

## The Annual Birthday Meeting

Jane Austen's birthday was well celebrated when JASNA-NY Metro Region held its annual birthday meeting on Dec 11, 2010 at the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. The gathering was crowded in every sense: 120 people, a full program of events, four raffle prizes, and adjacent to Pug's Boutique, a table displaying the handmade jewelry of JASNA member Maisha Rashid (a portion of her proceeds went to JASNA-NY). We even had a camera crew from CNN taping part of the proceedings.



After a brief reading from *Pride and Prejudice* by Regional Coordinator Jerry Vetowich, Nili Olay, our other Regional Coordinator, thanked the many volunteers who made the last four years so rewarding. The election of four officers proceeded briskly. Linda Dennery and Meg Levin were voted in as the new Regional Coordinators. Mary Ann Linahan succeeds Linda as Secretary. Diane Mangasarian will be continuing as Treasurer. Kerri Spennicchia will continue as assistant Regional Coordinator.

While retiring from the day-to-day running of the region, our much loved former Coordinators are going to be quite busy. Nili and Jerry will



be devoting their full attention to planning the 2012 Annual General Meeting in Brooklyn. But first they were honored for their four years of service with gifts that reflected their varied interests in music, travel, and Jane Austen – *Pride and Prejudice* in Hebrew was the gift in the latter category.

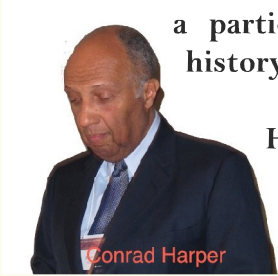
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Next, program chair Joyce Melito introduced members of our Juvenilia subgroup, who read their favorite passages from *P&P*: Jaclyn Green-Stock, Jennifer Potter, Marilynn Doore, Allie Bruce, Susanna Ciurleo, and Sabina Hollis.



Joyce then turned over her duties to Conrad Harper, cofounder of the New York Metro Region. He introduced our speaker, Dr. Mary Poovey, the Samuel Rudin Professor of the Humanities and Professor of English at New York University. Her interests lie primarily in 19th century literature, culture, and history, but she has also written on the 18th century and has a particular interest in economic history.



Her talk was intriguingly titled “Reading *Pride and Prejudice* Backward.” She began by telling us that, some years ago, she was

puzzled when rereading the scene in Chapter 18 of Volume 3 in which Elizabeth and Darcy discuss what prompted him to propose again. Elizabeth reflects ruefully:

“My resolution of thanking you for your kindness to Lydia had certainly great effect... Too much, I am afraid; for what becomes of the moral, if our comfort springs from a breach of promise, for I ought not to have mentioned the subject.”



Dr. Poovey could not remember a scene where Elizabeth

makes that “resolution.” Turning back to the scene in Chapter 16 that led directly to Darcy’s proposal, she could not find any reference to Elizabeth’s actually making the resolution, nor could she find any such resolutions in earlier passages. In addition, she could not find any explicit promise that Elizabeth could be fairly described as having breached.

As many of us know, *P&P* is the revised version of *First Impressions*, a novel Austen completed in 1797. Perhaps something was lost in the revision? Looking up at her audience, Dr. Poovey said: “If I had been dealing with another writer, I would have just said, ‘Oh, she was careless,’... But this was Jane Austen and I knew that she didn’t make this kind of mistake.” While not giving us all the details of her detective work, she was led to conclude that, by referring to a resolution and a breach of promise not presented in the text, Austen was “gesturing” to events outside the world of the novel, events in contemporary England.

At this point, some in the audience might have wondered if the actual “breach of promise” referred to a scandal involving the dissolute Prince of Wales. But no, Dr. Poovey’s knowledge of economic history, coupled with the year of the original manuscript’s completion, led her to conclude that Austen was referring to the Bank Restriction Act of 1797. Napoleon was threatening war, people were getting nervous about their money, and the Bank of England was afraid there would be a rush of panicked depositors demanding gold in exchange for their Bank notes. So Parliament passed the Bank Restriction Act, permitting the Bank to refuse to exchange the notes. According to Dr. Poovey, this was the breach of promise Austen is referring to, for on every note appeared the assurance that the paper money would be so exchanged. This much discussed act was still in effect when *P&P* was published and was only repealed in 1821.

