



Northern California Region

From the Regional Coordinator

Hello Northern California Region,

I am excited for you to see what the board has planned for the coming year! We are still being very cautious and will be anticipating virtual programming this year. You can read more about our plans for the 2021 year in this issue of the quarterly newsletter.

I will be reaching the end of my term this year, and I want to see more people step up and help with events this year, and beyond. I want to ask, if not urge, members to join the board as volunteers. Not just to help ease the strain of the few volunteers on the board, but to ensure the region keeps going.

We desperately need more folks to step up and take on responsibilities for the NorCal region, and I hope to hear from some of you soon, so that you can help with 2021 programming and grow our local board.

Thank you,

Bianca Hernandez-Knight
Regional Coordinator, JASNA NorCal
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Upcoming Meetings

Date: Saturday, March 20, 2021

Time: 2:00–4:00 pm PDT

Topic: *Northanger Abbey*

We will be watching “The Words and Wisdom of *Northanger Abbey*,” a breakout talk by Devoney Looser from the 2019 AGM, and will follow it with a discussion of the talk and novel. See page 2 for the Eventbrite registration link for this Zoom program.

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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2021 JASNA NorCal Events

Date: Saturday, March 20, 2021, 2–4 pm PDT

Topic: *Northanger Abbey* Talk and Discussion

[Register through Eventbrite here](#)

We will be watching “The Words and Wisdom of *Northanger Abbey*,” a breakout talk by Devoney Looser from the 2019 AGM, and will follow it with a discussion of the talk and the novel.

Talk description: *Northanger Abbey* was famously first titled *Susan*, but did you know it was labeled romance? Or that it and *Persuasion* were mistaken for one long work? Learn more about Austen’s genius by single word and witty sentence with this image-filled presentation, plus “nice” discussion of women, history, romance, and reading.

Date: June: TBD

Date: Saturday, September 18, 2021, 2–4 pm PDT

Topic: A Virtual Regency Salon

We are working on the details for this fun virtual salon event that will include a variety of activities, from “show off your pandemic projects” opportunities to mini-tutorials to bingo and trivia games, and beyond. More info and calls for participants soon.

Date: Saturday, December 18, 2021, time TBD

Topic: Birthday Toast to Jane Austen

We are working on getting a speaker for this annual celebration, and we will need volunteers to help with the coordination and execution of the event.



Volunteers Needed!

We’re increasing our efforts to recruit JASNA NorCal members willing to share their time and expertise and help keep our region afloat. Honestly, we can’t do this without you. Visit the [Volunteer](#) page on our web site for more information and a list of roles—both big and small—that may be the perfect fit for you to become more involved and to make new Janeite friends. Check it out and join us!

A Year at Home with Jane Austen

Astonishingly, it's been a full year since the global COVID-19 pandemic closed schools and businesses, curtailed travel, and led to the cancellation of many events, conferences, and other professional and social gatherings. We miss reconnecting with friends at literary and arts gatherings such as the JASNA Annual General Meeting; we miss dressing up for balls and banquets in lovely historic locations. It is likely to be some time before it's safe for such social activities to once again be possible.

Fortunately for Janeites (and for other literature and arts fans, students, and scholars), one of the (few) redeeming features of this pandemic year has been an opportunity to attend virtual talks, garden and exhibit tours, musical and theatrical performances, and more, through a huge offering of online programs from historical and preservation organizations, museums, universities, publishers, theatre and music companies, and individuals intent on sharing their interests and properties despite the circumstances. Here are just a few of the types of virtual gems I've discovered while remaining quietly at home.

The Play's the Thing

Theatres may be closed for now, but actors love an audience even if the applause is just those little clapping hands in a Zoom box. Productions of Jane Austen's works are always popular, and many companies have made filmed versions of their past productions available for viewing. In addition there are also new virtual productions on offer, with actors dressing up at home and using digital backgrounds from stately homes. I've seen live virtual productions of *Persuasion*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and the recent holiday hit *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*, as well as a rare performance of Frances Burney's *The Woman Hater*; they've all been great fun and show some very innovative use of the available technology.

