



The Jane Austen Times



*Imagination is everything—
Miss Jane Austen.*

The Jane Austen Society of North America
Puget Sound Region

**Volume 15, Issue 1
February 2008**

From the Regional Coordinator

Dear Fellow Janeites,

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I am thrilled to be your Regional Coordinator for the next two years. Elaine has done a fabulous job and will be a tough act to follow – I will endeavor to do my best. For those of you that I have yet to meet, I teach gifted third graders in the Bellevue School District. I don't teach Jane Austen, but do have her books in my classroom and her action figure on my desk. My students are quick to point out Austen sightings to me, and I am often on the receiving end of Austen gifts – a valentine from Colin Firth was a favorite!

What an exciting time to be a member of the Jane Austen Society! This year we are fortunate to witness an entire "Jane Austen Season" on *Masterpiece Theater* that will include new adaptations of *Emma*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Persuasion*, and *Sense and Sensibility*. We have also seen two feature films devoted to Jane: *Becoming Jane* and *The Jane Austen Book Club* and can look forward to even more with the release of *Miss Austen Regrets* and *Lost in Austen*.

It seems like every trip to the book store produces another new title devoted to our Jane. Continuations of her novels written from every possible perspective (even Mr. Darcy's dog!), books with Jane as a detective, stories involving time travel to Regency England, advice books, a choose-your-own-ending adventure, modern women paying for an Austen-like romance, and even just discovered "lost memoirs" of Jane Austen!

And let's not forget about two local theater productions of *Sense and Sensibility* and *Persuasion* in February.

All of this exposure cannot help but bring more people to appreciate the writings of Jane Austen . . . but seriously, don't you all feel just a little bit smug that we knew she was fabulous all along? ☺

Sincerely,
Julie



NEXT MEETING:

**FEB 19, 2PM @
Greenwood Library
8016 Greenwood Ave. N, Seattle
(206) 684-4086
See you there!!**

The Greenwood Branch is located at the intersection of Greenwood Avenue North and North 81st Street.

Driving from the north (heading south):

Exit from Interstate 5 at N. 85th St. (Exit 172) Drive West on N. 85th St. for 1½ miles to Greenwood Ave. N. Turn left on Greenwood and go south for four blocks. The library is on the left, on the southeast corner of Greenwood and N. 81st St.

Parking

There is free covered parking under the building. Enter and exit the garage on 81st Street. Library patron parking only. Violators are subject to impound.

Garage Hours

Monday: 1 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Tuesday: 1 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Wednesday: 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Thursday: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Friday: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Saturday: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Sunday: 12:00 - 5:00

No after hours vehicle releases.

The Library cannot be responsible for vehicles or their contents.

The library is served by Metro Bus routes **5, 48** and **355**

*February Program***Beau Brummell – The Legend and the Man**

How much do you really know about Beau Brummell? He has been described alternately as the first truly modern celebrity; history's foremost social climber; an uppity commoner; the first metrosexual; a son of the French Revolution; one of the most accomplished, agreeable

and entertaining of men; and paradoxically, as cold, heartless and satirical.

At our February meeting, Charlene Kern will explore the life and influence of Beau Brummell, born just three years after Jane Austen.

As the younger son of a private secretary and grandson of a valet, his ascendancy to the role of preeminent authority of style and fashion in the early 19th century as well as an intimate of the Prince of Wales was remarkable. He has inspired poets and fashion designers. His life has been recounted and fictionalized in film, on the stage, and in books. The fashion aesthetic he championed influences menswear to this day, and in some instances, women's clothing as well. Come and hear more about the singular existence of Beau Brummell, the greatest dandy of all time.

*The Attic Theatre Presents
"Sense and Sensibility"*

Bellevue, WA. By special arrangement, The Attic Theatre will present the West Coast premiere of Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, as adapted by Ashley J. Barnard. Set in Regency England, Austen's beloved novel deftly paints a picture of life for women controlled by the social conventions of the day, in which they are forced to secure good marriages to escape poverty. Two sisters, Elinor and Marianne Dashwood, undergo heartbreak and betrayal by the men in their lives, until they encounter lasting love.

