Jane Austen Society of North America Southwest
January 2017 Newsletter

In This Issue

Jane Austen in the News

2017 AGM Hotel Reservations

Winter Meeting Recap

2017 Essay Contest

2017 Board Approved Reading Groups

Connect on Social Media

Jane Austen in the News!

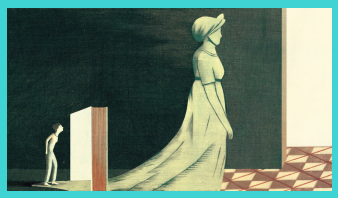
In December, Sotheby's auctioned six items relating to Jane Austen, including first editions of three novels, a letter Austen wrote to her sister, Cassandra, and an

2017 AGM Hotel Reservations

Conference-rate hotel reservations for the 2017 AGM in Huntington Beach, California, will become available the first week of January! Be sure you have signed up at JASNA for email news on the Annual General Meeting (AGM) or check the AGM 2017 website. Our region has the honor of hosting the 2017 conference. Next month's newsletter will include an extensive update on the plans currently underway! For more information, contact Nancy Gallagher, 2017 AGM coordinator.

Will and Jane: Winter Meeting Recap

ivory cup-and-ball game.



The New York Times featured a piece in December titled "In Trying Times, the Balm of Jane Austen."

Join Our Mailing List!

Visit the JASNA-Southwest website for more about programs, reading groups and more.

And look for our brand-new website coming soon!

A large contingent of members and guests attended JASNA Southwest's Winter 2016 Meeting, "Will and Jane," on December 3 at Luminarias Restaurant in Monterey Park. The event explored the common ground shared by Jane Austen and William Shakespeare, two of the world's most legendary and enduring authors.

Janine Barchas -- who recently co-curated the exhibition "Will & Jane: Shakespeare, Austen, and the Cult of Celebrity" at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. -- discussed that effort as well as her work developing the What Jane Saw website, which digitally and painstakingly reconstructed two Georgian museum blockbusters as they looked to Austen in 1796 and 1813. Barchas is on faculty at the University of Texas at Austin and is the author of *Graphic Design, Print Culture, and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* and *Matters of Fact in Jane Austen: History, Location, and Celebrity*.

Janine Barchas

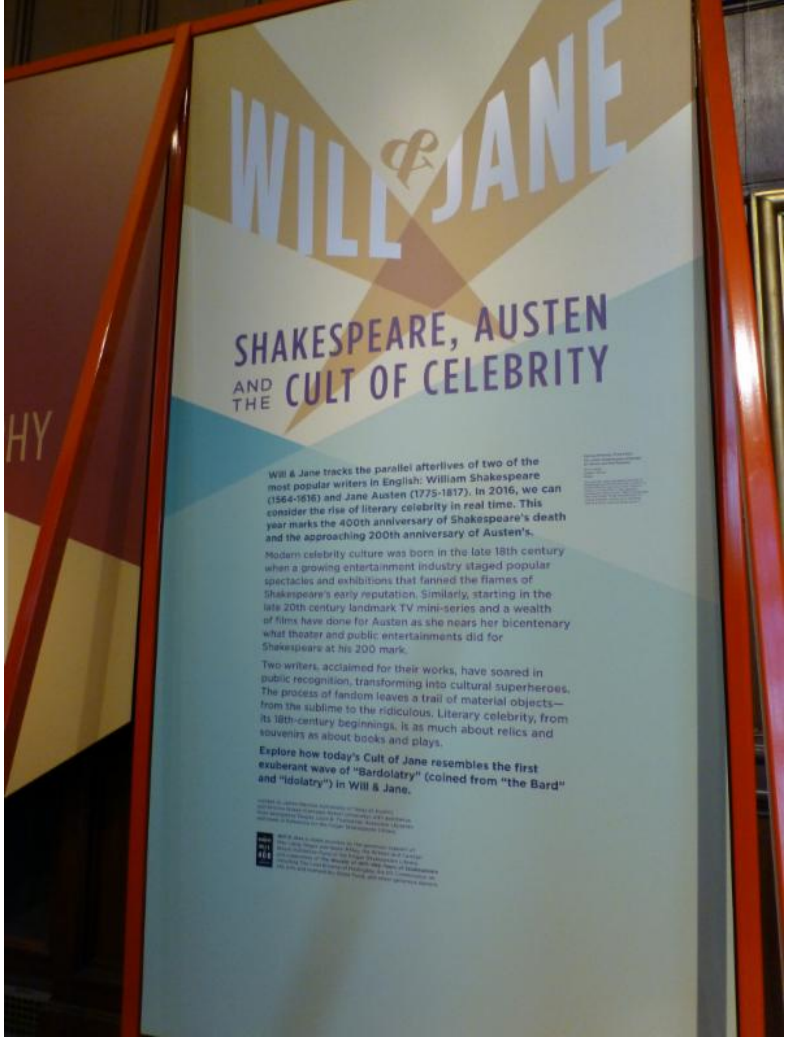
While the 1813 retrospective of Sir Joshua Reynolds' portraiture was the initial impetus for the What Jane Saw digital reconstruction project, Barchas' talk focused on the 1796 exhibit at the Boydell Shakespeare Gallery that we believe Austen also would have attended. It was the first Shakespeare museum in the world. "She stayed around the corner from the museum in August 1796 when she was 20 years old," Barchas noted. No one with an interest in literature and theatre, like Austen, would have missed such a big event.

