

JASNA-Dayton Newsletter

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December 2018

JASNA Dayton 12th Night Ball - January 12, 2019 – Tickets Going Fast!

By *Tori Manship*

December has arrived, JASNA Dayton's 4th Annual Twelfth Night Ball is quickly approaching, and tickets are selling quickly too!

We hope you will be able to join us for a grand ball on January 12, 2019, hosted at the Patterson Homestead. We gather not only to honor the end of the winter holidays in wonderful Regency fashion, but also to commemorate the life and work of Jane Austen, whose own birthday was December 16th. The festivities will include English country dancing, feasting, a silent auction with wonderful historical and contemporary goodies, and a card room with traditional games.

Please come in your holiday finery from any era!

Registration is still open, so secure your place at this festive annual event before it sells out!

To reserve, please mail a check made out to JASNA Dayton to Mary Ann Gasior, 2727 Old Whipp Ct., Centerville, OH 45440. Questions and inquiries should be directed to Tori Manship (torim08@aol.com) or Mary Ann Gasior (gasiormaryann@yahoo.com)



The cost is \$45 *per person* for JASNA & Cincinnati English Country Dance (CECD) members, \$55 *per person* for non-members. Registrations close 7 days prior to the event. This is a limited capacity event, so send in your reservation before the holiday rush hits.

For more information please visit: <http://www.jasnadayton.org/12th-night-ball/> and keep an eye on our Facebook page for updates!

***A Great Time Was Had By All at Playhouse in the Park for Miss Bennet:
Christmas at Pemberley – October 28th***

By Zoe Shade

If you are a Janeite or have ever read Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* – then you would have enjoyed Cincinnati's Playhouse in the Park's imagined sequel "Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley," written by Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon. (If one is not familiar with *P&P*, then you might have missed out on some of the wit and humor.) A number of JASNA of Dayton members and friends traveled to Cincinnati for a fine brunch at the Cincinnati Art Museum's Terrace Café and an afternoon of theatre.

"Christmas at Pemberley" picks up where *P&P* left off; Elizabeth and Darcy, newly married, invite the family to join them for the holidays when, much to everyone's surprise, middle sister, Mary, gets her chance at romance and happiness.

In anticipation of the family's arrival, Elizabeth has decorated Pemberley with many festive decorations. Of note, by each person who enters the room for the first time, is a large evergreen tree waiting to be decorated! Why on earth would she have a live tree in the house? (Those who attended the play determined that Elizabeth must have been embracing the Victorian Era with its German heritage – whatever – the tree provided quite a bit of stir...) Throughout the first scenes Elizabeth enlisted her family to help adorn the tree with ornaments. (By Act Two the tree was fully decorated... the tree had been turned around during intermission to reveal a beautifully completed Christmas tree.)

The actors who played Elizabeth and Darcy were excellent and caught the essence of Jane Austen's main characters. The conversations between these two were lively, but every time Darcy tried to steal a kiss or an embrace, someone entered the room, much to his consternation. Poor man.....

Bingley and Jane (visibly expecting their first child) were the first to arrive with sister Mary. These actors were also spot on! The warm relationship between the two elder sisters and their spouses was fun to relive. Mary, also very well cast, was now more accomplished on the piano and still rather bookish.

An unexpected guest arrives in the form of Arthur de Bourgh, a distant cousin. He informs us that Lady Catherine has died, and he is the presumed heir to the estate. He is quite hesitant to go to Rosings where Anne de Bourgh is awaiting his arrival and so he has come to Pemberley to delay the inevitable!

By-the-by, Mary and Arthur are drawn to each other with mutual interests (and affection). Neither of them having experienced these emotions before, they are not sure what they are feeling or how to express themselves. Eventually, younger sister, Lydia, arrives and predictably upsets the apple cart!

Mary decides to write a letter to Arthur expressing how she feels about him; Arthur goes to Darcy and Bingley for advice, and they tell him to talk to Mary's sisters. Meanwhile, Lydia (not happily married to Wickham, whom she has left at home) flirts with Arthur and causes all sorts of mayhem. The back-and-forth is lively and fun – until Lydia absconds with the letter Arthur has written to Mary and thinks he has written it to her. Comedies of errors ensue.