Author, Author

As frustrating as it must be for writers with new books coming out, it's also been easier for prospective readers who don't live on the typical book promotion tour routes to learn about new publications. [The New York Public Library](#), among other institutions, has a healthy schedule of author talks and discussions, and JASNA regions have been able to book authors for their member meetings without the usual scheduling issues and travel expenses. One of the best presentations I attended was a talk hosted by the JASNA New York Metropolitan Region by Professor Gretchen Gerzina, specialist in the fields of Black British studies, African American women's writing, and mixed race studies, and the author of several excellent books on these subjects.

Regency Wardrobe Enhancement

There will eventually be a new Season: balls and banquets and tea parties and weekend retreats await. Whether you regularly dress to impress at every Jane Austen event, or are just thinking of dipping your toes in the costuming waters, being stuck at home is a perfect excuse to start sewing! The internet abounds with video tutorials on trimming bonnets, knitting reticules, choosing a pattern for a day dress, or finding the best resources for that perfect trim. JASNA regions, costume guilds, and other groups often include costume sessions in their programming, and it's not difficult to find (or host!) informal sewing meetups to show off your new turban or get some expert advice.

Book Clubs Are Hot

My online book club, Home with Austen, started via a chat during a Facebook Live session at last spring's JaneCon. Our small group ranges from a high school senior (now in college!) to a different type of senior, located all over the US; we're still going strong on Zoom; and we've started using the [Book-clubz](#) web site/app to stay organized. We've discussed all of Austen's published novels and are deciding what to read next. If you're feeling isolated, try starting your own virtual book club; it's not hard to find kindred spirits.

PJs Are the Perfect Conference Wear

There have been SO MANY terrific virtual Austen conferences, many of which I would never have been able to attend in person before (although now I'm hyped up for future IRL events). One of the best organized was the [Historic Joseph Teel House's Emma Virtual Regency Retreat](#) in January 2021. Living on the West Coast, I'd never even heard of Teel House, but they put on a fabulous weekend event with author talks, topical panels, a historic costume fashion show, cooking demos, dance instruction and a bonnet trimming workshop. Kudos to them!

Where can you find out about future events, you ask? Well, JASNA NorCal has an [online calendar](#) listing everything we learn about. Another avenue is to connect with some of the many groups who are putting on these events: like or follow their social media channels, sign up for mailing lists, check your local JASNA region's listings and collaborations with sister organizations. For as long as we must socially distance, the calendar is yours to fill.

Eleanor Farrell

JASNA AGM (Annual General Meeting) Updates



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>



2022 JASNA Annual General Meeting

Dates: September 30–October 2, 2022

Location: Victoria, BC

Theme: Sense and Sensibility in the City of Gardens

The Victoria, BC, Region wishes to excite your anticipation with a return to Canada for the 2022 JASNA AGM! Come to the city with a long JASNA history and legacy. We know many JASNA members will be ready for a lovely getaway to our City of Gardens when the time comes, and we can guarantee you are going to have a fantastic time filled with our Jane, and everything Victoria has to offer. Visit the **2022 AGM web site** for more information and updates.

2021 Student Essay Contest

JASNA conducts an annual student **Essay Contest** to foster the study and appreciation of Jane Austen's works in new generations of readers. Students world-wide are invited to compete for scholarship awards in three divisions: high school, college/university, and graduate school.

The 2021 Essay Contest topic is tied to the theme of our upcoming Annual General Meeting: "Jane Austen in the Arts." It encompasses a wide variety of the arts, including fine arts, performance arts, decorative arts, and crafts. The deadline for Essay Contest submissions is **Tuesday, June 1, 2021**. It is essential that you visit the **Submissions** page and review the contest rules and eligibility requirements. The JASNA web site also provides more information and samples of past winning essays.
