



Happy Spring!
from the
Jane Austen Society of North America
Indianapolis Region

"Her eye fell everywhere on lawns and plantations of the freshest green; and the trees, though not fully clothed, were in that delightful state when farther beauty is known to be at hand, and when, while much is actually given to the sight, more yet remains for the imagination."

Mansfield Park, Chapter 46

Next Meeting—June 21—Picnic and IMA garden talk and tour—picnic at 12:30; talk and tour at 2 pm

Join our Facebook Group-- ["jasna—indiana"](https://www.facebook.com/jasna-indiana)

"Like" JASNA's Facebook fan page-- <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Jane-Austen-Society-of-North-America/285332054855712>

Check out our web page-- <http://sites.google.com/site/jasnairsite>

Indianapolis Region—We now have 52 JASNA members! Well done!

From the Regional Coordinator

Mansfield Park—What is an RC to do? Discussions have run amok. Poor Fanny continues to be abused by those 200 years removed from, but following in the wake of, Mrs. Norris. The questions and the controversies continue on and on. What was Austen thinking when she wrote this novel after *Pride and Prejudice* and before *Emma*? Why the more serious tone? Why such conflicting feelings about some of the characters? How is this particular novel more than others, so often "misread?"

After two meetings during which *Mansfield Park* and its characters were cussed and discussed, blamed and defended, puzzled over and analyzed, the only conclusion reached by most is that it is a troubling novel, raising more questions than it answers. It seems to defy easy analysis; explanations do not come freely; it is a difficult novel on the first, second, and even third reading. So, should even the most ardent Austen fans continue to re-read and try to admire or at least appreciate its elusive fine qualities, uplifting messages, and lofty themes?

A noted librarian named Nancy Pearl wrote that not all books deserve a cover-to-cover reading. She asserts that if the reader is under 50, he is only obligated to read the first 50

pages; if over 50, subtract the age from 100 and feel obligated to read only that number. Dare we apply this—with some alteration-- to Austen novels, particularly *Mansfield Park*? Should one just write it off as the least favorite novel of JA after one reading? Give it a second try? Maybe require a third reading if one is to be allowed to remain a member of JASNA?

Jesting aside, the discussion of this novel has been a “refreshing” (?) change from the unanimous adoration of Darcy, for instance, or from the universal swooning over Captain Wentworth and his talent for tantalizing memos, or countless other familiar and beloved scenes in Austen’s novels.

At the very least, this novel asks us to think more deeply, judge more carefully, and read more thoughtfully. By any literary standards, not a bad task to be set before a reader.

From our secretary, Mary Miller

April 27th Meeting and Tea At Sue's Home

We had 20 in attendance with 7 new members. We had a lively discussion on *Mansfield Park* about which many opinions were expressed. Of all of Austen's novels, this one seems to invoke the strongest opinions--for and against. No fights broke out though it was iffy at times! We advised the group of upcoming events--May 18th tea at Maura Hutchison's home in Greenfield, Meeting at the IMA gardens on June 21st and early details on the Louisville Festival.



May 18th Meeting and Tea at Maura's Home.

Once again, Maura outdid herself with a formal tea with a champagne toast!! We continued the *Mansfield Park* discussion. For a novel many folks do not like, we sure are talking about it a lot!! Random quotes from the book were read and mulled over by the group. We had 18 folks in attendance including 5 friends of Maura's that jumped right into the discussion. The IMA meeting on June 21st may also be a "Box Hill" picnic meeting too. More details will be advised soon. Also, Sue has recently updated the website. We agreed for the Louisville Festival to attend the 3rd setting of the tea as a group. The times and costs were shared to the group.



Maura, our happy hostess, with Pam Welker



Beautiful tea table awaits



Ready to dig in



Mary Miller and Erin Webster waiting for companions

Membership information

We now have 52 JASNA members, four of whom are life members! There are 137 folks on our email contact list, many of whom we have never met, but who wish to stay connected to our goings-on! To think we started with four members of the Greater Chicago Region called together by Susan Haller and some friends, this growth is terrific.

In an earlier newsletter, I stated that our region would no longer collect the \$10 dues we had been soliciting from the beginning in order to build up our new bank account. The reason for doing this is to clear up the confusion regarding membership. To clarify...

