



Northern California Region

From the Regional Coordinator

Hello JASNA NorCal,

Somehow it's already December. And somehow it's just December. What a lifetime this year has been. As we enter the colder months I hope you're all taking care of yourselves and enjoying some comfort reading and watching. I know I'll be rereading some favorites and maybe finally digging into my TBR pile.

We have an exciting December event planned, in coordination with the other California JASNA regions, and I hope to see you there. (More info in this event later in the newsletter.)

Looking ahead to 2021, I would love to know about your ideas with this [survey](#). Last time we didn't have a high participation rate, so I hope this time we can get more of you to chime in on what you'd like to see from the region in the coming year.

As far as events go, we will continue to meet virtually due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. I do not anticipate that conditions will change much for 2021, so for now we will plan to be completely virtual unless major advances are made, and even then, we would want to survey you all to see how you felt about meeting IRL again.

I hope you continue to take care of yourselves and your communities.

Bianca Hernandez

Regional Coordinator, JASNA NorCal



Upcoming Meetings

December 12: A Toast to Jane Austen

The California Regions of JASNA (JASNA Southwest, JASNA Northern California, JASNA Greater Sacramento, JASNA San Diego and JASNA Central California) invite you to celebrate Jane Austen's birthday with them at this virtual afternoon salon of ideas, games, and fun. See page 2 for details and registration link.

Online Events Calendar

We have added a calendar widget to our web site with listings of virtual Austen events from all over the world: ours and other JASNA regions, libraries, museums, educational non-profits, and more! Submissions are appreciated: email news@jasnanorcal.org. Check out the calendar here: [Online Events Calendar](#)

**Jane Austen Society of
North America**

Northern California Region

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THE CALIFORNIA
REGIONS OF JASNA
INVITE YOU TO
A Toast to
Jane Austen

speakers | socializing | surprises



The California Regions of JASNA (JASNA Southwest, JASNA Northern California, JASNA Greater Sacramento, JASNA San Diego and JASNA Central California) invite you to celebrate Jane Austen's birthday with them at this virtual afternoon salon of ideas, games, and fun.

Date: Saturday, December 12, 2 pm – 4 pm

Venue: Zoom

From the Page to the Stage

We will open with the panel discussion “Theatrically Yours, Jane Austen,” featuring theater professionals from across the country who have firsthand understanding of taking Austen from the page to the stage.

The panel will be moderated by JASNA Central California Regional Coordinator Heather Parish, executive director of the Rogue Performance Festival in Fresno, Calif.

Featured panelists will be:

- **Brooke Aiello**—a professional actor, costume designer and professor of theater at California State University Fresno and Fresno Pacific University, where she specializes in period acting styles. She has directed Michael Bloom's adaptation of *Emma* and costumed Lauren Gunderson & Margot Melton's *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*.
- **Hana Sharif**—artistic director for the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis. She directed Kate Hamill's *Sense and Sensibility* for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in addition to other acclaimed productions of *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Christians* and *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*.

- **Nandita Sheno**—an actor-writer who lives in New York City. Her full-length play *Lyme Park: An Austonian Romance of an Indian Nature* was produced by the Hegira at the Round House Theater in Silver Spring, Maryland.
- **Amy Stallings**—a professor of history at the College of William and Mary. She is also an actor and historical interpreter with Colonial Williamsburg. Her adaptation of *Northanger Abbey* was produced by the Williamsburg Players in 2019.

Original Theatrical Presentation

The panel will be followed by an original theatrical presentation by Carissa Meagher, a playwright, actor, director and theater instructor. She holds a BFA in acting from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts and an MFA in playwriting from Ireland's RADA affiliate school. Her one-act play *Written Off* was produced at The Lir Academy and her thesis play, *California*, was featured in Dublin's Fringe Festival. In 2019, Sacramento Theatre Company opened its 75th Anniversary Season with her play *Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey*.

Social Time with the Janeites

Following the panel and theatrical presentation, join us for some camaraderie and good spirits as we play together with Austen Adaptations Trivia, an Austen-themed scavenger hunt and a Zoom costume contest. So gather your Austen goodies and your best cap for visiting and enjoy some afternoon fun with fellow Janeites!