Serendipitously, when Barchas was working on the Will & Jane exhibition for the Folger Library, she discovered that the 1796 Shakespeare Gallery had taken place in the same space she had already reconstructed for the 1813 Reynolds retrospective. However, only 29 of the Shakespeare Gallery paintings Austen would have seen -- less than a third -- survived, whereas most of the Reynolds

paintings she saw still exist. Barchas and her team had access to the exhibit's catalog and engravings of the entire collection, as well as fragments of some of the artworks, and were able to develop an algorithm that allowed them to accurately determine the size of the missing pieces.

Her inspiration for the 2016 Will & Jane exhibit at the Folger was examining how Shakespeare was viewed 200 years after his death, compared to Austen at 200 years. The exhibit broke the attendance record of every prior show at the Folger, in part due to attracting some major media coverage in *The New York Times* and the *New Yorker*, Barchas said.

"No other authors fit on the shelf with Shakespeare and Austen," Barchas noted. "It's not that there aren't other worthy authors. But Shakespeare and Austen do seem to be the outliers in terms of their celebrity. It's that we know so little about their lives, and it's the parallel trajectory their fans have taken. It's the coincidence of being on the scene at the 200-year mark when there is a new technology -- public museums in Shakespeare's case, and the BBC bonnet drama in Austen's. And ultimately it has to be their talent and that what they wrote appeals to such a wide variety of people."



Sarah Raff

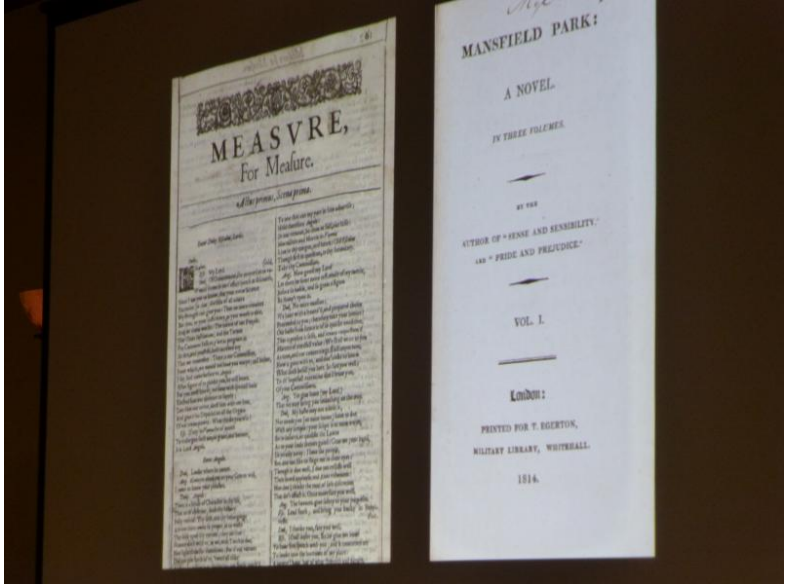
After lunch, Sarah Raff discussed the similarities between Austen's *Mansfield Park* and Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* in the context of authority and guardianship and their ramifications. She discussed the view during Austen's time of whether guardians and heads

of state -- as well as authors -- served as delegates or principals.

