



Jane Austen Society of North America, Southwest Region

## June 2018 Newsletter



# Q&A with JASNA President Claire Bellanti

Claire Bellanti has served as president of the Jane Austen Society of North America since 2014. She previously was vice president for regions from 2010 to 2013 and JASNA Southwest's co-president/regional coordinator from 2005 to 2008.

She retired from UCLA after a 35-year career as a library professional. Claire earned her master's in history from the University of Nevada Las Vegas and her MBA from UCLA.

As she prepares to pass the torch to a new JASNA president at the end of the year, Claire shares her favorite experiences, the changes and challenges she's overseen, and her hopes for JASNA's future.

*What have you enjoyed most about your tenure as JASNA president?*

The JASNA president has many jobs: Signing contracts, investigating insurance, writing business letters, planning JASNA tours, participating in committee work, overseeing the AGMs and directing the business of the JASNA board are perhaps the most important. But there is no question that the one thing I have enjoyed most is visiting JASNA regions. I have been able to travel to 24 of them during my four years as president. JASNA supports the cost of the travel to help encourage regions, both old and new, in their programming efforts for members. I've given a talk about Circulating Libraries in the 18th and 19th centuries [the same talk Claire gave at our Southwest region meeting in December 2015 at UCLA]. For me, getting to know members around the U.S. and Canada has been the most rewarding part of the job.

*What were the biggest changes you have overseen so far?*

Three especially beneficial changes for members have taken place during the last four years:

1) The development and launch of a new JASNA website. It has a modernized look, is easy to navigate, and contains so much interesting information about Jane Austen and the novels. My favorite part of the website is the map of the novels, and I love that it is so easy to search old issues of *Persuasions*.

2) The development and launch of a new membership management system and the change in the membership period. It is hard to believe but, until 2016, JASNA's membership information (nearly 5,000 entries) was handled with an Excel spreadsheet. Now that we have a system that will send automated renewal notices and allow people to update their own demographic information, we have been able to extend membership for a full year from the day that person joins, and we no longer need to make everyone's expiration date the same day. Under the old system, whether you joined in October or May, your membership expired in August.

3) The change to national-dues only. Since JASNA's inception, there was confusion among members between local region dues and national dues. People often paid one of them, thinking it represented dues for both. This confusion sometimes created ill-feeling. JASNA has eliminated local region membership dues by setting up a dues-sharing program with the regions. Ten dollars of the dues each member pays to the national organization are now returned each year to the member's primary region to help support local programs. [Visit the [JASNA](#)

[member portal](#) to designate your primary region, if you haven't done so already.]

*What are you proudest of?*

I am very proud of the steps JASNA staff have taken to bring our organization into the 21st century. I cannot take credit for any of the technical expertise that has gotten us there. But I hope I can take a little credit for clearing the decks and making it possible for those with the expertise to move forward with the projects.

*What have been the biggest challenges?*

While it can be challenging to lead an all-volunteer organization, those who participate in JASNA governance are so committed that it is a delight to collaborate with them. So that is not the biggest challenge, but it is the best challenge.

*Where would you like to see JASNA be in the next decade?*

JASNA's membership has grown dramatically in the last five years, in part because of the 200th anniversaries of the publications of the six novels and the death of Jane Austen. JASNA's ability to retain members depends on its ability to keep up with technological developments that appeal to younger members while making sure we provide all members with the services they most need. I hope that JASNA will continue to find meaningful ways to bring Jane Austen's writing into people's lives. I do not necessarily believe we must always be growing larger, but I do think that we must never lose sight of the written word of Jane Austen, so that those people who love Austen's words will have a place to celebrate them.

## AGM Banquet Signup

If you are attending this year's Annual General Meeting in Kansas City, you should have received an email announcing that seating for the banquet will be arranged in advance.

At our Spring Meeting on June 2 at UCLA, we will have a signup sheet for anyone who is interested in sitting at a table with other JASNA Southwest members.

If you are not attending the June 2 meeting but would like to be included, email [Susie Wampler](#).

## How to Hoot for AGM Roommates and Rideshares

If you are going to the 2018 AGM and want to find hotel roommates and/or rideshares to and from the airport, use our Hootboard. Here's how it works:



1. Email [Erika Kotite](#) to request an invitation to our Hootboard.
2. Once you get the "Join Hootboard" email, click on the link and sign up with your email and select a password.
3. Use the Community Code z72q2.
4. View the posts and reply – OR put up a new post of your own.

Questions? Contact [Erika Kotite](#).

## Save the Dates:

# Fall and Winter Meetings

Fall Meeting  
Saturday, Sept. 8  
Pasadena Central Library  
*Persuasion* and the Art and Science of Austen's Fiction  
Collins Hemingway

Winter Meeting  
Saturday, Dec. 8  
Sony Pictures Studio, Culver City  
Linda Troost and Sayre Greenfield  
authors of  
*Jane Austen in Hollywood*

We have a very special day planned for you at the former MGM Studios, where the original 1940 *Pride and Prejudice* was filmed. JASNA Southwest will be subsidizing part of the cost of this event for our members as a special thank you for helping make the 2017 Annual General Meeting hosted by our region such a great success.

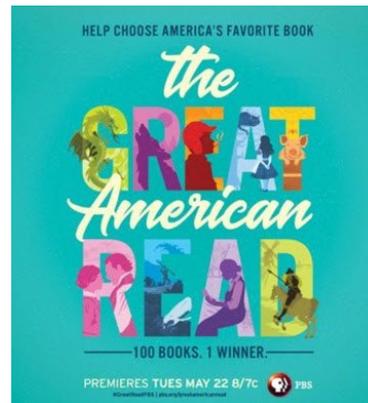


## Vote for *Pride and Prejudice* in the Great American Read on PBS

[The Great American Read](#) is an eight-part series that explores and celebrates the power of reading, told through the prism of America's 100 best-loved novels (as chosen in a national survey). It investigates how and why writers create their fictional worlds, how we as readers are affected by these stories, and what these 100 different books have to say about our diverse nation and our shared human experience.