1. Continued attendance at our region meetings and special events is allowed only by membership in JASNA itself—the US/Canada organization--and not by any region dues.
2. Those regions which have region dues, do so in order to offset meeting expenses, printing and mailing costs, and other miscellaneous costs, which is a valid reason—especially for larger regions—and might apply to our region as well now that we have grown.
3. We might want to continue to collect \$10 (semantics issue here—call it “dues” or “donation”) from those of you who wish to help support our region’s expenses. Just keep in mind that this is not the “free ticket” to region meetings.

4. So...region dues are really donations to the local group, rather than the privilege of actually attending meetings.
5. According to JASNA's policies, membership in JASNA is required to attend any region meetings after the first one or two visits (this is where the policy is vague. I have not been keeping track of how many times anyone attends before joining JASNA, but I probably should do so soon).
6. Membership in JASNA has many benefits beyond allowing attendance to any region meeting anywhere in the US or Canada, including the JASNA News and Persuasions publication, special announcements about trips to England and other information.
7. Having said all this, keep in mind that --with or without region dues--special events staged by any region would probably mean that every attendee would be charged a fee, but most regions charge one price for JASNA members and a greater price for non-members or guests.

Upcoming events

June 21—Garden, landscaping tour, lecture at IMA—meet for picnic at noon; talk and tour 2 pm

July 19 and 20—Louisville Festival (sign up for third tea; for more info, contact Mary Miller

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August 17—Fund-raising auction; talk by Jo Mader on British navy, specifically William Price and Austen brothers--Bowers home, 2 pm

September 13--Saturday—Crafts workshop, specifically quilting—Ivington Library, 2 pm

October 10—12—AGM Montreal—"Contexts, Conventions, Controversies in Mansfield Park"

December (date and venue tba)—Birthday Tea with vocal concert by Lisa Whitaker, 2 pm

2015

Feb 15—Letters of Jane Austen (Deidre leFaye edition recommended)—Landaw home, 2 pm

April 19—Jo Mader presentation on Historical background of Regency Period and formal tea--Skooglund home, 2 pm

June 13--Saturday—Special event on Regency health and medicine—Indiana Medical History Museum, time tba

July—Louisville Festival or Crafts workshop

August 16—fund-raising auction and Georgette Heyer book discussion. Bowers
Home, 2 pm

September 12--Saturday—Crafts workshop—Glendale Library, 2 pm

December (date and venue tba)—Birthday Tea with harpist and speaker on Regency composers,
2 pm

This and That

Would you like to be a part of our **Facebook group** so that you can see postings, comments, and/or offer your own insights about all things Austen? If so, just “friend me” on Facebook and ask to become a part of the JASNA—Indiana group. We have had some interesting exchanges already, and it’s a great way to see what others are discovering.

Send me those book blurbs anytime. I will put them on the website; you can put them on the Facebook group. I know some of you are reading sequels, spin-offs, and nonfiction related to JA. If you have read an Austen- related book recently and would like to pen a very brief review, or if you come across Austen or Regency Period related news items or trivia, I would love to include it/ them. Don’t be shy. Send to islandaw@gmail.com or share on the Facebook group.

The Web Site (a project looking for a leader)

It continues to be a work in progress, but it is, at last and at least, a start. I need to establish a new domain name, work on making it an online community or at least a link to one, and expanding the information on some of the links—mainly Regency Period and Biography. Here is a list of the links thus far: AGMs, Announcements, Austen Reading List, Biography, Book Reviews, Fund Raising, Games and Puzzles, Images, Membership, Regency Period, Tea Rooms, Trivia, Upcoming Events). If you forget the web address, it can be retrieved if you use “JASNA Indianapolis Region” as your search term on your web browser.

Upcoming Events

2014 Annual General Meeting, Oct. 10-12, Montréal, Québec, Canada Theme:
Mansfield Park in Montréal: Contexts, Conventions and Controversies

2015 Annual General Meeting, Oct. 9-11, Louisville, KY USA Theme: Living in Jane Austen’s World

2016 Annual General Meeting, Oct. 21-23, Washington, D.C. USA Theme: *Emma* at 200: “No One But Herself”

2017 Annual General Meeting, Oct. 6-8, Southern California USA Theme: Jane Austen in Paradise

If anyone ever asks....

***There are about 4500 members of JASNA in Canada and the US and there are over 70 regions.**

Contact Information

Chawton Cottage—www.jane-austens-house-museum.org.uk
Jane Austen Centre in Bath—www.janeausten.co.uk
National organization—www.jasna.org
Greater Louisville Region—www.jasnalouisville.com
Jane Austen Books—www.JaneAustenBooks.net or AustenBooks@gmail.com

Local region officers

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