upcoming Masterpiece Theatre season, which will include filmings of all six Austen novels, including four brand new adaptations, as well as the Colin Firth *P&P* and the Kate Beckinsale *Emma*. A brand new “biopic” for the series is currently being prepared by BBC.

Lori Bajorek Agency contributed CDs of songs from a projected *P&P* musical, some lucky people with “J’s” marked on their programs took home a new Penguin edition of Austen novels, and a lavish spread was offered, thanks to the generosity of Miramax, Tribeca Film Series, and PBS Masterpiece Theatre.

With Miramax making no pretense that its handsome movie *Becoming Jane* is in any way a documentary or an accurate biography, the very forgiving Janeite audience was good-naturedly willing to overlook certain slips, inconsistencies, and fables and enter into the spirit of the film, which certainly appreciated Jane Austen’s genius. They enjoyed the gorgeous scenery, admired the performances of Ms. Hathaway and a veteran British cast, noted abundant references to characters in the novels, and were cognizant of the respectful appreciation of Jane Austen’s genius by the filmmakers.

—Elsa Solender



Masterpiece Theater The Complete Jane Austen

In early 2008 PBS will be airing film adaptations of all six of Jane Austen’s novels. Four of the films will be new productions. See www.jasna.org for more information.

Book Reading and Signing

Confessions of a Jane Austen Addict

By Laurie Viera Rigler

The author will read selections from her new novel, a literary homage, comedy, and exploration of identity, destiny, and the nature of time. This is the story of Courtney Stone, a thirty-something Jane Austen fan living in contemporary Los Angeles, who wakes up inside the body of an Englishwoman in Austen's time.



Wednesday, August 15, 6-8 p.m.

Alice's Tea Cup, 156 East 64 Street.

Call (212) 734-4832 for reservations.

\$30 includes a copy of the book and special tea and scones.

JEST FOR JANEITES

Grab copies of this book for yourself
and as a stocking stuffer for friends!



This gently priced collection of hilarious cartoons by Gene Gill sends up the sequels, the prequels, the films, and even ourselves.

Book Launch Party Thursday September 27

at Elsa Solender's apartment

Reservations required: jasnaNY@yahoo.com

Box Hill Picnic



On a lovely Saturday morning, with the sun shining and the humidity low, thirty JASNA-NY members met on our roof garden amidst petunias, snapdragons, and roses. We enjoyed lively conversation and a delectable potluck lunch. The desserts were, of course, the big hit of the day. Especially memorable were the chocolate-covered marshmallows-on-a-stick brought by Linda Dennerly, and the strawberry shortcake brought by Joyce Melito (see photo). These goodies consoled us for the loss of our ceremonial “picking of the strawberries” from our plants – the birds had eaten all the berries!

After lunch, Marilyn Goldfried presented a quiz on *Emma*, to prepare us for the Vancouver AGM. It was exciting, fun, and competitive. I hate to say it, but my team lost.

Nili Olay

Quizmaster’s Note: Both teams acquitted themselves extremely well on this challenging quiz.



Photo by Harvey Hellering

MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED AND APPRECIATED

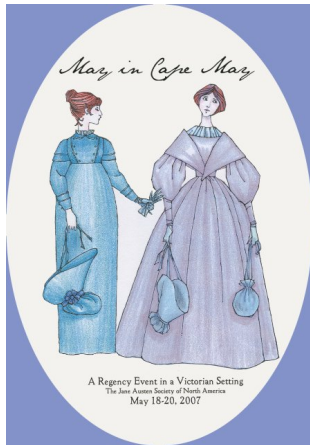
Many thanks to all those members who have so generously responded in the past to our request for contributions. The Greater New York Region is one of the few JASNA regions that do not charge local dues. JASNA-NY, therefore, depends on its members’ generosity in order to provide organizational and informational services such as the newsletter. The donations also help to keep our many exciting programs inexpensive or free.