This original adaptation by Ashley Barnard was first performed in 2002 and directed by Ms. Barnard, an actress and author of four novels.

"Sense and Sensibility" will open Valentine's Day weekend, February, 2008, at the Theater at Meydenbauer Center, 11100 NE 6th, Bellevue, Washington, (425) 637-1020. Performances are scheduled for Friday, the 15th and 22nd at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, the 16th and 23rd at 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, the 17th at 2:00 and 6:00 p.m.; Thursday, the 21st at 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday, the 24th at 2:00 p.m.

The show stars Lorrie Fargo, Heather McRobbie, Corey McDaniel, and Jeffrey Stephens. It is directed by Mark Lewis and assisted by Jane Reinhardt. Please visit www.theattictheatre.org for tickets and information.

(I checked on their website and ticket prices are \$25, with a discounted price of \$20 for students and seniors)

--submitted by Julie Arnold



From The Membership Chair:

The membership lists will be updated shortly. What this means to you is, if you have not renewed your membership in JASPS for 2008, this will be your last newsletter. To continue to be informed of the latest Jane sightings and future meetings, contact Catherine Crossman at 253-588-6516 or at cccros@yahoo.com. If you are in need of a membership form or have simply forgotten whether or not you need to renew, she will be happy to assist you.

Book-It Repertory Theatre Appreciates JASPS Donation

In late December, I received an email from Charlotte Tiencken, Managing Director of Book-It Repertory Theatre, thanking JASPS for the \$500 donation that we voted to send to fund part of the costumes production for the February, 2008 production of "Persuasion". The message said, in part, "We so appreciate your support and are looking forward to having the Society here for the performance. We will be happy to thank the Society for the donation in the program and will specifically put that the donation is for the creation of the costumes for this production." JASPS can be proud that our funds are helping to bring Austen's words to a wider audience!

--Loveday Conquest

Approved measures

At the December meeting, the membership voted to 1) sponsor an essay contest for high school students entitled: "What does Jane Austen's writing mean to me?" and 2) make a \$500 donation to Book-It Theater to be used to partially underwrite the costs of costuming their February 2008 production of "Persuasion."

Why Jane Austen? Why Now?

From Masterpiece Theater's "The Complete Jane Austen" Web page.

Masterpiece Theater brings the complete works of Jane Austen to television at a moment when interest in the author—both her works and her quiet, early-19th century life—may never have been greater. Since the 1940s, full-length film productions of Jane Austen's novels have been turned out at a steady rate of three to seven per decade. Today, Austen "mania" is everywhere, from two new Hollywood features inspired by her life and work, to Jane's image featured on the cover of *Newsweek*, to MySpace and YouTube. Her novels and books about her novels crowd the bestseller lists. Nearly two hundred

years after the publication of *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen still has enormous appeal for contemporary readers and viewers. What accounts for the continuing popularity of Jane Austen? Why Jane, and why now?

At first glance—particularly for most high school students—Austen's popularity is hard to fathom. Austen wrote about the problems and pressures of 19th century courtship and marriage. Action and adventure are limited to a walk in a rainstorm or a ride in an open carriage without a chaperone; powerful feelings and desires are expressed indirectly, if at all; conversation is a high art, flavored with ironic wit and the discussion of weather. Her characters' behavior and life choices are dictated by standards and values that can seem utterly foreign in a world as rapidly changing as our own.

Perhaps modern readers and viewers continue to be drawn to Austen's work because of the very limitations that may make us wary at first. The physical and social landscape within her work is restricted, but the field of themes, emotions, and even desires she explores there is deep and broad. How, her novels ask, does a person do the hard work of creating a good, happy, balanced life? Catherine Morland is a naïve girl with a fanciful imagination; how will she learn to distinguish reality from fantasy and come of age? What does it feel like to be Anne Elliot, disappointed by life before the age of twenty, and how will she find the courage to redeem the mistakes of her past? And why, we might ask Fanny Price, do love, respect, and affection not go to those who deserve them?