Dr. Poovey concluded that Austen was, in a way, breaking a promise herself – the promise to the reader that an author will present everything needed to understand the book. But she “neutralizes” her own breach of promise and “still provide[s] the reader with pleasure.”

The talk was followed by refreshments and the traditional birthday toast, written by Zoë Coralnik Kaplan and read by Joyce Melito.

[Editor’s Note: If members who attended the talk, and those reading about it now, consult their copies of P & P they may be puzzled by Dr. Poovey’s statement that Elizabeth’s resolution to thank Darcy is nowhere presented in the text. In the opening two paragraphs of Chapter 16, Volume 3, we find Darcy walking with Kitty and Elizabeth toward the Lucases’ house. We read that “...Elizabeth was secretly forming a desperate resolution...when Kitty left them, she went boldly on with him alone. Now was the moment for her resolution to be executed...” and she goes on to thank him.



Dr. Poovey’s talk was a greatly abridged version of a section from her book, *Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in 18th and 19th Century Britain*. On page 367 of that work she does refer to the incident in Chapter 16, but argues that, in that exchange with Darcy, Elizabeth refers to yet another, earlier decision that is nowhere explicitly stated. ]

*Meg Levin*

## Jane Austen’s Birthday Toast

Today our Jane’s 235,  
But doesn’t show her age at all;  
There are no authors now alive  
Who hold their readers so in thrall!

Her reputation is immense –  
Worldwide and heavily translated;  
And her effect is so intense  
That others are intimidated.

Her books are copied and embellished,  
But no one else leaves us amazed;  
Her films, productions that are relished,  
And feed great crowds’ admiring gaze.

So here’s to Jane, long may she flourish,  
We raise a glass of birthday cheer;  
May she continue, then, to nourish –  
( Let’s do it all again next year.)

*Zoë Coralnik Kaplan*



## JASNA-NY Juvenilia's Valentine's Day Dinner

On Friday, February 11, Juvenilia -- the young-ish JASNA-NY set -- celebrated Valentine's Day with a love-themed dinner party. Red and pink balloons decorated the Wined Up wine bar, in mid-town Manhattan, where the dinner took place. Members enjoyed a variety of dishes from pizza to pasta to burgers as well as several bottles of wine for the table.

We spent much of the evening discussing *From Prada to Nada*, the latest movie adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility*, which a number of the members had seen at a previous Juvenilia outing. We also discussed future plans, including a Bollywood movie night, featuring *Aisha* an adaptation of *Emma*, and an opening night outing to the new *Jane Eyre* movie. An impromptu photo shoot featured guests posing with both desserts and books. Most of us brought books, some more than one, and added them to the centerpiece for our table. Dramatic posed readings with eyeglasses were shared as members pulled out their best *Vogue*. During dessert attendees took



turns going around the table and sharing their favorite love quote, passage, or poem. Authors quoted included Ella Wheeler Wilcox, Tom Stoppard, Emily Dickinson, Elizabeth Gaskell, and, of course, Jane Austen. From *Pride and Prejudice*: "To be fond of dancing was a certain step towards falling in love." A lovely evening of wine, chocolate, and poetry was enjoyed by all.

Jennifer Potter

## A View of *Mansfield Park*

Everyone I know has strong opinions of *Mansfield Park*'s Fanny Price: it's love or hate, and it's usually the latter. Most people I meet can't stand Fanny, because she's everything other heroines are not: weak, extraordinarily moral, and quiet. She's also not much fun. I have to admit that I fell into the "dislike" camp. Mary Crawford, for all her faults (and there were many) was certainly more interesting, and some even say she was the true heroine of the novel! And that's what I thought too, until I saw the light, thanks to my professor at Clark University, Lisa Kasmer. She assigned the article "Jane Austen and Edward Said: Gender, Culture, and Imperialism," by Susan Fraiman. This article, and Professor Kasmer's insights, completely changed what I thought about Fanny and



*Mansfield Park*, and made me respect Austen and this particular heroine more than almost any other.

In the past I thought that Fanny rarely showed an ounce of spark. But I was clearly overlooking important parts of the novel. Fan-

ny's refusal to marry Henry Crawford speaks volumes about her ability to stand up to Sir Thomas, someone who had taken her in and cared for her from a young age. To say "No" to a marriage that would solidify wealth and rank for the family would have been extremely difficult, as Fraiman

points out. Fanny recognizes that Crawford is a rake, and she won't give in to Sir Thomas' attempts to sell her off to the highest bidder (as Sir Thomas somewhat reluctantly did with Maria, which of course, turned out disastrously).