Many corporations have matching grant programs – perhaps you work for one that does! Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to our region even if you cannot attend the next event. Checks should be made payable to JASNA-NY and mailed to Diane Mangasarian, Treasurer (address on the event registration form)

Sincerely, Your Co-Coordinator *Nili and Jerry*

May in Cape May

A Regency Event in a Victorian Setting



On a beautiful May weekend, 56 Janeites – mostly JASNY-NY members, but some from as far away as Virginia and Wisconsin – gathered in historic, picturesque Cape May, NJ —as close as we could get to Bath on this side of the pond. They came to enjoy lectures, discussions, entertainments, and an historic home tour. The organizing team, under the able command of “Vice Admiral” Jerry Vetowich, deftly succeeded in relating all that occurred to Jane Austen, her work, her times, and her Victorian successors. Marsha Huff, JASNA President, graciously opened the conference. Below, some participants describe their experiences.



Juliette Wells “A Likeness Pleases Everybody”

Juliette Wells’, Assistant Professor of English at Manhattanville College, paid homage to our beautiful seaside setting and to ourselves, as Austen’s American partisans, in considering women authors on both sides of the Atlantic in her talk, “*A likeness pleases every body*”: *Emma Woodhouse as Portraitist and Her Successors*. She began by introducing the term *ekphrasis* (a verbal rendering of a visual image), the narrative technique through which we “see” portraits created in novels. Wells then explored two theories advanced by the art historian Marcia Pointon: the “portrait contract” (the power dynamics among the various parties involved in the creation and viewing of a portrait) and the subjective nature of all claims regarding a portrait’s “likeness.” She analyzed these concepts first in the portrait episode of *Emma* and then in analogous scenes in Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women*, Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening*, and Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*

Jan Fergus “Austen’s Legacy of Laughter”

Jan Fergus of Lehigh University compared and contrasted Jane Austen’s works with those of some of the Victorian writers whom she influenced. Lady Louisa Stuart, in her memoir *Some Account of John, Duke of Argyll, and His Family*, depicts characters closely resembling Austen’s, among them a duke who, like Mr. Bennet, marries a woman lacking in intelligence. Unlike Mr. Bennet, however, he deliberately marries an intellectual inferior because he believes intellectual women lack virtue. Emily Eden’s novel, *The Semi-Attached Couple*, presents minor characters with distinct Austenian resemblances. Mrs. Douglas, like Mrs. Bennet, resents watching the neighbors’ daughters marry while her own daughters remain single, and Mr. Douglas responds to his wife’s petty, ill-natured remarks with some of the irony of Mr. Bennet. Lady Portmore’s vanity, like Mrs. Elton’s, leads her to believe that all men admire her. By contrast, Charlotte M. Yonge’s *The Heir of Redclyffe* lacks Austen’s humor and belongs to the genre of Victorian melodrama. Yonge, like Austen, ably conveys character through dialogue. In the first two pages of the novel, she introduces six characters with skill such as Austen displays in the first chapter of *Pride and Prejudice*. (Professor Fergus was unfortunately prevented by illness from attending. Many thanks to Kerri Spennicchia, who rose heroically to the challenge of reading Jan’s paper and moderated the post-lecture discussion).

Jean Brassil

◇ Kathryn Shanks Libin: “From Jane Fairfax to Lucy Honeychurch” ◇

The subtitle of Kathryn Shanks Libin’s talk was: *The Romantic Heroine at the Piano*. Jane Fairfax (*Emma*, 1816) and Lucy Honeychurch (*A Room with a View*, 1908) are young English ladies of a similar age; both are decorous and accomplished, and both excel at performing at the piano. Shanks Libin, who teaches music at Vassar, characterized the pieces that Jane Austen and her heroines play — especially Jane Fairfax and Marianne Dashwood — as “pretty conventional – proper parlor music.” During Austen’s era, music was considered a “civilized accomplishment,” appropriate for a drawing room.

