



## JASNA Central and Western Ohio Region Newsletter

February 2024

### March 10, 2024: Lafferty Pike at the Library

Join us on Sunday March 10, 2024 at the Centerville Library on Spring Valley Pike from 2:30-3:30 p.m. for a musical program with Lafferty Pike. Hot tea and scones will be served. There is no fee for this program, but registration is required. Please RSVP to [eilannaesp@yahoo.com](mailto:eilannaesp@yahoo.com) by March 6, 2024.

About the program: “Tunes and Expressions”: Favorite Songs of the Inimitable Jane Austen

We know Jane Austen as a beloved author whose keen depictions of human nature continue to delight. But she was also a pianist, singer, and music aficionado. Her personal songbooks contain a treasure trove of Regency Era music curated by Jane herself. Like many of her literary heroines, her own personality is revealed by her musical tastes.



The musicians of Lafferty Pike will present selections from Jane Austen’s eclectic collection, including comic operas, hymns, dances, instrumental showpieces, and romantic ballads. Travel back in time with sounds of harp, violin, and guitar to hear the music that cheered and inspired this remarkable woman.



## Twelfth Night Ball Recap

By Eilanna Price

The Central and Western Ohio JASNA Region 12th night Ball was held on Jan 6th at the Patterson Homestead. Patterson Homestead is owned by Dayton History, which maintains it as an 1840's house. The ballroom was added later and works well for both dinner and dancing. The evening began with a Toast to the 12th Night Ball (a little history as to why it went out of fashion later), then a wonderful served dinner. Dinner was either Salmon or Chicken, with rice, asparagus, a salad, rolls and butter along with small desert treats. Beverages were Coffee, Tea, or punch, with water on the table. Table decorations by Marja included silhouettes of Jane Austen with our CWO initials in a triangle lit up with tea lights for effect. After a good time conversing with our table partners, we had a short break.

Guests could then either move to the front parlor for the learning and playing of old card games such as Whist, or they could stay in the ballroom for dancing. Fred was our card master in the front parlor. Beverly was our wonderful dance caller and the three musicians added a special touch with live music. Guests could go back and forth for entertainment. We also selected a King of the Ball, this year it was Paul Weaver and he looked regal in his crown. The period attire of many of the guests really added to the atmosphere, but not required at all. Everyone had a great time during the evening amid much dancing and card playing.

Included in the evening was a silent auction held in the front room. Several baskets were bid on and the traditional, new bonnet made by Cam, was in the auction. See the picture of the bonnet to the right.

A huge thank you to all the members of the Program Committee who put the Ball on. The logistics, detailed planning, and night of set up/execution made the Ball a success. Program Committee members are Carrie Bebris, Tori Manship, Marillyn Rueth, Cindy Manship, Mary Ann Gasior, Mariah Busher, Marja



Weaver, and Eilanna Price. Mark your calendars to come to the 2025 12th Night Ball, location and date to be announced in the fall. If anyone would like to help work on the 12th Night Ball for 2025 please e-mail [eilannaesp@yahoo.com](mailto:eilannaesp@yahoo.com).

## Reading Group Update

By Wilson Palmer

On February 11, 2024, the Dayton and Cincinnati area Reading Group was welcomed into the vaulted ceiling living room of Marja Weaver's beautiful home where we continued our discussion of *Sense and Sensibility*. Eleven were in attendance plus two on Zoom. We enjoyed tea, goodies, and the pleasure of being together talking about Jane Austen. We discussed Chapters 4 through 8 of Volume III, the last days of the Dashwood's visit to London through Willoughby's surprise "assault" on Elinor at the Palmer's house at Cleveland.

I expected to get some negative response from my last email about author Ann Richards' and my assertion that Jane Austen was a Christian moralist, but that did not happen. Perhaps it is because within our small group a higher percentage of those present were regular church attenders than the normal US average. We seemed to agree that Austen's negatively represented clergymen like Mr. Collins was not an attack on the Anglican Church, but a critique of those who see the work as a job instead of a calling. When one of our participants talked about the failure of first-born sons, like Colonel Brandon's brother and John Dashwood, we thought of Cain versus Abel and Esau and Jacob. When our discussion veered into English law someone could name the Bible story of Simon Magus who became the namesake for the crime of simony. Forgiveness can be another religious theme which Elinor and Marianne explore in spite of the trials under which they have suffered.