But wait! Enters Anne de Bourgh looking for Arthur, “her intended”!!!! (Anne makes the snarkiest comment of all about the “live tree” in the house – too funny.) Anne has determined that the only way she can remain at Rosings is to have Arthur marry her! (This Anne de Bourgh is not the one as read in Jane Austen's books or as depicted in the various movie adaptations. No! With her mother deceased, Anne has taken on her mother's persona and is just as demanding and manipulative as ever.) The repartee throughout is lively and amusing.

Arthur believes he has no choice but to follow Anne's dictates and to marry her. As they are preparing to depart the premises, Elizabeth and Darcy intervene. Well, as you can imagine, all is resolved: the boy gets the girl; Lydia is to go back to Wickham; it is arranged that Anne can stay at Rosings without being married; Jane and Bingley are to have their first child; and Darcy gets his kiss and embrace. All's well that ends well!

Join Us for “Plans of Economy in Persuasion” presented by Linda Zionkowski at the Mercantile Library in Cincinnati on Saturday, April 23rd, 2019.

By Angela Crovetti

Our spring event is to be a FREE one for JASNA Dayton and Mercantile Library members alike! Join us for an afternoon where we will enjoy a potluck snack, and Linda's excellent lecture, which was most recently presented at the 2018 JASNA Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Who in Jane Austen's culture truly held the power of the purse? Although a family's wealth generally belonged to men, the task of managing that money often fell to women. Linda will explore with us how attitudes towards spending and saving gave shape to *Persuasion's* plot and characters, and how the novel proposes a balance between prudence and profligacy, caution and abandon, in money and love alike.

Linda Zionkowski is a Professor of English at Ohio University, and most recently author



of *Women and Gift Exchange in Eighteenth-Century Fiction: Richardson, Burney, Austen*. Along with Miriam Hart, she has published several essays on the role of domestic music in Austen's life, culture, and novels. More details will be available in the spring!

Columbus Reading Group Enjoyed Northanger Abbey Discussion October 21

By Sandi Brennan

The Jane Austen Reading Group, Chawton in Columbus, met on the afternoon of Sunday, October 21, at the Panera in Hilliard. There were ten of us in attendance. We began with our usual practice of sharing where we've found and the topics of references to Jane in modern day, e.g.: articles in the *New York Times*.

Those of us who had attended the AGM talked about our impressions of the meeting and the breakout sessions. Of course, we agreed that hearing Amanda Root speak was the highlight.

Our assignment for this meeting was to read the first ten chapters of *Northanger Abbey*. We discussed the foibles, failings, and peculiarities of the characters, with the personalities of John and Isabella Thorpe bearing the brunt of our criticisms.

We plan to meet in the winter, once again at Hilliard Panera. At that time, we will discuss the next ten chapters of *Northanger Abbey*. No date has been set yet for the next meeting.

For more information about the Columbus reading group, or to RSVP for the next gathering, please contact one of the coordinators:

Sandi Brennan - sbrennanedd@aol.com

Sherry Rose-Bond - violethunter@columbus.rr.com

Cincinnati-Dayton Reading Group Also Explores Northanger Abbey

By Wilson Palmer

The Cincinnati-Dayton Reading Group has started with *Northanger Abbey*, and our October and November discussions were delightful, as all of our sessions usually are. Scholars know something about when *NA* was first submitted to the printers and so forth but we can only speculate on when Jane Austen first started writing it, *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*. To me it feels like *NA* is not far removed from her juvenilia and I think her first book was this one, *S&S* was second, with its convoluted sentence structures and too subtle climactic points, and Jane really hit her stride with *P&P*. Researchers have said differently, but that is how they read to me.

Most everyone present seemed delighted with the fun and humor of *Northanger Abbey*. Many enjoyed the heavy-handed narrator and some thought this technique refreshingly modern. Since

Jane Austen was pioneering a new kind of novel, perhaps she needed this intrusive narrator to help introduce this style of writing and teach readers how to appreciate it.