Finally, all the novels ask a question that resonates today as powerfully as it did in Austen's time: What chance do the needs of the heart and mind have in a world dominated by money? The world of Jane Austen's novels may be small, but it is not simple.

Austen's other great appeal is that spending time in her world is fun. Her world *is* different from ours, and the films and novels transport us there. We can travel through Regency England (approximately 1800–1820) as tourists, free to enjoy what is glittering and entertaining. Thanks to her deft sense of humor, we delight in her characters, with all their faults. We return home, remembering the pleasures of her world and think about how that world reflects upon our own, with its sharp differences and its subtle and surprising similarities.

Jane Austen first made her way onto standard U.S. high school and college reading lists because she is a great novelist. She remains there because she has proven herself to be a timeless one. Each generation "rediscovers" Austen. Chances are that at the end of the 21st century, we will still be asking "Why Jane? Why Now?"

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/austen/bookclub/whyjane.pdf>

Jane Austen and Money

As a keen observer of social class, Jane Austen translated the life choices made by her family into the conflicts at the heart of her novels. This is particularly true for money and its impact on families. The Austens were country gentry, and were accepted socially by wealthier families in the neighborhood, but they were not wealthy. They had enough to live on, and a few household servants, which made them the equivalent of middle class. Like Mr. Bennett in *Pride and Prejudice*, George Austen could give his daughters little to marry on, and had little property to leave to his sons. Jane Austen saw her beloved brother Edward adopted by a wealthier family, the Knights of Kent. As Austen biographer Park Honan notes in *Jane Austen: Her Life*, "The lasting, subtle effect of the adoption was to make [Jane Austen] more fully aware of how money, land, inheritance, and social advantage easily take precedence . . . over family love."

http://www-tc.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/austen/bookclub_janeslife.pdf

Book review

I have spent the last month puzzling over a book reissued in 2007 by the publisher, Sourcebooks, who tout it as being the first Austen sequel. The novel is *Old friends and new fancies*, by Sybil G. Brinton and it was first published in 1914. The author takes 39 (!) characters from the 6 novels and involves them all in a series of quite clever episodes subtly plucked from the pages of Miss Jane Austen, with some very surprising marriages arranged at the conclusion. I would recommend this book to others but with caution. I certainly wouldn't give it to my friend who loves contemporary sequels and continuations with action-filled plots and single character development nor would I send it to my friend who just read Jane Austen for the first time this year. If, however, you have the text of all the novels thoroughly memorized by now and crave some intellectual stimulation (where did that plot come from?), this novel may be for you. For my part, I found the book somewhat slow but very entertaining (even if the author managed to turn my very favorite villainess into a heroine!)

--submitted by Elaine Weeks

"Persuasion" Preview at Seattle Public Library

On Wednesday, January 23, Book-It Theater will present a preview of their stage adaptation of *Persuasion*. The program will also feature a discussion with co-adapters Jen Taylor and Colin Byrne, director Myra Platt, and the actors.

From the Program Chairs

Because we have some special events coming this year, your Program Committee (Connie Winkler and Jim Nagle) wanted to give you plenty of notice.

I. OUR JUNE MEETING

On June 8, 2008, we will have a very special meeting. Marsha Huff, the president of JASNA, will come to give us her talk on VIEWING AUSTEN THROUGH VERMEER'S CAMERA OBSCURA.

▪ WHERE

Since the talk involves Johannes Vermeer, the 17th Century Dutch painter, we decided to select an art gallery as the venue. After reviewing art galleries in the area, including The Frye, we have selected the Henry Art Gallery at the University of Washington, 15th Avenue NE and NE 41st Street. To be sure we could get the ideal location, we have already signed the contract for the use of the Henry Gallery's auditorium, which has an integrated AV system, projection screen, maple paneled walls and a stage with a podium. Through the good graces of Loveday Conquest, we were able to get the discounted UW non-profit organization rate, so the rental for the auditorium and then the Café/Sculptor Court is \$443.75.