Sir Thomas' efforts to control Fanny can also be read as a metaphor, and Fraiman really helped me think more about this aspect of Austen's plot. Mansfield Park, the country home, is supported by the labor of slaves on Sir Bertram's estate in Antigua. The only reason Mansfield Park exists is by the exploitation of others. I think Austen's genius really shines here because she's making a connection between Sir Bertram's power over the slaves in Antigua, and his power over the members of his household. Sir Bertram tries to crush the simultaneous rebellions of the slaves in Antigua and the social rebellion by the young people at Mansfield Park. He does not win; at least not with his family: Fanny won't do as he bids, he can't control Tom, and Maria destroys her marriage. I think Austen is saying that no form of patriarchy should exist. I agree with Fraiman, that Mansfield Park is not, as critic Tony Tanner has called it, the epitome of moral fortitude and correctness. In fact the house is the exact opposite.

What continues to make Fanny and *Mansfield Park* so rewarding to talk about is that we are not always sure what Austen meant. While Austen definitely condemns how women and marriage are equated with money and transfers of wealth (as my professor said, look at how many times words associated with money are used: e.g., price, improvement, and capital), there are hints that Austen was not certain about issues like colonialism. Literary critic, Edward Said, argued that Austen was a proponent of colonialism and did not much take up the cause of slaves. He said that when Fanny brings up slavery at the dinner table, and the Bertrams have nothing to say, that is because there is nothing to say about slavery. I'm on Fraiman's side, though; I think Austen

shows that the Bertrams have no thoughts about slavery, and that illustrates their lack of morality. Fraiman also recognizes the complexity that is Jane Austen. While she attacked slavery, she also did not focus on it much; she used it more as a device to communicate problems with women's oppression. I personally would have liked to know more about the slavery in Antigua.

In *Mansfield Park*, Fraiman says that while Austen writes with the West (Mansfield Park) as the center of the universe, she also shows that there are problems with having an immoral home be the center of everything. While Said thinks that Austen's comparison of Mansfield Park to Fanny's home in Portsmouth confirms Austen's belief that Mansfield Park's "order" is preferable to Portsmouth's disorder, the heads of household at Mansfield are just as corrupt and unfeeling. As Fraiman states, if Mansfield Park is to stand for the West, then Austen is saying there are lots of problems with Britain's rule as well.

What I now appreciate most about *Mansfield Park* is that Austen's characters stand for all different kinds of people: Fanny for a slave, Sir Thomas for a slave owner, and Mrs. Norris as a overseer. Each character and circumstance stands for something important. Jane Austen showed the world not only as it was, but also as it should be. In the end, it doesn't matter so much whether I like Fanny or not, what matters is how I view the world because of what Austen was saying about women's oppression, slavery, patriarchy and colonialism.

Jaclyn Green-Stock



## JASNA's 2012 Annual General Meeting Brooklyn, NY!



By now all JASNA-NY members (except maybe the newest ones) know that our region is hosting the Annual General Meeting (AGM) October 5 to October 7, 2012. You probably also know that we will be holding the event at the New York Marriott at the Brooklyn Bridge and that our theme is “Sex, Money and Power in Jane Austen’s Fiction.” If you were at the October regional meeting or at the Portland AGM, you heard us announce the major speakers: Anna Quindlen, Cornel West, Sandy Lerner, and Daniel Cole. You can read more about them on the JASNA website ([www.jasna.org/agms/newyork](http://www.jasna.org/agms/newyork)).



So what is left to do? Lots and lots--and we are having fun getting it all done. For instance, a “Call for Papers” for breakout speakers is on [www.jasna.org](http://www.jasna.org) and will appear in the JASNA News spring issue. If you would like to submit a proposal, please look for instructions in JASNA News. We are arranging superb musical programs, special speakers, places to visit, workshops, dance classes, and much more. If you have been to an AGM, you know that although the conference officially opens on Friday afternoon, participants begin to gather by Wednesday and often stay until Monday.

Many of you have volunteered to help. We will need each one of you. This is our opportunity to make our region shine.