Almost a century later, however, the playing of Lucy Honeychurch, E. M. Forster’s heroine, contains elements of emotion that move her well beyond the drawing room. When the Reverend Mr. Beebe hears her perform Beethoven’s Opus 111 in C Minor at a concert for the edification of the lower classes, he observes Lucy creating an atmosphere that draws her listeners into the music and engages them at a level virtually unknown in the Austen era. Music was even seen as a way to promote moral values in Victorian times. English musical audiences in the Regency were considered to be the most sophisticated in their world, and were familiar with the works of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. There is no evidence, however, that Austen herself was familiar with their revolutionary, passionate works. While Marianne Dashwood and Jane Fairfax capture only “a whiff” of the sublime in their playing, Lucy Honeychurch reaches that dimension. What would have happened to the heroines in Jane’s novels if they had heard the music of Beethoven, Mozart, and Haydn? As Shanks Libin says, “We can only speculate.”

Joyce Melito

Congress Hall Cape May NJ



Photo by Harvey Hellering

THE TROLLEY – THE TOUR – THE TEA

A Visit to the Emlen Physick House



A trolley transported us back in time to visit the Emlen Physick Estate, Cape May's only Victorian house museum. This creation of Victorian architect Frank Furness was commissioned in 1878 by young Emlen Physick, a member of a prominent Philadelphia medical family. At age 21, he had just graduated from medical school, had just inherited a fortune, and had just decided that fortune meant he need never practice medicine, even if his grandfather, Philip Syng Physick, was the Father of American Surgery.

Rich, young and idle, Dr. Physick bought himself an automobile, Cape May's first, and managed to have the town's very first traffic accident, as well. His 18-room mansion, with its many curious upside-down chimneys, is considered one of America's finest examples of Victorian "Stick Style" architecture. Huge stick-like brackets adorn the porch. Inside, further evidence of "stick style" features are found in the design of the ceiling moldings, the fireplaces and furniture.

On either side of the entryway — flanked by two huge moose heads — are the formal parlor and informal parlor. A visitor in Physick's time might have been served a "Manhattan," a drink invented by the Victorians, in the formal parlor. Asian influences – screens, porcelains, fans – abound throughout these fascinating rooms which, with typical Victorian excess, are crowded with furniture, clothing, dishes, laces, bric-a-brac, amusements, and musical instruments.

Physick knew his fellow Cape May resident, John Philip Sousa, some of whose sheet music sits on the table near the piano. The kitchen contains canned vegetables from the early 1800s. Interestingly, food was canned at that time, but a hammer and chisel were usually required to open a can. We should not be surprised that the Physicks, who bought the latest models of everything, owned the first can opener. If one chandelier globe in the house broke, it (but not its mates) was replaced with the latest new model of globe, leaving several fixtures with multiple globes of one style and a single one in an entirely different style or color.

Much of the home's original furniture remains, but some went missing after the deaths of Dr. Physick, a bachelor, his widowed mother and maiden aunt, when the house lay neglected. Rowdies stole or destroyed some of the contents. The Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts (MAC) lovingly restored the house, buying back or receiving as donations some of the missing items. Cape May reputedly contains many haunted houses and the Physick home is no exception. A table in the parlor is always set for a séance, for this house, they say, is haunted by two women and several dogs. One cannot help but wonder where these ghosts were during the vandalism of the house – out visiting the ghosts of other houses? Is it too much to expect resident ghosts to do their proprietary duty?

While half of our group toured the house, the rest toured the town, all of which is a national historic landmark, possessing well-preserved architectural masterpieces (and curiosities) of notable Gothic Revival and Queen Anne design. Colorful houses in Cape May bear colorful names, like The Merry Widow, The Painted Ladies, The Pink House, The Gingerbread House and Pharo's Inn. The presence of The John Holmes House, with a military collection of artifacts dating from the Revolution, and the story of a Reverend Mr. Collins, "who had few equals in the pulpit," residing in Cape May in the 1790s, satisfied those who needed assurances of time-specific connections to Jane Austen in Cape May.

LUNCH was set in the garden tent of the Twinings Tea Room in a restored carriage house on the estate grounds. A pot of tea, a tasty salad, a variety of sandwiches, a scone, a tea cake, a portion of clotted cream, and a selection of delectable mini-pastries made up our scrumptious repast, thanks to the menu planning of Linda Dennery.