The central plaza garage is the closest garage to The Henry. Located just north of The Henry at NE 41st Street and 15th Avenue North, parking is free all day Sundays. Street parking is supposedly easy to find nearby if you don't mind walking a couple of blocks. Good streets to check are Campus Parkway, University Way, Cookman Street and numbered streets from 40th to 43rd. Parking is not metered on a Sunday.

▪ WHEN

We have reserved the auditorium from 1:30 so the technical check can set up. At 2:00 the attendees will be allowed in and we will have our meeting from 2:30-4:00. From 4-5:00, we will have a "tea hour" in the Baci Café and Outdoor Sculpture Court.

▪ FOOD

The exclusive caterer for The Henry is The Wedge Catering, www.thewedgecatering.com. The clause in the wording of The Henry Rental Agreement is "we cannot accommodate any outside caterers."

So we are unable to bring in our own food and tea as we normally do. Instead, we shall have The Wedge set up a tea service and one of their fabulous cakes to help us celebrate the occasion. We are doing this in lieu of a more substantial meal to keep costs down. The tea and

cake shall enable us to keep the price down to the bare minimum (\$5–10).

▪ HOW MANY

With Marsha Huff coming, we want to encourage the largest turnout we can. Most of the galleries we looked at were either very small (fewer than 20 people) conference rooms or large auditoriums with not much of anything in between. At the Henry, we selected the auditorium for its setting and the fact that it can comfortably hold up to 150 people. While gathering that many would be a miracle, we should hope for, and expect, far more than a regular meeting. So please tell spouses, relatives, friends, neighbors, and others who might be interested in Jane Austen, Vermeer or simply seeing the Henry to attend. For planning purposes, not as a firm commitment, please as soon as possible let Connie know (206-632-7521; winkleronnie@yahoo.com, if you plan to come and whether you shall be bringing others.

We shall also work with The Henry to see if they can provide us any publicity in newsletters, announcements, etc. Connie and I shall come to the February meeting and try to answer your questions and take your suggestions.

II. OUR AUGUST MEETING

Our August meeting, which will be at Epiphany Church, will be entitled English Country Dance Workshop, rather than Eighteenth Century Dance Lessons, because there will also be dances from the Seventeenth and early Nineteenth Century, hence "English Country" is a more apt description. Also, does anyone have, or can arrange for, a small sound system (microphone/speaker) for Charlene for that afternoon? It would really help people hear her, and she wouldn't have to strain.

Write on, Miss Austen

Victoria Coren
Sunday December 2, 2007
The Observer

The BBC has announced a new drama called Miss Austen Regrets, about the love life of everyone's favourite romantic ironist.

You can understand their thinking. There is a limit to how many times *Pride and Prejudice* can be remade, how many different Hollywood stars can take the role of Emma, how much sexing-up *Persuasion* can endure, but audiences are greedy for heaving muslin and Jane Austen seems terribly reluctant to write anything new.

'We thought JK Rowling was slow!' those producers must mutter over their Martinis. 'All this success makes them lazy. Someone get to Austen's house with a big enough cheque to force her arse into that chair and her

fingers on to that keyboard. Where does she live? Probably Hampstead.'

In the meantime, an obvious solution presents itself: make films about Jane Austen, in a Jane Austen style. Simple formula, magnificent costumes, big houses and the famous name stamped legitimately on top. Thus we have just had *Becoming Jane* and now *Miss Austen Regrets*

There are two problems. One is that all the novels have a happy matrimonial ending. I say 'happy'; I would not want to spend the rest of my days trying to make conversation with Mr Knightley. And I'm not sure anyone is up to the challenge of a lifetime's sexual passion with that sappy vicar from *Mansfield Park*. But in the language of 19th-century costume drama, marriage is the only happy ending available. It's the only 'closure'.

Jane Austen, unfortunately for the scriptwriters, experienced matrimony only as a series of near-misses and 'stubborn' rejections. This way merry filmic resolutions do not lie. She never even had sex, much though broadcasters would love to unleash a raunchy period drama in which Miss Austen's crinoline is whipped up by a rugged ostler who has her all over the stableyard. Any Google search of 'Austen', 'hayloft', 'camiknickers', 'absinthe' and 'bi-curious' would yield nothing to the hopeful channel controller.