Our primary focus at this time is fund raising to help enhance the programs and experience for the AGM attendees. We need assistance in obtaining grants, underwriting of specific items (such as printing, AGM bags, etc.), and in holding fund raising events. If you have contacts for--or ideas about--things that we (or you) can do in this area, please let us know. It is not too early to start.

Conference Coordinators  
Nili Olay and Jerry Vetowich  
[Jasna2012@gmail.com](mailto:Jasna2012@gmail.com)





## JASNA | NEW YORK CITY 2012

### NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

In October 2012, JASNA will hold its Annual General Meeting (AGM) in New York City. 600 active Janeites from around the US and Canada will spend three days here with us and we want them to know that they are in the cultural capital of the US. We have big plans for a terrific conference, and we need a lot of volunteer help to pull off a truly memorable conference.

### WON'T YOU HELP?

Please fill out the information below so we will know best how to use your personal talents.

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. No. \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Professional Skills /Place of employment \_\_\_\_\_

#### Please check all tasks with which you would feel comfortable helping

Prior to the AGM—over the next 18 months:

- Working with Marketing Committee to enlist community and corporate support  
Do you have contacts for special funding, i.e. printing – receptions – giveaways – etc.?
- Illustrating conference materials
- Copywriting conference materials (e.g., promotional material, news releases, etc.)
- Sending outreach e-mails to publicity outlets, etc. and making follow-up phone calls
- Assisting with E-mail, Facebook, Twitter, Blogs and Website as well as any other electronic medium.
- Office tasks like assembling registrants' kits, stuffing and mailing information

For those of you living in Brooklyn, can you help with:

- Assessing restaurants in Brooklyn Heights and City Hall areas of Brooklyn
- Suggestions on special things to do in that area – bookstores, antique stores etc.
- Other suggestions and talents. \_\_\_\_\_

During the AGM (October 3 – 7, 2012) – not a commitment, just an indication of interest

- Checking people in at the registration desk, handing out packs and helping sign up banquet tables
- Serving at an Information Desk to assist attendees in finding their way around NYC
- Taking tickets at the door of plenary lectures
- Serving as aide to a speaker (insuring the room is properly set up, AVA materials working, etc.)
- Working at Pug's Boutique selling merchandise under supervision
- Serving as Hostess to new members at their special reception

Nili Olay and Jerry Vetowich

AGM2012 Co-Coordinator [jasna2012@gmail.com](mailto:jasna2012@gmail.com) 212-666-9170

Report from  
**JASNA-NY**  
**Regional Coordinators**

*When Thomas Jefferson arrived in Paris to serve as American ambassador to France after Benjamin Franklin, he was asked if he was Franklin's replacement. "No," he replied, "I am only his successor."*

We feel somewhat the same – JASNA-NY's former Regional Coordinators Nili Olay and Jerry Vetowich are a very hard act to follow. They have not only left us a legacy of such popular innovations as the new members' lunch, but have also set us all an example by their inspired thinking and constant reaching out to members for suggestions and assistance.

We also share their view that the best way to enjoy and understand Jane Austen and her works is to learn more about her culture and time. In planning events for the New York Metro Region, we will strive for balance: scholarly but entertaining, fun but informative.

The next two years will be busy ones, culminating in the JASNA Annual General Meeting that the New York Metro Region will be hosting in Brooklyn in 2012. None of it would be possible without the hard work of our dedicated volunteers. Those with official titles or assignments are listed below, but we value all the members who pitch in to help ensure that our meetings are enjoyable and our Region well run. We thank you all.

*Linda Dennery and Meg Levin*



Jerry, Meg, Linda, Nili

#### **Officers:**

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- **Newsletter Managing Editor:** Jinny Ewald
- **Pug's Boutique Manager:** Kerri Spennicchia

#### **Other**

- **Web Master:** Jerry Vetowich
- **Local Database Administrator:** Linda Dennery

## JASNA-NY in the News

One of the delights of being your former regional coordinator was the unexpected adventures that came our way. Jerry and I had been RCs only weeks when “The Today Show” was covering the auction of the portrait purported to be of the young Jane Austen. The portrait did not sell at auction, but five JASNA members--Gene Gill, Valerie Peterson, Kerri Spennicchia, Jerry, and myself--had our fleeting moment on television.