One new adaption was how Jane Austen used dialog to let us determine the personalities of the characters, instead of the long, specific descriptions used by other authors. It is easy to see how *NA* is a parody of Gothic novels. But Jane also includes some specific critiques of the productions of her fellow writers, even those she enjoyed. Also, the narrator gives us the famous "defense of the novel" in last pages of Chapter 5.

With all the humor in the plot and narrator, there are real Gothic darkness and dangers for women underneath the surface plot. Catherine Morland is an innocent left to navigate the social and sexual minefields of Bath, without any useful female mentor. But is this enough to make the story interesting? The Bronte sisters didn't think so. Many of us have previously heard that reading Jane Austen was very important to English WWI soldiers. I thought this was only nostalgia for home. New for me was the thought that one of the reasons Austen appealed to them, was that so many of the fighting men felt trapped and powerless in the trenches. They could therefore identify with the plight of Austen's women characters.

Those of us who are still in contact with former Reading Group leader, Jean Long, have heard her say that in Henry Tilney, more than any other Austen character, we have the true voice and opinions of Jane Austen herself. Critics and today's reader can feel Henry is a sexist bully, condescending to Catherine, lording his power and superior knowledge over her. Or is he, as most of us think, witty and teasing, but sincerely sensitive to Catherine and his sister?

Northanger Abbey is a short book so we plan to finish it in a single year. If you want to join us, don't wait too long, as we only have two sessions left. All meetings are 2:30-4:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

February 10, 2019: We will be discussing *Northanger Abbey* Volume II, Chapters 1-8 (if you have a version with continuous chapters: ch. 16-23) at Judy McCoy's house. Discussion leader will be Kay Berg.

March 10, 2019: We will be discussing *Northanger Abbey* Volume II, Chapters 9-16 (if you have a version with continuous chapters: ch. 24-31) at Eilanna Price's house. Discussion leader Marilyn Rueth.

If you are interested in leading a discussion or hosting a meeting, please contact Wilson Palmer (wilson3cp@gmail.com)

JASNA Annual General Meeting (AGM) from an Attendee's Perspective

By Cindy Manship



This is Cindy Manship, your roving reporter who, along with my daughter Tori and my husband, David, went to this year's AGM. The AGM was held in Kansas City, Missouri, which for us was a 9-hour drive, roughly, with stops. Since we had tickets to the special Amanda Root presentation on Thursday evening, we were anxious to arrive on time. We got there but just barely! After leaving my husband to deal with our luggage (thanks, Dear!), Tori and I headed for the huge ballroom. We got there too late to pick up our registrations for the AGM itself, but we had our proof that we paid for this special event. It started with a pre-recorded interview which was shown on the large screens, but the highlight was when Amanda herself came out and took questions from the audience. This was interspersed with Amanda doing some dramatic readings from *Persuasion*. It was a very enjoyable presentation. Her talk was very warmly received by everyone, and she came across as a very down-to-earth

sweet and funny person.

The next day things really got into gear. A group of us Dayton area types had lunch together before the first major event. We walked across the street from the hotel and had a lovely lunch at a place in their Union Station. The interior of this building was absolutely beautiful! Our group included Angela, Tori, Linda Zionkowski, (the speaker at our upcoming program this Spring), my hubby, David and me. (David came along for the ride. I wasn't able to get him a companion membership this year so referred to him as "My Companion without Portfolio") On the walk over, I just had to get our picture with the very large and moving T-Rex dinosaur displayed outside the building! (They were having a show of dinosaurs somewhere else in the building and that was their advert for it!) The first big event for us was the opening Plenary speaker, Dr John Mullan. I must say he was my favorite speaker of the whole weekend. He has spoken at two other AGMs, neither of which I had attended. He was a brilliant speaker and very funny! His insights both serious and funny were very interesting. I made sure to purchase his book, *What Matters in Jane Austen? Twenty Crucial Puzzles Solved*, after hearing him speak.