[Register here](#)



2021 JASNA Annual General Meeting

Dates: October 14–17, 2021

Location: Chicago, IL

Theme: Jane Austen in the Arts

Plenary Speakers: Gillian Dow, Devoney Looser, Desmond Shawe-Taylor, Maestro Stephen Alltop and Soprano Josefien Stoppelenburg

Join us in the exciting city of Chicago as we explore the strong connection between Jane Austen and the arts. Austen attended private musical evenings, enjoyed visits to the theater and galleries, and participated in family theatricals. Each of her novels features the arts in some form—from the domestic female accomplishments of playing an instrument, singing, and drawing in *Emma* and *Pride and Prejudice*, to the elaborate but private preparations for a performance of *Lover's Vows* in *Mansfield Park*, to the public concert at the Assembly Rooms in *Persuasion*. In 2021 we will examine how the visual and performing arts influenced Austen's writing and how her work has in turn inspired film, stage, and other artistic adaptations for more than 200 years.

For more information, visit the 2021 AGM website: <http://jasna.org/agms/chicago2021/home.php>



Call for Papers:

Persuasions On-Line Special Issue

Beyond the Bit of Ivory: Jane Austen and Diversity

This special issue of *Persuasions On-Line*, to be coedited by Danielle Christmas and Susan Allen Ford, hopes to explore Austen through the perspective of race— as well as how other forms of inequity related to ethnicity, gender identity and orientation, ability/disability, culture, and class might intersect with or inform those perspectives.

It's time for the community of those involved in the scholarship and discussion of Jane Austen and her world to examine the limited ways in which we understand Jane Austen's writing and the world of which she was a part and the limited ways we write and talk about those subjects. Submissions should be sent on or before **January 15, 2021**; the issue, *Persuasions On-Line* 41.2, will be published in the summer of 2021. Please read the full [Call for Papers](#) to learn more.

JASNA NorCal Virtual Book Club

Mr. Woodhouse considered eight persons ... together as the utmost that his nerves could bear.

To be sure we kept his horror of large parties in mind for each of our four Virtual Book Club meetings on *Emma* that concluded last week.

In the company of clever, well-informed people, while staying at home in real comfort, our book club had a great deal of conversation on whether Frank Churchill is a rascal or a lover, Jane Fairfax shy or cold, and Emma a haughty princess or a well-intentioned but misguided and loving friend and daughter. By the end, Miss Bates had won everyone's heart.

We met on Friday evenings for three weeks in a row to discuss each of the three volumes of *Emma*. In our last meeting, a month later, we enthusiastically discussed various *Emma* adaptations and our favorite performances.

Some key questions that kept us engaged and generated lively discussions:

- Was Mrs. Weston a good governess to Emma?
- When Mr. Knightley calls Harriet a silly girl and yet wants her to marry Robert Martin, did he care about Harriet's sentiments or did he just want his friend and tenant to get the girl that he desired?
- Emma and Mr. Knightley's disagreement on whether Frank could have and should have attended his father's wedding to Miss Taylor.
- Austen's famous quote on Emma, "*I am going to take a heroine whom no one but myself will much like*"—is that really true? We like Emma too! Or do we really?

I want to thank the attendees who made this book club so thoroughly enjoyable! I started each meeting with a set of trivia questions and I was so impressed that none of my questions went unanswered. As Mr. Elton says, "*where small parties are select, they are perhaps the most agreeable of any.*"

Please stay tuned for our next Virtual Book Club (*Pride and Prejudice*) to be scheduled between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Deepali Lugani

Do you belong to a local Jane Austen book club? We'd love to share reports of your reading adventures with other JASNA Nor-Cal members, many of whom cannot make our quarterly events and would appreciate knowing about and connecting with other Janeites who live nearby. Send articles or contact us at rc@jasnanorcal.org for more information.



Pandemic Reading

Most of us have been stuck inside at home for much of 2020, which means ... more time to read! Which books have been helping you through the pandemic and social distancing? Our Spring 2021 issue will include a selection of recommended new releases and old favorites. Join in: email your list of favorite lockdown reads to news@jasnanorcal.org so that we can include them in the next newsletter.