Irene Jankowski

THE ENTERTAINMENTS

Friday Evening

Jane Jeopardy (Cape May Edition):

Category: John Philip Sousa (aka The Keeper of Cape May Lighthouse) (aka Rich Chiemingo)

Answer: NOTHING

Question: What does Jane Austen have to do with John Philip Sousa?

Answer: EVERYTHING

Question: What does John Philip Sousa have to do with Cape May?

To wit: some of JPS's many connections with Cape May:

- As a young man he played in the local Cape May hotels.
- During a stint directing *HMS Pinafore* on Broadway, he met and married a new cast member – they honeymooned in Cape May.
- His band played at the rededication ceremony of Congress Hall (our conference hotel) in 1882.

This presentation gave our conference the full flavor of Victorian America, which is so fully visible in Cape May. Slides, CDs, and a historical instrument (helicon) were used to wonderful effect to illustrate Sousa music and amuse the audience. Performer/lecturer Rich Chiemingo taught us much that we hadn't known about Sousa's life and career.

Jerry Vetowich

Saturday Evening

Elizabeth Freedman graciously welcomed attendees to the Saturday evening festivities and then presented Marianna Loosemore, who acted as our emcee and moderator for the banquet program. Marianna introduced the multitalented actress, playwright, and current Artistic Director of The East Lynne Theater Company, Ms. Gayle Stahlhuth. Ms Stahlhuth enchanted the assembly with a *tour de force* one-woman performance of JASNA member Judith Fiedler's *Lady Elliot Entertains: A Conversation at Kellynch Hall*. Ms Stahlhuth deftly portrayed each of the Elliot sisters and the newly elevated Lady Elliot, formerly Mrs. Clay, by flawlessly shifting intonation, speed of delivery, and body language. Before us sprang Elizabeth's pride and stiff carriage, Mary's susceptibility to drafts (aachoo!), Anne's measured reasonableness, and Penelope's nervous assertion of her new status as head Elliot female, intent on organizing her former patroness's future living arrangements.

Our moderator then led off a discussion of the play with a question prepared by Gene Gill, who asked if the audience found Ms. Fiedler's imagined postscript to *Persuasion* plausible. How eagerly Fanny Dashwood, née Ferrars, would have heard our heated debate over Elizabeth's ability to maintain herself without her father's income from the estate. Would limited resources necessitate Miss Elliot's seeking a home with a relation or would she be sufficiently flush to live on her own? Ah, Austenites in their element with interpretation of the only textual reference to the sisters' financial endowment thrust center stage. Sir Walter "could give his daughter [Anne] at present but a small part of the share of ten thousand pounds which must be hers hereafter." (Chapman ed. p. 248)

So does "share of" mean a one-third part of £10,000 or does her share equal £10,000? In his character notes, Mr. Chapman opts for the sisters getting £10,000 each. You decide, but query whether Elizabeth would still be entitled to the dower amount if she failed to marry.

Sabina Hollis

THE COSTUMES, THE CUISINE, AND THE COMPANY

Susan and Elan Zingman-Leith, experts in Victoriana, initiated us into the intricacies of Regency and Victorian clothing, illustrating their talk with vivid slides. They showed us how, after the free and comfortable clothing of the Regency period, Victorian women were forced to wear heavy fabrics and steel-boned garments that looked upholstered, burdened with lots of trimmings and crinolines. Clothes were visible symbols of one's status: a woman could not possibly work in such attire. Her costume immediately identified her as a member of the middle, rather than the working class.

Barbara Hellering

The clouds rolled in to dampen what had been a beautiful day, but there was a break in the rain just in time for the Costume Parade. Ladies in their bonnets and spencers, pelisses and parasols, strolled the Washington Street promenade, just as Catherine Morland or Anne Elliot might have done while browsing the shops in Bath. The ladies (and military gentleman) posed for a group portrait at the original home of Captain Mey, the founder of Cape May.



