Jane Austen Society of North America, Southwest Region

December 2020 Newsletter

Register Now for All-California JASNA Event
Saturday, Dec. 12

Our December event will be held in collaboration with the other JASNA regions in California (a first!) and is free and open to anyone interested in Jane Austen.

Join us for "A Toast to Jane Austen" via Zoom on Saturday, December 12 from 2-4 p.m. Pacific time.

Register Now!

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!

Recap of Jane Boltz Regency Fashion Event

At our Zoom event on November 14, JASNA Southwest Board Member Jane Tomi Boltz gave the presentation "Exploring Regency-Era Fashions for Women and Men by a Prejudiced and Amateur Seamstress" in homage to Austen's "The History of England by a Partial, Prejudiced and Ignorant Historian." Nearly 150 people from all over the world tuned in for the live event.

Her talk and the Q&A that followed are now available on the JASNA Southwest YouTube channel, where you can also catch up on our other past events.

Boltz led the audience through a history of her own journey learning how to create Regency clothing. She also made her fabric sources, indispensable sewing tools, clothing patterns, cravat pattern, and an easy guide to folding and tying a cravat available on our website.
Save the Dates
for our next two Zoom presentations
January 16 and February 20

Prof. Jason Solinger

On Saturday, January 16, from 11-12:30 p.m. Pacific time, join us for a talk by Jason Solinger on "Anti-Historical Austen: From 'The History of England' to Northanger Abbey."

Solinger is an associate professor of English at the University of Mississippi, where he teaches classes in 18th and 19th century literature. He is the author of Becoming the Gentleman: British Literature and the Invention of Modern Masculinity, 1660-1815, which explains 18th century Britons’ obsession with the figure of the gentleman. He is currently working on a new book exploring the ways that Austen's readers have shaped our ideas about literature.

His talk—an extended reprise of his presentation at JASNA's 2020 Virtual Annual General Meeting—will examine Austen's parody of history books, "The History of England." His humorous and enlightening lecture slideshow should put to rest the notion that the text was a mere youthful lark. On the contrary, he will explain how "The History of England" articulates questions that shaped the adjacent disciplines of literature and history. His talk will address such questions as:

- How much poetic license are we willing to grant the historian?
- On what basis did Austen's predecessors call their own novels "histories"?
- Who is better at explaining the motivations that drive people, the historian or the novelist?
- Which discourse—fiction or history—better prepares readers for being in the world?

Art Historian Nancy Mowll Mathews

Join us on Saturday, February 20, from 11-12:30 p.m. Pacific time, for a talk by art historian, curator and author Nancy Mowll Mathews on "Austen and Cassatt: Working From Home."

Mathews is the Emerita Eugénie Prendergast Senior Curator of 19th and 20th Century Art at the Williams College Museum of Art directing the Prendergast Archive and Study Center and teaching in the Williams College Art Department and Graduate Program in the History of Art.

Using letter writing as the core activity of "work" for the educated and prosperous classes, Mathews will compare Austen and Cassatt's own work lives, their long-distance communications and how they represent women working from home in their art. As appropriate for our current remote work lives and use of Zoom, she will draw comparisons with the similar stay-at-home professionalism of the 19th century.

Mathews received her PhD from the Institute of Fine Arts at NYU, where she began her long career as a preeminent Cassatt scholar. Of the more than 15 books and exhibitions she has produced, the best known are Cassatt and Her Circle: Selected Letters, Cassatt: The Color Prints and Mary

In addition to her work on Cassatt, she is the co-author of the Prendergast catalogue raisonné and numerous other books on Maurice and Charles Prendergast, Paul Gauguin, and the relationship between art and early film.

Modernized Adaptation of *Persuasion* Arrives Dec. 18

*Modern Persuasion*

In the first feature film modernization of *Persuasion*, Alicia Witt fills the Anne Elliot role as Wren Cosgrove, a New York workaholic who finds herself coming home every night to her cat. When her firm is hired by Owen Jasper (Shane McRae), "the man who got away," long-lost feelings are stirred.

The script is credited to Jane Austen, Jonathan Lisecki and Barbara Radecki, and the film is directed by Lisecki and Alex Appel. The video-on-demand release date is December 18, 2020.

[Watch the trailer](#)

'Tis the Season to Binge-Watch Austen Adaptations

**Austen Adaptations (and More) Coming to BritBox in December**

By December 7, all of the following Austen adaptations will be available on BritBox:

- *Mansfield Park* (1983)
- *Northanger Abbey* (1987)
- *Emma* (1972)
- *Persuasion* (2007)
- *Sense and Sensibility* (1980 and 1981)


Reading/Film/Game Groups
Saturday, December 12, noon
**Long Beach Reading Group**
Jane Austen birthday celebration
Members will select a favorite bit from Austen's works or letters to read.
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
For more information, contact Sherwood Smith.

Saturday, December 12, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
**Ventura Reading Group**
*Jane Austen at Home* by Lucy Worsley
The meeting will be held via Zoom.
For more information, contact Phyllis Michaels.

Sunday, December 13, 1:30-4 p.m.
**West Los Angeles Reading Group**
*Sense and Sensibility* by Jane Austen
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
For more information, contact Katie Walker Boeck.

Wednesday, December 16, 7 p.m.
**Pasadena Area Reading Group**
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
For more information, contact Susan Ridgeway.

Saturday, December 19, 10:15-11:30 a.m.
**North Orange County Reading Group**
*Persuasion* by Jane Austen (chapters 1-8)
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
For more information, contact Melissa Buell.

Sunday, December 20, 5 p.m.
**Santa Monica Reading Group**
*Miss Austen* by Gill Hornby
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
For more information, contact Kathi Stafford.

Saturday, January 16, 12:30 p.m.
**Long Beach Reading Group**
*The Making of Jane Austen* by Devoney Looser
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
For more information, contact Sherwood Smith.

Sunday, January 17, 1 p.m.
**Orange County Reading Group**
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
For more information, contact Maryann Pelensky.

Sunday, January 17
**San Fernando Valley Reading Group**
*Persuasion* by Jane Austen
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
For more information, contact Cheryl Cole.

Thursday, January 28
**Janeites Reading Trollope**
*The Prime Minister* by Anthony Trollope
Meeting will be conducted via Zoom.
For more information, contact Lora Walker.