And she didn't do much else either. This is where TV executives have trouble grasping the difference between reality and fiction; Austen's books are full of drama and excitement because her life wasn't. It is hard to keep viewers tuning in to the big cliffhanger: will Jane be able to unpick this difficult embroidery stitch?

How many films and serials, truthfully, can be made from the tiny life of a constricted rural lady when the required genre demands a huge romantic conclusion and the woman herself did little with men but turn up her nose at their romantic desires or fail to notice they had any?

Why, plenty! And we, the viewers, demand more Austen-style action! Roll on the spring season, 2008 ...

Scents and Sentimentality

This one-off ITV drama deals with an episode in Jane Austen's life when she visited a drapery shop. As Jane attempted to buy handkerchiefs and perfume, the draper (a dark fellow with an aquiline nose) adopted an unnecessarily haughty tone.

Scents and Sentimentality 2

It turns out that he was only working as a draper in the hope of meeting a modest wife before inheriting his

uncle's vast estate! But Jane never discovers this, because she doesn't need any more handkerchiefs.

Hyde Park

In this lavish film by Working Title, Jane Austen goes for a walk in Hyde Park where a shy yet wealthy curate tries to buy her an ice cream. This true-life experience (referred to briefly by Austen in a letter to her sister Cassandra in 1803) came to a sad end when she misunderstood the stammering clergyman, took great umbrage and hurried away. Julia Roberts takes the leading role, with Rowan Atkinson as the curate.

Enema

It is known that Jane Austen suffered various physical ailments, possibly some kind of glandular problem, and took regular trips to the healing waters of Bath. What was not known (until the launch of this \$80m, 24-part series from the Histor-Tainment Network of California, starring Beyonce Knowles as Jane) is that she once visited an avant-garde young doctor in search of treatment. The doctor's proposed methods so horrified our delicate spinster that she never returned to Bath, thus never learning that the 'doctor' was in fact a duke who adored her from afar and could think of no other way to make her acquaintance.

Coat hanger Abbey

Universal Pictures presents a heartbreaking tale, based on a little-known event in Jane Austen's life when she was invited to dine at an imposing residence in Oxfordshire. The novelist (played here by Will Ferrell in a fat suit) detected a tone of condescending pride from the man who helped her off with her coat, and, deeply offended at such inappropriate behaviour from a butler, called immediately for her carriage. By the time she realised that she had mistaken the abbey's rich bachelor owner for a servant, it was too late and he had married her cousin.

Guardian Unlimited © Guardian News and Media Limited 2007

Volunteers Needed

The proposed program for 2008 is on the last page of this newsletter.

We still need:

One location
Three Tea Hosts
One Food Host

Location needs: someplace that can hold about 35-43 people, with seating. We need electricity, water, & tables for tea. Having plates, cups, & napkins is great, but we can always use paper and plastic. Libraries and condo community rooms can be excellent spaces.

Food hosts bring refreshments, either purchased or made, simple as you like (savory and sweet, please).

Tea hosts (black and herbal teas with pots, sugar, milk, cream, cups, napkins, small plates, spoons) also help with the clean -up.

Jane Austen Sequels Available

Miss Austen finished *Persuasion* with an enigma. Was the deceitful widow Mrs Clay so lost to all honour, decency and - yes - self-interest as to live installed in town under the capricious protection of that equal dissembler Mr Elliot? Or was the lady, as Lady Russell proclaimed her, a very dangerous companion? Was she indeed capable, with neither money nor family connexions to sustain her, of 'wheedling and caressing' her profligate lord into making her his wife and thus, the future Lady Elliot? Without descending into the realms of vice and depravity, the authoress hopes to resolve this puzzle in *Connivance* by Helen Baker (an English lady and recognised authoress)

<http://www.lulu.com/content/1234550> for paperback or download.

Once you have enjoyed this, you will be eager to read the *Pride and Prejudice* continuation *The Book of Ruth* by Helen Baker <http://www.lulu.com/content/444990> for paperback or download.