More than one member of our group said this part of the book was their favorite, or most important in rounding out Elinor's character. She has a lot to deal with in communicating Colonel Brandon's offer of a living to Edward without taking credit for it, happy to see Edward would have a home and some income, but confused about how she should feel versus how she really feels about enabling Edward's marriage to Lucy. After all the suffering and affronts with which Elinor has been dealing throughout the novel, we get to see her having some fun or revenge, needling her brother about the stupid contradictions of Mrs. Ferrars, giving Robert Ferrars the evil eye, and calling Willoughby out on his selfishness and offenses. When Willoughby foists himself on Elinor's attention at Cleveland, she is forced to be strong, but still open to hear his side of the story and trying to keep her wits from being sucked too far into sympathy for him.

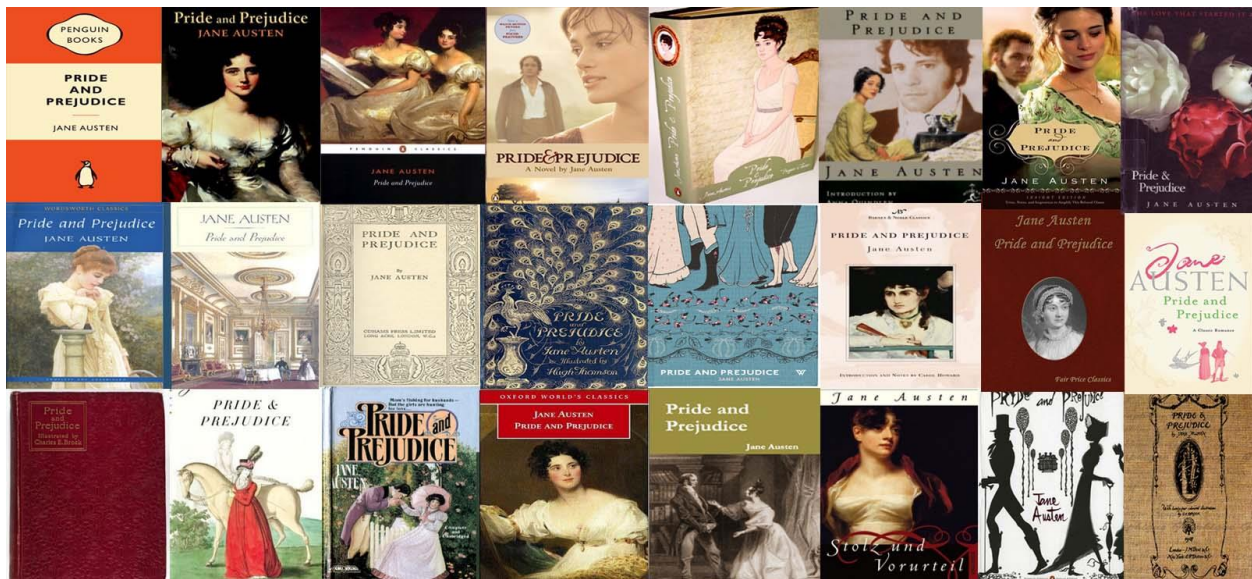


The question was asked, why does Willoughby dislike Colonel Brandon? We had to piece back together the timeline, realizing that when we first see this dislike it is long before Brandon knows about the seduction, and perhaps Willoughby at that time is ignorant about Eliza being Brandon's ward. Or did Willoughby know, and so his dislike is a mask for his own guilt? One answer I like to the first question is this: Because Marianne is offended by the assumption of

everyone at Barton Park that she is to be the love interest of such an “old” man, Willoughby takes up Marianne’s cause, hoping it will endear himself even more to her.