"Much as the guardian educated, protected and supervised the marriage of his ward, so did the novel educate young readers, protect them by teaching them how to protect themselves and guide them to a wisely chosen spouse," Raff explained. "In the early 19th century, an era still deeply suspicious of the novel genre, the alignment of novels with guardians served a defensive purpose."

Raff argued that, ultimately, what most conspicuously connects *Mansfield Park* with *Measure for Measure* is not the concern with authority and guardianship but "its similar ugly duckling status within the complete works of the author." She went on to add that "the reception of some of the main characters is radically divided in both works." She noted that the Duke of Vienna is considered by critics as either a "benevolent god or a monster of hypocrisy" while Sir Thomas Bertram is seen as either the "ideal British landowner or a tyrant." The heroines' reception is even more divided, with many finding Fanny Price either an exemplary moral center of her world or an insipid goody two shoes (or worse), while Shakespeare's Isabella is either "a saint or a sadistic fury."

Raff is an associate professor of English at Pomona College and the author of *Jane Austen's Erotic Advice* and the forthcoming *Author-Guardians in the English Novel*.

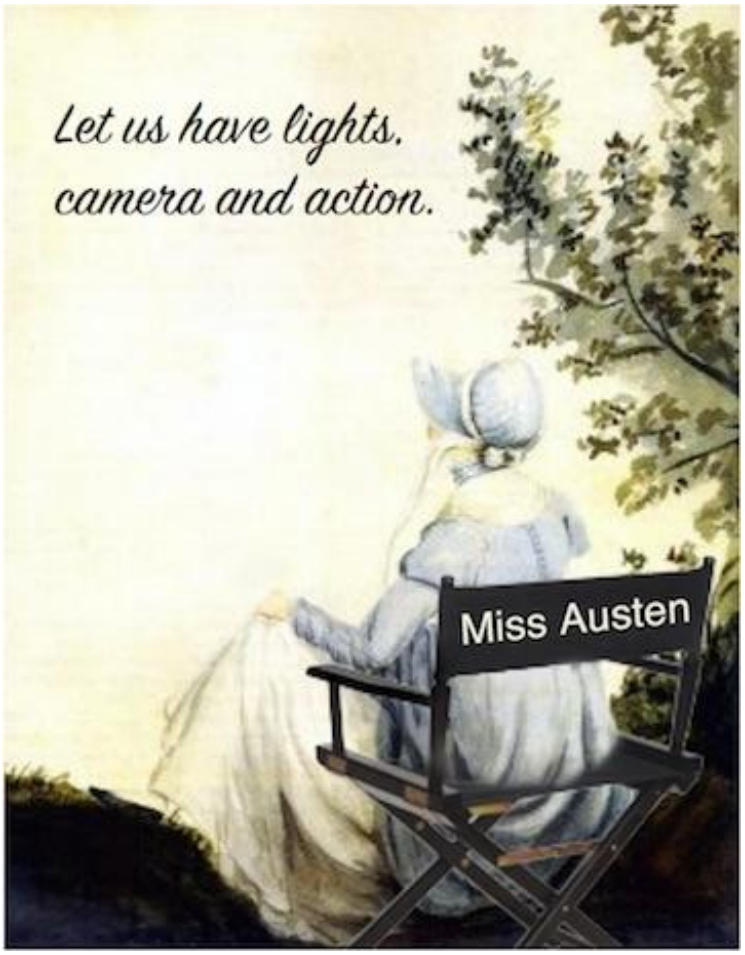


The gathering at Luminarias

Some of the basket opportunity drawings featured the day's theme.

The event included a white elephant exchange as well as an emporium.

2017 Essay Contest



On the occasion of the 200th anniversary of Jane Austen's death, JASNA is looking for short essays that address the following questions:

Imagine that you are adapting an Austen novel for stage or film. What elements might you be tempted to change -- especially for a modern audience -- that should not be tampered with if the integrity of the work is to be preserved? These elements could be scenes, characters, dialogue or something else. Explain why they are so crucial to the novel. How does what can and cannot be changed shed light on Austen's popularity and influence?

Who Is Eligible: Students at the high school, college and graduate levels.

Awards: Judges select first-, second-, and third-place winners in each of the three divisions.