The authoress relies on recommendations from person to person so you will probably be the first in your area to enjoy these novels.

From the Jane Austen Society Membership Secretary
--Submitted by Julie Arnold

To Jane - On Her 232nd Birthday (December 16, 2007)

Today is the day Jane is 232;
But she'll only admit, well, to 229!
Still the years have been kinder than ever she knew,
And she's come to this point full of fame, and just fine!
Her works are more touted than ever before,
Her light and her sparkle continue to shine;
Her books and her films come to mean more and more,
Her vintage just bubbles - the rarest of wine;
Few authors just burgeon long after they're gone;
Few charm and enchant, create wisdom and spells;
But Austen keeps rolling, keeps piling it on,
And her world reputation just deepens and swells.
So here's to our Jane, whom we love and admire
More and more every year, as we now make our toast;
May she always continue to cheer and inspire,
May she always continue to please us the most!
To Jane!

Zoë Kaplan

--from the New York region newsletter

NOTE: Please feel free to share this information sheet with any interested persons.

JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY OF THE PUGET SOUND

The Puget Sound Chapter of the Jane Austen Society is this region's branch of the Jane Austen Society of North American (JASNA). Nationally, we are a group of about 4,000 women and men who enjoy the study, celebration and appreciation of the works, life and times of Jane Austen. Our local group meets six times a year (every other month), and 30 to 40 individuals attend the meetings. We are an eclectic, inclusive, and friendly group of people from all backgrounds and with a variety of educations, professions and interests. For more information on line, please visit our website at www.austenps.com.

Our meetings are open to members and guests. Each gathering begins with a very short business meeting and is followed by a program presented by a member or a guest speaker. Examples of the many topics and subjects included in our programs:

- Regency dress, fashion and social life.
- The postal service, the military and politics of Austen's time.
- Regency music and dance, including performances and dance lessons.
- The history of porcelain and chocolate, with an emphasis on the Regency Era.
- The literature that influenced Austen, the books published during her life and the books and films influenced by Austen.

After the presentation, we enjoy tea and refreshments provided by volunteers. Our meetings take place in members' homes and at local library meeting rooms. We traditionally have the meetings the second Sunday of the month (but NOT always), from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Our 2008 Meetings:

- February 10
- April 13
- June 8
- August 10
- October 12
- December 14

Membership and Dues:

Membership to this organization is open to anyone of high school age or older interested in the life, times and works of Jane Austen. Dues for the local chapter are a mere \$12.00 per year. In addition, all local chapter members are required to be members of JASNA. Members of JASNA receive the annual journal **Persuasions**, which is a softbound book containing essays written by JASNA members around the world, the tri-annual newsletter reporting on events and related Austen information, and an invitation to attend the annual conference. Our local newsletter is a great collection of articles, book and film reviews, notices of new Austen web sites, and general Austen info all provided by local members. It is sent six times a year just prior to the next meeting.



2008 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

February 10

Speaker: Chapter member Charlene Kern
 Program: "Beau Brummel"
 Location: Greenwood Library
 Food hosts: Maureen Kremers Gail Purcell
 Tea hosts: Carolee Jones Loveday Conquest

April 13

Speaker: Author Phyllis Bottomer
 Program: "So odd a mixture: autism in Austen"
 Location: Redmond Library [tentative]
 Food hosts: Marian LaBeck Susan Pasco
 Tea hosts: Maureen Kremers Kimberly Brangwin

June 8

Speaker: Marsha Huff, JASNA President
 Program: "Viewing Austen through Vermeer's 'camera obscura'"
 Location: Henry Gallery
 Catered

August 10

Speaker: Chapter member Charlene Kern
 Program: English country dance workshop
 Location: Epiphany Parish
 Food hosts: _____ Kimberly Brangwin
 Tea hosts: _____

October 12

Speaker: Chapter member Jim Nagle
 Program: "Aristocrats and gentlemen"
 Location: Epiphany Parish
 Food and Tea host: Nichelle Hilton

December 14

Program: Annual Birthday Tea
 Location: _____
 Tea hosts: LeOta Berry _____