The second hour of the [first episode](#) featured the 2017 AGM in Huntington Beach and some of our members! Check it out online if you missed it.

You can [vote for \*Pride and Prejudice\*](#) once a day on the PBS website.



## New Film Group Forming

A new group is being developed to focus on one Austen novel at a time and comparing it with its various film adaptations, including traditional and modern versions. Several Southwest members have expressed interest but we are still looking for new participants so we can determine the best locations to meet, as the group is widely dispersed.

For instance, for *Pride and Prejudice* the group would re-read the novel and then examine a filmed adaptation each month (or every other month), including the 1995 mini-series, the 2005 film, *Bride & Prejudice*, the 1980 mini-series, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, the 1940 film, *Lost in Austen*, the 2003 Mormon version and even much looser interpretations such as *Bridget Jones's Diary*, *Before the Fall* and *Pride + Prejudice + Zombies*.

Depending on interest, the group might watch the filmed versions independently and then meet to discuss them, or potentially watch some of the adaptations together if an appropriate location can be secured.

Contact Susie Wampler at [jasnasw@jasnasw.com](mailto:jasnasw@jasnasw.com) if you are interested in participating or learning more.



## 2018 Young Filmmakers Contest

The Southwest Region of the Jane Austen Society of North America (JASNA) is accepting video submissions for our second Young Filmmakers Contest.

Students at the high school, college and graduate-school levels (including spring 2018 graduates) are eligible to compete for the contest. The top submissions will be screened at our December 2018 regional meeting and a "crowd favorite" award will be bestowed on the favorite submission selected by JASNA Southwest members.

Winning entrants will receive a small cash prize, a year's membership in JASNA and paid admission to the Dec. 8 JASNA Southwest regional meeting at Sony Pictures Studios. Works must be five minutes or less in duration, shot in widescreen format and adapted from or inspired by Jane Austen's writing or life. Otherwise, contestants are encouraged to use their imagination. You may submit comedies, dramas or documentaries in live action or animation. Your entries may be modernizations or mashups of Austen and another public domain author. They may be set any time from the Regency era to the present or even in the future. They may be cast with puppets, pets or people. Let your imagination and inspiration run wild!

Deadline is November 1, 2018. View our [entry form](#) for more details and all rules and regulations. For any questions, contact [Erika Kotite](#).



## Reading/Game Groups

Saturday, June 2 (during lunch at the JASNA-SW spring meeting)

### **Riverside Reading Group**

*Northanger Abbey* by Jane Austen

For more information, contact [Cristi Hendry](#).

Saturday, June 9, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

### **San Gabriel Valley Reading Group**

*Jane Eyre* (second half) by Charlotte Bronte

Location: Mt. San Antonio Gardens in Claremont

Potluck

For more information, contact [Kelly Duir](#), 909-967-6630.

Sunday, June 10, 1:30-4:30 p.m.

### **West Los Angeles Reading Group**

*Sense and Sensibility* by Jane Austen

This group is at capacity and cannot accept new members. Current members may contact [Clara Browda](#), 310-278-8759.

Thursday, June 14, 7:30 p.m.

### **NEW GROUP: Janeites Reading Trollope**

*Ralph, the Heir* by Anthony Trollope

Location: West Los Angeles

For more information, contact [Lora Walker](#).

Saturday, June 16, 2:30 p.m.

### **Jane Austen Game Group (West Los Angeles)**

Join fellow Janeites to play Austen-related games.

For more information, contact [Teresa Chien](#).

Saturday, June 16, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

### **Ventura County Reading Group**

*Wives and Daughters* by Elizabeth Gaskell

Location: E.P. Foster Library, 651 E. Main St., Ventura

For more information, contact [Priscilla Diamond](#), 805-798-5622.

Sunday, June 17, 5 p.m.

### **Santa Monica Reading Group**

*A Secret Sisterhood: The Hidden Friendships of Austen, Bronte, Eliot, and Woolf* by Emily Midorikawa and Emma Claire Sweeney

Location: home of Kathi Stafford

For more information, contact [Kathi Stafford](#).

Saturday, June 23, 1-3 p.m.

### **Westside/405 Reading Group**

*Brideshead Revisited* by Evelyn Waugh  
Location: Home of Syrie James  
For more information, contact [Karen Berk](#), 310-477-6753.

Saturday, June 30, noon

**Long Beach Reading Group**

*Camp Austen: My Life as an Accidental Jane Austen Superfan* by Ted Scheinman

Location: Grounds Cafe, Long Beach

For more information, contact [Sherwood Smith](#), 714-330-7856.

Sunday, July 8

**Pasadena Area Reading Group**

*A Secret Sisterhood: The Hidden Friendships of Austen, Bronte, Eliot, and Woolf* by Emily Midorikawa and Emma Claire Sweeney

This group is at capacity and cannot accept new members. Current members may contact [Susan Ridgeway](#), 626-357-1397.

**San Diego Region**

Although San Diego is a separate JASNA region, many JASNA Southwest members are interested in San Diego JASNA events and vice versa.

For information on, or to RSVP for, upcoming San Diego JASNA meetings, visit [www.jasnasd.org](http://www.jasnasd.org).

Visit our website!



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