Another question was what purpose did the Willoughby meeting at Cleveland serve in this novel? One answer we have already mentioned is that it helps establish Elinor as a heroine of a higher order. But another answer I found interesting is that this scene gives us a glimpse of Willoughby’s future. He admits that his punishment will be his continuing regret in losing Marianne. Austen’s villains often “get away with it” with very little punishment. Certainly, Lucy seems to be rewarded, achieving her worldly goals without any negative consequences. So, Willoughby’s future suffering is perhaps a gift to the reader since he has injured not only the Dashwood family but Eliza, Colonel Brandon and who knows how many others. Someone wondered why, if Willoughby did care about Marianne, why wait until she is on her deathbed? Why not later in the day or the next after the final breach with Marianne when Sophia was not standing at his shoulder, why not send Marianne another letter truthfully explaining the things he tells Elinor at Cleveland? This re-writing of the novel reminds me of a discussion many months ago asking: Since Marianne was writing letters to Willoughby, why did she not walk a few blocks to his London residence and confront him when she first arrived in the city? Well, the main reason, of course, is that if people were logical and faced problems directly, we would not have Jane Austen’s beautiful novel, so wonderfully constructed.

The next and final discussion of *Sense and Sensibility* is scheduled for **April 14, 2024**.



## *Pride and Prejudice* Turns 211

By Amy Kurlansky

“It is a truth universally acknowledged.....”

With that deceptively simple opening, *Pride and Prejudice*, the second published novel by A Lady leapt onto the scene on January 28, 1813, and into the hearts and minds of readers for the last 211 years.

Originally titled *First Impressions*, *Pride and Prejudice* has endured in the literary imagination for over 200 years. When Jane Austen wrote *Pride and Prejudice* in the 1790s, the English novel was still a relatively new art form. Miss Austen is well-known for her astute critiques of the people and society around her, as well as her notorious wit.

*Pride and Prejudice* is often credited as the grandparent of the modern rom-com, epitomizing the “enemies to lovers” trope. Its influence can be seen not just in the 1995 BBC miniseries or the 2005 feature film, but, in countless other stories, such as *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, *The Lizzy Bennet Diaries*, *You’ve Got Mail*, *Bride and Prejudice*, and even cultural phenoms *Downton Abbey* and *Bridgerton* (which also happens to be set in 1813).

Writers can tell all sorts of stories in all kinds of genres. Embedded in the story of country manners, Miss Austen’s characters face a number of daunting challenges. Not only is *Pride and Prejudice* an amazing story of love and romance, and a witty critique of a community’s foibles, it also sheds some light on a very difficult legal concept.

In case you do not know, the Bennets are part of the English landed gentry, which does make them part of the aristocracy. Mr. and Mrs. Bennet and their 5 daughters live at the family estate, Longbourn. And, Longbourn is entailed. This seemingly small fact becomes a key part of the story, as Mrs. Bennet matchmakes and meddles in order to try to find good husbands for her daughters. In this world, though, marriage is a very high stakes situation, because none of the girls can inherit the family estate when their father dies, which makes it very likely that they would not be able to stay there. They would also not receive any income from the property.

So—as a small reminder from first year Property: Mr. Bennet has a life estate in Longbourn. It is entailed. Technically, there is a fee tail male and only men can own Longbourn. Thus, the next vested beneficiary in Longbourn is....a distant cousin, Mr. Collins.

And, that, is how *Pride and Prejudice* has become perhaps the singularly best example illustrating how English estates and property law work.

Suddenly, knowing that Mrs. Bennet, Jane, Mary, Kitty, Lidia, and of course, the beloved Lizzy, could potentially find themselves needing to find a new place to live after Mr. Bennett dies and their cousin moves his family into Longbourn (which is exactly what happens to the Dashwood sisters and their mother in Austen’s first novel, *Sense and Sensibility*) puts a very humanized spin on the “simple” property problems that always seemed to start “‘A’ had a life estate....”

Whether you think you are a Lizzy, a Jane, a Charlotte, a Georgiana, or a Darcy, Miss Austen’s characters have made their way into our hearts, minds, and culture while also teaching us a little about the law.

Thus, we would like to celebrate the birthday of *Pride and Prejudice*. Happy 211th!  
Here's to the next 211.

(Originally published by the Hamilton County Law Library:

<https://lawlibrary.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/pride-and-prejudice-turns-211/> )

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