After the parade, attendees were treated to a cocktail hour and banquet. Not only were the food and wine superb, but the company! The company was everything that Anne Elliot could hope for:

"clever, well-informed people, who have a great deal of conversation; that is what I call good company."

Mary Ann Linahan

A WARM WELCOME IN WONDERFUL VICTORIAN CAPE MAY

Cape May may have been yet another well-executed event for veteran JASNA members, but for 10 of us, it was the first time that we had the opportunity to join a new, interesting group of people for lots of great discussion, excursions, and food. And what a super welcome we had!

First our new regional coordinators, Nili and Jerry, held focus groups to find out what worked well about the New York Region group, and what needed some more, well, focus. One suggestion that came up in my group was to identify how to make new members feel welcome and part of the group.

So how did the group act on that suggestion? Before the weekend, we each got a phone call from a current member welcoming us to JASNA. Several members had volunteered to make the calls and to host tables at a welcome dinner on Friday night. We were even offered the opportunity to suggest a place to eat in Cape May.

When we arrived at Congress Hall, we registered and received name tags with a special colored dot to identify us as “newbies.” That dot fostered all sorts of conversations all weekend, as other attendees, both new and old, came up to us and introduced themselves.

Then Friday night we had a special treat – dinner at The Blue Pig, the excellent restaurant at Congress Hall. We were at small tables, with 4-6 people each, and one host who was a current JASNA member. Everyone at the table had an opportunity to be part of the conversation.

Finally, throughout the rest of the weekend, our name tag dots kept us in the flow of meeting people and having interesting conversations. These efforts by current members were really appreciated by us new ones, and we look forward to many more JASNA events. Thanks!

Laurie Morison

**Caitlin Augusta
Judith Augusta
Laura Claude
Sandra Duffy
Carolyn Epstein
Dorothea Goldys-Bass
Melissa Hamilton
Marilyn London
Diane Mangasarian
Laurie Morison**

RESERVATION FOR Sunday SEPTEMBER 16 MEETING

The meeting will begin at 1:30 pm at the House of the Redeemer at 7 East 95 Street (between Madison and Fifth Avenues). If this will be your first JASNA-NY meeting, please plan to arrive around 1:00 pm so that we may meet you and introduce you to other Janeites. Save the top part of this page as a reminder of the time and place of the meeting. Clip and mail the reservation form below to reserve your place at the meeting.

See you there!

Nili Olag Jerry Vetsawich

clip here>>>=====

Name: (Ms. Miss. Mrs. Mr.) _____

Address: _____

Telephone: Day _____ Evening: _____

Email: _____

Please reserve ___ places for the September 16 meeting @ \$25 each = \$ _____

I wish to make a-tax deductible donation to JASNA-NY (THANK YOU!) \$ _____
(Don't forget matching funds.)

TOTAL enclosed (make check payable to JASNA-NY) \$ _____

Mail your reservation coupon and check to our Treasurer:

**Diane Mangasarian
170 West End Avenue Apt 21E
New York, N.Y. 10023**

[] Check here if you would like to help plan future JASNA-NY programs.
Gene Gill, Program Chair, will contact you.

[] Check here if you would be willing to donate (make or buy) sweets for
future meetings. Shirley Safran, Refreshments Chair, will contact you.

[] Check here if you would like to help with Pug's Boutique (our shop)
Kerri Spennicchia, Merchandise Chair, will contact you.

Date	Events
Wed Aug 15th	“Confessions of a Jane Austen Addict” Book Reading & Signing
Thur Aug 16th	Monthly Book Group
Sometime in Sept	Screening of the film “The Jane Austen Book Club”
Sun Sept 16th	Regional Meeting “Come & Meet the Other Mrs. Elton”
Thur Sept 27th	Cartoon Book Launch <i>The book will be for sale.</i>
Thur Oct 18th	Monthly Book Group
Thur Nov 15th	Monthly Book Group
Sat Dec 15th	Birthday Meeting

*Thanks to **JASNA-NY'S** wonderful volunteers – too numerous to mention! –
for all their help in the last few months.*

JASNA - GREATER NEW YORK CHAPTER

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