Winners will receive:
* Cash scholarships ranging from $250 to $1,000

* Paid registration and two-nights' lodging for the JASNA Annual General Meeting in Huntington Beach CA, October 6-8 (first place only)
* One-year free membership in JASNA
* Publication of the winning essays on the JASNA website.

Entry Deadline: May 21, 2017

For Details/How to Enter: Visit the Essay Contest page at www.jasna.org.

2017 Board Approved

At our December 3 Winter Meeting, members approved the following 2017 JASNA-Southwest board nominations:

Regional Coordinator--Cheryl Cole
Secretary--Jay Scholl Bohlen
Treasurer/Meeting Concierge--Sonya Samuels
Membership/Meeting Concierge--Carol Krause
Newsletter/Webmaster/Social Media--Susie Wampler
Program Planners--Jan Fahey and Lynda Hall
Event Planner--Glenda Pinney
Press Liaison--Brittany Gash
Festival of Books Coordinator--Emily Bergman
Past Regional Coordinator--Nancy Gallagher

Board Advisors:
Claire Bellanti
Diana Birchall
Erika Kotite
Terry Ryan
Carla Washburn

Reading Groups Upcoming Meetings/Info

Long Beach Reading Group member Christina Llata baked Jane Austen silhouette cookies and put together Austen-themed teabags for the group's annual Jane Austen Birthday Tea in December.

Sunday, January 8, 2-4 p.m.
South Bay Reading Group
A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens
New and returning members are welcome.
For more information, contact Jeanine Holguin, 805-444-8999.

Sunday, January 15, Noon
Orange County Reading Group
Dolley Madison: The Problem of National Unity (Lives of American Women) by Catherine Allgor
New and returning members are welcome.
For more information, contact Viki Barie, 714-309-6702.

Sunday, January 15, 1-4 p.m.
San Fernando Valley Reading Group
Northanger Abbey by Jane Austen
Ellen Lowe is hosting a tea for the annual Jane

Austen Birthday Celebration.
For more information, contact Cheryl Cole, 310-422-5475.

Sunday, January 15, 5 p.m.
Santa Monica Reading Group
The Girls of Slender Means by Muriel Spark
For more information, contact Diana Birchall, 310-394-2196.

Saturday, January 21, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
San Gabriel Valley Reading Group
Castle Rackrent by Maria Edgeworth
Location: Santa Catalina branch library, Pasadena
For more information, contact Kelly Duir, 909-967-6630.

Saturday, January 21, 11:30 a.m.
Ventura Reading Group
The Wanderer, or Female Difficulties, by Fanny Burney
Location: E.P. Foster Library, 651 E. Main Street, Ventura, California 93001
For more information, contact Linda Terry, 805-302-0855.

Sunday, January 29, 12:30 p.m.
Long Beach Reading Group
Phineas Finn by Anthony Trollope
For more information, contact Gerda Kilgore, 562-496-4452.

Sunday, January 29
Pasadena Area Reading Group
Sisters of Fortune by Jehanne Wake
This group is at capacity and cannot accept new members. Current members may contact Susan Ridgeway, 626-357-1397.

Saturday, February 18, 11:30 a.m.
Ventura Reading Group
Mr. Collins Considered (aka Jane Austen and the Interplay of Character) by Ivor Morris
Location: E.P. Foster Library, 651 E. Main Street, Ventura, California 93001
For more information, contact Linda Terry, 805-302-0855.

Saturday, February 18
Westside/405 Reading Group
Victoria by Daisy Goodwin
For more information, contact Karen Berk, 310-477-6753.

Sunday, February 19, 1:30-4:30 p.m.
West Los Angeles Reading Group
Nutshell by Ian McEwan
Discussion leader: Dr. Charles Lynn Batten
This group is at capacity and cannot accept new members. Current members may contact Clara Browda, 310-278-8759.

Sunday, February 26, 2-4 p.m.
Riverside Reading Group
First Congregationalist Church
3504 Mission Inn Ave., Riverside
Emma: A Modern Retelling by Alexander McCall Smith
For more information, contact Cristi Hendry.

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 upcoming San Diego JASNA meetings, contact Jeanne Talbot, 808-342-0666.

Join us on Facebook

Are you on Facebook? So is JASNA-SW! Stay connected in between our meetings and e-newsletter updates, share your Austen-related stories, favorites, travel and more with fellow Janeites!

Like us on Facebook