One of the problems in attending an AGM is trying to decide which break-out sessions to attend. Some are great and some are less than great. As always, I had a mixed bag but I must say most of them lived up to my expectations. One of my favorites was on Saturday when I attended,

"Captain Benwick and Louisa Musgrove: Shipwreck or Love Boat?" Despite having her co-presenter not be able to attend, the speaker did a great job. It was an interesting and funny program. (I'm noticing a trend here, I like humor interjected with seriousness!) Afterwards, we took a vote and the "Love Boat" people won! Tori attended Linda's Breakout, "Plans of Economy in *Persuasion*." She said Linda did a wonderful job, and it was one of her favorite breakouts.

All in all, a lovely time was had by all. I got to spend some time with my friend, Candy from Maryland whom I don't get to see too often. At the banquet I had the chance to visit with Lisa Tyler, our new RC, and get to know her better. I enjoyed talking to Linda Zionkowski at lunch and after the banquet too. Then, of course, there was the shopping and the parade and, and, well, my time is up! I could write more but Angela only asked for a couple of paragraphs! I hope you enjoyed my roving reporter's tale of the AGM. I'll now return you to your regularly scheduled program.

If you are interested in attending a future AGM, check <http://www.jasna.org/conferences-events/agms/> for details.

Pride and Prejudice Voted America's #4 Best-Loved Novel

Pride and Prejudice, by English author Jane Austen (1775-1817), has been chosen as America's #4 best-loved novel by participants in *The Great American Read*. The Top 5 novels and the first-place winner were revealed during the final episode of the eight-part PBS series, which aired October 23.

Over 4 million votes were cast between May 22 and October 18 as viewers voted for their favorite books from a list of 100 finalists determined by an earlier national survey. Jane Austen's light, bright, and sparkling classic is in good company. The other books in the Top 5 include *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which took first place as America's best-loved novel, as well as the *Outlander* series (second place), *Harry Potter* series (third place), and *Lord of the Rings* series (fifth place).

Published in 1813, *Pride and Prejudice* is the oldest book in the top 60, but its timeless appeal ensures that it is never out of print, and its opening sentence is one of the most famous in English literature: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife." The novel continues to win the hearts of readers worldwide thanks to its lively, modern heroine, Elizabeth Bennet; unforgettable comic characters; witty dialog; and universal themes that still resonate today: love, money, social mobility, and self-knowledge.

Claire Bellanti, president of the Jane Austen Society of North America, said, “I am delighted that *Pride and Prejudice* has been chosen as one of America’s top five favorite novels. I hope the news will encourage those who have not yet read the book to discover its timeless and universal appeal!”

About *The Great American Read*

The Great American Read, an eight-part PBS television and online series, explored and celebrated the power of reading, told through the prism of America's 100 best-loved novels. Viewers were invited to read these books and vote for their favorites over the course of five months. For more about *The Great American Read*, visit <https://www.pbs.org/the-great-american-read/home/>.

Of Note...

Submitted by JASNA National President, Liz Cooper;

Once again, we ask you to get the word out about the yearly JASNA Essay Contest. We don't spend money on publicity, and so we are asking you to help us. As most of you know, this is a contest for students at three levels: high school, undergraduate and graduate. The topic is usually tied to the upcoming AGM. For 2019 the AGM celebrates *Northanger Abbey* and the contest theme is related to Jane Austen's use of literature in this novel and elsewhere. You will find the details about eligibility, format, and submission here:

<http://www.jasna.org/programs/essay-contest>

Also on the website is a link to a color poster for the contest:

<http://jasna.org/assets/Programs/JASNA-2019-Essay-Contest-Poster.pdf>

Please help spread the word!

Dates to Remember

January 12, 2019 – Annual 12th Night Ball at Patterson Homestead

February 10, 2019 - Dayton-Cincy Reading Group - *Northanger Abbey* Volume II, Chapters 1-8 (if you have a version with continuous chapters: Ch. 16-23)

March 10, 2019 – Dayton-Cincy Reading Group - *Northanger Abbey* Volume II, Chapters 9-16 (if you have a version with continuous chapters: Ch. 24-31)

April 13, 2019 – Linda Zionkowski lecture at the Mercantile Library, Cincinnati

JASNA Dayton Executive Committee

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