During our four years as RCs we talked to numerous journalists. We were always happy to be interviewed in order to get both Jane Austen and JASNA's name out into print. The most exciting of those interviews came during our last few months as RCs. (A bit of symmetry here.) Arden Dale of *The Wall Street Journal* (*WSJ*) contacted me in early October 2010; she said that she wanted to write an article about Austen and was trying to get a hook. We talked for about an hour about JASNA and Austen. I mentioned our active group of young members (the Juvenilians) and that determined the direction of the article. I invited her to come to the October Regional meeting and speak to our members.

The next day, Mary Pilon, also of the *WSJ*, contacted me about writing an Austen article. I laughed and said that I had talked to Arden Dale the prior day. Mary and Arden decided

to join forces and write the article together. Both of them came to our October meeting, interviewed a number of people, and quoted Jennifer Potter and Jaclyn Green-Stock in their article.



Allison Bruce, Susanna Ciurleo, Sabina Hollis

The *WSJ* article appeared on December 6, 2010. That afternoon I received a call from Ronni Berke, a CNN producer, to talk about a program featuring some of our young people. I gave Ronni a number of names, and Allison Bruce and Jaclyn Green-Stock were interviewed in the CNN studio. I also invited Ronni to come to the December regional meeting; she sent a video photographer. It was serendipity that I had asked Juvenilia members to read their favorite passage from *P & P* before the day's lecture. The readings made it onto CNN as well as the interviews with Allison and Jaclyn. If any of you missed the *WSJ* article or the CNN clip, the links are:

*WSJ*: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704594804575649041609261602.html>

CNN: <http://amfix.blogspot.com/2010/12/16/jane-austen-what-me-sexy/>

Is there a downside to all of this free publicity? Not really, except that now anyone who read the *WSJ* article knows exactly how old I am.

*Nili Olay*

*MUSIC IS IN THE AIR AT THE JASNA NY SPRING MEETING!*



Please join us on Saturday,  
April 23 at 2 pm for a talk by  
Prof. Kathryn Libin:

*Daily Practice, Musical  
Accomplishment and the  
Example of Jane Austen*

Columbia University  
Faculty House  
116<sup>th</sup> St between Amsterdam Ave  
and Morningside Drive



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Member Tickets @\$35 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

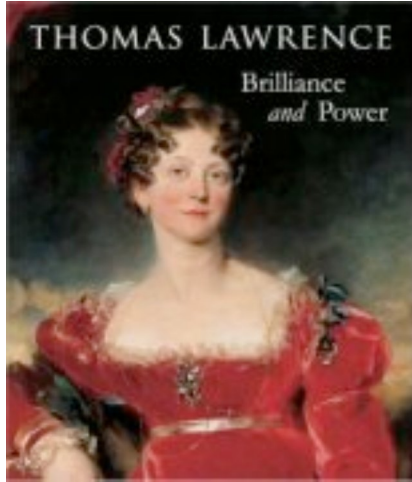
\_\_\_ Guest Tickets @\$40 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Tax deductible donation to JASNA-NY = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Thank you! Please don't forget matching funds.)

TOTAL enclosed = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name of guest \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this form and check (payable to JASNA NY) to our  
Treasurer: Diane Mangasarian  
170 West End Avenue Apt #21E New York, N.Y. 10023  
If you wish to pay by credit card, go to the credit card link at  
jasnany.org



***Yale Center for British Art Day Trip  
Saturday, April 9, 2011  
Registration Form***

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ places for bus & Museum tour @\$35 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ places for museum tour only @\$10 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to make a tax deductible donation to JASNA-NY  
(Thank you! Don't forget matching funds) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL enclosed = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

For mail registration  
Make check payable to JASNA-NY  
Mail this form and your check to our Treasurer:

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

Or you may go to the PayPal link for online registration.

# Austen Chronicle

NY Metro Edition

DATE	EVENTS
Saturday, April 9 Day Bus Trip	Yale Center for British Art Thomas Lawrence: Regency Power and Brilliance
Saturday, April 23 Spring Meeting	Prof. Kathryn S. Libin Daily Practice, Musical Accomplishment and the Example of Jane Austen
Saturday, June 11 ( <i>rain date Sunday</i> )	Box Hill Picnic - Bronx Botanical Garden
Monday, June 27 Evening Talk	Prof. Jennifer Kloester on Georgette Heyer



JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA  
2012 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, NEW YORK CITY

**SEX, MONEY AND POWER**  
*in Jane Austen's Fiction*

OCTOBER 5-7, 2012



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*Meg Levin*

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